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CONTENTS OF CURRENT NUMBER.

	PAGE
THE UNIFICATION OF CANADA.....	W. H. Cross. 655
THE RECENT UNIVERSITY AND DEPARTMENTAL EXAMINATIONS.....	T. Arnold Haultain. 656
OUR WORKING WOMEN AND THEIR EARNINGS.....	657
BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON.....	658
M. CHAUVEAU'S LIFE OF OZANAM.....	658
A FRENCH SAVANT ON DANCING.....	659
THE CAPTURE OF THE "ROSA" OF SEVILLE, A.D. 1593 (Poem).....	William McLennan. 659
TOPICS—	
Land Speculation and the Troubles in Manitoba.....	660
Commercial Union and the Sovereign Power.....	660
The New Fisheries Commission.....	660
State of the American Fisheries.....	660
Mr. Chamberlain.....	660
The Commission and the Maritime Provinces.....	660
A Permanent Arbitration Treaty.....	661
The National League and Crims.....	661
The Ennis Meeting.....	661
Mr. Gladstone and Home Rule.....	661
Germany and Russia.....	661
The French Mobilisation Experiment.....	661
"Frogology".....	661
Early Wheat.....	661
Early Britons.....	661
The Great Wall of China.....	661
BOOKS—RECENT MISCELLANY..... 662	
SAUNTERINGS.....	E. S. 663
CURRENT COMMENT.....	664
LITERARY GOSSIP.....	664
OUR LIBRARY TABLE.....	664

THE UNIFICATION OF CANADA.

In the model Republic of Plato every human creature was to settle into the place for which he was fitted. Its rulers were to be specially trained from early youth for that responsibility, and only after attaining their fiftieth year, and then only upon the condition of being found worthy, were they to begin their active political career. Plato, in admitting that no such government existed in his day, cherishes the hope that "its pattern is laid up in heaven for him who is willing to see it, and, seeing it, rules his life on earth accordingly." We live under a form of government in theory much superior to that which the great Pagan philosopher deemed perfect. It has been slowly evolved out of the experience of ages, tempered by the influences of a divine religion which was to the Greeks foolishness. We revere it as one of the best heritages bequeathed to us by our forefathers, and we are under a moral obligation to leave it to our children a little better than we received it. The one condition needed for the perfection of Representative Government is that the political units shall have suitable weight—in other words, that all men shall be equal in intelligence and patriotism. Nothing approaching to this condition has yet arisen anywhere; but since education became a recognised duty of the State, we have been moving in the right direction. In England, where this method of government struggled into existence, the great mass of the people, of various origins, became fused together by national adversity and prosperity, and they acquired sentiments and memories in common. The union with Scotland was one of a kindred people, and it proved a happy event for both countries. The addition to Great Britain of a country like Ireland, having a different history, and whose people were animated by different sentiments, produced less satisfactory results.

Turning to Canada we find that the Provincial Governments work better than that of the Dominion. The reason of this is on the surface; so long as the people of one province are separated from their fellow citizens by a different language; so long as they are trained differently, have different institutions, and a different kind of law, so long will political equality and solidarity be impossible. If it be conceded that the more homogeneous the population the better will it be adapted to representative institutions, it follows that the policy of breaking down all barriers that separate becomes a patriotic duty equally incumbent upon all classes in every State where such institutions have been adopted. So far as Canada is concerned the wrong step was taken as long ago as 1774, when the Quebec Act was passed. This measure was the result of an unwise generosity on the part of the British Government, and the greatest statesmen of the time opposed it. Lord Chatham rose from his sick bed to denounce it in the Upper House, and in the Commons Burke and Fox protested against it in vain. The British North America Act of 1867 only sanctioned what was then done, but so long as sections 93, 94, and 133 of the latter Act remain unamended the legislatures of Canada can do little more than prepare the way for changes that are imperatively needed.

The Toronto *Mail* has ably drawn attention to our present situation. It has adopted a praiseworthy moderation of language in referring to the means by which Government saves itself from utter paralysis. We feel it the more necessary to acknowledge the indebtedness of the Canadian public to that journal, because we believe that it obscures the real issue by placing "clericalism" in an improper relation therewith. It is something akin to the mistake of abusing the attorney for the doings of his client. As already stated, the difficulty lies in the ignorance of the *habitant*, and in the fact that he has no opportunity of becoming in touch with his fellow citizens while his language and institutions remain what they are. The great body of the clergy differ from their flock only in the fact that they are thoroughly trained for a special purpose. Their education, such as it is, elevates them into the position of guides, not only in matters of religion, for which their training well qualifies them, but also in social and political affairs, in which subjects the clergy have had no more special training than the people. Still it would be a misfortune were this influence less than it is. It has kept industry, frugality, sobriety, and chastity among the virtues of the *habitant*, and in so doing has rendered him as well as the State a great service. Further, clerical influence has probably prevented unscrupulous and irresponsible demagogues from obtaining a dangerous instrument. It may be frankly admitted that clericalism in Canada is what it has ever been elsewhere. The appeal to history would show that in the Church of Rome, as in lesser churches, there are parties, and that the extreme high Papal party has been the worst enemy of the Church. Count Cavour, who was not unfriendly to the Church, as a religious body, exposed the folly of this party in a speech delivered on February 17, 1855. He said:

"In truth, gentlemen, if you review the history of Europe during these last years, you will perceive that in every part of it that party has adopted an aggressive and contentious policy, which I conceive to be absolutely at variance with the true spirit of religion. Observe in England the Catholics: after they had obtained, through the Emancipation Act, a full equality of civil rights, you will see their heads, instead of seeking to conciliate public opinion and to live on good terms, at least with the liberal part of the community which had always favoured them, put forward exorbitant pretensions, rouse public opinion anew against themselves, and put in jeopardy the very laws that they had spent so long a time in winning. The same thing happened in Holland, where the excesses of the ultra-Catholic party brought about the downfall of a liberal ministry that had always shown itself most favourable to them, and led the ultra-Protestants back into power. The like happened, too, in almost all the States of Germany. Most signally did it happen in the neighbouring State of France, where you have seen the ultra-Catholic party push reactionary ideas to the most extravagant height. . . . We have seen, strange as it may be, certain ultra-Catholic writers at war alike with Bossuet and Voltaire, and condemning the four Gallican Articles no less than the *Encyclopédie*."

The Church has profited by the counsel of its friends, and the able statesmen at the Vatican are at present pursuing a wise course. Canada can look with confidence to Rome for aid when it is made clear that in removing from the *habitant* the shackles of ignorance the interests of the Church and of the State are equally served. It is well known that the head of the Church in Canada is not of the ultramontane party, and it is unfair to speak of the Church as sanctioning the excesses of that party. The fact is that secular education was undertaken by the clergy in Quebec when there was no one else to do the work. Too little acknowledgment is made of the extent to which the result has been satisfactory, but it is perfectly evident that in preparing their pupils for their political duties they have entirely failed. Wax candles gave a good light until gas came into use, but those who are quite satisfied with the latter have to adjust themselves to the introduction of the electric light.

The difficulty in Ireland has presented some points of similarity and contrast to our own. The degree of the civilisation of the people of the three southern provinces of that country was such that they were entirely dependent upon the clergy. Language in this case also was a bar to progress. Whereas in the Province of Quebec at the last census eighty-six per cent. of the population were Roman Catholics (a percentage somewhat larger than that of the French-speaking people), in the Province of Connaught, at the first census of Ireland in 1820, out of a total population only three per cent. less than that of Quebec at the last census, eighty-eight per cent. spoke the Irish language. Time has wrought marvellous