

# THE WEEK.

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## THE WEEK :

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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.

"SOME aspects of Imperial Federation" was the topic of a very able and interesting address delivered by Mr. Granville C. Cunningham, before the annual meeting of the Toronto branch of the Imperial Federation League, on the evening of Thursday, the 9th inst. The courage and candour with which Mr. Cunningham presented and faced the tremendous difficulties to be overcome before the grand scheme which he so clearly outlined can be realized, are worthy of all praise. "However great," said he, "the difficulties may be in the way, the federation of the British empire can be lasting and permanent only if her political system accords complete autonomy in local affairs with due representation in imperial affairs." He added, with obvious truth, that the difficulties in the way are very great and that those difficulties lie in England rather than in the Colonies. In the course of the discussion which followed Mr. Cunningham's address it was argued that some scheme of imperial unity might be brought about without the adoption of the federal system for Great Britain and Ireland. But most minds which address themselves fairly to the problem will, we think, reach Mr. Cunningham's conclusion, that a reconstruction of the present parliamentary system of the British islands, on a federal basis, would be an indispensable first step in the direction of any stable and satisfactory federation of the Empire. We are not of the number of those who scout the idea of such a change in the British home government as utterly beyond the pale of possibility. On the contrary, we quite agree with Mr. Cunningham that, notwithstanding the intense conservatism of the British mind in the aggregate, and, notwithstanding the deep-seated reverence with which it regards those grand Parliamentary institutions which are the growth of centuries, the trend of opinions and of events in Great Britain in the direction of home federation is at present marked and unmistakable. In fact the thin edge of the wedge is now fairly inserted. Rather should we say the thin edges of several wedges are already inserted, and the immense weight of neglected but needed legislation, constantly accumulating, is pressing them home. The most serious difficulty that presents itself from this point of view is the inevitable delay. The "proverbial slowness" with which the English always move in such matters relegates the change to a future so distant that it is, to say the least, extremely doubtful whether

either Canada or Australia could afford to wait for it, even were the consummation one devoutly to be wished in every other respect.

HOPE deferred has, it will be admitted, as enervating an effect upon a people as upon an individual. If it be true, as Mr. Cunningham admits, that we Canadians feel that we have outgrown our colonial position and are aspiring to the dignity and responsibility of full national life, is it wise or reasonable to ask us to relegate our hope to the uncertain issues of a somewhat dim and admittedly distant future? The answer to this question will depend, no doubt, upon conditions. The most obvious of these conditions is the attractiveness of the alternative way or ways which may promise to lead more speedily to the goal. Closely connected with this will be the question of the comparative superiority and certainty of the advantages to result from the proposed federation when at length it shall have become attainable. It would be absurd to attempt to discuss either of these questions in a paragraph. We can but indicate in a word one or two directions in which we should be disposed to look had we time and space for adequate discussion. Annexation we decline to consider as a practical question. Mr. Cunningham dismisses the idea of Independence on the ground that it would give us a weak nation existing mainly upon the sufferance of a powerful neighbour. This argument from timidity will scarcely satisfy the self-reliant Canadian, and it conveys an imputation against our powerful neighbour that is perhaps scarcely deserved. It loses sight of the fact that the United States, if disposed to be hostile, could almost as effectually block Imperial Federation, so far as Canada is concerned, as she could destroy Canadian Independence, and would be much more likely to do so. Above all it ignores the belief, which is one of the chief articles in the creed of the advocates of Independence, that, under the impulse of national life, Canada's great resources would be so rapidly developed, and her sparse population so strongly reinforced, that she would in a short time be no longer weak. Turning, on the other hand, to the grand picture Mr. Cunningham and others delight to paint of the growth and greatness of Canadian commerce under Imperial Federation, the argument fails at the crucial point, in that it gives no sufficient cause why Canada's trade with Great Britain and her colonies should be so much increased by the proposed change. The thing most necessary to a trading community, says Mr. Cunningham, is that "it shall be safe, secure from molestation and free to come and go." But is not all this as true of Canada to-day as a British colony as it could possibly be under any other relation to the mother country? What, then, stands in the way of this great development of Canadian trade with Britain? Would not precisely the same obstacle, whatever it may be, exist after the federation as before? In a word, in giving up, as Mr. Cunningham tacitly does, the visionary hope of a preferential tariff in favour of the outlying parts of the proposed federation, does he not virtually surrender the one "material advantage" derivable from the proposed change?

THAT philosophical problems are problems of human life; that the effects of philosophy on life are, in a general way, and when historically interpreted, a legitimate test of the truth or falsity of a philosophical doctrine or system; these are the primary propositions which Professor Baldwin ventured to maintain in his inaugural lecture on Saturday afternoon. They are bold and comprehensive propositions for these days when so much of what passes as the higher, or at least the truer, thinking oscillates between Positivism and Agnosticism. That they were maintained with a logical grasp and clearness which in themselves go far to vindicate, not only directly the place and use of philosophy as an essential element in sound academic culture, but also indirectly the wisdom of the University authorities in their choice of a successor to the late lamented Professor Young, must, we think, be admitted by all impartial listeners, whatever their personal opinions upon the primary propositions themselves. For our own part we can but congratulate Professor Baldwin on his masterly handling of a most difficult but most important theme; and at the same time congratulate the

present and future students of Toronto University on their privilege of regular lecture-room contact for a term of years with the author of this admirable prelection. It was time that the barren and mischievous notion that the use of philosophy proper in a college course consists simply in the mental exercise, the practice in fine intellectual fencing, which it affords, a notion which has for its corollary that for this use one set of opinions is about as good as another—it was time that such a notion should be boldly challenged. If Professor Baldwin has not shown that Philosophy stands in vital relation both to truth or knowledge, and to conduct, he has at least intimated pretty clearly the lines along which such demonstration may be sought and found. He did well, too, while clearly holding that in order to accomplish his true work in education the instructor in Philosophy must be alive to the essential conditions of progress in each of the great departments of learning, to intimate as clearly that if mind is as real an existence as sense, its phenomena are as well worth studying, and as reliable, as material for scientific induction. The friends of Toronto University have good reason to infer from this address that this important department of instruction is in good hands. If Professor Baldwin's teaching power is equal to his power of thought and expression, and if we may accept a single essay as a key to the latter, we may safely predict that the subject of metaphysics will lose none of its old time popularity in the Provincial University.

ONE of our correspondents, in the discussion of the Manitoba Separate Schools question, said that we "appear to have forgotten that the Manitoba Act is of the nature of a treaty or contract, and that there are at least two sides to it." Writing somewhat hastily last week, we misinterpreted the sentence as referring to the Act of the Manitoba Legislature establishing Separate Schools. The real reference, it is clear on a second reading, is to the Act of the Dominion Parliament by which Manitoba was constituted a Province and admitted into the Confederation. That this Act was to some extent the outcome of a series of conferences held between certain delegates representing or claiming to represent the short-lived Provincial Government of the Red River country and the Dominion Government is beyond question. Admitting for argument's sake that the said Provisional Government had authority to represent the sparse population at that time in the country, and that the delegates to Ottawa correctly represented that Government in the framing of the agreement which was the basis of the Manitoba Act, the broad question would still remain of the right of a few settlers in a large unoccupied territory to enter into a compact binding the future inhabitants of that territory, though nine-tenths of those future inhabitants might have quite different ideas as to what was expedient in the various matters dealt with in the agreement. There would remain, also, the related, but broader, question of the right of even the Dominion Government and the British Parliament to impose an unalterable constitution upon a people entitled to local self-rule as a Province of a virtually autonomous Confederation. As we have before intimated, it appears to us extremely doubtful if the people of either a Province or a Dominion can be properly regarded as a free people, so long as they are held bound by the provisions of constitutional Acts which they have no power to alter or amend. But the particular question under discussion—viz., that of the alleged compact embodied in the Manitoba Act—has now entered a new and remarkable phase. Our correspondent, in the sentence above quoted, had no doubt in mind the Bill of Rights which Archbishop Taché published a few weeks since, as having been presented by the delegates from the Red River country in 1870, and as having been made the basis of negotiation in framing the Manitoba Act. Professor Bryce, of Manitoba University, now comes boldly forward with the astounding statement that the original and only authentic Bill of Rights prepared by the Council of the Provisional Government contains no stipulation in regard to Separate Schools or the distribution of public money for the schools among the different religious denominations. Pending the answer of Archbishop Taché to this very serious charge, it seems but proper to leave the question in abeyance. It is incredible