

then "the people" swept that bewildered fly into the shadowed place of Opposition. If Mr. Blake will drop the high heroics to which he has been accustomed to devote himself, and talk to and of real men and women, who rule their own affairs through their representatives, and not of an imaginary crowd whose cause he is bound to maintain against all comers, they—"the people"—will more readily give him their support.

Next to Mr. Blake's ability must be reckoned his independence of spirit. That is a good trait in any politician's character, and the fact that we have most of all to deplore is, that our members of Parliament become mere partizans, having neither conscience nor judgment as individuals. An independent man in the House is a clear gain to the country—a man who will think and speak for right in governed and governors is a man to praise and sustain; but there is no good which may not be abused, and independence may be exaggerated. That is the mistake into which Mr. Blake has fallen. He thought, and seems yet to think, that to be independent a man must insist upon having his own views carried out, or resign office,—must control other men or throw up responsibility. So Mr. Blake was in office one week and out the next—now a leader, and again a most reluctant follower. But that is not independence—it is simply self-assertion, and may readily run off into arrogance. If Mr. Blake will be independent in a reasonable manner—if he will believe that true personal independence often shows its strength by yielding to the opinion of others—and if he will try and believe that even weak men and perverse men have some claim to life and a hearing, he will yet make for himself an honourable name in politics.

I can easily understand how a man of Mr. Blake's ability and culture and liberal views must chafe under the leadership of the Hon. George Brown. The unsanctified Gritism, of which the *Globe* is the recognised oracle, is in no way after the tastes of any true friend of progress; and when one who is really of liberal sentiment has to bear the yoke imposed by it, there must be chafing and consequent division in the camp. Mr. Blake may as well do his best, however, to fall in with the party. He cannot form a new following—for there seems to be no material out of which a decidedly liberal party could be made; neither can he take the position now held by Mr. Mackenzie—for if the Liberals were to elect him as their leader they could not keep him long. Mr. Blake cannot lead any party: he is constituted not to lead: he is too impatient, too authoritative, too unbending, too scornful of the mere diplomacy needful to keep a party together. All this is said without any intention to depreciate Mr. Blake's merits. These things, which cause him to fail in political life, would help him to high and honourable position in any other calling; but when a man puts his hand to politics and hopes to succeed therein, he must conform somewhat to the general notion of political working. If Mr. Blake will do that he will render good service to the country by and through the Liberal opposition.

LAW REFORM.

It is a characteristic—of, perhaps more appropriately, an eccentricity—of the jurisprudence of Quebec, that a party cannot testify in his own case. All "his sisters and his cousins and his aunts" may appear in his behalf, and "kiss the Book"—for relationship is now no bar; but, in the expressive vernacular of the times, "his mouth is shut." His wife, too, is excluded—with logical propriety; for she, presumed, is part of himself—his "better half."

It was once deemed wise that everything should be established in the presence of two witnesses, but the exigencies of modern trade have relaxed the rigidity of this rule, and one witness—where witnesses are permitted—is now sufficient. It is clear, however, that the best evidence can very often only be supplied by the parties to the suit; and in any case, there does not seem to be any good reason why a man may not be heard in his own behalf, under oath. Such is the law in England, in the United States and in all countries where British ideas prevail. Here, however, we are an indifferent people—that is to say, we take things just as we find them. We act very often with as little

public spirit as though we were merely remaining in the country for a short time for purposes of gain, preparatory to taking up our abode in another land.

Half the ordinary transactions of life are made, "between man and man," without witnesses. The thing is done "on honour," and it is to the credit of mankind that honour is so large a factor in business. But a disagreement arises—the parties appeal to the Courts, and the plaintiff is stopped from opening his mouth! If he wants the story told, he must hear it from his adversary. But if he could accept his adversary's view, he would not have come to Court. This restriction, it is to be feared, frequently defeats justice.

Civilization, as understood in British countries, demands that both parties shall be heard. Let the judge weigh the evidence of each, and consider all the surrounding circumstances, and he will not be without the means of deciding. Solomon heard both the contending women, and who can doubt the justice of his decree? But it will be answered that if proper precautions had been taken, if the parties had had a witness, or had "reduced the bargain to writing," the proof in court would have been easy. This is true. But is not this suggesting too strong a compliment to bad faith? And should we not feel happier in dealing with our fellow-men, to confine our energies to the merits of the transaction, without the harassing consolation of a prospective law suit! A wag once remarked that "life is too short to be in a hurry," and, according to this view, every transaction in a grocer's shop might be witnessed by "These Presents," and no trouble would result, if the customer should "refuse and neglect to pay." But seriously, is not a man's word worth something in these days? And if so, why exclude his oath? Are we living in the Nineteenth Century? or are we not? Or is the Attorney-General indefinitely abroad?

Three of the Great Western Directors have come to this country, and if they act as deceitfully to those with whom they are negotiating as the Board did to the proprietors in palming off Mr. Childers' speech, which they knew embodied views he had changed, and secured proxies by the deception, those with whom they have dealings had better be on the alert. Perhaps, however, they will find that straightforwardness pays best in the end. At the statutory half-yearly meeting Mr. Adams secured a promise that the proxies already obtained are not to be used at the meeting next month, and he can now appeal to the proprietors and show the imposition of which they have been the victims; and perhaps Col. Gray may not boast of so many proxies at the next meeting. At least Mr. Adams can send out Mr. Childers' recantation of his 1876 speech, and if the proxies are then given the shareholders cannot afterwards plead ignorance.

I hear that the Roman Catholic priests of the district of Montreal are getting up a petition to the Pope to remove or dismiss Bishop Fabre. The reason they give is that the Bishop is too severe on them, forbidding them sundry small indulgences in his Palace in the matters of tobacco, snuff, &c. It seems hard on the poor priests that they should be compelled to practise such extreme self-denial, but the more piously inclined say the reform has not been enforced before it was necessary.

I have received from a most competent authority the following answer and correction of my statement made a fortnight ago as to "superior education" in this Province:—

SIR,—The statement in the SPECTATOR of the 18th ult., as to the disposal of the sum produced by the sale of marriage licenses was not quite correct. This sum, being a special tax on Protestants, has been placed at the disposal of the Protestant Committee of the Council of Public Instruction, and is used to supplement that portion of the "Superior Education Fund," from which grants are made to the colleges and higher schools of the Protestant ministry. As the Superior Education Fund is divided primarily, according to population, the share that falls to the ministry is but small, and the marriage license fees form a very useful addition to it.

New York is vieing with Paris in the speculation mania. Nearly all the railroad stock on the New York Stock Board, advanced from 50 to 100 per cent. this year. Erie within a few weeks