

From the summer of 1882 to the autumn of 1885, Judge Thompson continued to win golden opinions from all with whom he came in contact. During that period more than one of those that had opposed him in politics referred to him as "a light under a bushel," which implied that the discharge of judicial duties did not afford ample scope for the exercise of his uncommon gifts.

A few months ago, Mr. Thompson, at the urgent and repeated solicitation of many friends, consented to resign his judgeship, and to enter the Canadian Commons, as head of one of the most important departments of the public service—the Department of Justice—a position for which his whole previous training tended to fit him. Then, presto!—at once began a disparagement of almost every quality that entitled him to the respect and confidence of his fellows, and this by some of the men who, in July, 1882, indulged in fulsome praise of him, and congratulated the Bench on his elevation thereto.

It is the honest opinion of the writer, that the journalist or electioneering agent that acts inconsistently and unfairly towards a gentleman of the ability and worth of the present Minister of Justice, would not hesitate to act unfairly and improperly towards any man in the Dominion to whom he happened to be for the time politically opposed. Untrammelled by party ties myself, I think I have a right to give such an opinion. Nor do I hold it without reason. By numbers of men competent to judge him, the present Minister of Justice is regarded as one of the finest jurists in the whole country. I feel that I am quite within bounds when I say that he is one of the most scholarly, and most effective speakers that this Province (perhaps I might say, any Province of the Dominion) has ever produced. His possession of a magnificent legal mind is beyond question; his integrity, candid honesty of purpose, and high character, are above suspicion; his qualifications in every respect for his onerous position far beyond caviil. If any public man deserves a tribute of respect from his every opponent, he is emphatically one. Yet the fiend of party would misrepresent and nullify him without scruple and without stint, because he happens to be in active sympathy with the political party, whose policy seems to him the best suited to the requirements of the Dominion. Ah, Party! what things are done and said in thy name! "Fie on thee—fie, fie!"

SANTOR RESARTUS, JR.

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

#### RAMBLING NOTES IN BURMAH.

(CONTINUED).

But first a word regarding the climate. The day we landed in Rangoon was damp and hot, a trying combination peculiar to these parts, and very unpleasant after the hot, but dry atmosphere of Madras.

With a tropical heat, the rainfall equals 200 inches per annum in some districts. To this excessive rainfall, and heat combined, are due the luxuriant vegetation, the abundant rice-crop, and the wonderful development of trees and flowering plants. To them also are due the fevers which make the jungles so unhealthy, and that mental and bodily torpor which betray the European long resident in the country. One can stand the dry, hot air of a Turkish bath, with the thermometer up to 160 degrees, for hours; but a short stay in a Russian bath, where we have heat and steam combined, becomes very unpleasant; and in Burmah, we are in a perpetual steam-bath.

The dampness in the air was such, during the few months I spent in Rangoon, that pictures would tumble out of their frames on the walls, the glue dissolving in it; boots and saddlery would become mildewed in a single night; and to keep one's wearing apparel in good order, it was necessary to dry it every evening on a wicker-work frame suspended over a brazier of charcoal. The houses are well raised from the ground on piles or pillars of stone, and are of the same pattern as the Indian bungalows,—one-storied wooden buildings, with sloping roof, venetian windows, and broad verandahs; but few of them are tight enough to keep out the ceaseless rain at this season, and I spent my first night in bed under an umbrella and waterproof. The umbrella is a necessary part of one's outfit; and prettily painted, as it usually is, the Burmese umbrella is ornamental as well as useful. To have an umbrella carried above one by a servant, when taking one's walks abroad, is a sign of the greatest dignity. It used to amuse me to see the man I subsequently lived with, late a sub. in the R. A., then Assistant Magistrate of Rangoon, gravely strutting along the streets, followed by a half-naked Burman, holding a gaudy umbrella over his head. "Lord of all umbrella-bearing nations" is one of the titles of His Majesty of Ava; and a white one may be borne by none but royalty in his dominions. The umbrella is also one of the sacred insignia of the Burman's religion. We find the pagodas surmounted by them, and one has been lately placed on the summit of the Shooey Dagoon, costing many thousand rupees. The climate is drier, however, and pleasanter in Upper Burmah.

The country is rich in vegetable products, thanks to this excessive heat and moisture. Rice, tobacco, cotton, and indigo are cultivated, besides the fruits I have mentioned. There are vast forests of pine and teak-wood, much sought after formerly by Nova Scotian ship-builders, but the rapidity of growth is what is most striking. What we consider trees here spring to a height of four and five feet in a night, and the thickness and over-growth of the jungle makes travel, except by the water highways, almost an impossibility. Apropos of the rapidity of tree-growth, they tell you what would seem like a *crax*, or any but an Eastern traveller—one gets so used to marvels in these parts.

It used to be the custom in Burmah to execute criminals by strapping them naked across the stump of one of these fast-growing trees, which had been cut down to the ground and sharpened for the purpose. His hands and feet were firmly bound to other stumps in front of and behind him. In the course of one night the tree would grow through his body, and in

the morning be found flourishing in the air above him. I regret to say this anecdote has heretofore promoted such symptoms of derision as have provoked me at the time, from relating more of my Eastern experiences.

The effect of such a climate upon Europeans is, in the long run, very detestable. Though liver disease is not so prevalent as in some parts of India, diarrhoea and dysentery are common; and when a man runs down with such complaints here, he cannot pick up again without leaving the country. Its effects upon the nervous system are particularly marked. Those who have resided here long are blanched, languid, and tremulous. A prolonged sojourn may even lead to softening of the brain, the first symptom of which is supposed to be a liking for Burmah.

Horses, and elephants, too, succumb to the influences of this climate. Imported horses develop suddenly a form of spinal disease, (stroke of the wind they call it), which renders them paralyzed in the hind limbs, and, of course, useless. The deaths among the elephants (largely used by the Commissariat for transport and other purposes), have several times caused great expense and alarm to the Government.

For *contra*, in this atmosphere the insect plague is at its greatest development. The sanguinary mosquito infests the low land day and night, makes one's life a burden. Mosquito netting is *de rigueur*, and cane-bottomed chairs, though cool, are soon voted a nuisance. At meal times, a swarm of white ants descend upon the table, drop their wings, and crawl about serenely. Now a black beetle whisks, buzzing, across our face; or a green bug, abhorrent to smell and taste, lands in our soup, and spoils our messing for that evening. In the rafters crawls the house snake; and lizards of all hues and sizes chivvy each other across the ceiling. To reach one's home at night is a journey of some danger. One must have a "boy," with lantern and stick, to frighten from one's path the more harmful reptiles; and it is not without a careful over-hauling of the bed clothes that one finally seeks the arms of Morpheus.

(To be continued.)

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

#### THE RIEL FEVER ABATING IN QUEBEC.

A few weeks ago, at a large public meeting in Montreal, Mr. Mercier called Riel a martyr, and even compared him to Christ. He said at the same time that in thus characterizing Riel, he was voicing the sentiments of a million and a half of people. Of the number of intelligent men in Quebec that entertain such sentiments, I have no exact idea; but I have good reason for believing that it is far less than was at one time supposed.

Several gentlemen of good standing in Montreal attended the "Riel Indignation" meetings, and were credited with using very harsh language in speaking of the Dominion Government, and of their English-speaking fellow-citizens. Some of these speakers were apparently ready—yea, anxious to go into rebellion unless "vengeance" should be wreaked upon the men that permitted the law to take its course towards Riel; but they are now giving people to understand that they are very differently disposed. More than one of them has been manly enough to declare it impossible for a Roman Catholic to hold, consistently with the teaching of the Church, that the rebel-leader who incited to rapine and murder was not guilty of a heinous crime. They explain that their disapproval of the carrying out of the last penalty upon Riel was caused by fear that the result of the execution would be to perpetuate the spirit of discord and in-urrection in the North-West.

Six weeks ago, Mr. Tarte, the clever and versatile editor of *Minerve*, was commonly believed to be one of the most uncompromising of the agitators for vengeance. This gentleman has lately published a letter in which he candidly acknowledges that Riel was guilty of some of the gravest offences known to the law, that a fair trial was given him, that he was deserving, morally and legally, of the sentence upon him passed. So much does he manfully avow; but says it has been his opinion that it was not *advisable* to permit the sentence of death to be carried out.

For the "National Party" that was intended to be independent of Grits and Tories, and to be devoted exclusively to the promotion of French-Canadian interests, Mr. Tarte has no sympathy. He recognizes that "it has been organized and encouraged by a few self-seeking politicians in what they conceived to be their own interest," and that it does not represent the feelings or the interests of the people of Quebec. The following extracts from his letter are not ambiguous:—

"I have, without any restriction whatever, condemned Riel's conduct for having headed an armed movement against the authority of the Dominion:

"I have never hesitated to declare, in the paper of which I am the editor, that he was guilty of high treason;

"I have repeatedly protested against the idea of making a hero of that agitator;

"I have refused to proclaim that the French Canadian ministers who claimed their portfolios in Sir John A. McDonald's cabinet were infamous.

"One may respect those who entertain the view that the extreme penalty should not have been carried out upon Riel, but for those who endeavor to make a national question and to form a national party out of his execution, there can be no feeling of sympathy."

If I am not misinformed the present attitude of twelve or thirteen of the French-Canadian M. P.'s who became disaffected with their party because of Riel's execution, is exactly the same as that of Mr. Tarte.

Bishop Duhamel, Bishop Langlois, Father Dowd, Archbishop Taschereau, and many more of the clergy of Quebec, have publicly spoken upon this matter, and all have emphatically condemned, as *un* Catholic, the conduct of those who by their laudation of law-breakers encourage