

"THE MENTAL OUTFIT OF THE NEW DOMINION."

(From the Montreal Gazette, Nov. 5th, 1867.)

The third fortnightly meeting of the lecture season at the Literary Club took place Monday evening (Nov. 4th.) More than ordinary interest was excited by the fact that the paper to be read was by the Hon. T. D. McGee. His subject was "The Mental Outfit of the New Dominion," and a topic more interesting to the literary public, or appropriate to the present time could hardly have been selected by the lecturer.

The chair was taken at 8 o'clock by the President of the club, the Rev. Dr. Jenkins, who introduced the lecturer to the audience in a few well-chosen words. At the close the Rev. Dr. Balch pronounced a high eulogium upon the paper, and moved, seconded by Mr. Murray, that the thanks of the club be tendered to the lecturer for his able and eloquent address. The President brought the meeting to a close with the announcement that the next paper at the club would be read by Mr. Billings on the subject of "Reason and Instinct."

The following is Mr. McGee's address:—

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN: I propose to offer the Club a short paper, on "The Mental Outfit of the New Dominion."

Concerning the physical resources of the united Provinces—their military and maritime interests—the changes and improvements in their means of intercourse—their most urgent necessities in the way of legislation: of all these there will be occasions enough to speak elsewhere. For the present subject, the present time would seem most suitable, and this Club the natural audience, to which to address whatever is to be said. It is true some mere politician may say, "let us look to Ottawa," as to the best collection of our mental productions; or some much occupied citizen here, (in Montreal,) may interpose with, "patience, friend, we are building our city." I know the city must be built, and I hope it will be wisely and well built; I know the country must be governed, and I trust it will be well and wisely governed; but it can neither hinder the growth of the city, nor distract the councils of the country, to consider now, on the eve of our first Dominion

Parliament, with what intellectual forces and appliances, with what quantity and kind of mental common stock, we are about to set up for ourselves, a distinct national existence in North America.

All political observers are, I believe, now agreed that all the forces of a nation may be classed under the three heads, of moral, mental, and physical force. It needs no argument to prove, that in this reading and writing age; "the age of the press" as it has been called, power must be wherever true intelligence is, and where most intelligence, most power. If England conquers India by intellect and bravery, she can retain it only at the price of re-educating India; if a Czar Peter and a Czarina Catherine, add vast realms to the Russian Empire, they too, must send out the schoolmasters to put up the fences, and break in the wild cattle they have caught; if a United States reaches the rank of first powers, it must at the same time, send its best writers as ambassadors of its interior civilization. To this end Benjamin Franklin, Irving, Everett, Paulding, Bancroft, Motley and Marsh, have been selected with the true instinct of mental independence, to represent the new country at the old courts of Christendom; while Payne, Gooderich, Hawthorne, Mitchell, and other literary men, have filled important consular offices, by the dictation of the same sentiment, of intellectual self-assertion. Regarding the New Dominion as an incipient new Nation, it seems to me, that our mental self-reliance is an essential condition of our political independence; I do not mean a state of public mind, puffed up on small things; an exaggerated opinion of ourselves and a barbarian depreciation of foreigners; a controversial state of mind; or a merely imitative apish civilization. I mean a mental condition, thoughtful and true; national in its preferences, but catholic in its sympathies; gravitating inward, not outward; ready to learn from every other people on one sole condition, that the lesson when learned, has been worth acquiring. In short, we should desire to see, Gentlemen, our new national character distinguished by a manly modesty as much as by

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