

Canada, could live long side by side without discussing the advantages of union. But it is a question affecting so many different interests, and likely to be so far-reaching in its consequences, that much time will probably elapse before it emerges from the academic to the political stage. It may perhaps be out of place for a civil servant to express opinions on the matter; but it seems ridiculous to accuse the ordinary citizen of disloyalty for discussing its pros and cons. Such a question cannot be settled by repression, any more than it can be settled by abuse. It is not the mood of the century to decide any question in this way; and those who propose to themselves to defend a side must be prepared with argument rather than epithets. That the objections of Canadians to Annexation are not solely those of unreasoning prejudice, it is the object of this paper to show.

What the travelling reporters may tell their chiefs, it is difficult to forecast. In investigations of this sort the personal coefficient is likely to play an important part; and in no region of investigation are accurate results less to be looked for than in attempting to gauge the feeling of a large body of people. Thus in the French Revolution it seems clear that if the sentiment of the people had been foreseen, the dominant classes would have gone to any length of reform to prevent their overthrow; but, apparently, they had not the slightest idea of the popular state of mind. Again, all through English history we see a variety of enterprises, some failing, others successful, and all undertaken in the hope of popular favor. Can we suppose that Charles II in the year preceding the Restoration was any more confident of success than various other Stuarts, who at other times entirely miscalculated popular sympathy in their attempts to regain the throne? Even the present day affords samples. No American has yet forgotten the various estimates made of the strength of Tariff Reform sentiment before the last election, and how far from the truth even the most sanguine expectations of its friends proved to be. And so those who wish to find Annexation sentiment in Canada may find it; but whether it actually exists or not, and what may be its strength, no one can tell till the people are forced, by vote or otherwise, to declare their real opinion in the matter. What we can do, with some possible profit, is to canvass the causes and tendencies that act on sentiment, and estimate how far they will weigh in influencing the decision of a country.

One of the principal arguments now used in Canada against Annexation is that based on the idea of loyalty. It is asserted that Annexation, nay, even discussing Annexation, is an act of treason towards the sovereign power. But whatever strength this cry may have at present, it seems probable that it will be on other grounds that the real issue will be fought. Of course it would be a very different thing if England resisted Canada's wishes in the matter, but English statesmen have repeatedly asserted that England would offer no resistance should Canada desire to be independent or change her allegiance. Treason we take it, now-a-days, is an offence against the common weal; and if neither country suffers loss by the separation, it is difficult to see

that an offence has been committed. It is true that by joining the States, we should become liable to act against Great Britain in time of war; but in the present state of things we are under no obligation to fight England's battles, should we be called upon to do so. We are prepared to keep any contract to which we have engaged ourselves; but we surely could not be accused of breaking faith, when we are voluntarily released from obligation.

The truth is, that ideas of loyalty are undergoing a change. It is not that the duty of keeping an undertaking is held any less sacred, or that the love of one's native country will ever grow less; but that old idea of loyalty, which consisted in keeping open old sores, and glorying over a defeated enemy, is getting to be recognised as one of the many heritages of barbarism. The very origin of nations is seen not to be a God-ordained and sacred institution, but rather the transient accident of a less civilized age. Uncertain as is the early history of man and of language, this much seems clear, that the great diversities which characterize nations are chiefly due to migrations and lack of communication in early times. It is impossible that such a thing could happen now. Let us suppose, for instance, that England existed as she now is, and all the rest of the world were uninhabited. A migration at once begins and in a few hundred years the earth is comparatively well populated. Wherever the new settlers go, they take with them their language and their books; their newspapers and telegraph systems; they establish steamship communication with each other, and with home. Is it conceivable that in five hundred, in a thousand years, the traces of their common origin would be so obliterated that each country would have its own language and customs; that intercourse could only be carried on through interpreters, or some Volapukian makeshift? America gives an emphatic negative. Two hundred and fifty years have passed, the greater part of them without the telegraph, and with imperfect communication by sailing ships, and yet to-day for all purposes of intercourse Englishmen and Americans are practically one people. A treaty or legislative enactment would make them one in a few hours, in a sense in which it would take centuries to unite France and Germany—yet England and the States, and Canada less emphatically, call themselves separate nations, and treat each other as foreign countries. Probably they are right in doing so; probably, because no sovereignty which has yet been framed to unite in one countries separated by the sea, has proved sufficiently permanent to demonstrate how large an empire may be and hold together. The war of Independence was due to the fact that American needs could not be appreciated or satisfied in London. The feeling in Canada against Annexation may be the offspring of a like suspicion of Washington. To put it in other words, there is no inevitable reason why the English-speaking peoples should not act together as one nation; but instinct may warn them that they will get on better as they are.

What must be insisted on, however, is that nationality has lost all sense of a common birth. The word is quite differ-

ent with us from its use to distinguish Jews and Greeks, or at the present day in Europe, Russians and Celts. As we just said, American and Englishmen are sufficiently alike to live together under one flag. An affection for turned-up trousers on the one hand, or for promiscuous spitting on the other, would hardly keep them apart, were there not other interests to consider. The questions which have really separated Britain from the States have been mainly questions of business. The original separation arose over taxation; more recently we have the sealing and fisheries questions, and there is a marked source of annoyance in tariff matters. Whatever feeling has existed between the countries has resembled rather the jealousy of great trading companies, than a genuine variety of inter-racial hate. And even this grows weaker as business interests become more and more interwoven together.

In spite of this, Canada is sedulously cultivating a national spirit. Such a spirit is in reality but a larger form of esprit du corps. It may be cultivated on behalf of a church, or a college, or a joint stock company. It is an outward manifestation of friendliness and good-fellowship; it depends a little for its warmth on the existence of outsiders; just as the interior of the earth is supposed to be peculiarly hot on account of external pressure. It is unreasoning but very natural. To select certain traits, by which a Canadian could infallibly be recognised would indeed be difficult. The native Canadian is a little more American than an Englishman, a little more English than an American. Occasionally he would pass for one or the other. But this class composes a comparatively small part of the population. There are besides nearly a million French, who are national enough for any purpose. There is a large number of English, Scotch and Irish, preserving their national accents, and demonstrative in their patriotism, chiefly on the festivals of their various patron saints. We have even a large body for whom the Battle of the Boyne is the one political cult. Then, again, there are many Americans who have settled here chiefly in connection with American money invested in Canada. That so many elements should be able to live together and present an appearance of homogeneity speaks much for the power of the Custom House in determining the nations of the day.

But though from a business point of view Canada may seem sufficiently welded, there is still something wanting to make her a nation in a complete sense, and the curious experiment is being tried, of finding some common idea or symbol, to represent more visibly the unity already practically secured. It might appear wiser to let well enough alone; but the idea of dependence is galling to the more ardent souls, and various plans have been suggested with the view of making our condition more tolerable. One scheme which meets with some favor partly from the vastness of its design, partly from the insignificance of the actual change involved, is called Imperial Federation. By it each Canadian would become a citizen of a mighty empire, which Britain, as she has builded, would continue to sustain. It is not proposed that Canada should contribute to the imperial defence, or surrender her privilege of taxing imports from