

CANADIAN LOYALTY.



It is perhaps somewhat daring that so soon after Mr. Goldwin Smith has spoken on our Canadian loyalty, THE VARSITY should venture an independent opinion on the same subject. But it would seem that so great are the differences of opinion regarding it entertained by different sections of the people of the Dominion; so strange are the propositions advanced and supported under cover of this mysterious "loyalty," that full discussion of the matter, ending in a rational conclusion as to what true loyalty in these days really implies, cannot but be to the common advantage. To such a discussion this article is intended as a trifling contribution.

Loyalty—keeping faith. This is the true meaning; for the primary idea of law-observance early passed away; and the feudal loyalty became that fidelity to the oath of homage which distinguished the true "man." The object of the feudal loyalty, be it observed, was not the nation, but the superior; not the community nor the state, but the person of the lord. In this sense the sentiment lingered long, and in degree still lingers among the people. The doctrine of the divine right of kings was a perversion, modified by religious and theocratic notions, of the feudal idea. The affection of the royalist for the person of the Stuart Kings (wholly by reason of their kingship) was an outcome of it. And in our own day, despite the almost total demolition of the relics of feudalism, there are many who maintain the old position; who work themselves into a real fervor of devotion to Her Most Gracious Majesty our present sovereign, which is personal, and yet entertained wholly by reason of her being Queen. In others, the old leaven works differently. They profess intense affection for England (or, if touched by the new spirit of Canadian nationalism, for Canada) which has for its object—what? The soil of England; or its people? The soil of Canada; or its people?

What is, and what should be the position of Canadians on this question? Shall we deny the existence of rational grounds for entertaining such a sentiment at all, and relegate it to a place among bygone superstitions; or shall we recognize it as a vital element of the national life finding various and at times grotesque expression? The prevalence of the sentiment, the fervor and undoubted honesty of so many of its exponents and the tenacity with which it clings to life seem to make the latter proposition the more reasonable. And if national (like individual) love is sometimes blind; if it reaches out at times in all manner of impossible directions; that proves, not the futility of the love, but the need for its enlightenment in order that sham loyalty and misguided loyalty may both be merged in a strong sensible national sentiment.

The one basis of true loyalty—feudal or modern—is the social idea—the sense of social union—the brotherhood of the trades unions; the *fraternité* of France. Trades unionism is loyalty in fragments. It is the reaction from that individualism, which having meant to seek at first their greatest good in detached and spasmodic action is learning anew that the highest interests of the individual may be better served by partial or class association. Such association necessitates a measure of individual self-sacrifice; and, though material selfishness is at the root of the union, it must of necessity result in a spirit of devotion to the class which, broadened, extended and purified, will in the end embrace the community and the nation, and culminate in a cosmopolitan desire for the world's welfare. Thus the selfishness of the one leads to the association of the many, and tends ultimately to recognition of the brotherhood of mankind.

Now, where, for us Upper Canadians, is the sense of fellowshipship to find its limits? For when we have bounded that we have determined what shall be the object of our loyalty. Ontario, Canada, the Empire, the English-speaking race? For we may cast aside as humiliating the proposition

that our loyalty (including our self-sacrifice and our obedience) is due to great Britain. Great Britain is a part, as Canada is a part; let us own allegiance to the whole. The men of England are British subjects of no higher a grade than we; and our services to the Empire have been quite as great as theirs. It cannot much longer be possible for us to submit (for even great pecuniary reasons) to be governed, even in theory, by a parliament in which we have no voice. Canada must be represented in the Imperial councils; or her autonomy must be assured by the removal of the Imperial veto. One change or the other our national pride demands.

But, setting such matters for the moment aside, there is, it would seem, no true reason why Canadian loyalty should not find an object in the Empire as a whole. We are brothers; whatever our variances, our highest interests are substantially identical. Canadians are but Britons transplanted. The same people won by patient conquest Canada and the Australian Empire. We need not narrow our view to Canada only; but let it sweep in pride and exultation over the whole vast Imperial domain, won by us and by our brethren. And recognizing our national privileges, it is but right that we recognize our national duties. Let us legislate now for the unity of the Empire, not against it, only bearing in mind that we are part of the Empire, and injury to part means damage to the whole. Assimilation of tariffs or greater centralization of power there may never be; but, at least, we may preserve the bond of political union for the sake of future possibilities, if for nothing else. Let us do nothing rashly; and a time may yet come when the great disaffected member of our national family shall find it possible to seek, if not a closer political union, at least a friendly alliance—a fusion of forces and of hearts.

For the present, why should we forsake the Mother Country for the United States? Commercial advantages there might be. But despite the sneers of practical politicians a man's nationality should not be readily bartered for material gain. True loyalty is the conscience of the nation; and to violate the national conscience is to commit national sin. If, then, our true, intellectual, moral and social sympathies are with the parent nation, only the gravest necessity should force us to sever our connection with her. Such a necessity undoubtedly cut the cord which bound the New England colonies to the Motherland; and in our own case such a necessity may (improbably) at some time arise. But the strained relations which have existed since the severance between England and the United States, the undisguised anti-British spirit which breaks out in every presidential election, and the tone adopted by the press and public of the Republic toward ourselves, because of our relationship to England, make it imperative that we take sides. Circumstances render it impossible for us to cast in our lot with our southern neighbor without a sacrifice of our self-respect, a severance of kindly relations with our best friend, and a surrender of our right of inheritance of the historical and literary traditions of the British Empire. To these last, indeed, in such a contingency the descendant of the sturdy Revolutionary fathers of 1776 might lay a better claim.

"Shoulder to shoulder," then, let the motto be. No bluster, no defiance, no martial breathings of threatenings and slaughter against our neighbor and next of kin, but a steady, sturdy adherence to the British brotherhood, with a constant effort for Canada's advancement and for the recognition of her full rights in the grand alliance. And may the time soon come when bickering shall cease and Empire and Republic shall clasp friendly hands and unite in honest effort for the welfare of the world.

UBIQUE.

President Patton, of Princeton, poetically gives his opinion about attending college by saying: "Twere better to have gone and loafed than never to have gone at all."—*Ex.*