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CANADA'S FUTURE.

THIS subject is so completely surrounded with enigmas and latent elements that anything beyond mere conjecture is at present next to impossible. Upon this important question, there are various opinions and theories, emanating from thoughtful and cultured minds; yet all these seem to unite in the common conclusion that Canada will not long continue its present relations: that the frail link which the Imperial appointment of a Governor-General affords will not be sufficient to perpetuate the connection between this and the Mother Country; that a new era in our political and possibly in our social condition is near at hand.

Imperial Federation, Federation with the United States, and National Independence as the destiny of this country—to be reached in the near future—are freely discussed, and many sanguine advocates for each may be found. Far less information has however been furnished by the friends of Imperial Federation than by those who support either Annexation or Independence. Indeed the proposition for the first named has been scarcely more than presented for consideration; while the arguments for and against it are conspicuous by their apparent lack of knowledge of the subject, at least in its details.

A commission however, consisting of representatives from almost every Colony of Great Britain, has lately been in session in London, its avowed object being the discussion of questions of defence and postal arrangement existing between England and her Colonies, with the view of improvement. But this meeting of delegates and this discussion are rightly regarded as only preliminary to a consideration of the broader and more important question—Imperial Federation.

As I have stated, American Federation or Annexation and Colonial Independence have been more widely and thoroughly presented: the former in various forms, with attractive surroundings. The term Annexation has been disarmed of much of its significance and unpopularity in Canada, by substituting Commercial Union; by this change of terms a far more attractive subject for discussion has been introduced. The unrestricted reciprocity idea has received much attention and gained many adherents. It has been strongly supported by prominent men in the United States and Canada: notably by Prof. Goldwin Smith—probably the most polished writer in America; and by Erastus Wiman, a Canadian millionaire residing in New York, a gentleman of vast influence in both countries. He is endowed with a high order of talent, and gifted with a ready and convincing style of writing and speaking. The arguments of these gentlemen have lately received additional point and force on account of a marked difference of opinion between the Governments of the United States and Canada, in relation to the protection of our fisheries under the Treaty of 1818. Much irritation on the subject exists between the two countries; and to allay that feeling it has been strongly urged that all trade restrictions should be removed. Many farmers, whose interests are alleged to be injuriously affected by existing relations, and the Toronto Board of Trade, have already held conventions to consider the question, the former declaring that the best interests of Canada would be

conserved by Commercial Union, the latter resolving the very reverse. I think however it has become clearly evident that Canadian sentiment— notwithstanding these efforts to change it—remains strongly adverse to such relationship with the United States. The impression seems to prevail that unrestricted trade between the two countries would necessarily lead to a political union, and this the loyalty of our people to their own and British institutions refuses to entertain. While I have but little doubt that a Commercial Union antagonistic to the trade interests of England would surely lead first to Canadian separation, and subsequently—from necessity—to Annexation, I do not believe that a reciprocal trade treaty, recognising British, American, and Canadian interests, would ever be followed by a political union with the United States. On the contrary, I think that an enlarged intercourse, which freedom of trade must certainly produce, would but enhance the feeling of loyalty, by affording increased opportunities to Canadians of observing the instability of Republican institutions, and understanding more clearly the tendency towards disruption that a pure democracy presents. For although there is every outward appearance of material prosperity and unanimity of sentiment in the United States, there exist undercurrents, political and social, of great danger to the State. These are constantly maturing, and ere long will become most difficult to control, if control be even possible. Already a terrible civil war has spread horror over that land, directly resulting in the sacrifice of over 2,000,000 of human beings—brothers in relation, language, and religion. Already two Presidents have been assassinated, and for a term of four years a third presided by usurped power. With such startling events, all of recent date, in a Republic, but little more than a century after its formation, it would be a mistake to suppose that no recurrence of them would be repeated. With far greater reason might we predict that as these elements of discontent and disruption develop, the danger will become more imminent, and future results more calamitous. At any rate Canadian ideas of liberty and government, drawn from observation and information already possessed, are totally adverse to republican sentiment and practices; so much so that a political union of the two countries would simply be impossible at present.

If then Commercial Union or Annexation may be regarded as out of the question, would Colonial Independence meet with greater approval by the people of Canada? This proposal is presented with many plausible arguments. An Independent Nationality has in its very name attractions sufficient to stir the ambition of patriotic Canadians, but the aspirations of these will be sensibly lessened when the relative geographical position, population, and wealth of the United States and Canada come to be rightly considered, and the consequences dispassionately weighed. For though the former cannot fairly be regarded as an aggressive nation, still with a population of 60,000,000 as against our 5,000,000, and possessed of wealth greater than the wealth of England, it would seem a hopeless effort to attempt competition without at least the moral support that England now furnishes. For notwithstanding Canada in territorial area is equal, in population, wealth, and variety of climate she is vastly inferior, to the United States. Canadian Independence would therefore present the spectacle of two nationalities on the same continent, with a common origin and language, but the one all powerful, the other comparatively weak. In cases of dispute between these—as in the fishery question—Canadian interests would always suffer, because, although we might be able to maintain our contention by force of arms as we have done before, still every fresh cause of dispute would produce a feeling of unrest and doubt in Canada, sufficient at least to retard substantial progress, while the immense advantage that uncontrolled power confers would rest altogether with the United States. I fear therefore that an Independent Nationality under such depressing conditions would be so hedged in by danger as to preclude its ultimate success. I cannot consequently anticipate that Canadians will willingly disregard their existing advantages, secured through their connection with England, to embrace only very doubtful prospects of independent success, should that connection be severed. Hence I am necessarily forced to the conclusion that Canada will share the destiny of England, whatever that destiny may be, or at least be chiefly influenced by England when shaping her own. Every passing occurrence clearly indicates a closer alliance with that great nation. The recent exhibition of Colonial products—attended with most gratifying results—was the first step toward