

Commentaries

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SALUTATORY.

We respectfully make our bow to the public, and beg leave to express a hope that our further acquaintance will be productive of a growing mutual satisfaction. No doubt every periodical, on its very first appearance before the world, not only professes, but is really actuated by, those considerations which are popularly believed to comprise the paving stones of a certain place with an objectionable name and a more objectionable climate, which some persons are now-a-days mercifully trying to do away with. But we know how often and wofully these professors of good intentions fall away from their early promises. With these recollections haunting us, perhaps the less we say of our own intentions the better. It will be as well to let the proof of the pudding be in the eating of it. Still, of the plan which, in our present amiable state of mind, we *would like* to carry out, there are a few traits which it may not be amiss to outline.

As our title may indicate, we claim the right to dip our oar in everywhere—into everything which concerns the public as a *public*. At the same time we hope to be able to rigidly eschew all clash and scandal of a strictly personal and private nature.

We would fain be independent in politics—and everything else. It may be necessary to say that by *independence* we do not necessarily mean *neutrality*—a "sitting on the fence" as between adverse views; a "splitting the difference" as between rival interests; or an utter ignoring of differences which cannot be reconciled. True independence is quite consistent with taking a very decided part, or "side," in any question agitating the public; but what is of its very essence is to discuss every question solely upon its own merits and without bias from any factitious influence whatever.

Whilst wishing and really intending to be independent, we hope also to be *free*. By this we mean, not only to be exempt from all undue restrictions upon our editorial expressions of opinion, but to accord a similar latitude to others. No contributor will necessarily be excluded from these pages because his views—whatever the subject under consideration—differ from those to which special preponderance may happen to be given by us, or from our habitual tone upon such subject. *Some* restriction may be *sometimes* necessary, in view of the limited space at our disposal, and of the indispensability of matter for publication being expressed in seemly terms and, in all cases, ready to be put into the printer's hands without revision.

We expect that, at least, readable articles—original, as well as selected—upon Art, Science, and General Literature, will find their way into our pages. As to *News*, we cannot, of course, pretend to compete with our daily contemporaries, whose special self-appointed mission it is to provide news for the public; but we shall, in each number, place before our readers a carefully compiled and condensed News Summary for the week immediately preceding the day of issue.

Such is our brief programme. Whether we succeed in carrying it out, or not, must be told by the future.

THE POLITICAL OUTLOOK.

We come into the world just on the eve of what must prove to be a momentous period to that part of it to which we particularly belong—the Dominion of Canada, to wit. Within a few months—perhaps within a few weeks, there will be a Parliamentary General Election in this Dominion, as also a Provincial Legislative Election in Nova Scotia. It is always pretended, in these Provinces, that the season of a General Election is a momentous one. Do the people who so pretend, really appreciate and feel the responsibility which rests upon them on such an occasion? That is doubtful—extremely doubtful. There are, just now, however, special and pressing reasons why the people of Canada should endeavor to orient themselves—to ascertain, by careful inspection, just what their position and relations are in view of the pending event just named. Let us try, as succinctly as possible, to see what that position is.

We have no intention of being laboriously historical. We do not purpose tracing the chain of Canadian events from a remote period, or even from July 1867, down to this the date of our first appearance before the public. We will do the reader the credit of assuming that he is already familiar with the leading events extending over that period. Let us only recall these facts, that, less than four years ago, the Ministry which now rules Canada, assumed office; and that, immediately afterwards, on an appeal to the country, that Ministry was sustained by "an overwhelming majority" in the House of Commons, which majority has been maintained, with but slight variation, ever since. Now, this, the Mackenzie Ministry, is to be again tried before the country. And let not the country forget the important truth, which is so often sought to be smuggled out of sight, that Ministers are to be tried upon their own merits,—and demerits, if they are chargeable with any. This is a truth which cannot be too firmly impressed upon the minds of the public; and it is one from which a certain class of journalists habitually and most persistently endeavor to divert public attention. Multitudinous charges, both of doing what ought not to have been done, and leaving undone what ought to have been done,