

eral-Conservative leaders, and their followers have been convinced in their own minds that whatever was advocated by Reformers was necessarily pessimistic exaggeration. The result has been a state of political lethargy by no means favourable to the best interests of the country. Crimination and recrimination have raised so dense a mist that behind it politicians of the scheming sort have been able to advance those interests that have not been promotive of the public good.

Now, however, a question has emerged that has touched the people of Ontario to a degree unparalleled for many years. Some still cherish the idea that after all, the present opposition to Jesuit aggression is only another move on the political chess-board, and that it can be manipulated and controlled by the usual machinery, as all other questions of public interest have hitherto been. It is beginning to dawn on the mind of the professional politician that in this instance he may have miscalculated. A stubborn familiarity has been evoked that will not down at the bidding of the partizan expert. Party politics have lost their conjuring power in this instance.

If proof has been wanting hitherto that the feeling of indignant remonstrance against pandering to Romish influence is not shallow and evanescent, the demonstrations of the last few days supply all that is needed to convince the incredulous that the struggle has at last begun in earnest. The recent magnificent demonstration in Toronto showed that the heart of Ontario was stirred. If lingering doubts remained that the Protestants in the Province of Quebec were apathetic to the dangers by which they were menaced, these doubts are now removed. It could with apparent reason be said that they were apparently indifferent: it cannot be said now. The great meeting last week in the Queen's Hall, Montreal, was a surprise to friends and foes alike. The enthusiasm was such that it swept all before it. The speaking was direct, earnest and powerful. It would be an entire mistake to conclude that the Montreal meeting was in any sense a partizan demonstration. Speakers and hearers alike forgot for the moment all party distinctions, and the gravity of the situation was looked straightly in the face. The Protestants of Quebec have been blamed for their apathy, an accusation that can no longer with fairness be brought against them. They have at once and enthusiastically responded to the feeling aroused in Ontario. The people of this Province have not only taken part in this movement for the purpose of self-defence, but also out of sympathy for their menaced brethren in the Province of Quebec. The obligation to continue this agitation has been deepened by the quick and powerful response as expressed at the great meeting in Montreal.

The danger threatening free institutions in this Dominion, especially at the present time in Quebec, is by no means imaginary. The purpose of the Ultramontane section of the Roman Catholic Church, directed by Jesuit astuteness and audacity, is no longer pursued by concealed and tortuous methods. It is clear, outspoken and unmistakable. The one design cherished by Rome—and its attainment is sought throughout the world—is the absolute supremacy in things sacred and civil of Roman rule. Bull, Syllabus and Encyclical alike have that bold frankness which scorns concealment in declaring that modern liberalism must be crushed. Free institutions are to be subordinated to the rule of the Vatican. For years past that has been openly proclaimed by Quebec ecclesiastics. That purpose has been kept steadily in view, and their every movement has been directed to the advancement of this end. Already the free exercise of the franchise is denied to the citizens of Quebec. They must cast their votes as the bishop counsels, and as the priest at the altar and at the confessional directs, not always unaccompanied with menaces that to an obedient and simple-minded Roman Catholic are of terrible import. Spiritual pains and penalties are denounced against those who will not submissively mark their ballots as a domineering ecclesiastic may choose to direct.

Some time ago the Quebec priesthood avowed their intention to exercise complete control over all the educational interests of that Province, and one encroachment after another has left Protestants but a limited power in directing the affairs of their own institutions. Recent attempts to impose disabilities and indirectly attempt to prescribe the studies pursued in Protestant institutions tell only too plainly that an insolent majority have the will, as they apparently may soon have the power, to crush the rights of the minority.

The incorporation of the Jesuit Order two years ago was a startling piece of audacity that, singularly enough, aroused little or no opposition at the time. It is true indeed that Cardinal Taschereau remonstrated, but his remonstrance was unheeded.

As a sequel of the Jesuit incorporation the endowment of that obnoxious body followed in natural order. And now the act conferring the \$400,000 grant is made positively offensive by its recognition of Papal authority in the administration of the civil affairs of this Dominion. In the face of these indisputable facts is it any wonder that those who value civil and religious liberty, whether they be Protestants or Roman Catholics, have been aroused, and are now convinced that the time has come when all such outrageous aggressions must be strenuously resisted? It is now abundantly apparent that this movement is too deep and too earnest to be regarded merely as a political manoeuvre. Politicians who endeavour to make it a means of party warfare for party ends incur serious responsibilities. If this movement is to vindicate the inalienable rights of a free and progressive people it must be carried on untrammelled by political bias. The people are in earnest, and their political leaders will require to rise to the lofty spirit and purpose that the solution of the question demands.

#### THE PRESIDENTIAL CENTENNIAL.

EVER since 1876 our neighbours have been celebrating centennials. The habit of getting up a demonstration of some kind over events of varying degrees of magnitude and turning on the oratorical tap has apparently become chronic with United States citizens. When is this centennial business going to end? While the boom has dragged its length along it must be admitted that the event being so enthusiastically celebrated this week is eminently worthy of commemoration. It is not only one that appeals directly to the pride and patriotism of all citizens of the United States but it may justly be regarded as of universal interest. The hundredth anniversary of George Washington's inauguration as President of the United States recalls general attention to a man who played a most important part in the development of modern history. It was the beginning of a great experiment in the science of modern government which has been so successfully wrought out that it fitly claims universal recognition, which it will ungrudgingly receive. All progressive nationalities in the closing decade of the nineteenth century will regard the Washington Centennial celebration with sympathetic interest.

Washington's inauguration as first President of the United States was the last touch in laying the foundation stone of the great American Republic. It was a grand experiment which many looked on hopefully, and some regarded with misgivings. It is even possible that the most sanguine would have their desponding moments. Hitherto the history of republics had been a chequered one. Greek democratic rule, to a large extent nominally so, had gone down before the military ambition of Rome, and the Republic of the Romans had been effectively crushed by imperialism. The Venetian rule of the Doges evolved the cruellest and most relentless despotism before its overthrow. The Swiss federation has fared better but its sphere is so limited that its influence does not reach far. France discarded the oppressive and corrupt rule of the Bourbons for a republican government which awakened hope to end only in bitter disappointment. The seething mass of revolution threw on the surface a set of men morally and mentally unfit to shape the destinies of a nation in a new era. They proceeded to stain the pages of history with their indelible crimes, and their saturnal ferocity paved the way for the military despotism of a most unscrupulous imperialism. The process was repeated on a milder scale in the fortunes of the second French republic. And now the third republic seems as if passing through a nightmare dream, and what may follow the awakening no mortal can foretell.

The American nation had no historical pattern it could copy. The history of republics was one of warning chiefly. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the experiment, regarded by a variety of feelings by other nationalities, was looked upon as a hazardous one. It had many conditions in its favour. It started with what at the time was an almost illimitable territory. The people who formed the nucleus of the new nationality were a stalwart race. The New England Puritans, much as some have attempted to deride them, for like all other peoples, they had their weakness, and did not altogether escape the lingering traditions of their own times, were well fitted by experience and character to become the founders of one of the mightiest modern nationalities. Those who for many years afterwards made choice of the United States for their home were thrifty and enterprising. They also very materially contributed to the development of the resources and character of the republic. Only in

comparatively recent years has there been an appreciable influx of that heterogeneous mass of the dissatisfied elements of every country in Europe, a class that may prove a more or less disturbing force for many years to come. The people governed themselves, and the government was carried on with a commendable degree of economy. The stability of United States institutions was not at any time very seriously menaced until slavery and its upholders had assumed undue proportions. The discord it occasioned culminated in the civil war that tested the nation, and eventually demonstrated the stuff it was made of. In that crisis of its history, the fate of the republic for a time hung in the balance. Only a comparatively few publicists were of opinion that the American nation would emerge unscathed and stronger for the fiery trial it had passed through. Lagubrious prophecies of its dismemberment were numerous. The prophecies failed but the nation stood. Whatever may be the character of future dangers to be encountered, negro slavery will not be one of them. Abraham Lincoln's emancipation proclamation, and the victory of the Union arms settled the question of American slavery for all time.

The dangers that loom up before the republic are just the social and economic questions that press for solution in older and differently governed lands. The evils incident to democratic rule are developing with ominous rapidity. The overweening influence of professional politicians, the corruption and bribery resorted to in the presidential election recurring every four years cannot be viewed with complacency by citizens who sincerely love their country. There is sufficient health and vitality in the body politic to throw off the virus of festering corruption, but the longer it is delayed the more enfeebled does the nation become, and the greater will be the effort needed to secure the upright management of public affairs. Other nations cannot well assume a pharisaic attitude in this respect. It would be difficult to find a nationality whose skirts are clean, but then it is not everywhere that the corrupt use of wealth has assumed the proportions it has in the political life of the United States. It matters not under what form of government bribery and corruption are practised. They are destructive and demoralizing evils wherever they exist and no nation having a regard to its future can afford to treat such evils with indifference.

The press of the United States has apparently put forth a supreme effort to make the Washington inauguration centennial celebration a success. The literary magazines have lavish pictorial and letterpress displays. The weekly papers of all kinds have not allowed the occasion to pass without improving it to the utmost, even the professedly comic journals have indulged in gorgeous lithographic displays and the daily papers have focussed their enterprise on the Washington centennial. If a tithe of the material specially provided for the occasion is in a tolerable state of preservation a hundred or even several hundred years hence the people of that future time will have far better opportunities of knowing about the Father of his Country than most of his contemporaries possessed. The Washington issue of the New York *Independent* is a most interesting number. The half of it is filled with contributions by the most diverse and some of the most distinguished writers of the time. Not the least remarkable of these is a *fac-simile* of a letter in English by Louis Kossuth, the veteran hero of the Hungarian nation, who gives his reasons for declining the task of writing a more elaborate estimate of the American patriot he so much admires. Another note of declinature is from the pen of Mr. Gladstone who thus refers to Washington: "All I can say is that I look upon Washington, among great and good men, as one peculiarly good and great; and that he has been to me for more than forty years a light upon the path of life." Among others, including statesmen, politicians, poets and princes it may be mentioned that Palgrave and Whittier pay their tribute, Drs. John Hall, William M. Taylor, Howard Crosby, and Theodore Cuyler speak for the Presbyterians. Professor Goldwin Smith writes with his accustomed historical erudition and faultless literary finish and Justin McCarthy, at one time on the staff of the *Independent*, contributes what might fittingly form a chapter in the "History of Our Time." Centennial celebrations have been seasons rich in hero worship, and Washington has the lead just as he had in his life-time.

THE HEBREW CHRISTIAN. (New York: Rev Jacob Freshman.) An edition of this serviceable weekly has been specially prepared for distribution at the Paris Exposition. In addition to its English contents there are special contributions in French and German.