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The fresh sorrow that has fallen upon the people of Quebec is all the more poignant from the reflection that it might have been prevented. The disaster did not come without warning. Nearly half a century ago (May 17, 1841,) the high cliffs of Cape Diamond poured down destruction and death on the houses beneath and their unthinking indwellers. In this case the fatal avalanche fell about an hour before midnight, when most of the inhabitants of Champlain street had retired to rest. Eight buildings were swept away in the path of the descending mass of rock, or were crushed into shapeless ruins beneath its weight. Thirty-two persons lost their lives by the catastrophe, and others lingered on till welcome death relieved them of their agony. Years passed and the horrors of the calamity had been forgotten by many of the younger generation, when again in 1852, at a point further westward, a landslide caused the death of seven persons. From time to time in the interval between that fatality and the dreadful disaster of last week, portions of the rock had given way.

It was not till 1880, after the fall of an unusually large mass of rock, earth and gravel that the authorities deemed it advisable to take what they deemed effective measures to save life and property from the recurrence of such casualties. In order to lessen the peril, certain clearly menacing portions of the over-hanging rock were removed, some houses whose position subjected them to daily jeopardy were taken down, and a barrier was erected which was supposed to be sufficiently high and strong to retain ordinary boulders and protect the houses on the opposite side of the street. It is now obvious that those defences were futile in case the avalanche of 1841 should be repeated. The enormous mass of rock and earth which, on the evening of the 19th inst., detached itself from the heights, rolled clear over the barrier and dashed into the opposite houses with resistless force. As the hour was between 7 and 8 p.m. many of the dwellers in the doomed tenements were at home and few escaped death or injury. As yet the extent of the mortality is unknown, though over forty bodies have been recovered and the searchers are still busy. Some were killed instantly; others died a lingering death, the agony of which one shudders to imagine. If any even incidental satisfaction can be associated with scenes of death and torture and unspeakable grief and horror, it is to be found in the contemplation of the humanity and heroic devotion of those—clergy and laity, soldiers and civilians, officials and private persons—who assisted in recovering the victims and helping the survivors.

On the appalling sights witnessed on the scene of the calamity we need not dwell, as full accounts of the disaster have already appeared in our contemporaries. Nor is it our place at such a time to cast reproach on those (whoever they may be) whose neglect to urge upon the imperilled occupants of the crushed houses the imminence of the danger it is difficult to condone. It is, however, impossible to read the report of Mr. Baillargé, C.E., the engineer of Quebec City, without surprise at the strange apathy which, in the face of such clearly known conditions, allowed any human being to rest for years exposed to a sudden and fearful death. For it appears by Mr. Baillargé's explanation that, nearly ten years ago, he pointed out that the high area in front of the Citadel and embracing the southwest end of Dufferin Terrace, was so loosened by deep crevices that its separation, in masses of more or less magnitude, from the body of the cliff, was only a matter of time—that it would surely come down in a few years, and perhaps in a day or two. In the face of such a warning, one would think that no time should have been lost in either rendering the houses in that part of Champlain street perfectly secure, or else in insisting that they should be demolished altogether. It is also strange that, knowing the natural result of last week's weather on rock, disintegrating as Mr. Baillargé had shown that in the vicinity of the Citadel to be, the authorities should have held no inspection of the clefts or, in case they indicated unusual danger, should have failed to warn the people dwelling below of their dreadful peril. The avalanche, moreover, did not start unheralded on its fatal descent: it had been preceded by the fall of boulders and masses of earth, but these ominous phenomena passed unheeded till the moment of doom when, for most, escape was inevitable.

Some of our enterprising fellow-citizens in British Columbia think that, if Mr. Neilsen's system of lobster hatching can prove so successful in renewing the depleted beds of the Atlantic coast, there is no good reason why the experiment of lobster culture might not be made in Pacific waters. It has been suggested in the *Colonist*, of Victoria, that two or three hundred female crustaceans might be transported across the continent. Lobsters are carried long distances alive all the time, and with care it is not improbable that their transfer in a fairly healthy condition from ocean to ocean might be effected with comparative ease. That the lobster would be a valuable addition to the edible denizens of western waters no person will deny, and the experiment, which would not be very costly, is one that would, at least, be worth making.

It is much to be regretted that, in the bitterness of controversy, some writers have allowed religious prejudices to complicate the discussion of the language question in the Ontario schools. Surely, the French language is no more Roman Catholic than the English language. It is the mother tongue of millions of Protestants; it is the chosen speech of myriads of members of the Eastern Church. It is spoken by dusky Aryans, who pattern their lives on the precepts of Buddha. It is a channel of communication between the sons of Shem and the sons of Japheth in Northern Africa and the Levant. It is spoken by many who profess no creed at all. It was for centuries the official tongue in England, and has long been by convention the language of diplomacy throughout Europe and beyond its borders. It is evident, therefore, that French has no religious significance, and to wage war on it simply because the majority of those who use it in Canada are Roman Catholics is to give loose reins to a most irrational antipathy.

Of late we have heard some rather disquieting reports as to the state of feeling among the Half-breeds of the North-West towards the authorities. The Métis are, doubtless, a peculiar people, who require to be treated with delicacy and tact, and, if they have grievances left unredressed, or can justly complain of promises unfulfilled, no time should be lost in satisfying them, as far as it is possible to do so. They do not seem to have yet quite got over the notion that took possession of their minds in 1870 that the Canadians—the people of the older provinces—wished to rob them of all their rights. They claim that the Government has never dealt fairly with them in the matter of their share in the Indian title, and this is, it seems, one of the questions that is agitating them just now. It has been suggested that scrip should be allotted to all persons born since, as well as before, 1870. Others are of opinion that the Métis have been taught to place too much dependence on assistance from outside and too little on their own exertions. Whatever be the right view of their conditions and prospects, it is clear, from the experience of the past, that, if disaffection prevails among them to any extent, no time should be lost in arriving at the truth as to their position, expectations and needs, and taking such action as circumstances may require. This is just one of those cases in which delay is always dangerous.

The French elections have made one thing clear—Boulangism is not yet a dead cause. It is not, at least, extinct beyond resuscitation. That the General should have received nearly 6,000 votes in Montmartre, in spite of the Government's refusal to receive his declaration as a candidate, reveals the bitterness of the antagonism to the present régime as much as respect for the condemned ex-Minister. The widely prevailing conviction that M. Boulanger was not only harshly, but unjustly, dealt with, must also have influenced some of those who voted for him. The comparatively large number of blanks would seem to indicate that a good many were unfavorably impressed by the revelations on the trial, and, therefore, though they would not support the Government, they hesitated to gratify the vanity of an untrustworthy man. If this be the correct explanation, it is satisfactory to know that there are electors in France who prefer principle even to the discomfiture of their foes.

The part played during the past year in connection with the Boulangist movement by the Comte de Paris is hardly to his credit. What pressure may have been brought upon him by influential Royalists we can, of course, imagine. A policy of mere abstention, as the clericals in Italy tardily discovered, is, from a practical standpoint, a mistake. To surrender everything because a party cares greatly for nothing that it has a chance of winning, is a grave blunder in political tactics. The common-sense leader sees the enemy, and to dislodge and crush him he directs all his energies. If his unsought allies happen to be disreputable, that is their concern, not his. He does not pretend to go with them farther than a certain point. They have a common foe—so far as the defeat of that foe demands combined counsel and action, he will consult and co-operate with them. Afterwards—the deluge. Coalitions of this kind have been usual wherever parliamentary government has existed, and, doubtless, the heir to the throne of