

with unusual significancy on the same subject. "In a word," says he, "the Confederation appears to me to be little more than a shadow without the substance, and Congress a nugatory body, their ordinances being little attended to." The same sentiments may be found in many public documents. One of the most humiliating proofs of the utter inability of Congress to enforce even the exclusive powers vested in it, is to be found in the argumentative circular addressed by it to the several states, in April, 1787, entreating them in the most supplicating manner to repeal such of their laws as interfered with the treaties with foreign nations. "If in theory," says the biographer of WASHINGTON, "the treaties formed by Congress were obligatory, yet it had been demonstrated that in practice that body was absolutely unable to carry them into execution."—

In this state of things, the embarrassments of the country in its financial concerns, the general pecuniary distress among the people from the exhausting operations of the war, the total prostration of commerce and the languishing unthriftiness of agriculture, gave new impulses to the already marked political divisions in the Legislative Councils. Efforts were made on our side to relieve the pressure of the public calamities by a resort to the issue of paper money, to tender laws, and instalment and other laws, having for their object the postponement of the payment of private debt, and a diminution of the public taxes. On the other side, public as well as private creditors became alarmed from the increased dangers to property, and the increased facility of perpetrating frauds, to the destruction of all private faith, and credit. And they insisted strenuously upon the establishment of a government and system of laws which should preserve the public faith and redeem the country from that ruin which always follows upon the violation of the principles of justice and the moral obligation of contracts. "At length," we are told, "two great parties were formed in every state, which were distinctly marked and which pursued distinct objects with systematic arrangement." The wonder indeed is, not under such circumstances, that the constitution should have encountered the most ardent opposition, but that it should ever have been adopted at all by the majority of the states. In the convention itself which framed it, there was a great diversity of judgment, and upon some vital subjects an intense and irreconcilable hostility of opinion. It is understood that, at several periods the convention were upon the point of breaking up without accomplishing anything. On the other hand, if the votaries of the national government are fewer in number, they are likely to enlist in its favor men of ardent ambition, comprehensive views and powerful genius. A love of the union, a sense of its importance—nay, of its necessity to secure permanence and safety

to our political liberty; a consciousness that the powers of the national constitution are eminently calculated to preserve peace at home and dignity abroad, and to give value to property, and system and harmony to the great interests of agriculture, commerce and manufactures; a consciousness, too, that the restraints which it imposes upon the states are the only efficient means to preserve public and private justice, and to ensure tranquillity amidst the conflicting interests and rivalries of the states—these will doubtless combine many sober and reflecting minds in its support. If to this number we are to add those whom the larger rewards of fame or emolument or influence connected with a wider sphere of action may allure to the national councils, there is much reason to presume that the union will not be without resolute friends.

The events now occurring in the United States sufficiently prove, I think, that the fears of the illustrious founders of the Union were not without some foundation. The scheme of Constitution which is submitted to us is also a compromise, but a compromise in the best conditions of existence, and in those least dangerous to the stability and the strength of the nation to which it is to give being. Unity moves more at ease, and the checks placed therein for the benefit of the sections are placed in such a manner as not to obstruct the general action. It is not so much against the Federal principle that the greater number of the arguments of the hon. member for Hochelaga are directed. For him it is a party question which he puts to himself in this manner:—"How shall we find ourselves, my friends and myself, in this Confederation? Shall we be strong or weak? May we hope to regain power, or shall we be lost like so many drops of water in the ocean?" In order to convince the House that I have correctly appreciated the motive of the hon. gentleman's (Hon. Mr. DORION's) opposition, I shall quote from his speech of the 16th inst.:—

Hon. Mr. DORION—But, sir, I may be asked admitting all that—admitting that the scheme now submitted to us is not that which has been promised us, what difference will the immediate admission of the Provinces into the Confederation make? I will try to explain it. When the ministers consented to the votes in the Conference being taken by provinces, they gave a great advantage to the Maritime Provinces. This mode of procedure had for its result the most conservative measure that was ever submitted to the House. The members of the Upper House are no longer to be elected, but nominated—and by whom? By a Tory or Conservative Government for Canada, by a Conservative Government in Nova Scotia, by a Conservative Government in Prince Edward Island, and by a Conservative