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EVERYBODY who loves the country and who is fortunate enough to be able, if he does not live in it, to visit it for a few weeks during the summer, must deplore the scarcity of the birds, which ought to be one of the chief sources of pleasure to the rambler in the fields and woods. Cowper has sung:—

Not rural sights alone, but rural sounds,
Exhilarate the spirit, and restore
The tone of languid Nature.

This solace, too, is almost utterly wanting in the dells and glades of Ontario, or at least of any part of it which we have been able to discover within reach of the busy toiler in the city. Here, alas! it is no longer true, however it may have been in the past, that "ten thousand warblers cheer the day." On the contrary, one may walk for miles along the country roads, or sit for hours on the borders of the most promising wood, and scarcely have either the eye regaled with beautiful plumage, or the ear with delicious song. We do not suppose that it was always so. No doubt it is the gun of the ruthless sportsman which has desolated the groves once the sacred haunts of the feathered songsters. As one realizes this he can well sympathize with the indignation of Burns when he saw the wounded hare limping past him, and is almost ready to adopt his strong words in regard to the "murder-aiming eye" which has wrought this cruel havoc. All this is, however, a little aside from our purpose, which was suggested by a timely article in the *Rural Canadian*, calling attention to the facilities now provided, under the new game law passed by the Ontario Legislature, for the protection of their fields and woods from the ravages of the amateur sportsman. Under the provisions of this law it is quite within the power of every owner or occupier of a farm to prohibit trespassing on his land in search of game. The Act is primarily intended for the protection of game birds and animals of all kinds, which have been almost exterminated in many parts of the Province, but its provisions are equally available in defence of the songsters and other small birds. Every owner or occupier of a place, large or small, in the country, should acquaint himself with the ample provisions of this Act and use them for the purpose for which they are intended. If this is done with tolerable firmness, we may hope in the course of a few years to

see a great increase in game and birds of all kinds. An abundance of the former might become a source of considerable profit to the farmer, while the return of the latter would add greatly to the charms of the country as a place of resort by pleasure-seekers of refined tastes and feelings. The *Rural Canadian* has done a service in calling attention to the matter. We hope it will keep it before its readers.

THE date of issue of this number of THE WEEK is that of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the union of the four Provinces which formed the nucleus of the Canadian Confederation. In some respects the expectations of the promoters of the original union have been more than realized. In others truth compels us to admit that they have been seriously disappointed. The rapid extension of the bounds of the Dominion until they reached, as they do to-day, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and embrace every foot of territory in British North America, unless the Island of Newfoundland comes properly under that description; the accomplishment of the magnificent feat of uniting Halifax on the east with Vancouver on the west by a double band of steel, such as that which constitutes the track of the Canadian Pacific Railway, with all that its existence implies; these and some similar events in the history of these twenty-five years, betoken a development more rapid than the most sanguine advocates of the union of the four original Provinces could have anticipated. In the course of these events there has also been brought to light a wealth of national resources, as well as an extent of territory, far surpassing the largest anticipations of the founders of the Dominion. Twenty-five years ago, though the Hudson's Bay Territory was not literally an unknown land, and though several of the Fathers of the Confederation were already anticipating its admission, sooner or later, into the nascent Dominion, we do not suppose that anyone, unless possibly a few servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, had anything approaching to a just conception of the immense extent of rich wheat-producing prairie land which lay untouched by the plough, awaiting the opening up of the vast northern region to immigration and settlement. In these respects, at least, the expansion of the Dominion has been greater and more rapid than could have been conceived by its original founders.

BUT while the opening up of the North-West and the union with British Columbia have developed possibilities of national greatness far beyond the dreams of the most ardent of the nation-builders who met in the memorable Quebec Convention, truth compels the sorrowful admission that in some other respects the reality has fallen far behind the expectations of those who foresaw in the union of the Provinces the promise and potency of rapid national growth and progress. In 1867, the people of Ontario and Quebec and those of the Maritime Provinces in the East were strangers to each other. It was the fond hope and prophecy of sanguine advocates of union that a few years of working together under a common political system would weld all together, in the oneness of a community of interests, sympathies and national ambitions. It was also fondly anticipated that as a consequence of such a process of assimilation and integration there would spring up a warm, stalwart Canadian patriotism, the outgrowth of the common exercise of the larger powers of self-government which were one of the conditions of the change. Above all it was confidently expected that the young nationality thus ushered into being would, by the freedom and excellence of its political institutions as well as by the richness of its natural resources, attract to itself so large a share of the vast stream of immigration then as now setting westward across the Atlantic, that its population would increase by leaps and bounds. Had any pessimistic opponent of Confederation predicted that after the lapse of a quarter of a century the population of the Dominion would not have at least been doubled, he would probably have been scouted as an unpatriotic and faithless croaker. Scarcely less disappointing than the slow increase in population has been the equally slow growth of national and patriotic feeling. It must be confessed that the spirit of provincialism still dwarfs that of

Canadianism; that there is manifest but little of the drawing together of the people of East and West, in sympathy and aim, and in pride of nationality, which was anticipated in the early days of the Confederation. No stronger proof of this is needed than the fact that the patriotic people of the city of Toronto have deemed it necessary to apply to the City Council for a vote of a few thousand dollars in order to enable them to celebrate in some befitting way the coming First of July. A spontaneous joy in the recognized blessings of Confederation would have needed no such artificial aid to manifest itself on a holiday occasion. We make no attempt at present to point out the causes of this deplorable lack of both national increase and national enthusiasm. But it may serve some good purpose to call attention to the facts and ask each of our readers to form his own conclusions in regard to the causes and the possibility of applying effective remedies. Are those causes merely accidental and removable, or are they, as a good many think, inherent in the nature of the colonial status, proving the incompatibility of true national feeling and development with the inferiority of colonialism?

WE have received from a friend and occasional contributor a copy of the Constitution of "The Volunteer Electoral League of Montreal." The objects of this league, as defined in its constitution, are: To revise and perfect the voters' lists; to encourage the nomination of candidates of known integrity for public office; to use all legitimate means to secure their return; to prevent fraudulent and dishonest practices in elections; to follow up and prosecute, to the full extent of the law, those detected in any violation of the Election Act; to suggest and promote any legislation, approved by the League, having for its object the purity of elections. These aims will commend themselves to every true Canadian. There is in Canada to-day no truer and no wiser patriot than the man who devotes his influence and energies successfully to the work of detecting, counteracting and destroying, so far as in him lies, the germs of corruption which have fastened themselves upon almost every feature of our political system and are preying upon the very vitals of national character. We have not space to describe at length the modes of working by which the League proposes to promote its objects. The plan of organization seems, however, to have been well thought out, and if equally well carried into effect in any given locality or ward, must go far towards rendering impersonation and some other of the grosser forms of fraud which are unhappily so prevalent, well nigh impossible. If we have a doubt as to the propriety of any feature of the scheme, it is with reference to the provision for keeping secret the work of the League, and for making it a close corporation by the use of the secret ballot in the admission of members. But it is quite possible that these provisions are indispensable for the accomplishment of the work of the League. We do not pronounce against them off-hand. But they suggest a query as to the possibility of the League some day falling under the control of unworthy men and being used for selfish or sinister ends. For this reason we are not sure that we should not prefer, and we do not see why it may not be quite feasible, the formation of a national society, somewhat on the plan of the American Institute of Civics, or perhaps rather in some measure combining the work of that society with that of the American Institute of Ethics. A grand work might be done in Canada within the next few years by some such organization, working along educational lines, and by free use of press and platform,—for we are convinced that to the want of political and moral education and thoughtfulness, more than to an utter lack of the higher qualities of character, the corruption which all good men deplore is very largely due. We do not know to what extent the Montreal League contemplates work of this kind, or whether it aims at more than local operations. But even with a vigorous national society there would always be room and necessity for the work of vigorous local organizations. We admire and approve the noble aims and patriotic spirit of the League, and should be glad if organizations with similar objects were speedily formed all over the Dominion. Our correspondent, Mr. H. B. Ames,