

the earnest student had mutually antidotal draughts set before him within the walls of the same intellectual refectory. In being compelled to make his choice between conflicting theories, or to compound for himself a new admixture, his mind will undergo one of the most healthful of educational processes.

THE paper or pamphlet containing a report of the interview with a representative of the *Chicago Tribune*, to which Mr. Erastus Wiman asks our attention, has not come to hand at the date of this writing. The other pamphlets kindly sent are before us. That entitled "The Greater Half of the Continent" received, if we mistake not, notice in these columns at the time of its original publication in the *North American Review*. It would be ungrateful in any Canadian periodical to refuse to recognize and appreciate the very able and elaborate presentation made by Mr. Wiman in that article of the extent, resources and possibilities of the Dominion of Canada. We should, indeed, like to prescribe a re-reading of it, at stated intervals, as an excellent antidote to the pessimistic tendencies of Canadians of a certain class whom one occasionally meets. Those who have no faith in the capacity of our own people to carve out a future for themselves, who seem to fancy that Canada can continue to exist only by perpetually shrinking from the responsibilities of nationality beneath the aegis of the Mother Country, on the one hand, or by taking refuge under the sheltering wings of the Great American Eagle, on the other, need some such reminder of the boundless capacities and possibilities of their own land and people. Why should five millions of Canadians, the equals in physique, in intellect, in morality and in capacity for self-government, disinterested and competent observers being judges, of any people under the sun, being, moreover, the rich possessors of the greater half of this grand continent, hesitate to prepare for the duties, to face the dangers, and to aspire to the rewards of a separate and self-directing career?

THE second pamphlet before us does not attempt to find one clear answer to the question it proposes, "What is the Destiny of Canada?" It commences with the statement which is very probably correct, that "eight men of every ten in the United States, who have thought upon the subject, have reached the conclusion that Canada ought to belong to that country." This statement needs, however, to be explained and offset by another equally true, to the effect that eight men out of every ten in the United States are profoundly ignorant of the extent and resources of Canada, and of the character and spirit of the great majority of its people. Mr. Wiman, indeed, hints as much when he refers to the "general belief that the United States comprises nearly all that is worth having on the continent." The value of the opinion is in pretty exact proportion to the truthfulness of the belief. When Mr. Wiman adds that "while the opinion that Canada should belong to the United States is general, no one proposes to achieve it (its possession) by other than peaceable means," he is, we doubt not, equally correct so far as the great majority of the respectable citizens of the Union are concerned. This assurance should be all that is needed to enable thoughtful Canadians to listen with calmness to what Mr. Wiman and others have to urge in favour of the policy they so strenuously advocate. It would of course be absurd to attempt to discuss a question so large as that policy in a paragraph. To that considerable part of Mr. Wiman's article which is devoted to a consideration of the various obstacles in the way of political union with the United States we should be disposed to give little attention. To our thinking the one all-sufficient and insuperable obstacle is that the people of Canada do not wish for political union. The opinion which Mr. Wiman ascribes to some observers, that if a secret ballot were taken in Canada a vast number of the voters would be found to favour it, is we are persuaded, very wide of the mark. The very fact, that the cry that the proposed Commercial Union is adapted and intended to pave the way for political union has proved a crushing argument against the movement with which Mr. Wiman's name is identified, is in itself the best refutation of such an opinion. It simply proves that Canadians prefer their own laws, institutions and modes of life and government. A free people need give no other reason for retaining them. For our own part we are not of the many who would fear Commercial Union because of its supposed tendency to annexation. On the contrary we quite agree with those who, knowing that whatever annexation sentiment exists in the country springs almost exclusively from a belief in the commercial

advantages such union would bring, hold that unrestricted intercourse would be the most effective means of eradicating all such sentiment. At the same time we cannot shut our eyes to the force of the arguments drawn from the mercenary selfishness and disregard of the obligations of loyalty and gratitude to the Mother Country which would be involved in such an arrangement. Moreover to shut in this continent by a high tariff wall against the outside world would be as contrary to all sound laws of political economy as to those loftier principles of national and international ethics which were supposed to have found their home in the New World. We should, too, fail in frankness did we not remind Mr. Wiman that the fact of his having, in his discussions of the question before citizens of the United States, claimed or admitted, if correctly reported, that he regarded Commercial Union as paving the way for political union at a future day, has both discredited the movement and disqualified him, in the eyes of loyal Canadians, from being accepted as a representative of Canadian thought and feeling in his advocacy of it.

THE assembly of the Maritime Conference now in session at Washington is in several respects a somewhat remarkable event. The large number of nations represented is in itself a fact of great and hopeful significance. Never before, it may, we think, be safely said, in the history of the world, have so many delegates, representing so many different types of civilization and government, assembled in one place to discuss a matter of common and universal interest. This in itself indicates a tendency towards mutual confidence and good-will, which from its very nature is pretty sure to grow, and which may, in the near or remote future, develop into a practice which will prove of the greatest service in promoting the general peace and prosperity. That the nation taking the initiative should be the United States, and the place of meeting Washington, are also features of the occasion which are not without deep significance. They show clearly the position which the mighty Republic is rapidly acquiring amongst the great nations of the earth. Thanks to a fiscal policy which is in this respect thoroughly but mistakingly selfish, the United States falls far short of being the great maritime power which Nature seems to have intended her to be. It is her greatness by land rather than by sea which has put it in her power to become the centre of so influential a gathering. The main object of the Conference was very happily indicated by Secretary Blaine in his opening address: "The spoken languages of the world will continue to be many, but necessity commands that the unspoken language of the sea shall be one." To this point, viz., the meaning and use of marine signals, the attention of the delegates is being first of all directed. It is obviously a question not simply of national but of world-wide importance. The safety of any ocean-going craft and the lives of its crew and passengers are liable to be at any moment endangered by the want of a complete code of signals and a clear understanding of them. It is not unlikely that many a horrible collision has been brought about, either by a deficiency in the code, or by the want of a sufficiently accurate and ready knowledge of it, on the part of the man at the helm or even of the officer in charge. On this and related points it may be hoped and expected that the Conference will reach an agreement and formulate a simple and satisfactory system of signals, which will speedily be adopted as the unspoken, universal language of the maritime world.

IF reliance can be placed upon the reported interview had by a representative of the *New York Herald* with Sir Julian Pauncefote, there is some reason to hope that negotiations may shortly be resumed between the American Secretary of State and the British minister, looking to the settlement of all matters in dispute between the two nations. Sir Julian is represented as expressing his belief that the Government of the United States is "disposed to discuss and settle in an amicable and honourable way" all questions now pending between the two nations. He can "conceive of no reason why the discussion of the matters at issue should not proceed with the utmost friendliness and cordiality from the very beginning," and it is his earnest hope that he "may succeed in paving the way to an adjustment of these questions on a basis acceptable to the three parties concerned." When the minister comes down to particulars, however, it must be confessed that he gives us but vague and unsatisfactory reasons for his belief and hope. He denies that Mr. Blaine has intimated any desire for a discussion, formal or informal, of the questions referred to, or that he has any knowledge of the Secretary's wishes in the matter. The net inference

that can fairly be drawn from Sir Julian Pauncefote's remarks as reported is that he is personally desirous of reaching a satisfactory understanding with the United States Government on the matters in question, and that he has the requisite authority from the British Government to enable him to open negotiations. All this no one doubts. The misfortune is that the consent of two parties is necessary to any agreement, and that no sufficient evidence has yet been given that Mr. Blaine, or the Administration of which he is a member, has made any overtures in the desired direction. We shall be delighted to have our doubts dispelled by facts, but we confess that we have little faith in the existence of any real desire on the part of Mr. Blaine to come to any agreement that could be accepted as fair to Canada. Our scepticism is based partly upon the Secretary's character and record, partly upon the fact that the matter is a difficult and dangerous one for an Administration to handle. The U. S. Government has little to lose by delay. In view of the concessions that have already been made, both on the Atlantic Coast and in Behring's Sea, it is clear that the lapse of time but makes the case of the United States stronger and that of Great Britain and Canada weaker. In the case of Behring Sea in particular, possession virtually undisputed for an indefinite period cannot fail to create a presumption in favour of the claim thus apparently conceded. What Sir Julian Pauncefote is able to do should be done with the least possible delay. As, moreover, the questions are all distinctly Canadian, it is obvious that no discussion in which Canada is not directly represented is in the least likely to reach satisfactory results.

THE knowledge of most of us, it is to be feared, concerning the States of Central and South America consists largely in recollections of the geographical pursuits of our school days. While invention and enterprise are ever bringing Europe and America nearer together, news from the south travels slowly, and, except to the few, the lower half of our hemisphere remains an unknown land. The Pan-American Congress convened by Mr. Blaine, if it tends to increase popular knowledge of the Latin nations to whom has fallen so large a share of the natural wealth of the New World, will serve a most useful purpose. Although Canada's unfortunate colonial status has prevented her representation in the Congress, the delegates to that assembly will not depart without having learned something about the largest of the political divisions of this hemisphere. The somewhat audacious strategy displayed by Mr. Erastus Wiman in intercepting the delegates on their railway trip through the States, inviting them across the border, and banqueting them on Canadian soil, will no doubt be productive of good results. If Mr. Wiman has succeeded only in impressing his guests with an idea of the importance of Canada, and of the incompleteness of any continental legislation to which she should not be a party, he deserves the thanks of his countrymen. Should his remarks, and those of the other gentlemen who spoke for Canada at the luncheon, pave the way for closer commercial and political relations between the Dominion and the countries represented in the Congress, the result will be still more satisfactory. It is matter for regret, however, that Mr. Wiman should have thought himself excused or justified by the exigencies of travel in proffering his hospitality on a Sunday. Had the event taken place on any other day, not only would its moral effect have been far greater, but many of the prominent Canadians invited by the host would, no doubt, have gladly attended. It is no disparagement to the disinterested efforts and able speeches of Mr. Wiman and Mr. Goldwin Smith to say that neither can fairly be accepted as a representative Canadian. Both the New York capitalist and the brilliant English writer are, to a certain extent, disqualified for fully entering into Canadian sentiments and aspirations, and consequently for interpreting them to foreign inquirers. None the less, these gentlemen are to be congratulated on the public spirit displayed by them on this occasion. The example they have set in seizing so good an opportunity to make known the position and resources of the Dominion deserves to be copied—except in the disregard of the Canadian Sunday—by our politicians and public men.

THERE are, of course, degrees in the vagueness which we have spoken of as characterizing the knowledge possessed by North Americans of the other portions of the hemisphere. The Empire of Brazil, for instance, is more familiar ground than is Ecuador or Paraguay. The news of the abolition of slavery in that great country drew forth last year the plaudits of liberty-loving people everywhere.