

## CURRENT EVENTS AND OPINIONS.

SIR RICHARD CARTWRIGHT'S speech has, of course, set rolling the ball of discussion on the question of Independence. We are still treated by the adherents of Dependence with some lectures in the old denunciatory style, and loyalty is still paraded as if in these days the word could have any rational meaning but reverent submission to the law, and a hearty desire to do whatever may be best for the community. But it is manifest that the Reign of Terror is at an end. The advocates of Independence speak with perfect freedom, and their opponents evidently feel that mere denunciation has lost its force. This may be ascribed, in great measure, to the change which, unperceived by many, perhaps, here, and certainly by writers on Colonial subjects at home, has been stealing over Canadian society. Canada has ceased to be English and has become Canadian. Our elder statesmen, judges, and commercial chiefs are the best representatives of a period in which all the high places here were held by men who had come from England, and still regarded England as their home. That period has closed, and the high places in every department are now being fast filled with native Canadians. Instead of the disposition to acknowledge the superiority of men from the Old Country and to prefer them for all appointments, there now prevails, in every sphere, a feeling that they are interlopers whose intrusion is unwelcome, and whose pretensions are to be watched with jealousy. This sentiment is shown even in the Universities and the Militia. In Toronto University umbrage has never ceased to be given by the presence of the "Oxford Quartette"—now, by the way, reduced to two Professors, since of the supposed four one was not connected with Oxford at all, and one of the three who were has just resigned. In the Militia, albeit the reputed seat of the most fervent loyalty, General Luard certainly owed the unpleasant treatment which he experienced, not so much to any defect either in his own manners or in those of other people, as to the jealousy felt by native officers of a British Commander-in-Chief, and their impression that he could not understand Canadians. His successor will be fortunate if he escapes trouble from the same source. The fact is that an Englishman, of the professional class, is now better received and has a fairer field in the United States than he has in Canada, notwithstanding the traditional hostility of the Americans to the country from which he comes. Not that Canadians are less liberal or less good-natured, but they are more distinctly threatened by English competition. Tory papers tell us that from Sir Richard Cartwright and those who hold his opinions they will appeal to the "undying love of British connection." The last material bond of connection between Canada and the Empire was broken by Sir John Macdonald when, in loud and defiant tones, he proclaimed Fiscal Independence. The moral bond, which alone can be undying, none value more highly, cherish more intensely, or more earnestly desire to perpetuate than those who are at the same time convinced that the relation of dependence cannot last forever, that sooner or later equality must take its place, and that to prolong dependence when it has ceased to be good for either party is merely to run the risk of misunderstanding and rupture. However, the issue depends upon the great forces and the higher powers; while men of letters, least of all men, can have any personal motives for desiring to hasten, or in any way to influence, the result. The Canadian man of letters or journalist, though he may be uncertain as to the future, has in any event a plain duty to perform. If Canada is destined to be a nation, we must all wish both that she should have a national literature, and that her public men and her citizens generally should be trained, so far as the press can train them, not in mere party tactics, but in politics worthy of the name. If she is destined ultimately to join the great Confederation of the Continent, we must all wish that she should not be merely annexed as the smaller to the greater, but should carry into the Union, as Scotland has carried into the Union with England and Ireland, a distinct national character of her own and be a substantive power, if possible for good, in the Councils of the United race upon this Continent.

MINISTERIAL journalists declare that Canada has been made so rich by its National Policy that Reciprocity is no longer any object to her. Why then has a Canadian Minister been at Washington negotiating for a renewal of the treaty? In the sphere of political economy every sort of illusion seems to be possible, otherwise it would be difficult to believe that well-informed and sensible men could persuade themselves that a heavy increase of taxation could make up to the people of Canada for exclusion from the markets and other commercial advantages of their own continent. Amidst all the angry questions which concern only the parties and their leaders this is the one which really concerns the people, and to which the people if they know their own interest will give their special attention.

The Customs Line by which Canada is cut off from her continent is like the Customs Line by which Scotland was once cut off from the rest of her island, and its removal would be followed by a large measure of the same happy effects. A renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 would be a boon, and it is always wrong to quarrel with the half loaf if the whole loaf cannot be obtained: but the thing really to be desired is the abolition of the Customs Line. The Canadian statesman who would bring that about would deserve the blessings of every Canadian who lives by the sweat of his brow. Mr. Hitt was rightly informed when he was told that the feeling in favour of Free Trade with the United States was strong, and was likely to gather strength by discussion, among the people of this country, especially along the frontier; nor can there be any reasonable doubt that a complete measure, if fairly put before them, would speedily win its way to their acceptance. Opposition there would be, not only on the part of "officials," but on the part of others whose interests are more or less bound up with the existing system, and of politicians who always regard commercial union with suspicion because they fear that it may bring political union in its train. It is remarkable that though the commercial relations of the two countries have been under discussion, not a word has, so far, been said by the leading American journals, or by American statesmen about political annexation, and the remark may be extended, if the "Bystander's" experience is a fair test, to the conversation of political circles at Washington. Customs-line or no Customs-line, the political destiny of Canada will remain in her own hands. That the Americans harbour any designs against her independence all who have lived in the States know to be a chimera. Even if they were not too moral to conceive projects of aggression, they are too completely occupied with their own politics to pay much attention to anything beyond.

In connection with some things which have been said in these papers respecting the progress of the French element and the threatened extinction of British influence in Quebec, the attention of the writer has been called to a series of articles on the Evangelization of French Canada, by Mr. S. A. Abbott, which appeared in the *Montreal Witness*. "The French race," says Mr. Abbott, "appears destined under Providence to play an important part in the future of this continent, and possibly, in some respects, a controlling part in the future of this Dominion. The religious question, therefore, in its bearing upon political questions, assumes the utmost gravity to English Canadians, while in itself alone it is incomparably important. We must not build on the assumption that the French Canadians are being Anglicized, or that the races are about to amalgamate. Henceforth, whatever influence we may hope to exert upon them must be through agencies as thoroughly French as we can make them. This conclusion may be humbling to our pride, and contrary to our national traditions, but we must bow to the logic of events." Mr. Abbott's specific is conversion to Protestantism. But of the result of missionary efforts hitherto he has a doleful tale to tell. The missionaries estimate the total result of half a century of effort, of the work of labourers now 113 in number, and of an expenditure at present amounting to about \$50,000 a year, at 10,000 converts among the French Canadians in Quebec, and 15,000 among those in the States. The cause of failure, as Mr. Abbott thinks, is the rivalry of sects. Protestantism is presented to the French Canadian as a jangle of clashing creeds, all peculiar to English churches, so that the medley is at once confusing to his mind and repugnant to his national sentiment. Drop sectarianism, says Mr. Abbott, support a United French Protestant church, and the work of evangelization will prosper. Unfortunately, to convert the sects to unity, or even to united action in a single case, is at least as hard as it is to convert a Catholic to the religion of any one of them. If Mr. Abbott can achieve this feat he will have performed a service to Christianity more important than the evangelization of Quebec. There is likely, as Mr. Abbott is aware, to be a great stirring of the stagnant waters of Canadian opinion by an agency very different from evangelization, though one which will be "as thoroughly French as it can be made." New France has, of late, been assiduously renewing her connection with Old France. But Old France has not, like New France, remained unchanged, and the influences now, instead of being those of Louis XIV and Bossuet, will be those of the Revolution. Ultramontanism in Quebec may triumph over Gallicanism, it may set at defiance the feeble and disunited efforts of the Protestant missions, but it will soon find itself assailed in the rear by French Scepticism, and perhaps, as has often happened before, the hour of the Jesuit's apparent victory may prove that of his total overthrow.

SUNDAY evening last, we were told, was to be the crisis of preparation for the coming Presidential conflict in the three camps of electioneering