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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE Convention of Young Liberals is avowedly a party gathering, and we must expect opposite views of it to be taken by the respective organs of the two parties. Grits will say that when a country has fallen under the dominion of intrigue and corruption the natural appeal is to the generous enthusiasm of its youth. Tories will say that the Grits, having failed to win to their side the mature opinion of the country, are fain to address themselves to the excitable imaginations of inexperienced boys. That much will come of the Convention as a move in the party game is hardly to be expected: political revivals, as attempts to stir up enthusiasm generally, and apart from a definite issue, are seldom successful; nor is it easy to see why, if there is a definite issue, it should be submitted exclusively or specially to the young. Yet, irrespectively of any question between Grit and Tory, there is perhaps a fitness in the choice of the present moment for turning the attention of these young men to the political destiny of their country. They represent the first generation which has been thoroughly native to the soil. Hitherto Canada has been in every sense a dependency: the influence of the Imperial Country has prevailed, the policy and the political leadership have been British, the high places of public life and the professions have been filled by men of British birth, though of late they have been men who had come over as children, not, as in former days, adult immigrants. Canada is now Canadian: she is summoned to solve for herself the problem of her own future, and she has gained with other liberties, after a certain struggle against natural prejudice, the right of free discussion, with regard not only to her domestic affairs but to her external relations. Nobody dreams now of rebellion or conspiracy; if the Home Government sometimes makes mistakes, and unwittingly does us mischief, there is nothing in its conduct or attitude to excite disaffection. On the other hand, nobody is any longer afraid of being denounced as disloyal for advocating, without breach of affection to the Mother Country, whatever he conscientiously believes to be the real interest of the Canadian people.

Is Canada to be politically, socially and commercially a part and a power of the American Continent, or is she to be an outlying portion of Europe? With which of the two worlds, the Old or the New, is her lot to be cast? Which direction, in the times to come, are her aspirations and hopes to take? By what paramount aim is her policy to be shaped? It is evident that the decision of these questions must determine the whole course of future statesmanship. At this moment they are being distinctly brought before us by the advocates of Imperial Federation on one hand and by those of Independence on the other; Imperial Federation being in fact a movement of recoil produced by the visible attenuation of the political tie and the apparent approach of Independence, while the transient character of the present arrangement is proclaimed equally on both sides. Up to this time Independence, or a severance in any form of the political bond, particularly if the result was to be a closer connection with the United States, has always been identified with hostility to the Mother Country, and it has been assumed that there could be no parting without an angry rupture. Such notions have at last been banished. It must be now plain to every apprehension, both from reason and from abundant examples, that a sincere, fervent and disinterested attachment to the Mother Country is entirely consistent with the conviction that the process of political emancipation, having gone so far, will reach its completion, and that the bond, a few years hence, will be that of affection alone. It is not too much to say that in the breasts of men who look steadfastly forward to Independence there lives a stronger love of England, and one more capable of making sacrifices for her, than in the breast of any of the Colonial courtiers of Downing Street and seekers after aristocratic patronage and Imperial titles. The advocates of Imperial Federation say with truth that in estimating the practicability of their project, allowance ought to be made for the increased influence of great ideas; but the New World has its great ideas as well as the Old, and is not a less grand or ample sphere for their fulfilment, while everybody must admit that the advantage of practicability lies with aspirations which have for their theatre the land in which by nature our lot is cast. A political speculator in the Imperial Country sees everything from his own centre, and forgets that as colonies become nations fresh centres may be formed. By making herself a Power on the Continent of which Nature has constituted her a part, and by becoming a noble element of its life, Canada will pay the highest tribute of honour to the illustrious source from which her own life is drawn. Such, it may safely be said, is the feeling of the great mass of the British people. Nor would any military assistance which Canada can send her Mother Country be comparable in value to her friendly voice in the Councils of her own Continent. Even as regards our relation with the United States and its bearing on our relation with the Mother Country there has been a great change, and there is likely to be a greater. The virus of the Revolutionary quarrel seems at last to be spent; the feeling of all native Americans, except the Protectionist Manufacturers, towards the land of their fathers grows kinder every day, and Westminster Abbey is being once more recognized as the historic centre and temple of the race. A Moral Federation appears to be in progress which will not, like Imperial Federation, leave out the largest of the English-speaking communities. The question between the Continental and the Anti-Continental policy at all events is urgent and practical. We have come to the parting of the roads. The Anti-Continental party appreciates the crisis and is doing its utmost to decide the lot of the country in its own sense by a vast outlay on political railways and by the no less costly expedient of creating, in Nature's despite, manufactures in Provinces without coal, as well as by maintaining a customs line which cuts off the Canadian people from their natural markets and resources; while the impoverishment and atrophy which the system produces send the flower of Canadian youth over the border to the centres of prosperous industry and hope. If the Anti-Continental policy is a misdirection of national aims it is a fatal misdirection. This, at any rate, is the critical moment; and to take part in the decision with the firmness which only deliberate conviction can inspire is the duty immediately set before the young Canadian politician.