

from the benefit to the masses, the unhampered freedom of intercourse and trade relations are the most powerful advocates for peace and goodwill, alike just to the giver as well as to the receiver; and it is the interest of both countries to foster the principle by reciprocal means rather than experiment in a narrower groove which the resolution lately adopted by American representatives in regard to trade relations with Canada foreshadows. It is not on the lines of free trade as Canadians understand it, for Canadians will never abandon the traditions that bind them to the British Empire, silken threads in their tension, but chains in the power of their force. The freedom of commerce now offered is the commerce of the continent, Canadians could not accept that in exchange for the freedom of the commerce of the world which it is their ambition to share in, and which they now enjoy, and so long as commercial exclusiveness is American policy so long are Canadians forced to defend their commercial life by a similar policy, unless more advantageous trade relations are developed on the lines of duty to Imperial interests which are regarded as identical with the commercial interests of their country. Commercial union, as conceived by its promoters in the United States, would mean the gradual assimilation of those substantial advantages derived from Imperial connection, and its ultimate results would in all probability lead to the absorption of Canada, and in conceiving the idea of absorption into the United States Canadians should realize the improbability of securing more extended liberties than fall to their lot under their present constitutional privileges.

There is no doubt that a counterbalancing influence to the negro vote in the South would be welcomed by American statesmen, but it is not to the advantage of Canadians to be weighed in that balance. Apart from the negro vote, however, which is a growing power far removed from Canadian influence and interest, evidences are not wanting that, through the rapid acquisition of wealth, the people of the United States are to-day in danger of being governed by a plutocracy, and the return to a healthier national life for them may render necessary great political changes to avoid the substitution of an autocracy for their present republican institutions. It is not in accordance with the political instincts of Canadians to place themselves under the disabilities that are liable to arise from the establishment of an autocracy, but rather to endeavour to set an example on this continent by adhering to the principles of constitutional liberty, which contains the elements of a purer national life than the republic has developed, in the belief that the liberty-loving people of the United States will yet find the level of political freedom under the constitutional privileges of the British Empire. The power of the British Empire has so far worked no harm to the principles of international comity, and it is exercised in the development of civilization and in providing security for the world's citizens wherever its power reaches, and the increase of that power on this continent by the consolidation of Canadian nationality need not arouse the animosity of those American statesmen who have given such strong expression to their views in that direction.

Upward and Onward is the motto of the age, and the consolidation of the British Empire is essential to the realization of the idea in its application to the political life of British subjects, and American support to British power will hasten the realization of the motto in its application to the political life of the world. C. A. BOULTON.

BAISER.

IT is a brilliant concert hall, and at the upper end, beside a high, spindly desk, a woman is reading. She is tall and handsome; her coal-black hair sweeps down low on her forehead; her heavy brows are black, and so are her great, deep eyes. She has black lace on her arms and shoulders, but the rest of her dress is one rustling sunshine of corn-coloured silk. She is reading from the prince of dramatists, our English Shakespeare, and she reads well.

It is the famous courtship scene from Henry the Fifth, and as she reads on it grows harder and harder to believe that she is alone there on the platform. Against a background of ancient arras, sown with white fleur-de-lis, stand out three figures at least—the bluff soldier lover in his royal red, the French princess making broken music of the foreign speech, and the clever, quick soubrette. There they are, in that quaint, old-time room, playing their parts. Each in turn seems to fade into the swaying tapestry and grow out of it again when you turn away your eyes. The wooing goes on briskly, for the bold wooer is a king, and fresh from a great victory. The fair enemy makes but a half-hearted defence, and one by one the out-works are carried by assault. At last the bargain is struck, and he will seal it with a kiss, when—no! the shy, convent-bred girl shrinks back, shame-facedly, and, dropping the unfamiliar medium of her lover's language, protests vehemently in her own voluble French. He is bewildered, and appeals to her maid:—

"Madam, my interpreter, what says she?"

"She says, *Sauf votre honneur, zat eet ees not zee custom for zee maids in France to—to—I cannot tell what 'baiser' is.*"

And to help out her lack of words comes a swift, crisp chirrup, like a bird's—the first preluding note of a linked warble.

At that musical sound, the voice of the woman reading in black and gold grows thin and loses itself in remote distance, and all things seem to melt and flow together before her sight. Here is the audience and here am I; there is

the reader beside her desk on the low platform: but in the place of the royal courtship scene is a London street on a July night. The reading still goes on, I suppose, but I only see a stretch of pavement and a bounding wall, which makes a long dark vista before it blends at last with the hot night.

There came a hurry of feet, and little feet,
... laughs and whiffs of song.

And into the lighted space before a gas lamp sweeps a troop of merry girls. They do not seem so much to move themselves as to be carried on a shadowy wave out of the darkness behind into the darkness beyond. But for a moment they are in the light. How clear their young voices ring! How gay their laughter and chattering! How warm the little hands flung out at random to a stranger's clasp! Then, in the midst of it all, trills out that sweet, single bird-note, the chirrup of an airy kiss. And the dark wave has swept them past. How strange that sounds on London streets! This is no place for such a note as this. It has made the air thicker, the pavement hotter, and the encroaching walls more pitiless. The home of that sound is surely the quiet of a summer's morning in the country, the light hour before sunrise, when the clover is heavy and drenched with dew, and the tall trees stand green and cool against the silver sky.

But everyone is clapping hands. The reading must be over.
ARCHIBALD MACMECHAN.

PARTING.

Is it "good-bye," my friend? Ah well, good-bye.

Why should I hold you, wishing thus to go?

My quiet woman's life, so dull and slow,

Flows on unchanging: your's apart must lie:

My clinging hands but only fret you, dear;

You will not grieve to leave them folded here.

Nay, look not pained, God speed your going, friend.

You may not falter now for word of mine,

My life, my love will never colour thine,

Though all my hopes go with you to the end.

My path lies straight—so straight and dull and grey—

But yours leads onward through the shining day.

And thus we part! Ah well, 'tis better so—

Smooth down the page and fold it out of sight,

Kiss, and good-bye—and through the coming night

If I should sorrow that you wished to go,

I shall not blame you, dear—no, no, not you—

My heart alone shall answer for us two.

EMILY McMANUS.

A POLITICAL RETROSPECT.—I.

BEFORE the transformation of what was a partially disintegrated colony into a united and compact nation, embracing, as the Dominion now does, six Provinces, with a population verging upon five millions, the country comprised merely the two old Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada. Up to the time of the union of 1841, the whole of the British American possessions were under a vice-royalty, yet each colony was independent of the other, and all quite as much estranged as if they had been separate nationalities. It is true that England exercised more power and influence over them than she now does, owing to her not having granted that self-government which she afterwards conceded. Upper and Lower Canada were united only in name, while the rest of British America was a sort of *terra incognita*. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were scarcely accessible. Newfoundland was regarded as without the pale of control, Prince Edward Island was apparently unknown, and the great North-West was in truth a lone land.

If, as the experience of some European countries would seem to indicate, it is no easy matter to rule even a homogeneous people, how much more difficult it must have been to harmonize the two antagonistic races in Canada! The conquest left Britain in possession, but the descendants of the conquered would not be conciliated; knowing that they were not only entitled to an equal share with their British brethren in the rights and privileges conferred by the terms of the conquest, but that certain stipulations had been made, which some regarded as unfair, they persisted in demanding the fulfilment of the obligations insured to them by treaty. Being in the majority, the French Canadians deemed it essential that more deference should be shown them than was customary. What wonder need there be, that under such a state of things, a kind of oligarchy arose in one Province, and the two contending races in the other were constantly at variance? Distasteful as the so-called Family Compact was in the Upper Province, the supremacy of the French race in *Bas Canada* was far more intolerable to the British. The religion of the French Canadians rendered them less objectionable to the Irish than the Scottish and English residents, who looked upon the seeming alliance between the former as having been framed with aggressive designs. Such was really not the case, yet it was impossible to remove the impression that had been formed, and as a consequence dissension and disquiet prevailed. In the west the people were led to regard the ruling power there as an usurpation, and the Executive body was denounced as intolerant and tyrannical. How far it was so it were bootless to enquire; yet, goaded into resentment as one section of the people declared they had been, the feeling of opposition broke out

in open violence. In Lower Canada the French Canadian party, believing, as the historian Gameau declares, that "avarice no less than ambition, nourished hatred to our race," agitated for a change, and, led on by M. Papineau, the agitation culminated in overt act of treason, and then came the rebellion of 1837.

With the repression of the insurrection, the country soon settled down to the conclusion that its interests had been materially impaired, and its progress thrown back for a long series of years; but there were not wanting those who saw a favourable opportunity for urging a change of policy, and the Imperial Parliament was not long in addressing itself to the subject. Lengthy discussions arose on a proposition of Lord John Russell's to suspend the Canadian Constitution, which was adopted, and Lord Durham sent out to settle the existing difficulties. The selection was doubtless good enough in itself, but the project was not one that could meet with general favour. The suspension of the Constitution exasperated the Lower Canadians, and the Upper Canadians were divided in opinion, a large section being opposed to the manner in which the new envoy proposed to arrange matters. The appointment of a Council of Ten, composed of entire strangers to the country, was not acceptable, even with the addition of five judges, which concession, while it afforded the Governor-General the means of bringing some knowledge to bear on the wants and necessities of the country, was thought by many to be a means of conciliation. It was not so regarded by the people, however, for the belief was uppermost that the real design of the home authorities was to bring about a union of the Provinces—a thing not desired at that time.

Lord Durham's attempts at conciliation were ineffectual. He assumed a vast deal of pomp and parade, which the French Canadians were not slow in denouncing; he adopted the inexcusable practice of pardoning and exiling the chief of those who had been concerned in the rebellion, and was snubbed by the Home Government for doing so. Instead of restoring peace and harmonizing the antagonistic races, his action fanned the flame of discontent, and scarcely had he quitted the scene in disgust when a second revolt broke out, though it was feeble than the first attempt. If, however, Lord Durham accomplished nothing in the way of pacification, his report on the state of the country, submitted to the Imperial Government, was so admirable, and so well calculated to lay the foundation of a better state of things, that it was at once adopted, and its recommendations put into effect soon after. Sir John Colborne had taken the place of Lord Durham, and in turn he was superseded by Mr. Poulett Thomson, afterwards Lord Sydenham. The dissatisfaction of the opposing sections in the two Provinces was now very great, and Lord Sydenham found it a difficult task to fulfil a mission, which was nothing less than to bring the whole people into harmony by means of a legislative union; but he succeeded, nevertheless, for his proposition was agreed to by the Assembly of Upper Canada and the Special Council in Lower Canada.

With the consummation of the one great object upon which he had evidently set his heart, Lord Sydenham seemed as if he were no longer desirous of distinguishing his career, and he ceased to take any further interest in the welfare of the country, inasmuch as the union of the Provinces was all that in his judgment was necessary to secure the tranquillity and happiness of the people. To a certain extent he was right; but something more was needed to give the country that homogeneity without which there could be no real or lasting peace. The war of races raged as fiercely as ever, instead of being quelled, as was supposed, by the tranquillizing influence which the political welding of the antagonistic elements was expected to bring with it.

But, perhaps, after all, it was his failing health that compelled him to refrain from further activity, for he was under the necessity of having the first session of the united Parliaments closed by Commission. A few months later his horse fell under him, and the injury he sustained proved fatal. Thus ended the life of one who sought to make Canada a great and glorious country. He began well, and had he been spared he might have followed up the achievement with which his name is so closely identified. A short time after the death of Lord Sydenham the Governor-Generalship was assigned to Sir Charles Bagot, who, during his short stay, did much to smooth down the asperity then existing between the French and British, but his career was too brief to be marked by any material change for the general benefit. He had able advisers, and matters went on quite smoothly until the Governor-General asked to be relieved, and in a few months he followed Baron Sydenham to the tomb.

And now came the most momentous epoch in the history of the country, which was nothing less than a powerful test of the principle upon which the union had been based. Sir Charles Metcalf, an old and well tried servant of the British Crown, who had distinguished himself in administering the Government in other Colonial dependencies, became Governor-General of Canada; and his arrival at the scene of his labours was heartily welcomed by all classes. The agitation for the removal of the seat of Government from Kingston to Montreal had meanwhile gained such force that, in the first session of Parliament held under Sir Charles Metcalf, it was decided that the removal should take place. Thus a fresh element of discord was evoked, for there were not wanting those who regarded the step taken as being for the sole benefit of Lower Canada. But this was not all. A difference had sprung up between the Governor-General and his advisers who took the ground that it was utterly subversive of the principles of