

THE WEEK :

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CONTENTS OF CURRENT NUMBER.

TOPICS—	PAGE
The Canadian Outlook	675
Literature and Intelligence in French Canada	675
British Columbia Sealers Organizing	675
The Future of Victoria University	675
Hand-Work in Education	676
The Trade of the British Empire	676
An Inconclusive Argument	676
Tariff Agitation in the United States	676
Will China Retaliate?	676
Mr. Balfour's University Scheme	677
Lessons of the Great Strike	677
The French Republic	677
The Smokeless Gunpowder	677
A Year of Calamities	677
DRY-NURSING THE COLONIES	677
MONTREAL LETTER	678
AUTUMN (Poem)	679
PARIS LETTER	679
MY QUEEN (Poem)	680
A CORNISH PARSON	680
PRESENT SERVICE (Poem)	681
MANNERS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	681
PARISIAN LITERARY NOTES	681
AMID THE HEMLOCKS (Poem)	682
AN ARTIST'S LETTERS FROM THE ROCKIES.—III.	682
A SOLDIER OF FORTUNE	682
CORRESPONDENCE—	
Howells Again	683
THE PROGRESS OF INDIA	683
TRUE TALE	683
MUSIC AND THE DRAMA	684
OUR LIBRARY TABLE	684
LITERARY AND PERSONAL GOSSIP	685
READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE	685
CHESS	686

All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any other person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

NO, we may say in reply to our respected correspondent in last issue, we have not burned our boats behind us. "If the Mother Country should ask Canada to join her in a national and political partnership which should take the form of a great federation," and should show how such a federation could be formed with due regard to Canadian autonomy, finances, geographical and commercial conditions, and so forth, THE WEEK would be among the foremost to urge that the proposal should receive the most earnest and hopeful attention with a view to prompt acceptance. It is because we are sceptical not only as to the probability of any such invitation being given, but even as to the acceptance by the Mother Country of any proposition which could possibly be made by the colonies themselves looking to such a federation, that we are disposed to regard the hope of a national future for Canada as practically bounded by the alternatives of Independence or—nothing. What we are specially desirous just now of promoting is thoughtful consideration and discussion of the Canadian outlook. The time is surely ripe for such discussion. Events over which we have no control, notably the strange failure to protect the rights of Canadian fishermen in Behring Sea, are forcing it upon us. The general admission that permanent colonialism is impossible is one of the most serious moments, from every point of view. What shall take its place? It is easy of course to drift, but it is also easy to see what direction the drifting is likely to take and where it would probably land us. It would be as unwise as useless to deny that there are serious obstacles in the way of giving to the scattered provinces of Canada, so loosely connected as yet by the Confederation, the cohesion and unity essential to vigorous and progressive nationality. Are those obstacles insuperable? Are they not, to say the least, much less formidable than those which will confront any conceivable scheme of Imperial Federation?

IS it true that the literature of a nation forms a reliable criterion of its state of civilization? This question becomes of practical importance in comparing the respective conditions of the French-speaking and English-speaking parts of Canada. Those who make such comparisons to the

disparagement of the former are usually answered by an appeal to the honour-lists in the school of Canadian literature. By this test it cannot be denied that our French fellow-countrymen stand at least on a level with citizens of Anglo-Saxon lineage. How does this admitted fact comport with the charges so often urged against the French clerical system of education, and its alleged results in the mediæval ignorance, superstition, and non-progressiveness of the average *habitant*? The facts simply prove that the criterion is unreliable. The literature of a country must be measured by its breadth rather than its height or depth before it can be safely accepted as a clue to the state of education or general intelligence amongst the whole people. Many of the masterpieces of both ancient and modern literature were produced in ages and countries in which the masses of the people were in the most abject intellectual bondage. It is but too true, as Charles Dudley Warner pointed out in his "Comments on Canada," in *Harper's Magazine* a few months ago, that "literary men have not realized the richness of the French material, nor the work accomplished by French writers in history, poetry, essays, and romances. It is also true, more's the pity, that English-speaking Canadians, as a class, are on a par with others in their lack of knowledge and appreciation. A strong plea might be based upon this fact for the use of bi-lingual books and teachers in English as well as French public schools in Ontario. But to return to our point, the production of a very creditable amount of literature of a high class by Canadian French writers is clearly of no avail to disprove the common belief in regard to the lamentable backwardness of the great majority of the Canadian French in all the essentials of intelligence and enterprise, as compared with their fellow-Canadians of British origin. That belief is based upon the evidence of facts which are patent to all who choose to inquire into the matter. The French Catholic clergy, and possibly many of the educated laity would, we suppose, reply in effect with a misapplication of the aphorism, "Where ignorance is bliss," etc. Be that as it may, it is not open to them to plead, as M. Beaugrand did in *The Forum* a few weeks since, the quantity and quality of French-Canadian literature as a refutation of the common opinion.

A LATE number of the *Victoria Colonist* contains an account of a meeting of vessel-owners and others interested in the sealing industry, at which it was resolved to form a Sealers' Association for the purpose of protecting the rights and property of its members in the Behring Sea. It is rather unlikely that this resolution of men driven to the verge of desperation by a sense of injustice and outrage, can be carried out. The expense of fitting out their vessels with guns and ammunition such as could enable them to cope on equal terms with an armed American cruiser seems of itself to stamp their project as hopeless. But should the sealers, who, it is calculated, have been despoiled of property and suffered loss in business amounting in the aggregate to a quarter of a million dollars, prove really in earnest in the matter, and prepare their vessels to offer armed resistance to any vessel molesting them on the open sea, it would be curious to see what action the American and British Governments would respectively take. It is more exasperating than surprising to be told, as we were lately by so good an authority as Sir Edwin Arnold, that the people of England know nothing about the Behring Sea affair. The fact that such an occurrence produces no effect in Great Britain, outside of official circles, and, so far as appears, excites but the mildest interest within such circles, is strikingly suggestive of the immense distance, racial and social as well as geographical, by which the centre of the British Empire is separated from its colonial extremities. Time was when Britons were disposed to boast of the analogy between their great Empire and that of Imperial Rome in the days when the words, "I am a Roman Citizen," sufficed to protect her subjects from insult and injury at the farthest bounds of civilization. The most loyal citizen of British Columbia will hardly claim that the same is true of British citizenship in the year 1889. We know not what view of the matter the British Government are taking. That is, indeed, one of the many mysteries of the situation. But we are only too sure that the failure to secure or demand prompt redress for the out-

rageous treatment to which the British Columbian sealers have been subjected is doing more to shake Canadian confidence in the permanence, or the advantages of British connection, than can be undone in a long time. Nor can the Canadian Government be held blameless in the matter. Surely if it were sufficiently importunate it could at least obtain Imperial sanction for some assurance to the Canadian people that their rights will be vindicated and reparation made at some future day, however distant, and by some diplomatic process, however tedious.

WITH the liberal bequests of the late Mr. Gooderham to Victoria College, the struggle that has for some time been in progress with reference to the future course of that institution seems likely to enter upon a new phase. The condition of removal to Toronto attached to these bequests has settled, no doubt, the question of location. But it seems to have by no means determined whether the University when transferred to Toronto shall be carried on as an independent institution, or in federation with the University of Toronto. There appears to be much room for difference of opinion. The advocates of federation will naturally claim that the two ideas of location in Toronto and federation with the Provincial University were so closely associated in the mind of the deceased benefactor that he took it for granted that the one involved the other. The advocates of independence may argue, with perhaps equal plausibility, that the very fact of his having made no condition in respect to federation proves that the alternative of independence was clearly in the mind of the testator, and that he purposely and advisedly used such terms as would leave the Denomination free in this matter. The question is one of general as well as denominational interest. Its decision will virtually determine the partial success or the virtual failure of the attempt made by the Minister of Education and the Legislature at his instance, to consolidate, or rather co-ordinate, the higher educational institutions of the Province. Many thoughtful educators, looking at the vast financial resources considered necessary in these days for the establishment and operation of a University worthy of the name, will be disposed to think that the thoroughness and efficiency of Victoria are at stake, and that federation opens up the only way of escape from the feebleness inseparable from inadequate endowment and denominational narrowness. Others, again, whose opinions are perhaps equally entitled to respect, cannot look without serious misgivings upon the prospect of the dreary uniformity in educational methods and ideals, and the lack of stimulus to progress, which would ensue were all the courses of study and instruction in our higher institutions to be formed on the same plan, and the minds of all the forthcoming graduates cast in the same educational mould. The latter class of reasoners will no doubt be strongly reinforced by the large and growing class of those who favour voluntarism in higher education both by reason of faith in its potency, and for the sake of the political and sociological principles involved.

A LATE number of the *Canadian Architect and Builder* contains a well-written description of the first Manual Training department which has been established in connection with an educational institution in Canada—that of the Baptist College at Woodstock. This College, aided by the liberal bequests of the late Hon. William McMaster, has erected a building especially for the purposes of a manual-training department, and fitted it up with extensive machinery, tools, and other appliances, including an engine of ten-horse power. The manual training course is, we believe, optional and is engrafted upon the other courses in such a manner as to interfere but slightly, if at all, with the pursuit of one of the regular college courses. It is, in fact claimed by the managers of institutions having such departments, in the United States and elsewhere, that the two or three hours per day which are spent in the workshop are a help rather than a hindrance to success in the more exclusively intellectual studies. The design of the manual-training exercises is not, by any means, to teach trades, but merely to educate the hand and those perceptive and other faculties which are brought into requisition in connection with hand-work. From both the educational and the industrial point of view the experiment is not without interest for thoughtful observers. It is too true