

Durham, as a sort of dictator, high commissioner and pacificator, bringing with him a staff of able men, who among them, got up a report somewhat complimentary to our side, as many passages read very like our own compositions; but, as he must do something for "justice," several prisoners, whose overt acts brought them within the technicalities of high treason, were, without trial, transported to Bermuda; and certain absentees, among whom was named your correspondent, had a sentence of death recorded, to be executed should they be caught in Her Majesty's dominions. The British Parliament, not exactly appreciating this novel code of criminal procedure, disallowed the edict, and Lord Durham, throwing up his hand, returned home in a "miff," to make room as Governor-General for Poulet Thompson (Lord Sydenham), a thorough "business" man, who, unencumbered by any inconvenient scruples, and acting upon the maxim that the end justifies the means—which we all fling at the Jesuits, but act upon ourselves—made people who were opposed to the measure consent to a legislative union of the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, and put all government affairs in a train of good working order.

Then came Sir Charles Bagot, an amiable old diplomatist, during whose time was passed by our Parliament, and approved in England, an unpretending-looking resolution, to the effect that our government should be conducted according to

"THE WELL-UNDERSTOOD WISHES OF THE PEOPLE,"

which few words now comprise the "Constitution" called "Responsible Government" of British Colonies, the positive intent and meaning being that each shall be governed by the people themselves, as England is governed, with no foreign interference whatever. A lower House elected by the people, an upper House appointed by the Crown, or some hocus-pocus, and a Governor appointed by the Crown (Lieutenant-Governors will be noticed hereafter), who, like the Queen, reigns as a pageant, without ruling, the real ruler being the premier, or man who can command a majority in the lower House, and who is assumed to represent "the well-understood wishes of the people," to which the powerless Governor assents, as a mere matter of form. This system, worked by an oligarchy, has done well in England, where tradition, usage and fiction (the voice of the people has never yet been heard in the people's house), maintain their checks, and it has done good work here; but in the naked realities of a younger stage of nationality, it is dangerous machinery that jumbles legislative with executive powers, and, ignoring the existence of a minority, makes the head of a democratic majority an absolute, unchecked ruler in all things. Some day, when common thought becomes developed into public opinion, which cannot yet be said to have an existence in Canada, where the masses, like the strong horse, are content to be led or driven, democracy will see the necessity of erecting barriers against itself. Where would you be to-day, if, on every night during sessions of Congress in the last ninety-seven years, your Government had been liable to overthrow on a chance vote in the House of Representatives? Lord Metcalf followed, an excellent and able East Indian official, who could not exactly understand how he could represent Her Majesty with honor, or the need of any Governor at all, if he was to be in all things controlled by some loud-mouthed village lawyer, who could control in the Assembly a few votes more than the leading lawyer of the next village—and was inclined to interfere; but "the well understood wishes" proved too strong, and he was replaced in 1846.

Lord Elgin, who in this year accepted the position with all its pagantry and pay, was one of those mental light-weights who by a cunning exercise and exhibi-