

IVAN.

I ONLY knew one Nihilist in my life, and this was the way it came about. I was leaning over the parsonage gate and enjoying the long twilight of a Canadian summer evening, watching the stars more than the few people on the long maple-bordered street, when a little man, with very square shoulders, a big head and no neck, stumbled up and asked me in French if the pastor was at home. He had evidently been drinking, and was roughly dressed. He could not be called respectable, but I began talking with him. The proprieties never had a very strong hold on me, and some scamps drunk are much more interesting than any number of the eminently respectable quite sober. Besides, it was strange to hear French three hundred miles away from the nearest French settlement. My first thought was that I had to do with some French-Canadian. Was he from Bas-Canada? No. From old France, then? No, and impressive shakings of the head. Where then? Russia. Then you are a Nihilist? Assuredly.

I pretended to be much frightened, and asked if he carried dynamite about with him. Ivan was much amused at this, and tried to convey the impression that he always carried at least one bomb with him, much as ordinary people do a watch. His interest in the pastor had vanished when he was not at home, and went on to other matters. He tried to make me understand that he was an honest fellow. "Je travaille pour ma nourriture," he repeated over and over again, with a strange intonation and a pleasant smile. Then he told me more about himself: he had only been in the village a month; had been working for the tavern-keeper ever since, and now, because he had taken a couple of glasses of beer, he had been turned off without his wages. It was hard luck, and I sympathised with him. I tried to find out more about Russia, but even drunk, Ivan was too cunning to talk foolishly, and by-and-by, after telling him where to go, he bade me good-night very politely, and wandered uncertainly up the street.

A few nights afterwards, as I was strolling home, I ran across Ivan again. He was sober this time, and remembered me; the night was fine, and we went for a walk together. He was quite happy at having got employment as man-of-all-work at Kuckenperger's, and was ready to talk. We discovered mutually that we were not bad fellows, and he soon became confidential. After this I saw him often, and that moonlight walk was only the first of many. He was not a Russian, but a Pole, the son of a country pastor near Warsaw; he had served in the army as a courier and bearer of despatches; had been at Constantinople when the treaty of San Stefano was made; then for some time he had been attached to the Government offices in St. Petersburg; and finally, after spending two years in Paris as agent for his uncle, he had come to Canada.

He really was a Nihilist, a stray fragment of wreck drifted into this quiet, remote creek, telling of the world-storm outside. He had been secretary to a branch in the capital, and had narrowly escaped arrest and Siberia. He would talk willingly about *La Compagnie*, as he loved to call it, but when once or twice I tried to get some particulars out of him he put me off with a sharp look, a laugh or an evasive answer. He gloried in his connection with Nihilism, and spoke with the utmost confidence of the ultimate triumph of the revolution. One Sunday we were walking together; he was talking about a friend of his in Russia, and I happened to ask where he was now. Ivan stopped short, faced round, caught his throat between his finger and thumb with a peculiar twist, and said, dryly: "Il's l'ont pendu." Then he sketched a vivid picture of the execution; how he was there in the crowd, and many brothers of "The Company"; how calmly his friend addressed them all, exhorting them to be true to the cause, and how bravely he died. His wife was hanged at the same time.

Nothing could equal Ivan's contempt for the Russians, their stupidity, their drunkenness and the veniality of their officials. He transacted all his superior's business, because he was usually too drunk to do it himself, and always came down to the office very late. In this way Ivan got a hold on him that afterwards stood him in good stead. When the capital got too hot to hold him he made up his mind to escape; the only difficulty was to obtain a passport. His chief had a number in his keeping, but the risk of helping a suspect was very great. Still, for a heavy bribe, he let Ivan have one, on condition of returning it in a letter as soon as he crossed the frontier. The Russian ladies came in for a share of Ivan's contempt, and he seemed to have good grounds for it from certain personal experiences. Though all his wanderings, intrigues and misfortunes he was constant to one thing—his country, Poland; he believed in her, loved her, hoped for her future. It was but a question of time till she threw off the foreign yoke and took her place once more among the nations of Europe. His countrywomen were the most beautiful, and his country the best to live in, in the world. On one of our beautiful autumn days, bright and blue, with just the presentiment of frost in the air, I asked him if they ever had such weather in Poland. "It is the same sky," said Ivan, "all over the world."

Sometimes he talked of his handsome old father, with his grey hair and florid face, and his sisters. He had quarrelled with his family, and never expected to see them again. He was very clever and talked well; had read a great deal, and was master of several languages. He knew books and men, and had a large fund of literary gossip and anecdote. Puschkin and Mickiewicz were his favourite authors, I think—he had most to say about them, at any

rate; and I have heard him regret the books left behind in that far-away Polish parsonage. He was a merry companion, full of good spirits and good nature in spite of the bufftings of fate. I could easily believe his stories of boyish tricks on his teachers and his statement, "J'étais toujours un grand farceur." For the rest, he was a careless, practical philosopher, with a superb contempt for appearances, living from hand to mouth, and caring not for the things of the morrow. He had been brought up a Lutheran, but was very liberal in his religious opinions; beliefs he had none, except in Poland and *La Compagnie*. "I have read that Frenchman, Voltaire," he said once, "and Puschkin, and all religions are much the same to me. I go to the Salvation Army meeting and the Roman Catholic church: there is one God." And once he showed me reverently the picture of a young girl in her confirmation dress and veil.

After that summer I lost sight of him, and I cannot say what became of him. He was going back to Poland and *La Compagnie* and his conspiracies as soon as he could. You poor Ivan! perhaps you are in Siberia, or throwing bombs, or languishing in durance as I write. People will not appreciate you as I did, and some time or other you certainly will be hanged. Any way, you were thoroughly *bon enfant* and *bon camarade*, as you would say yourself, and I am heartily sorry that I shall never set eyes on your flat, honest face again.

ARCHIBALD MACMECHAN.

THE FIELD ELM.

BENEATH this tree what pleasures have I known,
The while its leaves toy'd with the summer breeze,
Sweet odours bearing from the orchard trees
That show their tops above yon wall of stone!
Here through the long hours have I mused alone
In day-forgetting dreamful reveries,
Or, by some poet's potent imag'ries
Transported to a time and place unknown,
Have with the Moor in fiery passion moved
And felt the frenzy of his tortur'd brain;
Have heard sweet Juliet call to her beloved;
Have speculated with the mystic Dane,
Or in the magic "Grecian Urn" approved
The glamour of Keat's shadow-pictur'd train.

J. H. BROWN.

THE COLONIES AND THE PREROGATIVE.

THAT the Constitution under which the British Empire is now subsisting is already federal is a fact that is rendered less obvious by some variations from the customary federal type. There is no other known federation which does not reserve a considerable number of legislative powers to a central Federal Government. Our Imperial Federation reserves none. The legislative independence of the separate states or nations composing the Empire is complete. (This is the principle; the few inconsistent exceptions—copyright, for instance—cannot long remain in their present position.) The rule is becoming yearly more solidly settled that in all matters of local legislation the Crown acts solely by the advice of its local ministers, and with the consent of its local Parliament. All internal legislative authority being so completely vested in the representative Assemblies of the constituent nations the contrast appears all the more marked when we turn to the manner of exercising executive authorities which in other federations are committed to a common central representative body. These are the great powers of State which writers of the last century confidently ascribe to the Royal prerogative. The constitution of final courts of appeal, the conduct of foreign relations, treaties and diplomacy, and the command in war were all originally part of the royal prerogative, and in the United States have become the prerogative of the President and his Cabinet. A federal council would seem to be the natural heir of the prerogative. But under the British system, so far, these prerogatives, although yielded by the Sovereign, have not yet passed into the hands of representatives of the whole people. Matters of peace and war, international treaties, the appointment of ambassadors and the constitution of the final court of appeal are, in appearance at least, controlled exclusively by the Council chosen by Her Majesty's subjects in Great Britain and Ireland.

The immediate question, it appears to me, is how to give a definite diplomatic expression to that actual unity which exists throughout the empire, founded on the modern constitutional relations I have sketched—such an expression that would almost of itself imply the removal of those somewhat galling inconsistencies that remain.

That such inconsistencies exist in the Imperial organization, nothing more clearly illustrates than the correspondence between the British Minister at Washington and the United States Secretary of State, in 1870, in connection with the fishery clauses of the Treaty of Washington. Sir Edward Thornton on the 26th of August advised Secretary Fish that "as the matters which are to be considered by the Commissioners deeply concern the people of Canada, it was necessary to consult the Government of the Dominion upon a point of so much importance as the appointment of a third Commissioner." Mr. Fish protested against this course. "The reference," he replied, "in your note to the people and the Dominion of Canada seems to imply a practical transfer to that Province of the right of nomination which the Treaty gives to Her Majesty." The British Government, he protested, had no right to delegate its powers under the Treaty to "an interested party." A consultation by Her Majesty with

her Canadian Privy Council Mr. Fish compared rather superciliously to a consultation by the President of "some local interest—that of the fishermen at Gloucester, for instance." In a like spirit the acts of the Canadian Parliament relating to the same subject present themselves to foreign writers as entirely *ultra vires*. "Lacking the power to contract a treaty," argues one writer of considerable intelligence and scholarship, and free from any bias of locality (Mr. Elliott, Minneapolis University: *The United States and the Northern Fisheries*, page 129), "the claim of right to construe one contracted between the Sovereign and a foreign nation is preposterous. As well might Massachusetts claim the right to open independent negotiations with the Court of St. James as Canada with the United States. Both lack the essential element—sovereignty."

When we consider with how large and important a proportion of the globe Canada is connected by virtue of her connection with the Empire, requiring no diplomatic relations, we can understand why the Dominion has hitherto found so little cause of complaint in its exclusion from direct official correspondence with foreign nations. It is only now, since the completion of the Canada Pacific Railway has given Canada a port upon the Pacific, that the full extent and importance of this internal freedom begins to display itself. The complete Imperial *Zollverein*, of which Imperial Federationists dream, is an extremely distant, unnecessary, and perhaps undesirable, consummation. There is an *inertia* in the vast trade interests of Great Britain too great to be overcome. But much may be accomplished short of a universal *Zollverein*. There is, for instance, no inconsistency of commercial principles to prevent Canada and Australia entering into a convention favouring the exchange of their respective products and manufactures. In a convention for that purpose between the Governments of those colonies, Great Britain might claim a voice, but she would have no constitutional right to impose a veto upon the arrangement. In this possibility Canadian enterprise may yet find ample consolation for the difficulties which her duties, as a part of the Empire, throw in the way of closer connections with the United States: even perhaps with the South American States. In many respects the United States and Canada are competitors. For the trade of South America they would be rivals. The undivided trade of Australia would be more than equivalent to that of South America.

Foreign relations, under our form of Federal Government, may long be a branch of government of the utmost complexity. While nations form a Union a part cannot act, except in concert with the whole, because the action of a part may affect the whole.

In each of a long series of questions and relations the mother country, with her wide spread commerce, must naturally be interested and claim a voice more or less potent. Not only from her preponderance in population and wealth, but from her geographical relations Great Britain is the common centre of a greater complexity of international connections than is likely to be the case with any other of the Imperial nations for a long time to come.

A constitutional system to be suitable for dealing with these internal, as well as with foreign relations, requires to be possessed of an elastic adaptability corresponding to their varied aspects and their liability to take many unexpected turns. But for this our fortunate Constitution is expressly and admirably adapted. It will be time enough for the Colonies to declare that they must make their treaties severally, as independent powers, when they no longer find it possible to make them jointly.

Taking a hint from legal practice, Great Britain might hold what is called a watching brief while a conference was being carried on in relation to a commercial treaty between two or more of the Colonies among themselves. But the colonies would expect to be made conversant in like manner with any future commercial negotiations between Great Britain and any European or Asiatic country, lest by some ill considered clause the unrepresented colony might unintentionally be put at a disadvantage.

But for treaty-making, as for other purposes, the centralized federation which is suitable to the United States is unsuitable to the British Empire.

Some Imperial Federationists ask, If Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific can form a confederation; if the States to the south of the Dominion can maintain a closely-knit Federal Union, why are we to despair of similarly consolidating our Imperial Union? For the reason that even the United States, enormous and widely extended as they are, are not only contiguous to each other, but may be described as lying within a ring fence. The commercial interests of one State at the South might appear to differ from those of an extreme Northern State. But these extreme members are united by others: the variations run gradually through the mass and never visibly confront each other across a border line. Diversity is not, therefore, found inconsistent with uniformity of policy. While their internal relations are comparatively united, their foreign relations are absolutely united. Geographically compact, they present one face to the outside world. It is quite otherwise with the nations of our Empire.

They compose a chain of States extending through two hemispheres and sundered from each other by Oceans. While the relations which most intimately affect Canada are at the present time those with the Continent of America—perhaps in an early future with Japan—the local relations of Australia are most intimate with foreign neighbours in the South Pacific. Australian commerce and self-protection may dictate the acquisition of the numerous Pacific islands