

successful party are said to be under the direction of one Riel, a Canadian (half-breed, we suppose) of considerable education and intelligence. They have issued a proclamation declaring themselves the only lawful government of "Rupert's Land," (so termed in the company's early days of loyalty to Charles the Second;) but offering to treat with Canada—on terms, however, we are told, (but here again we have no authority on which we can rely,) which it would be impossible for Canada to accept. But "independence" apparently looms in the distance. And the maintenance of independence by a few thousand half-breeds close to the frontier of a State rapidly filling up with an American population is not a very probable event, if it were a desirable one.

It is really necessary to look this disagreeable business in the face, and not to be satisfied with the idle generalities which are usually vented in such cases, about the strength of the British Colonial Empire and the duties of England in respect of it. The Hudson's Bay Company held this territory under the Crown. They sold it—both the powers of government and the land—to Canada. The home government superintended the transaction. It is now said that Canada refuses to pay the purchase-money, on the ground that her vendor has failed to give her quiet possession. Who is to put her into possession, assuming further negotiation unsuccessful, and how?

Supposing the use of force to be unavoidable, there can be little doubt that a very inconsiderable armed force from Canada would suffice to do what is necessary. They would find a divided population, one-half, or nearly so, ready to join them. The country is entirely open and accessible when once the frontier of the inhabited district is reached. There are no mountains or important forests, no fastnesses, natural or artificial. The only course which would seem open to the revolted would be to betake themselves to the neighboring wilderness, and carry on a guerilla warfare with the help of the Indian tribes of the neighborhood. But then the Indians are said to detest the half-breeds, and to be far better inclined to aid in exterminating them than to take part with them.

The Red River settlement is, as we have said, easily accessible over a plain country, either in mid-winter or in summer, from the peopled part of Minnesota; still its frontier lies four hundred miles from St. Paul, (close to the falls of the Mississippi,) the nearest American post of consequence. It is less than that distance from Lake Superior, in Canada; but then the space between is a region of marsh and scrub, roadless, tenantless, and almost impenetrable. How, then, is a Canadian force to reach it? With American permission to march through American soil, easily enough. But how without it? Only in one way that we can conjecture. Winter in those regions lasts till April or May. While the marshes are hard frozen it is conceivable that an armed party of hardy Canadian volunteers or militia, with or without such aid as the British contingent could furnish, might effect the march from Lake Superior over Canadian soil in sufficient force to overpower resistance. They could not bring artillery with them, but they would have none to encounter. But we must own that we hardly expect any such decisive resolution from the government of Canada. And if it is not taken and acted on before the spring, the opportunity is over. And then, if no accommodation has been arrived at, everything depends—however it may suit our pride to acknowledge it—on the attitude to be taken by the American government.

It were vain to speculate on such a contingency. We can only form a conjectural judgment from what we know of the habitual policy of that government and of the sentiments of that government and people towards ourselves. One thing has struck us of late as remarkable; and that is the moderation and calmness of the American press, usually so much addicted to the use of aggressive language on international matters, on the general subject of Canadian politics. It seems as if our cousins were really satisfied of what they commonly assert, that they are only biding their time, and that the *Dor Union* is all but ripe for peaceful annexation to their huge possessions.

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THE DIFFICULTY AT THE RED RIVER.

We wonder how many members of the British public, interested in ordinary political intelligence, have attained any definite ideas of the circumstances, or the scene, of that singular little insurrection against the authority of her Majesty which is, or was a few weeks ago, in vigor on the Red River settlement. This most sequestered of all civilized spots lies as near as possible in the geographical center of the North American continent. It is a mere oasis in a desert—an oasis in a Sahara of "lakes, rivers, swamps, treeless prairies, barren hills and hollows"—the very fig-end of the world, as old LaFontaine described the country north of Lake Superior, which forms part of it. This oasis lies two thousand miles west of Montreal, the chief city of Canada, to which it is now sought to annex the settlement, five or six hundred from the nearest point of Hudson's Bay, its only outlet by sea, and one thousand east of the Rocky Mountains. But to the south it approaches within fifty miles of the boundary line of the United States; and a population is now spreading rapidly over the fertile levels of the State