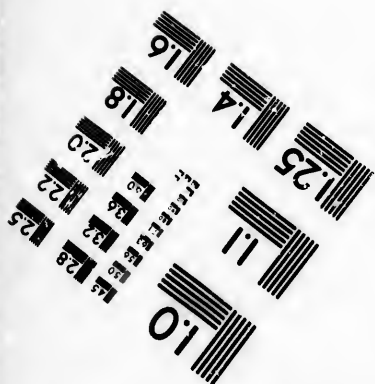
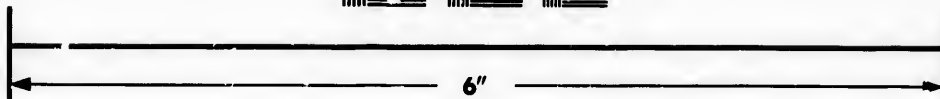
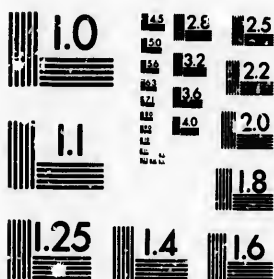


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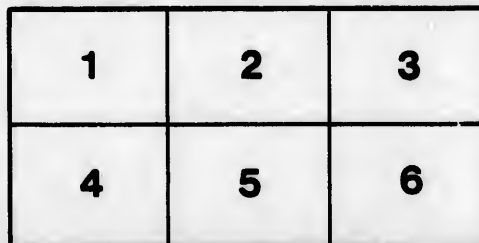
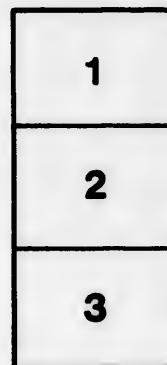
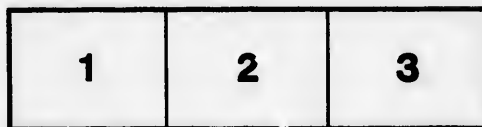
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LETTERS

ON THE PRESENT STATE

OF

NEWFOUNDLAND,

AND ON

CONFEDERATION.



St. John's, Newfoundland,
1869.

LETTERS

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PREFACE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEWFOUNDLANDER.

SIR,—

HAVING heard of an intention, on the part of others, to publish the following Letters in Pamphlet form, I think it well to preface them with a few explanatory remarks:

These letters were not written with a view to publication in their present form, nor with the wish or expectation of exciting discussion or evoking praise or censure.

They are merely the views of a private person, on a question of vital interest to the community to which he belongs.

They were not intended as a series to be fitted and linked together by sequence of argument. Their continuation was determined in a great measure by outward causes—comments and remarks made upon them—that led on the writer from one production to another without any special attention to order or arrangement.

Nevertheless it will be seen that one general argument pervades them, giving them sufficient unity to convey the opinions, and partially effect the object of the writer—the argument of contrast between our present hopeless position and our prospects under Confederation.

The writer has made no pretence of entering into questions of detail, in which he is unskilled, or of meeting narrow objections for which he has no taste, but has endeavoured to place a broad question upon a broad basis—and to test it by principles

and facts, whose truth, at least, no one can gainsay.

From all this three things are explained that have subjected the letters to reprobation in some quarters. They are *anonymous*—they are *incomplete*—they *contain nothing new*. They are *anonymous*, because intended to be considered for the sake of truth, not for the sake of their author; and because it is well known that the bare mention of a name is often the death-blow to calm discussion and the signal for recrimination and insult.

The letters are incomplete, because not intended to be complete, and avowedly dealing with but one part of a large question.

They contain nothing new, probably because there is nothing new under the sun—and one of the surest signs of fallacy and instability is newness.

To conclude, the writer advocates Union, because he hopes it will eventually benefit this country, in which he is as much interested as any one on earth. Confederation cannot affect him personally, or supply one wish of his not already gratified, so that he is truly and literally what he signs himself,

AN OUTSIDER.

February, 1869.

LETTER No. I.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEWFOUNDLANDER.

SIR,—

The argument of your late Editorials is undoubtedly conclusive. It is based upon the statement of the Chamber of Commerce as to the co-existence of immense wealth with immense destitution in this country, and must convince the impartial mind, that, in our trade, the condition of dependence of the fisherman on his merchant must be unfair and the system of remuneration for labor defective.

Comparatively speaking, nothing of the profits of his produce goes to the producer, and in recompense for labor which loads his employer with wealth, he receives a wage so inadequate that, in the majority of cases, he is unprovided with the bare necessaries of life for a great portion of the year, and is thrown for support upon the funds of the Government.

The substance of your statement might be put tersely, thus:

1st.—The produce of the fisherman's labor amounts in value to one million and a half pounds.

2nd.—The condition of the fisherman who produces that immense value, is a condition of almost absolute and universal destitution.

3rd.—Therefore, the system that begets this lamentable result is a rotten and perverse system, and calls for reform and redress.

In answer to this line of argument "a Merchant" in your paper of to-day says that the circumstances of the country and the precarious nature of its trade, justify the system pursued by the supplier, whose "charges are not beyond a fair profit un-

der all the circumstances" and whose "risk ought to be charged for above cash prices." This means, I suppose, (since it is intended as a contradiction to you,) that it is just and right that say 50,000 persons, who produce for a few other persons the value of one million and a half pounds, should live in a state of perpetual destitution; and that the weight that sinks them down to that state and keeps them there, is only the gentle pressure of "charges not beyond a fair profit" and of "risks that ought to be charged something above cash prices."

Can "A Merchant" himself, looking even from his own point of view, thinking only in accordance with the foregone conclusions of self interest, can he believe that the just and moderate regard to his own profit is a sufficient cause to produce and to justify the misery that oppresses two-thirds of our population? Yet such is the direct conclusion to which his statements lead, if he intends his remarks about "charges" and "risks" as a contradiction to what you advance.

But suppose he means these only as an explanation of the difficulties with which his class have to contend, and as a sort of excuse for an apparently severe system of trade; then his whole letter is wide of the question at issue, and is no more an answer to the great fact of universal poverty in the midst of wealth, than if it had never been written. No one wants explanation or excuse for the just rule of elevating prices for goods in proportion to the risk they are exposed to—every one admits the propriety of *that*—there is question of here *so raising* the price of goods, and *so depressing* the condition of the fisherman, that he emerges from his dealings a ruined pauper, while the merchant probably leaves the country a wealthy man, and hands over a still prospering house to some mercantile cadet, who in his turn "charges a fair profit."

and the fisherman feels another foot on his shoulder, and gets a new push downwards to the abyss, if he has not already met the bottom. Again the merchant says that in spite of "profitable charges" and "risks" paid for, "above cash prices" "the trade is not a paying one." Here again he reduces the large question of our social condition to a mere point of class interest, and this statement, whether true or not, has no more to do with contradicting or explaining the fact of universal pauperism amidst immense wealth, than if it were an algebraic equation. But if the trade does not pay the merchant, whom does it pay? It certainly does not pay the starving fisherman; and if it pays neither fisherman nor merchant, then where do the million and a half pounds go? Here we are again at the point. There is no use in going round and round that clear statement of our exports and weaving upon it, to conceal it, a web of irrelevant remarks; and "a merchant" appears to perceive this at last, for towards the end of his letter he advises you "to look to something beyond the Customs' returns to know how merchants are getting on." First, we remark in this piece of counsel the prevalence of the same spirit that would narrow all discussion of our social state to the limits of "a merchant's" own thoughts. He can't conceive for an instant that we can desire to know aught else except "how merchants are getting on," or that there are any other persons in the country whose interests are to be considered in the slightest degree; and this spirit, as usual, again keeps him wide of the question at issue—for he forgets that he is writing a letter to answer a forcible statement and complaint of *how the people are getting on.*

But to consider his counsel as it stands, certainly we admit that "Customs' returns" will not lead us into the secret of all the merchant's.

dealings or all his ways and means of "getting on." But they will teach us what and how much he exports, and that is all we want to know at present, and they *do* teach us that he has exported, the past season, produce to the value of one million and a half pounds. Here again is the awkward fact flying in the face of all "a merchant's" statement about "charges not above a fair profit," "risks that should be charged above cash prices," "trade that does not pay," &c.

It is indeed a sad necessity that has for its results universal destitution on the one side, and on the other the transfer of the whole wealth of the country into other lands, while *this* remains unimproved and exhausted.

Any system of things is better than this. It is certainly time to try something new, and that something must be a radical change, a thorough transition of things; no cataplasm will cure a broken down constitution, it must be renewed by change of sustenance, change of climate, change of employment; and it is a thorough renovation like this that alone will raise this country from its deadly languor.

Whether Confederation will effect it, and how, is a subject well worthy of study—that it would be a change of the radical sort there is no doubt, and I think it would not be difficult to shew it would be just the change we require. This is a subject that ought to be followed up, and I have no doubt that pursuing the line of argument you have entered upon, you will develop it more fully in future editorials.

I will probably address you again upon it myself.

AN OUTSIDER.

November 3, 1868.

LETTER No. II.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEWFOUNDLANDER.

SIR,—

In my last letter I dwelt upon one of the great evils that afflict this country ; the greatest of all, in fact, because the parent of all our other misfortunes—general destitution in the midst of an active and profitable industry. From this spring directly, as from a poisoned fount, the diseases that contaminate our whole social system. Poverty has become amongst us an institution, an industry, so to speak ; and it paralyses all energies, pervades all branches of business, substitutes degrading dependence for the wholesome freedom of honest toil, and drags down the people into the slough of indolence and vice.

I think I have shewn that this condition of things ought not to exist amongst us, that the means are produced in the country—produced by the very victims of distress—that might, under fair distribution, not merely alleviate but entirely remove the miseries that press upon us. Whatever may be said of the indolence and improvidence of the people cannot possibly account for our wide-spread destitution, since facts proclaim that the imperfect efforts of the Fisherman's industry alone produce what would be more than sufficient for his wants, while there remains, besides, the produce of cultivated land, limited but by no means insignificant, and the various earnings of tradesmen, seamen, and laborers.

But there is amongst us a system of trade that renders comfort and independence impossible to the majority of the people.

Be it admitted, to avoid offence, that no class

or individual is at present the author of this system that impoverishes the country. Suppose that we are all, merchants and fishermen, swept away by a wild current we cannot control—a current that *may* land *some* safe and unhurt, or even bear them onward to greater prosperity, but which *must* hurry the mass to destruction. What then? Is the system any the better for that? Is it not on the contrary the more deplorable because it is irremediable, the more clamorous for change because the more productive of ruin? No matter who caused or who supported it, we can no longer exist under it, and as we have no remedy at home, must look for one abroad. There are many who say that we ought to try domestic reform before applying to strangers, but they forget that any change, proceeding from ourselves, among ourselves, is simply impossible. They forget that the ills that oppress us have outgrown and overpowered us, bound us hand and foot, and that the only agency that could rid us of this oppression is the very same that has produced and will, if permitted, perpetuate it. Is it not proved beyond question that the whole fabric of our present system, in all its parts, social, mercantile, and political, is tottering to ruin? As a body politic, we are on the eve of beggary, and fairly at the mercy of a few capitalists. As a body mercantile, we are in a state of decadence; we have no really healthful mercantile prosperity, no quick and generous circulation of the life-blood of trade. As a body social, we need not open our eyes, we are constrained to close them upon the position we hold. And all this is the result of a free and untrammelled use of our own wisdom, of our own energies, of our own resources.

Why then do so many amongst us blindly persist in rejecting even the discussion of a change? We must have a change, be it what it

may—even the terrible alternative of Confederation! The consideration of union with more prosperous and progressive provinces has now reached that point of necessity for us, that we have no longer to discuss the reasons for rejecting, but must turn our attention to the weighty reasons for adopting it. If *nothing* could be advanced in favour of Confederation, we ought to run the risk of accepting it, we ought to take our chance with it, as the drowning man takes his chance even on the desolate reef or wild ocean solitude that Providence throws in his way, rather than encounter the horrors of certain destruction amid the waters. But Confederation will not merely afford us a chance of security—it will *secure us absolutely and entirely and immediately* against *some* of the greatest calamities that afflict us,—while it holds out a fair promise of the removal of *all* by that gradual process that gives stability to every reform. This is what I shall endeavour to show in future communications. If for the present I deal only with a general view of our existing condition, as compared with our prospects under Confederation, it is for the purpose of introducing the question fairly, judging of it in its broadest bearings, and asserting a principle which, once proved and admitted, will open the way for discussions of detail.

AN OUTSIDER,

November 14, 1868.

LETTER No. III.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEWFOUNDLANDER.

SIR,—

When a question arises that affects the future of a new country, the wisdom of age is not the only nor the chief light for the guidance of opinion, and the lessons of experience alone are not the safest channels of instruction. "Laudantur temporis acti." "give glory to the things of the past," is the generally accepted dogma of the experienced. It is based upon a feeling not only blameless but even creditable to that human nature whence it springs—the feeling of enthusiastic respect for persons, things, scenes and systems, that have accompanied one's whole career, and been associated with whatever good one has admired in the past and loves to recall in the present. As a feeling, then, this enthusiasm for things past cannot be reprobated, while as a guide for the future it cannot be accepted. If it were once received as the standard rule for national or even individual development, what progress could be expected, what wholesome change could be effected, what useful enterprize undertaken? If we admit, as a principle, that things were a great deal better long ago than they are now, or even may be under any change of system, the inexorable conclusion presents itself directly, that we had therefore better return to the past as soon as possible, dwell in the past as long as possible, and never be enticed from it by any consideration whatever. This conclusion we cannot accept, neither, therefore, can we accept the theory which would urge it upon us.

Giving to experience its due weight, as a motive of judgment, it should be the moderator, in-

deed, but not the opponent of legitimate progress. The aspirations of a young people should not be checked by the venerable tradition of a past era. We require for the proper discussion of a great political change not so much the matured wisdom of age as the hardy and aspiring hopes and energies of youth.

* * * * *

Let the dead past bury its dead,
Act, act, in the living present,
Hearts within, and God o'er head.

The whole argument of Anti-Unionists is now an appeal to the past, and repudiation of change from a past system, for the simple reason that that system is a time-honored one. This is apparent from the question put with an air of triumphant defiance by the advocates of the old system of things, "What one single substantial benefit is New-foundland to receive from Confederation?" That question has been answered, that gauntlet taken up. Here I only allude to it as a proof that they adhere to an old system simply because it is old; for if they cannot see what benefits may accrue to us from Confederation, how then can they prefer the old system to it? Preference supposes comparison between two positive goods, and choice of one before the other, but our adversaries prefer without comparing. They not only put all the weight in one scale of the balance of judgment, but they remove the other scale altogether, and ignore its existence—a system of weighing which, whether applied to things material or intellectual, can never produce an equitable result.

If the advocates of Confederation can show no good reason for joining it, how is it that its opponents can sum up *for them*, and publish *as theirs*, so many real and imaginary ones! How is it moreover that the very objections they make to

the measure furnish often excellent reasons for adopting it? They set up arguments for Confederation as onewould set up nine-pins, for the pleasure and triumph of bowling them down. One of them, they say, is that the people are now so wretched here that any change would be for the better. Yes, that is really one argument, and supported by the testimony of the Chamber of Commerce as to the productiveness of a trade sucked dry by monopolism ; it is a very good argument, and has not yet been bowled down, nor will not easily.

A second argument of ours is (they say) that Canadians and their capital would come to the Colony, &c. I am not disposed to admit that this is an argument with the Unionists—at least they do not prefer it as a principal one. They cannot tell whether Canadians will come here or not, if Union be effected. They know they will come if they find it their interest to do so, and that they will be far more likely under Confederation to examine, and more competent to decide, whether their advent here would be a source of profit to them or not, than they can be at present. Certainly in our present state of imbecility and pauperism it is to be hoped that Canadians may not anticipate the wishes of Confederates here, and make themselves witnesses of our pitiable misery. Unionists do not exactly expect Canadians to come here, any more than Americans or any other enterprising people ; the country will be as open to capitalists of any nation after Confederation as it is now, and doubtless better prepared for their visits. What we stand in need of is, not *Canadians*, but *Canada itself*; which means a strong and solvent Government, protection for trade, association with prosperous provinces, a cheap participation of all the means of subsistence we require, an opening for the middle classes, and a sufficiency for the poor. We can have

these from Canada without ever seeing the face of a Canadian, so it is hardly fair to put the argument about "Canadian Capitalists," in the second place on the list of Unionist arguments.

The Unionists' third argument is "that union is strength." If that is their argument it is a very ancient and respectable one, nicely illustrated in *Æsop's fables* by the allegory of the bundle of sticks. We must admit that the union in the fable was a strong union only because it was a union of separate strengths: if, instead of sticks, the members of that union had been "ropes of sand," then indeed they were no stronger when united than when separate, but it remains to be proved that Confederation would be a union of "ropes of sand," and not of sticks. To prove this it is not sufficient to assert (even with truth) that there can be no "natural bond" between us and Canada—because the union that produces strength is not always a "natural bond," it is often a purely accidental one, often a political one, oftener than all a mechanical one, as in the very case of the bundle of sticks, whose nature it was not to unite, so that in point of fact they had to be forcibly tied together.

But it is not true that there is no "natural bond" between us and Canada. If we give the word "natural" the only meaning it can have in this discussion, the bond of our union with Canada would be "natural." 1st. Geographically—our relative positions on the map shew that a union between us would look natural enough. 2ndly., it would be natural, socially descending, as our population do, chiefly from the same stock, using mainly the same language, and having the same form of Government and institutions. 3rdly., it would be "natural" politically, for it would give us a firm position, and unmistakable national identity before foreign nations,

secure us consideration from them—and at home utilize those relative conditions of supply and demand that exist between us. I simply deny therefore the statement that there could be no “natural bond” between us and Canada. This statement is not corroborated by showing that our trade with Great Britain or the States is far greater than our trade with Canada. Be it so. May not our trade with those countries be as great as ever after Confederation? If the natural course of our trade is with the States or England, who is going to interfere with that course? Who is going to turn its channel forcibly into another direction? Trade, when free, will always have its own way, but the more competition it meets with, and the more rival attractions that are presented to it, the more diversified and vigorous will be its course, and it will shower greater benefits upon those who embark in it. In case of Confederation, Canada probably will not draw our trade from the shores it seeks at present, but it certainly will open up a new market for it, without attempting to close the old ones except by the action of fair competition.

But my letter grows long and I must reserve further remarks till Tuesday.

Yours, &c.

AN OUTSIDER.

December 4, 1868.

LETTER No. IV.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEWFOUNDLANDER.

SIR,—

Nothing can exceed the lofty ridicule wherewith anti-Unionists treat the argument that Confederation would unite us with a great country and make us sharers with its prosperity. They think it foolish, if not disloyal, because, say they, we are already united with the greatest Empire in the world, and what greater happiness could we wish or hope for on earth? Unfortunately for them, this argument of theirs has little weight with a people whose fathers or themselves have traversed the broad Atlantic to found, for themselves new homes, new institutions, and, if necessary, new Governments too. We do not form a part of England, we are a part of America, and our natural connexion is with the great continent that gathers us as it were to her breast. England herself feels this. Gifted, as she always has been, with statesmen who look forward as well as back, she sees the day not far distant when these provinces would rush into Union with the neighbouring continent as if drawn by the law of attraction. Her part is to systematize, to direct, to wield, if you will, to her own interests, an event which would otherwise take place without her intervention, and perhaps be consummated to her discredit; so that the folly and disloyalty of those who favor a Union of those Provinces is simply the folly and disloyalty of England herself and of her statesmen. England at present has her eyes, and her hand, unusually wide open. She perceives that we have not progressed under her rule as well as we ought, and

the memory of some very few awkward obstacles that she herself opposed to our progress stirs up in her perhaps a sense of justice and clemency. Nations, however, like individuals, seldom forget what is profitable when doing what appears magnanimous. And there cannot be the slightest doubt that whatever generous policy England may pursue here or at home, she will not suffer herself to lose by it. But whether for justice or policy, or both combined, it is England's will that these provinces Confederate. So there is an end of oburgations about the folly and disloyalty cast in the teeth of Unionists.

I have neither time nor patience now, nor could I fairly demand space, to deal at length with all the trivialities that have been set up as arguments of Unionists to be summarily bowled down by their opponents. With regard to the good prospects Confederation would hold out to our youth, I imagine they have been alluded to as an advice more than as an argument—an advice for the youth of this country to take a part in life's struggle, such as they cannot have here—an advice such as the poet of the young Republic gives in his noble "psalm,"—

In the world's wide field of battle,
In the bivouac of life,
Be not like dumb-driven cattle,
Be a hero in the strife.

And it is a well-known fact that such of our youth as have joined in that strife in Canada, in the States, and elsewhere, when thrown upon their metal, and removed from the "lotus eating" influences that characterize this unhappy country, have earned honor and independence. In Confederation they would have at least equal facilities for accomplishing the same end, with the further advantage of working *at home*, for any part of the Dominion would be their own country.

The Railroad project is not a Confederation scheme at all. If it be accomplished, it will be a benefit to the world at large, not to Canada alone.

In fine, without wasting more time upon the views Anti-Unionists choose to take of the arguments for Confederation, or answering objections that have been refuted over and over again, I pause to admire, before I finish this letter, the cool assurance wherewith they set themselves up as arbiters of public opinion and protectors of popular rights. Let me ask on what plea do they assume this dignified position? Is it because wilfully ignoring the evils that beset us, blind to the spirit of indolence and the total absence of enterprise and industry begotten of our present system, they stimulate the people against a change by appeals made only to the passions and never to the judgment? Does this constitute their title to the position of leaders of the people? They tell the people that under Confederation they will be taxed, but they never point out the benefits that result to a people from fair and legitimate taxation. They never open their eyes to the more grievous burden that now oppresses them—a burden cast upon them not by a powerful Government whose interests are theirs, but by the self-constituted autocrats of trade. They tell the people that under Confederation they will be banded as soldiers to protect the Dominion frontier, but they never tell them that the military profession is more honorable than the profession of idle beggary, and that military discipline is better for soul and body than the listless liberalism of the street corners and public-house. There are hundreds of young men parading our streets in idleness who had better be trained to the honorable duty of defending an honourable flag, if such a fate were really in store for them. In fact so ruthlessly dishonest are

those "Leaders" efforts after popular suffrage that the burden of their advice to the people is simply this,—that they must never suffer any change that involves discipline or labor,—that they must insist on living as a nation of children, to be fed with a spoon—and when grown up, to be exhibited as walking gentlemen or debased paupers. It were too bad, they say, that Newfoundlanders should be subjected to any yoke, even such as the freest people on earth endure and cherish. If the advice of those leaders of opinion avail, then parents who see their children go to ruin from idleness; Ministers of Justice who find crime multiplied and intensified through delicate consideration for the feelings of the guilty; Legislators who behold a statute book replete with edicts that have become impracticable; Economists who deplore extravagant waste of wholesome food that would support five times our population;—all these should band themselves together, and tell the people the lessons of truth! tell them to remain as they are, that the rigour of taxation, &c., will disturb that delightful *abandon*, and check that charming license that have hitherto raised them to so high a position in the eyes of the world, and been so productive of comfort, happiness, and morality at home!!

Tell the people this, and you will easily enlist popular prejudice in your favor; but will you, or those whom you sway, represent the true interests of the country? Yet those who speak and write in this style are forsooth the only advocates of right, and revel in that intolerance that truth alone can justify!

But the people will yet learn the truth—the froth engendered in the popular mind by the agitation of the passions is but an effervescence—immediately beneath lies the cool substantial element of reason and judgment. The froth will

subside from its own weakness, and the current of common sense be seen pursuing its calm way all the time, urged by its own instincts to a true and proper outlet.

In a future letter I shall complete the general argument for a change of system, and in due time come to the discussion of particulars.

AN OUTSIDER.

December 6th, 1868.

LETTER No. V.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEWFOUNDLANDER.

SIR,—

The miserable condition of this country, produced by a bad system of trade, of politics, or of both combined, demands a speedy remedy ere total ruin sets in. I have not seen in any of the arguments used against Confederation, or in any of the apologies made in favor of our present system, the shadow of a denial of this fact. So the question is reduced to this, where are we to find the wished for remedy? We must find it at home, or find it abroad. There is no medium. No one as yet has attempted to prove that anything can or will be done here to lighten our burdens and promote our prosperity. To talk of the unexplored and perhaps valuable resources of the country, is folly. With a nearly bankrupt Government and a pauperized population, we are no nearer to prosperity amid our riches (if they exist) than Tantalus was to solace and refreshment amid cool waters and fragrant fruits, "ever at hand but never to be enjoyed." It is an axiom, applicable to every order of things, that the same causes, acting under the same circumstances, will always produce the same effects. The axiom is singularly realized in our present condition, and prophetic of our future prospects if a radical change be not admitted. If our political system has produced our distress, without being changed it will continue to produce it. The same must be said of our trade system; the same of both combined; for there is no power in this country to hinder or direct the operation of those causes, and there never will be while we remain isolated and irresponsible. There

can, therefore, be no fairer or more complete answer to the question, "What substantial benefit can we derive from Confederation," than the retort, "What substantial benefit can we derive from our present system?" Anti-Unionists are bound to prove against Confederation, because their system has been tried and found wanting, and Confederation has not. If they are in possession in point of fact, they are not so in point of right and reason. If we can find a remedy, a real practical one, for our ills at home, let some one come forward and point it out. The man who cannot do so has no right to oppose a change, even if that change be Confederation itself.

The question of Confederation will be proposed to the people, but let it be proposed fairly and dispassionately. Whoever would influence them against a change, is bound in honour and truth to point out to them a pathway from the labyrinth of miseries that encircles and deludes them.

But, unfortunately, such has been the degrading influence of a system of things that some would fain preserve and perpetuate, that to a moiety of the people it were vain to appeal on any subject involving intellectual effort. The divine spark of reason is almost extinguished in others. The strain upon the purely animal instincts, the protracted struggle for mere existence, have dulled the higher faculties of the soul, and left many of them barely in appearance men. Who is there among us that has not met with such representatives of misery? Day by day they present themselves to our charity, hungry, worn by a long journey on foot from some distant out-harbor, they have merely ideas and language sufficient to ask for bread. Address them on any topic, counsel them to energy and industry, your

lessons are responded to by a vacant stare, your efforts to wake even a sense of shame met with the patience of abject indifference.

There is a German legend that tells how Frankenstein, a philosopher, having worked himself into the belief that man was gifted with the creative power, addressed himself to the task of producing a human being. Accordingly he modelled out of clay a figure with face and limbs corresponding to those of man, and by some mystery of transcendentalism, proper only to German philosophy, he inspired it with life. He had arrived at the object of his ambition. He had become a creator, but, lo! the thing he had called into life was a hideous monster. Day and night it haunted him. Endowed with the power of motion, it was destitute of voice and language. Stolid and staring it followed him from scene to scene; in vain he sought the haunts of pleasure and dissipation—in the moment of his wildest forgetfulness the loathed creature appeared before him, and the light of its cold clammy eyes struck terror into his soul; go where he would, the thing was his companion, his monitor, his spirit's master, though its most abject slave; it acknowledged his domination, but instead of that unspeakable love and worship which do homage to a creator, its every gesture and attitude bespoke hatred and rage against the author of its existence. The creature became destroyer, and the philosopher perished miserably from terror inspired by the work of his own hands. In a social light it is such a creature that our system has conjured up amongst us. Nay, even physically and intellectually the poverty-stricken portion of our population is fast assimilating itself to the creature of the legend, and asserts the same entire but thankless dependence on those whom it looks upon as the authors of a miserable existence. This portion of the community we have not only

to provide for, but to think for. 'Twere a mockery to ask them what they think of Confederation. 'Twere a cruelty to advise them to oppose it. Of those who are not reduced to a state quite so degraded, the greater part are destitute and miserable. Little they know who sit by their firesides, or take observations from a window in Water Street, of the swift decay that prostrates them like straw before the sickle of the reaper. Seldom they behold those rotten tenements, that a year's wind and damp at most will sweep unheeded to the earth; and where will be their occupants? The greater number in comfort at last in the grave—the rest wanderers in more prosperous lands, and adding their mite of daily toil to the activity that makes nations great. This is too truly our condition, and to procure the necessary remedy requires not alone the exercise of intelligence but of humanity. The question of Confederation is for us not a merely political question—it is first of all a question of charity; and it is not alone the right, but the duty, of any one who thinks the Union of these Provinces will benefit this country, to speak his convictions.

This country is in a state of premature decay, and in its own institutions it contains no remedy for the evil, therefore some change is necessary, some infusion of vital power from without. This much all must admit—but will Confederation be the proper change. and provide the proper remedy? I think there can be no doubt of it. It is not in the nature of things that such a condition as ours should be allowed to continue, when superior intelligence and superior resources are brought to bear upon it. Our miserable state would, if known, enlist the sympathies and the aid of the stranger—how much more so of those whose own best interest would be the advancement of our people.

It is not unknown to History that peoples have been crushed and doomed to wretchedness by rulers whose duty and interest it was to protect and encourage them, but that is the history of the past—the history of feudal arrogance or of bloody conquest, and it applies not to coalitions voluntarily formed on the basis of reason and for the common weal without any dire discrepancies of religion, race, customs or institutions. And even where such discrepancies exist, the spirit of the present age is to unite and harmonize them, if possible; if not, to suffer and conciliate.

Though European coalitions must differ from those formed on this side of the Atlantic, having more old and deep-rooted difficulties to contend with, yet even there the genius of the age prevails. If unions commence there in conquest, they are succeeded at once, or as soon as possible, by a common participation of the benefits of freedom and civilization between victors and vanquished. It is not pretended that Prussia will persecute the North German Provinces; Austria gives free institutions to Hungary, and in fact so all powerful is the instinct of justice, peace, and progress, at the present day, that England is ready to lay the axe to the very root of her constitution rather than behold it heavy with the fruit of oppression and injustice. It is idle to talk of penal laws, extermination, or "bleached bones," at the present day. Such things are not possible any where, least of all in these new regions, where freedom seems indigenious, and where the only danger is that it may luxuriate into rankness. We have here before our eyes the model of the great Western Republic; and though there may be difference of opinion regarding her institutions and their stability,—one thing is certain, that she regards every portion of her vast territory as her very self, and with a zealous and im-

partial hand extends her protection and bounty and civilizing influences to the remotest regions of her empire. The form of its Government will slightly differ—but upon this great model Confederation will be established ;—it could not otherwise exist or prosper.

To prove that in point of fact Canada intends to govern upon liberal and progressive principles, to initiate a rule totally different from the ancient systems of conquest and spoliation, it is sufficient to know that the very first clause in her programme proclaims to all dependencies freedom of religion, of education, of trade ; but upon these and upon other practical benefits that must result to us from Union, I shall address you hereafter.

AN OUTSIDER.

December 28th, 1868.

LETTER No. VI.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEWFOUNDLANDER.

SIR,—

The object of all Government is the common weal. The Government that produces it is a good one, no matter what its form; and the Government that fails to produce it is a Government only in name. Again, the object of trade is to distribute the material goods of life among peoples, and the trade that does not effect this is a monopoly, a usury; what you will, but not a trade. If, therefore, you find that in any country there is neither that law, order, nor civilization that constitute and confirm the common weal, nor that general participation of life's goods that produces comfort and independence, you may conclude at once that the system of Government and the trade system of that country are defective; and if after a long trial and much effort they fail still to bring forth good fruit, you may presume, without rashness, that they are rotten to the core and must be supplanted by other systems more productive of prosperity.

In a few letters you have been good enough to insert for me, I have applied these theories to the present state of the country, and have proved, I think, that our system will not stand the test by which alone the good qualities of things can be judged. It has not borne good fruit; it cannot bear good fruit; therefore, it is an evil system, and ought to be eradicated. The only way of avoiding this conclusion, is, by throwing the blame of our miseries, not on the Government, not on the trade system, but upon the people themselves. This plan has been tried. It has

been asserted and insisted upon, that the negligence, improvidence, and laziness of the people are the sole and adequate causes of their own distress—that with a rich produce and a free and too liberal-handed Government, they *ought* to prosper, and if they *do not*, it is their own fault. I take exception to this line of reasoning on more points than one, and shall shew that even on the supposition that national indolence were the direct cause of national decay, the people do not deserve the blame of it.

Firstly, then, supposing indolence to be quite a general defect, a national trait; is it a *cause* or an *effect* of our sad condition? It is a cause undoubtedly of preserving and intensifying our ills, but it is far more an effect of a system that has made the people what they are, that has schooled them into dependence, and trained them up to rely upon anything else rather than their own industry and manliness for support. It is but a near-sighted mind that, scanning our social state, cannot extend its view to the real horizon of our miseries. He is a too sanguine searcher who can cry "Eureka," when but one and the least difficult section of his problem has been solved. If the people's indolence is the cause of this decline, what is the cause of the indolence itself? Race? certainly not. Climate? Much less. Pursuits, innate perversity, physical or mental degeneracy? None of these. It is the system that rules them—the necessity that enslaves them; that is the chief cause of this listlessness, and, therefore, the chief cause of all the evil effects that some would attribute to indolence alone.

Again, in point of fact, is it true that indolence is a general or natural failing of our people? I do not believe it; the nature of their occupations, and the absence of employment for manufacturers and tradesmen, render their toil, indeed, desultory; but in the only labor that the circumstances of

this country at present admit, they are neither indolent nor inexpert.

Let us return, then, to the true cause of our general decay, an incurably bad system of government and trade. This system must be changed. A truly radical change is now proposed—a Union with the other Provinces of B. N. America under one central and powerful government, which will possess both the will and the means of correcting all abuses throughout its dominion, of awaking activity and encouraging progress among its subject populations.

No one can pretend to state categorically the whole nature and extent of benefits to be derived from any such great change, for these depend upon the action of causes new to experience, subject to accident, and controlled by influences hidden in the future. The greatest statesmen of England cannot tell, for instance, the exact and entire good results that will accrue to the Empire from Church disestablishment. In deciding in favor of one of these great changes it is sufficient to know that its natural tendency is good and progressive, and that some positive and immediate good results will follow from it. In small localities the argument for or against a change are usually reduced to a discussion of practical results, and the general principle is seldom agitated; so it has been here on the question of Confederation. I will leave to more tutored hands the array of figures, the exposition of minute details, that may be necessary to complete the argument in favor of Confederation, and with necessary brevity touch upon some of the leading points at issue.

OUR LAND.

Are the people aware, when they are told that "the Canadians" intend to take their land—that they have comparatively no land to give up to

them? For the most valuable part of the country, nearly all of it that gives indications of mineral wealth, is already taken, not by a government that would utilize it—but by a few individuals, who, with perhaps one exception, have neither capital nor intelligence enough to turn it to account for themselves or any one else. If we have Confederation, I hope one of the very first acts of the Dominion Government will be directed towards rescuing our thousands and hundreds of thousands of acres from the greedy grasp which retains them, and opening them up to real capitalists and real explorers.

As things are now, the people may obtain possession of the fens and marshes of the interior—but that is all; it is certain that the Dominion Government would not expose the valuable lands of this or any other province under its sway to be scrambled for promiscuously as they are now. If our lands are worth anything, Canada would soon discover it, and her own as well as our interests would teach her to distribute them judiciously. I cannot now complete the review of the general good results of Confederation, but will reserve for a future and final letter further remarks upon the land question, trade, taxation, &c., under the Canadian Government.

AN OUTSIDER.

15th January, 1868.

LETTER No. VII.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEWFOUNDLANDER.

SIR,—

The object of my letters to you was to shew the necessity of a change in the condition of this country, and in asserting this necessity I am at variance with no one who has fairly considered or discussed our position. At another season the question might well be asked, What change can be devised that would benefit us? Have we not tried everything, from Imperial legislation to Responsible Government? Upon this latter have we not rung all possible changes, proved all possible combinations of parties, without other result than persistent decline in the scale of prosperity? Has not each successive grade of our descent been clearly defined by the introduction of some new, or the modification of some old Government? And has not all that we have done but proved our inability to do anything useful? All this is the sad but inexorable truth; and if in the present crisis we had to confine our prospects of a favourable change to our own energies and resources, the lessons of the past, casting their shadows upon the future, might well induce us to despair. But a change has been proposed beyond our anticipations, above our counsels, new to our ideas and experiences—a change that opens up for us a future great in its proportions and brilliant in its aspect, beyond all we could have conceived—that future may share the uncertainty of all that is to come, but it is free from gloomy delusions of the past. The future thus proposed to us is Union with the British North American Provinces.

The question of Confederation, as applied to us, resists, of its own strength and weight, all attempts at absolute rejection; it forces us to the point of determining how to accept it with the best grace and the most profit. The intelligence of the community has long since grasped this conclusion, and with the exception of a few who deal in ominous warnings while the people hunger for solid argument, a few who wish the people to foresee their fate after the fashion of the simple shepherd Melibæus, in the croaking of some raven from a hollow oak,—

“Sæpe hæc sinistra prædixit cava ab ilice cornix.”

All others are prepared to accept Confederation on rational terms. So the state of the question as at present proposed to the country is simply this; as we must have a change, and as Confederation is proposed to us, what good or harm is it likely to do us.

I have thus condensed the general argument of former letters in order to keep the question clear and connectedly before your readers' minds; now I will attempt to answer *the question of the country*, taking up the thread of the discussion where I left off.

OUR LANDS.

I stated in my last letter that our lands (meaning the most valuable portion of them) no longer belong to us as a people. They have been appropriated at a nominal price, or at no price at all, by individuals amongst us who can never, in all, human probability, turn them to the slightest account. The proof of this statement may be found in the archives of the Colonial Building. Without questioning the legal rights, under existing enactments, of those persons to the lands they have appropriated, we must feel that those lands, now virtually lost to the people, would, in

the hands of an intelligent and wealthy Government, become sources of employment and prosperity to us. If the day should ever come (and it is fast coming) when this country shall be pronounced by the world a region endowed by Providence with riches of His own making—if, while the seas refuse their tribute, and poverty reigns supreme, we might still look forward with hope to a time when our mother earth shall open up her bosom to supply our cravings, we could then have pride in the future and comfort in the present, even if left to ourselves. But while the people are beggared, the Government shackled, the land doomed to desolation, no such hope can beam upon us—the country's breast is closed to us, and the children of her womb are famishing.

The Government of Canada must be a strangely obtuse one if it does not see the necessity of putting an end to the monopoly of mineral lands in all parts of the Dominion, and of refusing those indiscriminate grants that alone would turn a rich country into a desert. As to increase of agricultural enterprise here, that is a thing that time, necessity, and example will bring about, and Confederation will, in every sense, help on the good cause.

OUR TRADE.

Great as are the defects of our trade system, they do not depend entirely upon the merchant, but chiefly on the nature of our produce and the peculiar occupation of the people. The whole trade is precarious—it is a lottery in which there are many blanks, and it is hard to insist upon any rule for it except what guides the science of chance. The merchants are undoubtedly the most important body of our community, and in the circumstances in which they are placed, have, as a body, done their part fairly and hon-

ourably enough. Profit is the very life, the first cause and final end of the business they are embarked in ; but while regarding that keenly, they have certainly done more for the people and the country than any other set of men in the community—besides the benefit that results from their business transactions, they are ever found foremost among contributors to works of charity and civilization. To them, then, I appeal as the true arbiters of the question of Confederation from the point of view of *trade*—Do they believe that the Union of this Colony with Canada will injure them or their dependents? What one advantage they now possess can be wrested from them by Union with Canada? What project they may contemplate can be frustrated, what course they may choose to take can be checked, by the interference of the Dominion Government? Must not our trade, on the contrary, like that of all other countries known to history, be improved by extension of dominion, by a free influx of all the commodities by which trade is sustained, by an intelligent and careful examination of the channels towards which it should be directed, and by those guarantees of wealth and power which alone can protect its honor and secure its success? Under Confederation nations will open their markets cheerfully to us which would hardly trust us at present, and inter-commercial treaties will be available from which now we are precluded. To prove this I have but to instance two facts—the one that Confederation, besides giving us a market duty free in Canada for our produce, and free importation of all commodities from any part of the Dominion we may choose to trade with—besides all this, will ensure for us a benefit of Reciprocity of trade with the United States, a benefit we are now deprived of, and not likely to regain if we remain in isolation and obscurity. It won't pay for large countries

to be entering into inter-commercial treaties with petty communities, especially such as this which has but one species of produce ; and the reason is that such petty communities *must* export to their rich neighbours if they want to live, so the rich neighbours need make no concessions to them such as are always contained in Reciprocity treaties. Canada can exist without the States, and the States without Canada, but Newfoundland cannot exist one instant without dependence on food-producing countries, so the sooner she becomes part of such a country the better for herself ; and unless her legislators and her people set to work to force from her soil all they require for food, and conjure up somehow fleecy herds and busy factories to supply them with clothing, unless they can do this (and I admit it were better than Confederation or any thing else) all bluster about independence and our liberties is simply ridiculous. The second fact that shews how our trade would improve under Union is drawn from the visit of a Canadian Commission to the Brazils and West Indies a few years ago. We were not represented on that commission, though its object, as shown by the very report of the Canadians, was incomparably more important to us than to any Province of North America. Magnificent concessions were made by the Southern Empire and Colonies to Canada, brilliant prospects of trade were opened up, concessions and prospects that would since have more largely benefited Newfoundland, whose name made such a figure in the report. if she had been Canada or a part of Canada, as she will become by Confederation. I have no time to refer accurately to the report, but it is in the hands of most of our leading citizens, and it proves that Canada is prepared to exert intelligence and expend money (what we could not do) for the encouragement and extension of her mercantile interests.

TAXATION.

The greatest cry raised against Confederation—the only one that really alarms the people,—is the cry of taxation. It is assumed by Anti-Unionists that by Confederation Canada is to capture us somehow as a slave, bind us hand and foot, and finally turn us out to work and starve, for her benefit; we are not to have the rights and privileges of children of the household, but only the contempt and ill-treatment of the menial; in fact we are not to have even the advantages which the sleek mastiff promised to the meagre wolf in the fable; we are to be chained up and lose our liberty, but not to become any more comfortable than when scouring hungrily our native wastes. This proposition being *fairly assumed*, as a political postulate, it requires of course no proof, yet it admits of illustration, for the benefit of the simple, and the great illustration of the forthcoming tyranny of Canada is the certainty that she will tax us. The question to put before the people is *not* whether Canada will impose taxes on us, but whether she will over-tax us, or give us no equivalent for taxation. If anti-Unionists can prove this latter, their alarm is at once justified, but they do not attempt to do so. There can be no proper state of society, no equitable social contract, without taxation—if people wish to enter society, to be subject to its Government, protected by its laws in life, property, trade, and general rights, they are bound to pay taxes to the Government that rules them, just as much as they are bound to pay for the bread and clothing they purchase in the shops. If any man wishes to avoid the obligation of paying taxes, let him at once reduce himself to that state of solitude supposed to exist before society had been formed, that savage state described by the poet,

“Cum primis irrupserunt animalia terris,
mutum et turpe pecus,” &c.

People must be taxed all the world over, and no rational man ever yet argued against taxation—it is only the abuse of taxation that can be condemned, and it is hard to understand from what occult source anti-unionists have become informed that Canada intends to overburden these Provinces. We know for certain that Confederation will remove some of the most galling taxes we now labor under. Under Confederation none of our provisions can be taxed, and the now usual phenomenon of a 30s. barrel of flour becoming suddenly, as if by magic, worth 60s., will cease to amaze us for the future. The only taxation Canada could possibly impose on us, (supposing even she taxes our exports, which I do not believe,) will fall upon those who can most easily bear it, and the poor man need have NO DREAD OF THIS BUGBEAR.

Your space and my own leisure will not permit me to enter more deeply upon this and many other interesting questions connected with the subject of this letter. I had intended a special article on Religion and Education under the Dominion Government, but relinquish the idea until time may be afforded me to meditate sufficiently on so serious a topic. I will only remark that both Education and Religion are free and flourishing in Canada. The large towns are supplied with colleges and schools that have produced eminent men in every branch of learning, and attracted youth even from countries where educational establishments are of the highest order. It is generally admitted that education is more solid, if less extended, in Canada than in the States of America; and a government that has encouraged so successfully at home this chief element of civilization, cannot fail to promote it hereafter in every portion of its Dominion. As to Religion, in Canada it is free, and Religion wants nothing more than that. The Canadian Catholic Church is a noble one, and

'twere a glory to be connected with it and share the honour of its name and virtues.

I have now finished all I have to say about Confederation. I have written on conviction, and if I have not communicated that conviction to others, I have at least pleaded imperfectly but honestly a cause full of import to this country, a country whose very miseries make it interesting even to the stranger, while it has stronger claims on the interest and affection of its children.

Viewing the great Union proposed to us in itself, independently of questions of tariff, taxation, &c., we are sensible of a sort of instinct that urges us to adopt it. Twenty thousand pounds more or less will not make Newfoundland more or less than she is till she drifts into the current of civilisation and industry. Confederation is not a financial question; it is a social one;—ours is a disease that money, instead of curing, will only aggravate, as experience has proved; we want those things that gold can never buy, industry, self-dependence, assimilation with the active races that surround us; and these can only be conferred by *union* with them, union of rule, union of sympathies, and union of interests.

AN OUTSIDER.

Jan. 30, 1869.

