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THE case of the Opposition in Ontario has hitherto been hopeless. At the last election they put forth their utmost force and gained some seats; but it was evident that their strength was exhausted in the effort, while the result left them still far from the possession of power. They have wanted men, though their leader himself has been all that his party could desire, except in respect of combativeness, with the lack of which it is not our business to reproach him. But their most fatal source of weakness has been the absence of any leverage in the shape of an issue, or a distinctive policy, by which a Ministry, not in itself unpopular or incompetent, could be overturned. The connection of the Government with the heads of the Roman Catholic Church had begun to give general umbrage to Protestants, and presented an obvious point for attack. But the hands of the Opposition leader were tied by the necessities of his party at Ottawa, where it rested on Roman Catholic support. It seems that this restraint has now in some way been withdrawn, and that the Opposition is about to move upon the one line on which it can hope for victory. Anxiously scanning the field of battle on the eve of an election, the Premier perceives the columns of the enemy forming for an advance against the weak point of his position, while the Opposition Press opens its preliminary cannonade. His alarm is betrayed by the appearance of an apologetic epistle of the first magnitude addressed to the Presbyterians, among whom dissatisfaction had assumed an acute form, and dealing elaborately with some of the charges of interference on the part of the hierarchy and subserviency on the part of the Government. The letter is eminently well framed; its tone is temperate, courteous, and persuasive. The particular charges selected for examination may have been unfounded or exaggerated. In every case of sinister influence, however real, public suspicion is apt to get upon false scents or overrun the facts. Yet the general suspicion may be well founded, and the influence may be constantly felt. We would delicately hint to Mr. Mowat, that though Prime Minister, he does not hold what we may call the Catholic portfolio, and that when under Pitt's Government Dundas managed Scotland, there were probably some little matters of detail which were better known to Dundas than to Pitt. He will find it difficult to dispel the belief that there exists between his Government and the heads of the Roman Catholic Church an alliance of which a Roman Catholic journal in this city is the special organ. He will find it still harder to convince the world that if the alliance exists, the Church of Rome fails to demand and extort her full share of the spoil. Between Liberalism and Roman Catholicism, not only is there no natural sympathy, but there is an antagonism which the Church of Rome proclaims in the most rampant terms. A political league between them must have some special object. Of the temporary league between Liberalism and Roman Catholicism in Great Britain, to which Mr. Mowat appeals, the special object was Catholic Emancipation, which was at once the cause of the Roman Catholics, and, as an application of the principle of religious liberty, a natural part of the Liberal platform. But the Roman Catholics in Ontario are struggling against no injustice which it is the business of Liberals to redress. The only conceivable objects of the league in this case are political support on one side and political spoils on the other. A Party Government, in the absence of any distinctive principle to hold its followers together, must purchase support where and as it can. That is Mr. Mowat's practical defence, and its validity is only too apparent. With regard to the special case of the Central Prison, it is fair to await the rejoinder which is no doubt coming from Messrs. Milligan, Macdonnell, and McLeod.

IN doing what is right for the future, it is not necessary to arraign the past. Those who conceded to the Roman Catholics Separate Schools may have acted wisely for that day. They may at all events have had sound reasons to show for what they did. At that time the Roman Catholics, though politically emancipated, had scarcely ceased to be the objects of intolerance. In Ireland indeed their religion was still, in a measure, proscribed while that of the Protestant minority was treated as the religion of the State. Under such circumstances they might not unreasonably shrink from sending their children to Public Schools in which Protestants predominated, and which were under Protestant administration. It was not

unlikely that the faith of the Roman Catholic child might be insulted, possible that it might be undermined. But all ground for such apprehensions, in this Province at all events, has now been entirely removed. Perfect tolerance, as well as perfect religious equality, reigns in Ontario. Many Catholic children, in districts where the numbers of the denomination are not sufficient for a Separate School, attend the ordinary schools, and it does not appear that their parents have, or pretend to have, any cause for complaint. If they had, a hundred politicians would be ready to spring to their feet and propitiate the Catholic vote by emulous demands for redress. Exception was taken some years ago by the heads of the Roman Catholic Church to the language of a history of England, which was used as a text-book; but the book was at once revised by the Council of Public Instruction, and the objectionable expressions were removed. The reason for which the priests now insist on Separate Schools is not that they really fear aggression of any kind, but that they wish their people to remain a distinct community under their own peculiar sway, trained in submission to ecclesiastical authority and owing allegiance to the Church rather than to the commonwealth. Their policy is aided by the clannish habits of the Irish people; and the result is a social and political separation which creates a community within the community, and which the State not only is not bound to foster, but is impelled by the highest considerations of policy to break down. To make all Canadians thoroughly members of a single community is an object of our Public School System, as well as to provide all citizens with the instruction necessary for the performance of political duty. There seems to be no doubt as to the general inferiority of the Separate Schools; so that their existence is an educational as well as a political evil. To safeguards against proselytism, if any are still necessary, the Roman Catholics are entitled. But the danger against which they demand securities, to form a ground for special legislation in their favour, must be real, not fanciful, or a mere pretence covering the desire for a powerful engine of ecclesiastical domination. The plea of conscience is always to be heard with respect; but it must be the plea of a sound and reasonable conscience. A man whose conscience forbids him to allow his children to be taught reading, writing, and arithmetic on the same bench with children of a different religion cannot expect that public institutions should be accommodated to his fancy; he must be told to get himself a more enlightened mind. Modern society is organised on rational principles, and cannot for ever be paying tribute to the Middle Ages. Separate and exclusive education is not conceded to the Roman Catholics in the United States, and we do not see why it should be conceded here. A sudden and abrupt change would not be just; but it is time that the Province should prepare for a change.

As neutrals in the political war we may, with a good grace, express the hope that Hon. Alexander Mackenzie will be allowed to take his seat again for East York without opposition on the part of the Conservatives. There is a very strong feeling, not only among Liberals, but among the people generally, that their country has never had a public servant more upright, faithful, or devoted than Mr. Mackenzie, and that so long as he can remain in public life every consideration should be shown him. He gave a patriotic vote, without regard to party, on the Riel Question. Opposition to his return would call forth a strong display of sympathy on his side.

WE cannot applaud Mr. Blake when he courts Rielite and Fenian votes, or when appeals are made on his behalf to the spirits of class hatred and of social revolution. But he is on better ground when he contends for economy and purity of Government. His own integrity is unquestioned and his desire for reform, we doubt not, is sincere. As little do we doubt that the Government, as at present carried on, is to an unpleasant extent a Government of corruption, such as may excite genuine indignation in a Reformer's breast. The report that the Ministerialists are now meditating a dissolution from fear of the scandals which next session would disclose is probably baseless; the majority is too docile, and the people, unfortunately, are too callous for the fear of exposure to have much weight. But it is not the lack of scandals that makes the rumour difficult of belief. The plea of Sir John Macdonald before the bar of history will be that he had to hold together a number of Provinces and sections connected by no natural tie, and this could be done only by appeals to Provincial, sectional, and personal interests. He may truly add that he has kept his own hands clean in the midst of no ordinary temptations, and that he has probably made tact and address go as far as possible and done the job for the country as cheaply as it could be done. That he should learn at last to entirely identify his own continuance in power with the welfare, or even the life, of the Confederation, and that