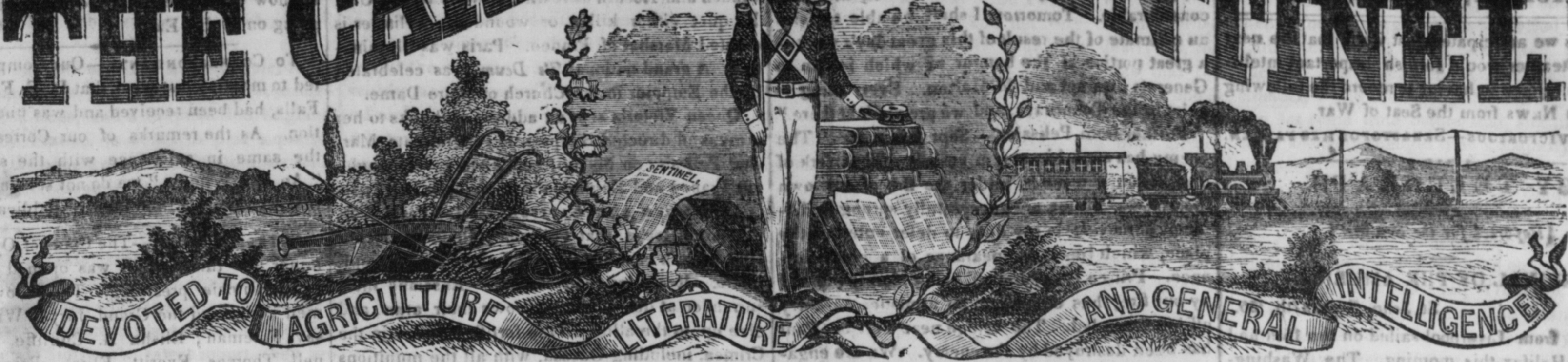


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## UNION OF THE COLONIES OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

BY P. S. HAMILTON, ESQ.

[From the Anglo-American Magazine.]

Concluded.

Their political isolation hinders the Provinces from carrying out any great work in which they are interested in common, and which requires their joint efforts. A melancholy instance of this may be seen in their futile attempts, extending over a period of some twelve years, towards the construction of an inter-provincial railway. The Provinces were all very desirous of having that great work carried on; and, since it was proposed, have, each of them within its own boundaries, undertaken and commenced similar works of vast magnitude, in proportion to their means. No one doubts that, if the Provinces had been united under a single Colonial Government at the time this great national work was first proposed, the road would now be nearly, if not quite, completed, from Halifax to the foot of Lake Huron.

There are numerous other public works, besides railroads, in which the Provinces are equally interested, requiring the co-operation of all, but which, under the present system, either cannot be carried on at all, or their progress must be attended with checks and delays which are extremely annoying and detrimental to the general interests of the country. So remote are these Provinces, socially and politically, from each other, that it is extremely difficult even for private capitalists residing in two or more of them, to unite in any undertaking requiring their joint efforts; and, if the operations of the undertaking are intended to be extended into more than one Province, it seems to be practically next to impossible.

To say that their present state of disunion discourages the production of native literature and mechanical invention, in the Provinces, may seem at the present time, a small argument in favor of union. They being new countries, but few attempts have been made, in either of these branches of intellectual development. Yet, however slight the results of this discouragement thus far, they must increase with the lapse of time; and, if suffered to continue, would, without doubt, soon become a very serious evil. Giving an individual the power of securing his patent, or his copyright, over the whole of the Provinces, by going through a troublesome and expensive ordeal in each one separately, can but slightly modify the general tendency of complete inter-colonial independence in this matter.

There are innumerable points of detail in which this want of union seriously retards the general prosperity of the Provinces. Few persons, residing in British America, have not, in their own persons, seriously felt its injurious results. The cure for all this obvious. Let a legislative union of the Provinces take place, and all the evils alluded to, under this division of the subject, terminate immediately. This is too nearly self-evident to require anything in the shape of proof; and the mode by which that union would effect such a result, is too plain to require any demonstration.

There is yet a third point of view in which the Provinces must be regarded, furnishing an argument in favour of union; that is, the relation which those Provinces, as component parts of the British Empire, bear to foreign countries, and particularly to the United States of America. Regarded in this

respect, their present aspect must suggest feelings of not the most pleasurable nature to a large majority of the British Americans, and certainly should give some concern to the Mother Country. The United States have, since attaining their independence, increased in area, wealth and physical strength to an extent which has aroused the wonder, and which, but for some attendant circumstances, might excite the admiration of the civilized world. That republic has not been at all particular as to the means by which her present status has been attained. She is the embodiment of ultra Democracy, among the civilized states of the New World, as Russia is the embodiment of ultra Monarchical Absolutism, among those of the Old; and the rapid progress of the two nations, from comparative insignificance to a prominent rank among the first class powers, has been not dissimilar, either in general nature, or in the means by which effected. That rapid rise to power has doubtless been caused, in a great measure, by activity in internal improvements; but it has been mainly owing to a system of aggression by which they have increased their own strength at the expense of neighbors who were too heedless to be disturbed by those aggressions, or too weak to oppose them. Great Britain, with the other nations of Western Europe, has awakened to a sense of the misdeeds of Russia—she still sleeps over those of the United States States, although none the less menacing to her own security. The British American subjects of Her Majesty are too near the scene of action to be unconscious, or uninterested spectators of the aggressive policy of the United States.

In 1803, the Government of that country, by taking advantage of Napoleon's necessities, extorted from the French, under the name of a purchase, the Province of Louisiana, thereby more than doubling the extent of its territory. By driving another extremely clever bargain with Spain, in 1819, Florida was obtained. In 1842, the "Ashburton Treaty," which settled what was called the "North-Eastern boundary dispute," between Great Britain and the United States, gave to the latter, without their having any valid claim to it, a further acquisition of territory, inconsiderable indeed as to extent, but, from its position, of incalculable advantage to British America. This treaty, as has been since clearly proved, was effected by means of gross misrepresentation, on the part of the United States Government and its officials. By a somewhat similar course of procedure, attended by what British Americans will ever consider an indefensible disregard of her own rights and interests, on the part of Great Britain, the grasping republic, in 1846, obtained a portion of Oregon, thereby reaching the Pacific Ocean and acquiring a further immense increase of valuable territory. On their Southern frontiers, the United States has pursued a system of annexation, somewhat different, but no less successful. For some years previous to 1836, a number of "American" citizens—cautious pioneers of a class of men who have since become more daring in their movements, and have acquired a wide notoriety, under the name of filibusters—pushed their way Southwards into the sparsely populated Mexican Territory of Texas. Upon finding themselves sufficiently strong to risk the attempt, they raised the standard of revolt against the Mexican Government. Assisted by large bodies of volunteers who flocked to the scene of action, from all parts of the United States, the rebels did not have to contend long against Mexico, impoverished and demoralized as she was by a quarter of a century of civil war. Texas became an independent country, and, in 1845, that territory was annexed and formed another of the United States. By this

series of adroit manœuvres, Mexico lost one-fifth of her territory; and the United States gained an addition nearly equal to one-fifth of what they previously held.

Throughout those regions of imperfectly explored wilderness, where national boundary lines are not so intimately known, or so accurately defined, as in Europe, there cannot be much difficulty, when the desire is not wanting, in raising a dispute relative to land marks. So it was soon discovered, both in the United States and Mexico. A dispute, turning mainly upon the question of the South-Western boundary of Texas, brought the two countries into actual hostilities; and the year 1846 saw an American invading army cross the Rio Grande. If the Mexican contest with the Texian rebels was short and decisive, this one was still more so; for now Mexico, weaker and more distracted internally than ever, had the whole of the United States as her avowed enemy.

Part of the price at which she purchased peace was the disposal of just one-third of her whole remaining territories which went to increase the wealth and power of her insatiable neighbor and enemy, and which forms rather more than one-sixth of the whole territory now possessed by the United States. By the peace of 1848, the latter country acquired the fertile, gold-bearing California, with a wider and more valuable frontage on the Pacific, and the large territory of New Mexico, opening into the heart of Mexico an unobstructed road for further and future conquests. Whoever has observed the course of events, in that quarter since the peace of 1848, cannot suppose it will be very long before such further conquests will be attempted. We have but recently seen an attempt made to perpetrate upon Cuba, another revolution on the Texian principle.

This rapid growth of the great North American republic, is fraught with painful considerations, to the British American people—the more so from their observation of the means by which that growth has, in a great measure, been effected. But apart from all consideration of the means by which the United States have acquired the vast territories and consequent political strength they now possess, one would naturally suppose that the mere fact of such an acquisition would be sufficient to give serious concern to the British nation. In 1783, those States were contained within an area of less than 390,000 square miles—the whole States, and "Territories" together occupying but 720,000 square miles—and contained a population of not more than 2 1/2 millions. In 1854, they have a territory of 2,750,000 square miles, and a population of over 24 millions. The growth of the Russian Empire, in territory, population, wealth—in power generally, during a period of 150 years, has not equalled that of the "American" Republic, for a space of less than half of that time. Great Britain has begun to feel serious alarm lest the Russian Autocrat should, by crossing nearly 2,000 miles over the savage deserts of Central Asia, attempt a conquest of the Anglo-Indian Empire. It is somewhat singular that she should entertain no apprehensions lest the democratic power of the United States should cross the St. Lawrence and the St. Croix and attempt the conquest of her no less important North American Colonies. Russia has never yet attempted, or even made any decided demonstration in the way of attempting, the apprehended conquest of India. The forces of the U. States have twice invaded the North American Provinces; and—let men say what they will about the ties of kindred, and "America's" affection for her Mother Country—the desire to do so again remains quite as strong as it ever was. There is

only the most extreme possibility that the United States will ever bring British North America under their dominion; but it is quite within the bounds of probability that the attempt will be made—and that at no very remote period, unless means are taken to prevent it. The cheapest and most effective of those means would be to place the Province in a position to defend themselves—to give them self-reliance, that compactness of physical strength, that unity of action, and increased dissemination and intensity of national feeling, which can be given by a Legislative Union of those Provinces, and by that only.

## MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

Many British officers are leaving the camp on sick leave. The general orders of August 3rd to 8th give leave to no fewer than 70.

Complaints are made that officers are not sent from England to take the places of the absent. The French go into the other extreme, and grant no leave.

The present effective force of the British in the Crimea, exclusive of sick and reinforcements on the way, is about 28,000 men. The hospitals are now in quite a satisfactory condition.

The Duke of Newcastle is still in camp. Captain Layard, brother of Mr. Layard, M. P., has died of dysentery on board of a ship at Balaklava.

An English navy writes to the papers that two short, flat-headed piles driven in to the ground under each sleeper, would prevent the sinking of the rails, and thus make the railway serviceable throughout the winter.

The London Times continues to reiterate the necessity of pressing on the assault upon Sebastopol before winter causes the besiegers to abandon their advanced lines.

Twins born to a French cantiniere in the trenches before the Malakoff. The lady accompanied her battalions to the trenches, and probably forgot the little incident about to occur.

The French reserved camp at Maslak will soon be augmented to 50,000 men; to be divided between Maslak and Sweet Waters, and sixteen squadrons of cavalry will encamp at Daoud Pasha.

A proposal is on foot to raise a large sum by subscription in England and present it to Miss Nightingale on her return, to enable her to establish an Hospital in London, where ladies may act as volunteer nurses, as they have done in the East.

Sir C. Napier writes a letter to the London Times saying that Admiral Dundas merely carried out plans which the (Napier) was unable to do from lack of gun boats.

Letters from Odessa brings news to the 7th, Large detachments of troops had been marched from the north of Ishmael, in consequence of intelligence which Prince Gortchakoff is said to have received respecting an intention on part of the allies to land 50,000 men in the neighborhood of that fortress, who, by marching along the coast under the protection of the fleet, would be enabled to cut off the communication of the Crimea with the main land. In order to avoid this eventuality, all disposable troops will be sent to Bessarabia.

The Morning Post says, we have more than ever occasion to believe that the Russian forces in the Crimea are suffering intensely from want of food and necessary supplies; and that this, combined with other causes, assures their speedy expulsion from Sebastopol and the south of the Crimea.

The London Morning Post says that the British Government are about to organize a Canadian legion.