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CURRENT TOPICS.

Were it not for the inherent improbability, we might almost say impossibility, of so atrocious a thing as such a war in the closing years of this century, we should be forced to regard the situation as between France and England as decidedly threatening. As it is, we can only fall back upon the assumption that the unstable French Government is trading largely upon the known forbearance of Great Britain, in order to divert attention from its own weakness and create a little capital for itself at home. It is difficult to explain otherwise the course that is being pursued in Siam. The French Government must understand perfectly well; no doubt they have been told pretty plainly that the spoliation of Siam, or her reduction to the position of a dependency of France, cannot be permitted by either China or Great Britain, Siam's two interested neighbours. Apart from other considerations, the pertinacity with

which France is trying to force a quarrel upon her weak antagonist, combined with her establishment of an understanding with Russia, and the suspicious movements of the latter in the vicinity of the Indian frontier, might afford ample material for predicting that we are on the eve of great events. But the fact that both nations are in the thrall of the Jewish money-lenders and that the latter have no reason to love Russia, and are not in the least likely to come to her aid with the sinews of war, without which she, notwithstanding all her armaments, is powerless, is sufficiently reassuring. Equally so is the fact that France is confronted by the immense armies of the Triple Alliance, and that she well knows that her extremity would be Germany's opportunity. Hence the strange and harsh course of the French in Siam may be pretty safely regarded as bluster, for the sake of some temporary effect, if it be not the incipient madness which presages suicide.

Few things are more surprising and discouraging to the colonist, at least until he has had an opportunity to survey his country and its affairs from the other side of the ocean and to some extent from the point of view of the Englishman, and to get a better idea of its relative importance in that perspective, than the wrong conceptions which are often formed of it by even the best informed of English journals. It is not long, for instance, since the Spectator gravely informed its readers, that "in almost every colony, and especially in the greatest, the Dominion of Canada, there is a party which is antagonistic to England, and inclined to assume an attitude of hostility to the mother country." We do not undertake to speak for other colonies, but every well-informed Canadian knows that the statement is entirely erroneous so far as Canada is concerned. There certainly is no party, we very much doubt if there are more than a very few individuals in Canada whose feelings towards the mother country are other than friendly if not even affectionate. There is no reason or excuse for their being otherwise. The misconception of the Spectator and any others in England who may have the same notion arises probably from the fact that there are many in Canada who do not regard perpetual colonialism as the true goal of Canadian ambition. But this view, whatever shape it may take in the minds of those who cherish it, is very far from

implying any feeling of hostility to Great Britain. Even the few—and their numbers are probably decreasing rather than the opposite—who advocate or favour political union with the United States are for the most part thoroughly friendly to the mother-land of both countries and would expect to carry with them a mother's consent and blessing. The Imperial Federationists are of course, effusively loyal to Great Britain. As for those who look forward to ultimate independence, as do a considerable and probably increasing number of our people, we are assured that nothing like hostility or antagonism to Great Britain has anything to do with their views and aspirations. They simply look forward to separation as the natural outcome of development and so the best thing for both parent and child. And these three classes exhaust the roll of thoughtful and influential Canadians.

"The fundamental principle of metropolitan journalism to-day is to buy white paper at three cents a pound and sell it at ten cents a pound." "In some quarters it does not matter how much the virgin whiteness of the paper is defiled, so long as the defilement sells the paper." These are some of the words in which Mr. J. W. Keller, a New York journalist of repute, expresses in the August *Forum* his opinion of the decadence of the present day newspaper in general and the New York newspaper in particular. The main count in the indictment is that the newspaper of the day has become exclusively a business enterprise, and that, in so doing, it has in large measure ceased to be a vehicle of opinion, and, in the words of the *Nation*, "made itself more and more a purveyor of gossip and scandal." It is certainly no palliation of the charge to say, as Mr. Speed, another writer quoted by the *Nation*, does, that in so doing the newspaper is merely acting upon the principle of "giving the public what it wants." Mr. Speed shows by facts and figures derived from actual analysis that "the gossip this year usurps the place of the literary matter printed in 1881, and articles about crimes and criminals take the places formerly occupied by religious and scientific matter." To what extent Canadian newspapers have shared in the decadence of the American newspaper, we shall not attempt to decide. Very few of the former, we are glad to believe, go the length of the latter in substituting personal gossip and slander, or minute particulars of crime and the history of