

THE SATURDAY READER.

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FIVE CENTS.

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Continued from week to week, the NEW STORY,
"HALF A MILLION OF MONEY,"
written by the author of "Barbara's History" for
All the Year Round, edited by CHARLES DICKENS.

TO OUR FRIENDS.

ANY person getting up a Club of five will be entitled to a free copy of the READER, during the existence of the Club; and if a yearly Club of ten, to a free copy of the paper, and a handsomely bound copy (two volumes) of Garnett's History of Canada, which is published at \$3.00 by R. Worthington, Publisher and Bookseller, next door to Post Office, Montreal.

THE "DOCTOR."

IT seems to be a fundamental law of nature that a man cannot be at once a poet and a statesman. The great Richelieu attempted the experiment and failed miserably; his poetry was execrable, while he stands in the first rank of the statesmen of France. In England, the second Duke of Buckingham was still more unfortunate, for he succeeded in neither, and his efforts only served to consign him to an unenviable immortality in the trenchant satire of Dryden. Dryden himself was as bad a politician as he was a good poet. Addison could write the tragedy of *Cato* and the Campaign, a poem; but he could not write a despatch. The politics of Swift constitute the only intellectual blot on his genius; and Walter Scott was probably the worst politician of his day. These facts appear to have been forgotten by Dr. McKay, chief correspondent of the London Times in North America. He is a poet, and has lately become a politician. It is possible, indeed, that he may have first arrived at the modest conviction that, like Richelieu, the inferior quality of his rhymes give evidence of his being destined to be a statesman; yet as we are very slightly acquainted with his writings except his letters in the Times, we will not pretend to judge how far he would be justified in such a view of his own case. But as poets are naturally vain, we wish he had reserved his vanity for his poetry, and his modesty for his politics. The one be

as indifferent as we know the other to be, Shakespeare and Milton need not tremble on their thrones, though Tupper might, to whose class and school we believe he belongs. But, *badinage* apart, we consider the now celebrated Montreal letter of the correspondent of the Times on Canadian matters, to be alike unworthy of the great journal in which it appeared, and of the grave subject of which it treats. It is a mere trader's view of the question; and Dr. McKay ought to be aware that the consideration of material interests alone have seldom, if ever, led to a revolution, such as the annexation of this country to the United States would be. The Montreal annexationists of 1849 committed the same mistake. No case could have been better argued from their point of view; but they did not remember, or were ignorant, that the feelings and passions of the people must be appealed to, as well as their reason and interests, to compass a revolution, a transfer of allegiance, or a change of dynasty. Now, the feelings and passions—and prejudices if you will—of the people of Canada and British North America are all opposed to a Union with the United States and a disruption of the connection with England, as they were in 1849. The Doctor is evidently a philosopher; we Canadians are not philosophers, and the sentiment of loyalty, or by whatever name it may be called, has grown with our growth, and cannot easily be eradicated. Many of us were born in the British Isles, some among us have fought and bled in the cause of the empire, and to these last at least, the transfer of them, soul and body, to a foreign country, above all to a country whose enmity to England is openly avowed, seems to partake of sacrilege. To come to individual instances. Admiral Vansittart and Admiral Baldwin, two veterans of the Royal Navy, were, some years ago, residents of Upper Canada, where their families are still established. They are since dead; but would Dr. McKay have dared to approach these two old officers, and advise them to change the flag of England for that of the United States? Many others are similarly circumstanced. What, too, if shortly after annexation, a war were to occur between the United States and England? Is it to be included in the bargain of transfer that we British Canadians are to fight, not only against the native country of many of us, but to shed the blood of our own relations, our fathers and our brothers, as it may happen? In the event of a rupture between the States and France, are the French Canadians expected to combat the soldiers of the land from which they drew their origin, and to which they are yet fondly attached? These are trifles to pseudo-philosophers and pseudo-economists; but with men of ordinary capacity and habits of thought they have no small weight. Dr. McKay also announces to the British public that the people of Canada are willing to continue in connection with Great Britain, so long as it costs them nothing, but that they will not exert themselves to maintain that connection—in short that

their loyalty and attachment to the mother country is a sham, and that tested by its money value, it would be found wholly wanting. This charge chiefly refers to the question of military defences. We imagine that even the Doctor will admit that, considering the state of our finances, we have, of late, not been illiberal in the matter of the militia. So we shall let that pass. As respects the fortifications which we are called upon to erect, if our learned censor knew anything of the history of Canadian defences, he would have hesitated before passing judgment against us. Perhaps he is not aware that of the millions laid out by England in this behalf, the greater part might as well have been cast into the sea, and that with the exception of the fortifications of Quebec there is little to shew for the money spent. Canals were made that are all but useless, forts were built that would not stand a day's siege, lands were purchased for military purposes at fabulous prices, and sold soon after for next to nothing. With these facts on record we are asked to expend millions upon works of which we only know that they are to be erected somehow and somewhere, under the direction of those who have already left so many monuments of their folly behind them. Can it be a subject for surprise that with the lesson of the past before us, we should be somewhat sceptical in our faith in the builders of the Grenville and Ottawa canals, and dilatory in consigning our money to the same valueless purposes. One thing is perfectly plain, namely, that we are thoroughly in earnest in seeking the continuance of the existing relations with England, while our advances are coldly received by many English public men, and by some with more than coldness. Our objects may or may not be misrepresented, but the fact cannot be disputed, as far as the great body of our people are concerned. We may hint, also, that the scheme of erecting fortifications did not originate in this country. We did not, and do not, ask England to build them for us. To decline to do a thing and to beg others to do it for you, have quite a different meaning.

Dr. McKay's statements do not certainly justify the conclusions he draws from them. If the friends of annexation be so numerous, influential and intelligent, why do they not show themselves, openly and fearlessly? Nobody will hurt them; they will not be lynched, nor stoned, nor prosecuted, although "a minority." But the whole affair is folly and worse than folly. Annexation must be the act of the people, and not of individuals, cliques or classes, be they whom they may. Are the people of Canada ripe for a change so momentous? Few will presume to assert that they are, or that they are likely to be so, for some time, at all events.

WOMAN'S LOVE—Woman's love, like the rose blossoming in the arid desert, spreads its rays over the barren plain of the human heart, and while all around it is black and desolate, it rises more strengthened from the absence of every other charm.