

framers of the document, but the reverse. One of their assigned motives for adopting the particular constitution which they select, is the desire of "perpetuating the connexion of the colonies with the "mother country." And, in fact, the scheme which they have proposed is based on the continuance of the connexion, and, if it was removed, would necessarily fall to the ground. For no Executive government is provided but that which "is vested in the Sovereign "of the United Kingdom of Great Britain "and Ireland." It is true that this government is "to be administered "according to the well-understood principles of the British constitution;" in plain English, that the name of the Crown or its representative is to be a mere mask, under which the real power is to be exercised by the heads of the dominant party in the colonies: but, as will appear hereafter, the mask is indispensable. Its removal would reveal what few would care to embrace.

We do not propose here to discuss the political connexion of the colonies in general, or that of the North American colonies in particular, with the mother country. But, before the connexion is solemnly ratified anew, and the future prosperity of a great community built upon that foundation, let the question be fairly and manfully looked in the face. These colonies are separated from us by three thousand miles of ocean. They are inaccessible for the purposes of military co-operation during nearly half the year. They are brought into intimate relations, diplomatic and commercial, with the communities of a different continent from ours. Their fundamental institutions—the principle of social and political equality, the absence of hereditary rank, of primogeniture and entails, their free churches and common schools,—are essentially those of the New, not those of the Old World. They are so far from being identified with us in commercial interest that they impose protective duties on our goods. At the present moment, both the mother-country and the colony are brought by the connexion into gratuitous peril: for

the angry Americans, though they have no desire for Canada as a territorial acquisition, are tempted to pick quarrels with us by its opportuneness as a battlefield; while the Canadians would be perfectly safe if they were not involved in the danger of a collision between us and the Americans. The hope of a Canadian force, able fairly to share with us the burden of defence, must by this time have passed away. The Canadians will not bear the taxation requisite for a regular army; and, in a country where the people are so thinly scattered and so much occupied, an effective militia or volunteer force is almost out of the question. On the other hand, supposing the political connexion to be dissolved, all the effective ties of kinship would remain; nor does there seem to be any objection to our abrogating, as against Canadians, all the legal and political disabilities of aliens, so that a Canadian coming to reside in England might be at once, in every respect, an English citizen. Under these circumstances, does not true wisdom, with which sound sentiment is never at variance, dictate the friendly and cautious termination of the present connexion? This is the question which it is the duty—the hard duty, no doubt—of those who have the destinies of the two communities in their keeping now to determine; and to determine with reference to the real interests of those concerned, not under the influence of mere tradition, mere phrases, or such empty fancies as the notion of *prestige*. Does the "*prestige*" of having the defence of Canada on our hands at this moment form a safeguard, in the opinion of any human being, against the danger which is present to every one's mind, and the occurrence of which was easily foreseen from the commencement of the great volcanic eruption in the adjoining States?

To proceed to the projected constitution. The first clause proposes a *federal* union of the colonies; and the next clause speaks of the *federation* of the British North American Provinces. But the third clause avows the desire, in framing the scheme of Government, "to

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