

THE
CANADIAN MONTHLY
AND NATIONAL REVIEW.

VOL. 10.]

NOVEMBER, 1876.

[No. 5.

BRITISH COLUMBIA, AND ITS RELATIONS TO THE DOMINION.

BY F. J. R., VICTORIA, B. C.

THE Canadian who takes extended and sanguine views of the future capabilities, needs, and prospects of his country, will probably regard the 20th of July, 1871, as one of the most important dates in the history of the Dominion, for on that day the great work of Confederation was completed by the acquisition of British Columbia, bringing with it a frontage on the Pacific Ocean. We fear, however, that to many of our countrymen this date will only present itself as the day on which a nearly worthless and very troublesome Province was acquired at a monstrous and ridiculous price. It may be of some use to present to such persons a brief account of the relations of the Pacific Province to the Dominion, its value, commercial and political, and its claims from a British Columbian point of view, and at the same time to remove several delusions which seem to prevail on these points and on the subject of the terms of Union.

The great question regarding the future of Canada we conceive to be this: Has she the capabilities of becoming a powerful nation, or must she make up her mind to be ultimately swallowed up by the United States? There is good reason to fear that if the Provinces which now compose the Dominion had remained separate, the latter would have been their fate, and that it was Confederation alone which gave Canada a

chance of avoiding the danger. The question is, to what extent Confederation was necessary; and we are inclined to think that the acquisition of British Columbia was the step needed to make impossible what was before a possibility.

That which, more than anything else, has tended to produce whatever annexation feeling exists in Canada, has been the constant emigration going on from the older Provinces to the United States; an emigration not only of those who have recently arrived from Europe, but of native born Canadians, every one of whom, when settled on the other side of the boundary line, has been an additional link to the chain which might bind Canada to the United States.

The only way to cure this evil is for Canada to find employment for her sons in her own territory, by increasing her commerce and her manufactures. We are told that a Protectionist policy would have such an effect; this we think doubtful—anyhow, it would be of no use for manufacturers to have protection unless they had customers, and customers, moreover, who would be large consumers.

If our great North-West territory and British Columbia were settled up, and brought by means of the Pacific Railroad into close communication with the rest of the Dominion, manufacturers in Ontario