

the proposed scheme we are somewhat astonished at the fact that there is nothing new in them. No argument is urged which was not brought forward in the autumn at the big dinner in the drill shed or the Chowder party at Bedford Basin. Union is a good thing—Intercolonial Railway—Uniformity of Tariff—and self defence—are still the cries of those who support the scheme of the politicians. Nobody for a moment denies the correctness of these truisms. A horse is a noble and useful beast, but granting that, does not prove him an agreeable companion in a drawing room. Union may be a good thing in its proper place but British North America is not at present prepared for it. Union—Railway—Tariff—and all the rest of the advantages before alluded to would be real advantages, were they not counter-balanced by a more than corresponding amount of disadvantages. The advocates of Union, we say, urge no new arguments in its favor. Their success in combating what is urged against the proposed Scheme is still more doubtful.

If it be urged that the system of Federation is distasteful they have a ready answer "The Provincial Parliaments have no power." If it be further urged why in the name of common sense, having no power, they should exist at all, an answer like the following will be given. "Well you see the whole thing is a compromise, Local Parliaments will probably soon die a natural death." This we deny. They will become, as a contemporary wisely remarks, hotbeds of Provincial agitation and tend to keep up Provincial jealousies and rancours to the great prejudice of any true union.

Now though the existing Scheme must, as we say, fail, we are averse to the idea that the labour of the delegates has been fruitless. Though we are not prepared to accept the Union presented to us in its entirety, the Quebec convention has pointed out many quieter paths by which we may eventually arrive at a permanent Union between the Upper and Lower provinces. It has made us feel what we want by the very fact of rendering the accomplishment of such craving possible. There are two things which Nova Scotia does desire and which we hope the failure of the present plan will not prevent being soon granted us. These are the Railway and Free trade between the Colonies. It will indeed be a great pity if all the labor of our delegates is utterly thrown away. They must have discussed the Tariff question at great length. The representatives of Canada and the other provinces would hardly have consented to establish free-trade between the Colonies unless they were aware that in the end it must be beneficial. Indeed the railway once built free trade will become a necessity. An arrangement of this kind has been found practicable between several sovereign states in Germany, and has been attended by the most satisfactory results. The many principalities which compose the Zollverein confederation enjoy all the advantages of a commercial union with none of the disadvantages attached to Federation on the American principal. Since the political state of the two Canadas renders a real Union impossible and Federation is distasteful to the Lower Provinces, we can see no reason why, though the proposed scheme must be rejected, the few parts of it which are practicable cannot be reserved for future use. We could surely effect such a mild scheme without the necessity of becoming a plaister for the political sores of Canada. It would in fact be a step, and a safe one, towards a more complete Union hereafter. Let our delegates try back next summer. Even those most opposed to the present scheme would gladly spare our politicians for another Autumn, if the province desire free trade, and if by such means it could be secured.

## ROCKHEAD PRISON.

The important subject of prison discipline has of late years attracted considerable attention throughout Europe and America. Ten or fifteen years ago, a cry went forth that prisoners were treated a shade worse than dogs, and public opinion carried the day in favor of those who had incurred the penalty attached to public wrong doing. For a time prisoners were pampered over-much, and imprisonment was robbed of half its terrors. Then came the customary reaction. Prisoners had been made too comfortable, and public opinion, recanting some of its previous dogmas, decreed that prison life was never intended to be an easy life. The convicts in the Melbourne hulks suffered from plethora,—the result of over-feeding and light work,—while British soldiers were rotting away before Sebastopol for want of proper nutriment! This fact was made the most of by patriotic philanthropists, and prison discipline underwent yet another change. Prisoners were no longer pampered, neither were they driven mad by the enforcement of cruel laws. There had been an error in their former treatment on the side of harshness; there had been an error in their later treatment on the side of leniency; and the present treatment of prisoners is the result of a compromise between two extreme fluctuations of public opinion. Prisoners are no longer of necessity hardened by incarceration, neither do they, while imprisoned, lead an easy life. They are now subject to the manifold annoyances consequent upon loss of freedom and enforced physical labor, but they are not subjected to the debasing influences formerly inseparable from prison life. Should they wish to reform their lives, their desires are strengthened and fostered by advice and tuition: should they remain obdurate in their vicious propensities, care is taken lest they should (by conversation or otherwise) contaminate others already, it may be, partially reclaimed. The wisdom of such an arrangement few will undertake to deny. Let us see how far this arrangement is carried out at Rockhead.

It is not long since we called public attention to the condition of the Pauper Asylum, as a disgrace to our community. The condition of Rockhead Prison is almost equally disgraceful; and, at the risk of being thought tedious, we would again implore our local authorities to give up some of their time to local institutions, before they launch forth into speculations regarding the splendid future of British North America. Our future, as a comparatively insignificant portion of some fabulous empire, is a grand subject; but ought we, in order to cherish a day dream, neglect our immediate concerns for the time being? Speculation, as to what Halifax may be hereafter, is an excellent thing in its way, but surely it is not beneath us to notice Halifax as it is at present. It is one thing to talk of Halifax as "the wharf of British America,"—it is another thing to note Halifax with regard to its present shortcomings. "Charity begins at home," is a trite saying, but its moral is sound, and worthy our consideration. If we wish to be part and parcel of a great nation, let us seek to develop the elements of greatness within ourselves. If our public institutions, under our existing form of government, are a disgrace to us, let us try, by remodelling such institutions, to prove ourselves worthy of alliance with colonists more painstaking. We must, as a people, be judged by our public institutions rather than by our private worth; and if we cannot properly manage a prison or a work-house, our voice will be worth but little at the Ottawa Council Board. We have already shewn our utter inability to deal with Paupers,—we shall now endeavor to show our utter inability to deal with Prisoners. This is strong language, but we must take our public institutions as we find them, and for the time being dismiss from our minds our greatness, present or prospective.

The grand evil in connection with Rockhead Prison, lies in the fact, that the employment of the prisoners is intended to defray as much as possible the expenses of the prison itself. It is customary in Europe and America to pay prisoners a trifling sum