

## THE FUTURE OF QUEBEC.

**I**F we could give a correct answer to this question we should answer a larger one, What is the future of the Dominion of Canada? We believe that by mutual co-operation and mutual concessions on the part of Quebec and the English Provinces, there is a possibility, a strong probability that we shall have a great sturdy northern Republic or Kingdom in North America. Many Canadians fondly hope that this may yet be realized, that there will be on the north of this Continent a united people with strong attachments to the great parent powers England and France, and to our kinsmen on the South, solving the great problems of popular government, social life and religious freedom. That this may become a fact and not a mere dream and theory, it is absolutely necessary that the people forming the component parts of the Dominion should understand and feel that all parts must be blended together in a common national feeling. To unite the people in this national feeling is the great and difficult task before the Canadian statesmen. This work could be easily accomplished were it not that Quebec refuses to assimilate. Quebec is the weak link in the lengthy chain of British Colonies in North America. How to strengthen this link, how to bring it in line with the other Provinces, or how to put the other Provinces in line with it is yet an unsolved problem. Attempts have been made, but hitherto, all efforts have been lamentable failures. The end in view seems further away than at any previous time. The Confederation of the Provinces in 1867 was one of the greatest of these attempts. This Confederation was entered into by many with no small assurance and with great hope. Twenty years have passed over us since then. To-day Quebec is more alien to the rest of the Dominion than it was twenty years ago. It is less in sympathy with the other Provinces and probably in less love with Britain than it was in 1867. The Provinces are not yet blended. They are restive, jealous and impatient of one another. These are not promising qualities in a people who are looking for national greatness. The control given by the British North America Act to the various Provinces over their own local affairs has brought into prominence what is distinctive in the different inhabitants. Their provincial peculiarities are being crystallized. At present the autonomy of the Provinces is earnestly advocated. This autonomy means less

[343]