

quarter of a century; for it cannot be denied that it is the federal union which has enabled the provinces to assume a position of so much importance among communities. Such facts prove that her people have hitherto been animated by a national spirit which must carry them still further on the path of national development.

The question will now naturally occur to every reader of these pages. — What is the future destiny of a country which is making such rapid strides towards national greatness? The interest that is now taken in the proposed Federation of the Empire proves that the foregoing question is already attracting the attention of Englishmen. The growth and prosperity of Canada and the other colonial dependencies for a quarter of a century have naturally interested British statesmen, and showed them how unfortunate it would be for England were communities of such undoubted promise to be allowed to drift away from the Empire without an effort to continue the connection on terms compatible with their self-interest and self-respect. This is, however, a subject of too great importance to be discussed at the conclusion of a paper like this. So far in Canada the discussion has not come within the limits of practical politics. It is quite certain that at present neither Independence nor Annexation is among the questions of the day, although they may be incidentally discussed when Canadians review the facts of their progress, and consider their position in the Empire. It is quite certain, however, that there are no large number of persons disposed towards a political connection with the great country to the south of the Dominion. The people who stood true to England during the War of Independence who suffered severely during the War of 1812—14, who never raised the flag of Annexation even in the days of the greatest depression in trade and industry, are not likely to seek absorption into the ranks of the American Union when they have already achieved a position among political and commercial communities, which is the best earnest of their national ambition, and of their ability to hold their own on this broad continent. As respects the question of Independence, it may be said that the various progressive steps in the political career of Canada seem to point towards the establishment in a later period of her history of a distinct nation. Such aspirations may be fairly considered the natural heritage of a British people, but while they may animate the hearts of the races that inhabit the Dominion, and may obtain still greater force in the days when Canada becomes a country of twenty or thirty million people dwelling in an unbroken line of provinces from the Atlantic to the Pacific, I

the people of the Empire are now in the position of a country which is making such rapid strides towards national greatness.

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