

by no other man living. We have his distinct assertion made in the House, that until the Monday morning after the resignation he had never had a conversation with the Governor General, in Canada, on the local politics of the day; an assertion which only a fool could have thought of making, had it been untrue. But, after all, what could back-stairs influence really have to do in the matter? It was not the Governor who made the move, but his late advisers. Back-stairs influence should result in removals, not resignation.

There was, then, what Mr. Lafontaine's letter represents Sir Charles Metcalfe to have called "antagonism" between him and them. Admitted. In 1832 there was an antagonism (far, far more serious, as I shall soon show) between William the Fourth and his advisers. They knew well that the King was at heart opposed to their great measure and to themselves. But they waited quietly, as we have seen, till his refusal at the critical moment to create Peers forced them to resign; and then, they resigned without a word said about antagonism. In 1834, there was still antagonism, and they were still omnipotent as ever in the House of Commons; but they sought no pretext for bringing the House to issue about it with the Crown. An accident (the death of Lord Spencer) made some Ministerial changes necessary, and gave the King the opportunity to get rid of them. The act was not theirs, because they knew that in England antagonism is no sufficient ground of resignation. The Ministry that took their places was defeated in the new House of Commons; and they came in again, and remained the King's Ministers till the day of his death, some three years after, every one knowing all the while that between him and them there was still all the antagonism there had ever been. Such is the English principle. Upon any other, dethronements would not be much less common than changes of Administration. Are we to have another principle for Canada? Can we suffer our public men to say that the first hint of antagonism between a Governor and them is to make them at once throw office and the interests of the Province to the four winds, and post down to Parliament to tell the country that he is good for nothing but to be recalled? With Responsible Government, we ought to have about as little occasion for a Governor's recall, as at home they have for a King's dethronement. The two remedies are not quite equally violent; but they are the same in kind, and one is not more repugnant than the other to the spirit of the British Constitution.

But the precedent I have been citing proves vastly more than for my present purpose I have any occasion to prove. The antagonism between King William and his Cabinet was one of public principle, and was so strong as to lead him to seize the only opportunity he had of dismissing them from his councils. What sort of antagonism was there between Sir Charles Metcalfe and his late Ministers? Was he really hostile to their party, their

measures, and themselves—anxious to reverse their policy, and surround himself with their opponents?

By the admission of all who have ever known him, and his public career has been long and eventful beyond that of most men, Sir Charles Metcalfe is a thoroughly able, honest man. Strong party feeling he never had an opportunity to show, nor even to form. But in general political sentiment and opinion he has always been recognised as being what politicians would term a Liberal, although not at all what they would term a party man. The man can be nothing else, who has raised himself through every step of promotion in the civil service of our East India Empire, from the lowest to the very highest; who, as an Acting Governor General of India, signalized his year's administration of affairs by an act so daringly liberal as the establishment of the Freedom of the Press; who was chosen by the Whig-Radical Government of 1837, at their utmost need, to govern a colony in a state of legislative rebellion, as Jamaica then was; who succeeded there in making himself literally the most popular Governor Jamaica had ever known; whom the Conservative Administration of 1842 selected to undertake the government of Canada under the liberal system then lately established here; whose appointment every Liberal at home applauded as the best and wisest they could have made.

Yet this man, we are told to believe, in spite of his own repeated, solemn declarations to the contrary, is adverse to the principle of Responsible Government; so entirely adverse to it that it is impossible for Responsible Government men to act with him as Executive Councillors! For my part, I have no such easy political faith as to make myself believe anything of the sort.

I can easily believe that he may have thought the advice of his late Ministers, in particular cases, short-sighted and unwise, and that he may have told them so; that their views as to patronage may have sometimes struck him as being too much those of political partisans; that the roughness and reserve of manner of some among them, of which their best parliamentary friends have had constant cause to complain, may have given him deep offence, and not without reason; that he may have understood it to indicate a settled resolve on their part to reduce him to a cypher, to prevent him from ever acting as his own judgment might dictate, perhaps at times to trick him into acts which they knew he would not, if fully explained to him, approve. I can believe that the reserve which such a feeling would naturally create on his part, may as naturally have been misunderstood by them; and that in this way there may have been established before long, between him and them, an antagonism of misunderstanding (if I may use the term) quite decided enough to account for the want of cordiality and confidence that has been complained of, without resorting to the absurdly impossible theory of a decided hostility