

CANADA AND THE JESUITS.

By GOLDWIN SMITH, IN MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE FOR OCTOBER.

(Continued.)

The French Revolution for the time estranged Quebec with its clergy from Old France. But the estrangement is now at an end, and France is recognized as the mother country. France on her part welcomes the returning affection of her daughter, and the old relations, saving the political connection, are renewed.

The history of Canada used in the French schools is a history of French Canada alone. Scarcely does it notice the existence of the British Provinces. In a perfectly national spirit it magnifies the victories of the French in Canada over the British, belittles those of the British, and presents the British in an odious light. It accuses the English of wishing to treat French Canada as they treated Ireland, and ascribes the deliverance of the French to their own patriotic efforts, animated by their religious faith, and seconded by fear of the United States which drove England to concession. It is evidently intended to implant in the heart of the young French Canadian allegiance to French Canada as a separate nation, love of France, and antagonism to the British conqueror.

But the aspirations of the French are not confined to the Province of Quebec. "La Verite" as we have seen, boasts that they have conquered the eastern townships of Ontario. Politicians of Ontario styling themselves Liberals, but under the influence of the Catholic vote, have helped to open the gate; the French have not only introduced their language into the schools but their ecclesiastical system into the localities, and resistance to them now comes late. Their advance is probably helped by a Protectionist policy, which, applied to a country like Canada, produces commercial atrophy, and sends many of the best of our British farmers out of the country, thus making room for the Frenchman, who is content with pease-sonp while the English man requires beef. But into the North Eastern States of the Union also the French have passed by hundreds of thousands. There are said to be one hundred and fifty thousand in Massachusetts alone. The French priesthood of Quebec scent a danger to faith from this connection, and "repatriation" has been attempted, it is needless to say, in vain. Apparently the lingual and intellectual unity of the continent, on which the unity of its civilization depends, is in jeopardy from the intrusive growth of a French nation. It will not be saved by the statesmanship of American politicians, whose treatment of the Canadian question vies in feebleness, inconsistency and vacillation with the treatment of the Irish question by their British counterparts. Thus strangely the struggle between the rival races for ascendancy in the New World, which seemed to have been settled for ever on the Plains of Abraham, is now renewed in a different form.

The ambition of French nationalism is extended to the Canadian North-West, where there is a population of French Half-breeds under clerical rule, the political power of which during the infancy of the settlement has been sufficient to force bilingualism on the Legislature of Manitoba. But in that quarter there is little hope for the Nationalists. The half-breed population does not increase, and if immigration takes place on a large scale it will soon be overwhelmed.

Till now there have been two political parties in Quebec, the *Bleus* or Tories and the *Rouges* or Liberals, connected with the Tory and Liberal parties of Ontario, though in a loose way, and,

especially in the case of the *Bleus*, with more of interest than of principle in the connection. But now, in the person of Mr. Mercier, a Nationalist and Ultramontane leader, independent of any Dominion party, has arisen. He calls all good Frenchmen to union on the ground of nationality. "Cessons nos luttes fratricides, unissons-nous." He says it is time that the Blue and the Red should be blended in the Tricolour. Apparently the people answer to his appeal. He has at all events got power into his hands, and seems likely to hold it.

No one can blame the French for their aspirations, which are natural, or for their attachment to their own mother country, which is natural also. An English colony placed in their circumstances would do as they do except that it would not put itself under priestly leadership and rule. But this does not alter the situation. Imperialism in the case of Canada has two things to accomplish. It has to separate this line of Provinces permanently from the English-speaking continent of which they are the northern fringe, and it has to fuse British Canada and New France into a nation. What chance is there of thus fusing a French Ultramontane theocracy with a community of British Protestants? If, as "La Verite" says, the ideal of the French Canadian people is not the ideal of the British Canadian, and he is making towards a totally different goal, how is it possible that the two elements should really become partners in the foundation and development of a nation? Where, it may further be asked, is the use of constraining them to make the attempt? What is gained for Canada, for the mother country, or for humanity, by thus forcing or bribing two antagonistic civilizations to remain in quarrelsome wedlock within the same political pale?

The conflict was sure to come, and it has come. On what field battle will be joined it is not easy to say. The Government, while its organs challenge the people to try the question in the courts of law, itself bars access to the Supreme Court, and has even had recourse in Parliament to most questionable strategy for that purpose. The Equal Rights Association is to have an interview in a few days with the Governor-General, but the Governor-General is a Constitutional puppet in the hands of his Ministers, with whom, moreover, his own sympathies as an extreme Tory are known to be, and nobody expects the interview to have any practical result. Its chief fruit will probably be exhortations to peace, which, is an excellent thing, but cannot be permanently established without justice. The only lists apparently open for the combatants are the courts of Quebec, in which the Jesuits have brought a libel suit against "The Toronto Mail" for admitting to its columns a document called the Jesuits' Oath. Out of this suit appeals may arise which will bring the question of principle with regard to the incorporation of the Jesuits before superior and impartial courts. The verdict of a Quebec jury in such a case could obviously settle nothing. It would be the verdict of the Jesuits themselves.

In the meantime reflections suggest themselves.

1. Imperial Federationists must surely be sanguine if they think that the difficulty of this French nationality will disappear in Federation. To the French Canadians Imperial Federation or anything that would tighten the tie to Great Britain is an object of abhorrence. They were at first disposed to give the present Governor-General a cool reception because they had been told that he was an Imperial Federationist. In a war with French the hearts of the French Canadians, if not their arms, would be on the enemy's side. Distance is not the greatest of obstacles with which the Federationists have to contend. Australia is inhabited by a single race, and lies in an ocean by herself. How can the same treatment be applied to her and to Canada, divided as she is

between two rival races, and at the same time joined to a great continent inhabited by the kinsmen of one of them?

2. Reformers who propose to cut the United Kingdom in pieces and pass it through the wonder-working caldron of Federation will perhaps hesitate for the future to appeal to the triumphant success of Federation in Canada as a proof of the safeness of their experiment: not that there would be the slightest analogy in any respect between a union of the North American Colonies under Imperial tutelage and a dissolution of the legislative unity of the British Islands.

3. Those who think that nothing is easier than the creation and operation of a federal union, no matter what the materials may be, or what may be the prevailing tendencies at the time of federation, have also a lesson here set before them. British and French Canada were divided from each other by race and religion; but there was not on the part of the French Canadians towards British Canada anything like the active hatred which has been stirred up among the Irish towards Great Britain. The circumstances in which a political arrangement is made, and the tendencies prevailing at the time of its introduction, require consideration at the hands of statesmen as well as the arrangement itself.

4. We have an inkling in the case of Quebec of the treatment which a Protestant minority would receive at the hands of a Roman Catholic and Celtic Legislature in Ireland. The Jesuits' Estates Act endows out of the public funds, to which Protestants as taxpayers contribute, not only a religious body opposed to Protestantism, but a Society the special and avowed object of which is to destroy Protestantism and to subvert Protestant institutions, as well as to put civil rights and liberties under the feet of the Pope.

5. The fourth reflection is one to which the attention of British Home Rulers is specially called. Their instrument for keeping an Irish Parliament in the traces, and preventing divisions of Legislatures from being followed by dissolution of national unity, is an Imperial veto on Irish legislation. Now this very expedient was tried by the framers of Canadian Confederation. The veto given to the Dominion Government upon Provincial legislation is perfectly general, no limitation of any kind being suggested by the British North America Act; nor can there be any doubt that it was intended to keep the action of the local Legislature in harmony with the general policy of the country, and at the same time to protect minorities of race and religion in the several Provinces. That such was understood to be its object plainly appears from the debates on Confederation in the Canadian Legislature. Mr. Mackenzie, afterwards Premier of the Dominion, adverting to the possibility of injustice being done by a Provincial majority of race, said, "I admit that it is reasonable and just to insert a provision in the scheme that will put it out of the power of any party to act unjustly. If the power that the central authority is to have of vetoing the doings of the local Legislature is used, it will be ample, I think, to prevent anything of that kind." "The want of such a power", Mr. Mackenzie observed, "was a great source of weakness in the United States, and it was a want that would be remedied in the Constitution before very long." The disruption of the American Union by Southern secession was vividly present to the minds of the architects of Canadian Federation, and led them to fear and avoid above all things weakness in the central power. Mr., afterwards Sir John, Rose said, "Now, Sir, I believe this power of negative, this power of veto, this controlling power on the part of the Central Government, is the best protection and safeguard of the system; and if it had not been provided, I would have felt it very difficult to reconcile it to my sense of duty to vote for the resolutions."