

portunity for future development than any other citizenship in the world. There is scarcely an important article of liberty, indeed, in the government of Europe and America which has not been copied to some extent from Great Britain. For Canada, then, to cut adrift from this abounding source of original, civil and political freedom is certainly not the path of safety. For Canada to declare her independence, and thus at least to lessen in some measure the relationship which binds her to British liberties, traditions and political ideals, would certainly mean a very sensible diminution of personal liberty and personal richness of sentiment, character and citizenship for every Canadian citizen. It is probable, indeed, that history has never offered to any people a political ideal of such splendid opportunities for free development as the ideal of a united British Federation of free nations. Walter Pater says, in "Marius, the Epicurean," "The mere sense of belonging to a system—an Imperial system or organisation—has in itself the expanding power of a great experience," and he might have added that this power is itself nothing else than the expansive power of human freedom. Such an ideal is too attractive to minds of vision to easily pass away.

This problem of Canadian autonomy seems, however, to be of peculiar interest to some of the people of the French race in the Province of Quebec. Fortunately, however, the British Empire is not founded upon race. This is not to be an Anglo-Saxon, but a British Empire. Ethnologically, perhaps, the French people of Quebec are nearer the original British blend than any other race in the Empire. The Empire will, therefore, be theirs in a peculiar sense. Even Great Britain herself is not one race, but two or many races. It is not many years since France and Scotland were allies making war upon their Anglo-Saxon neighbours,

and this friendship is not even yet forgotten. No true Imperialist can cavil for a moment with French sentiment. The French people of Quebec cherish their language, their religion and their race. They would be ingrates if they did not. All British people respect this sentiment in others as they cherish it in themselves. It is by cherishing, and not repressing, such noble sentiments, indeed, that nations and empires become vital and strong. The British Federation is designed solely as a political union, in which all races who dwell within its borders, and who are capable of self-government, will enjoy the very maximum of personal and political freedom consistent with Christian morals. Indeed, perhaps, the very finest result of such a union will be the final breaking down of that race prejudice which has been the cause of so much jealousy and war in the past, for we are to be not merely a British Union, but also a Christian Union. We propose to adopt British forms of government only because they are everywhere acknowledged to be the freest and the best, and because most of us have been living under them already for a century or more, and, perhaps, we may add, indeed, that this is the only sense in which the Empire can be called British at all. We have no quarrel with the Nationalist propaganda so far as it is designed to foster French sentiment, but where we do question it is at the point where it struggles to enlist that sentiment in the interests of a narrow and restricted Canadian sectionalism.

What then can Canada do? Possibly Mr. Ewart, like many others, thinks that we should formally declare Canadian independence and then allow the Empire to survive under the form of a merely sentimental alliance. Unfortunately, however, this theory is based upon an impossible philosophy similar to the theory which confuses autonomy and independence, to which we have already