

through the gate of honour nor with a strong Ministry. The most important post in his Administration is the leadership of the House of Commons; and for this he can find no better man than Sir Michael Hicks Beach, a second-rate administrator and a third-rate debater. Sir Michael takes the place vice Northcote, kicked upstairs by Lord Randolph Churchill; and he is likely to find that for him, as for his hapless predecessor, the choice lies between subserviency to an arrogant junior and ignominious elimination. The ablest man, and the best qualified on the whole to lead, whom the Conservatives had in the House of Commons, Mr. Edward Gibson, is made Chancellor of Ireland, and thus withdrawn from the field of battle, though it seems he is to have a seat in the Cabinet. Policy the new Government has none; for Tory Democracy is an Opposition weapon not a policy, and the Peers, we may be sure, will have none of it. The chief pillars of the Tory Government are Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke. If the Tories can induce those gentlemen to go on telling all holders of property and all whose industry is thriving that they will be compelled to pay ransom to the Radical proletariat, and at the same time holding out to the Parnellites hopes of the severance of the Union, the support of the respectable and loyal classes may be secured not only for Lord Salisbury, but in case of need for Lord Salisbury's butler.

Of the eulogies pronounced over the grave of Archbishop Bourget in Quebec only a faint echo is heard in Ontario. That the late bishop was a remarkable man in his way, and that he long exerted great influence in Lower Canada, is unquestionable. Of feeble frame and iron will, he was able to perform, and did perform prodigies of labour. For months together he would take only one meal a day, sleep very little, and spend nearly the whole of the time in praying and working. Using himself in this way does not appear to have shortened his life, for he lived to reach his eighty-fifth year. Under his episcopal guidance the religious communities in the Diocese of Montreal underwent a prodigious development. The convents increased from ten to thirty-seven, and over forty new religious communities and institutions were established. The bishop thought himself commissioned to reform or to transform everything—morals, politics, literature—and he undertook a censorship of manners, of the press, of literature, and the direction of politics. In carrying out this impossible task his zeal sometimes greatly overran his discretion. In public libraries frequented by Roman Catholics he would permit the use of no books the reading of which he chose to forbid. His anathema struck the *Institute Canadien* with the blight of death. One refractory newspaper after another he found the means of bringing to an untimely end. Parliamentary elections he tried to control through the pulpit and the confessional. But a defeated party with law on its side will not submit to undue influence, even when it is exercised by priests and in obedience to the command of the whole episcopate. The law as expounded by Roman Catholic judges proved too strong for the prelate. At Rome his theories were approved and his want of discretion condemned. At his own expressed desire he ceased to exercise the substantial power of Bishop of Montreal some years ago, and took the purely titular distinction of Archbishop of Martianopolis. But his influence survived his official as it will his natural life. To-day it lives in the majority of the priests of more than one diocese. Whether the ends which the late bishop accomplished, and the extreme ultramontane principles which he inculcated, will eventually prove to be for the good of the Church of which he was so zealous a servant the future will tell. Should reaction against the excessive sacerdotalism which he established come in Quebec, as it has come in Mexico and South America, the wisdom of a course on which unstinted eulogy is now being bestowed will find fewer defenders than at present. If what now passes for pre-eminent wisdom and unqualified success is not found to contain the germ of revolution, the world will have to acknowledge that like causes have ceased to produce like effects.

FAIR PLAY FOR FRENCH CANADIANS.

THERE is a disposition on the part of many Ontario papers, probably indicative of the feeling of many Ontario people, to believe that the French Canadian element in the Dominion is unwarrantably aggressive in national politics. This feeling appears to have been brought to a head by the rising in the North-West, and to be reaching boiling point over Louis David Riel. Allow me, as a Canadian born and bred, as a journalist fairly acquainted with both Ontario and Quebec, an English-speaking Protestant, and, I believe, a fair-minded man, to state my conviction that a considerable proportion of the press and people of Ontario are every whit as narrow-minded in matters of race and creed as our French-speaking countrymen can be, as aggressive and every whit as blamable for any friction which exists between the two peoples.

A Toronto paper a few days ago published the following editorial paragraph: "Hang Riel with the French flag—it is all that the rag is good for."* The French flag is nothing to Canadians, either French or English-speaking, save as representing an idea; and what was implied was that anything likely to be deeply respected by French-speaking Canadians was good enough only to hang a murderer with. This method of dealing with the feelings of fellow-countrymen followed upon the publication of an article in which a battalion of French-Canadian volunteers going to the North-West to fight for our common nationality were accused as a whole of revolting and despicable conduct, the accusations being based mainly upon statements made by one man—a volunteer returned from the route to the front, disabled by rheumatism. It is possible that there were men in the 65th Battalion who were guilty of actions which under ordinary circumstances would be indefensible. There were such in the Queen's Own. I mean that in the extraordinary circumstances of the movement to the front, and in the unsuspecting recklessness of youthful soldiering, some of the volunteers, with never a second thought about it, had a "bit of fun" where they found opportunity—picked up a stray chicken or raided a pantry—and were none the less true men for it. Yet slips of this nature could easily be magnified by mean minds into facts enough to stamp a whole militia as thieves or drunkards. I refer to the particular case as an illustration of the treatment which French-speaking Canadians are liable to receive from Ontario people, and which, when they resent it, develops into a howl about French Canadian aggression.

To return to the general relations between Ontario and Quebec at present, as emphasized in the case of Riel, I do not think that English fair play has been shown in the slightest degree by many Ontario people to French-speaking Canadians in the matter of the Half-breed rising. The disposition of French-speaking Canadians to make allowances for Riel has been exaggerated. Their natural and creditable pity and sympathy for their blood relations in the North-West has been maligned into an indifference to, even a half-concealed satisfaction in, the loss of the lives of loyal volunteers engaged against these relations. The idiocy of a few law students, the screams of *Le Metis*, have been grabbed at as representative of a race. I do not think I go too far when I say that the great majority of French-speaking Canadians have never condoned Riel's part in the rebellion further than to insist that, for the sake of justice to the Half-breeds, he should have a full and fair hearing before being finally settled with.

In the year 1837 William Lyon Mackenzie rose against the legally constituted Government of Canada. Through the rising, in which he played a conspicuous part, lives were lost, property destroyed and painful scenes enacted over as wide an area as is the area bounded by the Canadian Pacific Railway, the great Northern forest, Fort Edmonton and Batoche Crossing. The rising was put down. Mackenzie fled to the States to escape hanging. This spring the Ontario Legislature debated whether to honour the memory of that man as one of the makers of Canada, and no one dared mention his name with disrespect, branded as he had been fifty years before as a rebel and a murderer. Time has commended to all Canadians the indomitable resolve of Mackenzie to attain what he believed justice for the people—has made all tolerant now of a career which the majority would have stamped out on the scaffold fifty years ago if they had had the chance to do it at the moment.

Can the people of Ontario, at least the many who are expressing themselves so unreservedly about their fellow-countrymen of whose blood Riel is, not conceive that there may be an honest division of feeling among these latter about Riel's cause?—that the cause which is unfortunately championed by a man with his record may be in its way one that will deserve the sympathy of all Canadians in another generation, and that there is room for true feeling for it even now in the hearts of those most closely connected with its lonely supporters? Men may do their duty none the less honestly because it hurts them to do it, and it is surely just in such a case that they need the deepest consideration from their neighbours. What more than unthinking co-operation in the suppression of the rebellion can English-speaking Canadians expect from French-speaking ones? They are getting this. Do they expect that the men of Quebec should not only march alongside to put down the rebellion, as they are doing, but should also curse the rebels? Do Ontario people really desire compatriots who could view unmoved the distress, the revolt, the bravery, the ruin and death of their blood relations, the Half-breeds of the North-West, even in a bad cause, but before the Half-breed excesses have been proved to be aught but the blindness or desperation of misguided men?

It is unfortunate that on account of the Half-breeds Riel is too lightly

* At least, these must have been about the words. The paragraph was translated into French and published in *La Patrie*, in which I saw it.