

laid upon him. After this interview he prepared, in fear and trembling, to enter on the discharge of those duties. His fear was that his reputation was more likely to be damaged than improved "in the troubled waters of Canada." On the supposition that the new Governor-General was sent out to reverse the policy of his predecessor, Sir Charles Bagot, this may mean that the troubling of the waters was his assigned task. Lord Derby was quite capable of the malign enterprise attributed to him by Sir Francis. He commenced public life by voting for the Reform Bill, which was relied upon to rehabilitate the Whig oligarchy, but he afterwards found his true place among the Tories. His natural instincts would lead him to desire to crush responsible government in Canada. Things were undoubtedly done by Lord Metcalfe, as he afterwards became, which no Governor-General would now think of countenancing. At a dinner party, at Government House, M. Lafontaine, the leading member of the Executive Council, was seated beside Captain Higginson, private secretary of the Governor-General; and the conversation between the two, reported by the secretary, was made the subject of a despatch to the Colonial Office in which vague designs were attributed to the Ministry, which, if questioned, its members would certainly have repudiated. The subject of the conversation embraced the meaning of the Responsible Government Resolutions of 1841, the prerogatives of the Governor-General, the distribution of patronage. The conversation lasted three hours, and on every point raised the responsible Minister and the private secretary differed in opinion. Captain Higginson took the ground that the Governor-General, being responsible to the Imperial authorities for the acts of the local administration, was at liberty to dispose of the patronage as to him seemed best without check or hindrance. The report of the conversation was confessedly abridged, and its accuracy was challenged by M. Lafontaine. The unwarranted use made of the private conversation was a surprise to the Minister. The former Governor-General of India, become Governor-General of Canada, had no idea of being reduced to the position of the representative of a constitutional sovereign, in the sense of acting on the advice of a responsible council. Not only did he claim, he exercised, the power of making appointments without consultation or advice. What Lord Metcalfe probably foresaw when he accepted the onerous duties which Lord Derby selected him to discharge now happened: the Ministry, unable to accept the responsibility of acts which it did not advise, resigned. The waters were now effectually troubled, and in the shock of public sentiment Responsible Government struggled for a renewal of the recognition accorded to it in 1841.

BUT the proof of the theory that Sir Charles Metcalfe was sent to Canada to smother Responsible Government at its birth is, as Sir Francis Hinck's would himself admit, incomplete; still the circumstantial evidence is strong enough to make the suspicion of Sir Francis highly probable. Lord Sydenham's idea had been to work with the majority in the Legislative Assembly, but he hoped to control the Legislature by the force of intellect and the power of will. The policy of the Government he was himself to frame; that policy was to be his, and the Council was to be got to aid him to carry it out. He was to create a new system; to initiate everything, and to obtain the co-operation of the Executive Council and the Legislature in carrying out his plans. His aim was to be an intellectual autocrat, even while he entered on a change of system which must, when it got into full operation, place the real power in the hands of the Ministry. To attain his ideal he exhausted his strength by continuous labour. His successor, Sir Charles Bagot, without the towering personal ambition of Lord Sydenham, was content to let the Responsible Government resolutions have free play in practice; but his health was too feeble and his time too short to make traditional a system which had barely passed the transition state. If the forms had changed, the change in men's minds was still far from complete. The re-appointment of Vallières as Chief Justice was, contrary to the fact, popularly credited to Sir Charles Bagot as the personal act of the Governor. Sir Charles Metcalfe arrived just at the time when the forces of reaction could easily be set in motion for a last struggle; he touched the spring that gave them a dangerous activity, and when he had convulsed two Provinces by the dread of the dangers he had created, he appeared to be under the conviction, and did probably really believe, that he had performed the highest act of patriotism of which a Governor-General was capable. But the reaction, to which there is little doubt Lord Stanley gave the impulse, died with Lord Metcalfe, and Responsible Government obtained firm and sure footing under Lord Elgin.

SIR FRANCIS HINCKS is of opinion that the violence relied on to carry elections fifty years ago has in our day been replaced by corruption; that "the influence of money has been to a great extent substituted for that of force." The violence of ruder times, when there was little wealth in the

country, was a natural product of a state of things which insured the perpetual possession of power to one set of men; in which the waves of public opinion spent their force ineffectually, and electoral victories could not change the depositories of power. The exercise of unchecked power made the officials impatient of criticism; while the Legislative Assembly was reduced by the opposition of the Crown-nominated chamber to a mere talking machine, which could at all times muster a vast force of verbal condemnation. Under this state of things men's passions became heated, and when they got into collision at the polls, during a week of drunken riot, violence was inevitable. When wealth increased and victory ensured the possession of the spoils; when public men became amenable to criticism and were constrained to bow to public opinion, violence nearly ceased and corruption increased. But there is reason to believe that the worst stage of the period of electoral corruption has been passed. Men will not buy votes of the deposit of which they are not certain, and the certainty that a bribed voter would deliver the purchased vote the secrecy of the ballot has destroyed.

SIR FRANCIS HINCKS complains, not altogether without reason, that after he had left Canada to fill the office of Colonial Governor elsewhere, the entire responsibility of the Consolidated Municipal Loan Fund, under authority of which the municipalities piled up a mountain of debt, was thrown altogether on him, though it ought in all fairness to have been shared by Mr. Brown and his friends by whom the measure had been supported in its passage through the Legislature. The heavy charge which this measure imposed on the public treasury, Sir Francis says, was not foreseen when the Bill was passed. This may be true, but against a measure of a similar debt-accumulating character Mr. Baldwin had sounded a warning which proved to be prophetic. When Sir Francis Hincks, then the colleague of Mr. Baldwin, introduced a motion to empower the municipalities to make grants in aid of railway construction, it was not accorded the honour of being made a Government measure; and Mr. Baldwin, pointing to the mischievous working of a similar license in the State of New York, expressed the hope that the dangerous example would not be followed in Canada. When beaten on the division, amidst shouts of exultation from the friends of the measure, Mr. Baldwin showed more poignant signs of regret than perhaps at any other period of his parliamentary career. The defeat which was made the excuse for his resignation and as it proved final retirement from public life, far from being an equal cause of regret, afforded him the occasion for which he longed. The public reasons for resignation were sufficient, and they are correctly stated by Sir Francis; but if there had not been behind them a private wish to retire, the adverse vote need not and probably would not have caused Mr. Baldwin to resign.

TAINÉ'S FRENCH REVOLUTION.*

M. TAINÉ has now brought to a conclusion that portion of his great work which deals with the Revolution. He proposed to himself to write an account of the "origins" of contemporaneous France. We say an "account" rather than a history, for our author does not pretend to give us a continuous narrative of the incidents which took place in the development of the tragedy which he describes. Just as it would hardly be possible for any one to gain a true notion of the successive events in the history of the Revolution from Carlyle's powerful pictures of the men who took part in it, and of the circumstances in which they acted, so there would be much lacking in the knowledge of any one who had no more information than could be gained from the volumes of M. Taine.

His work, then, is not a history in the strict sense of the word. In some respects, moreover, it is lacking in that graceful fluency of style which is the greatest distinction of the best writers of France. Both in his modes of thought and in his manner of expression M. Taine often reminds us of an English writer more than of a French. We naturally do not like him the less for that reason; and we are sure that those who are best informed and most deeply read in the history of the Revolution will have much to learn from his researches.

No writer has ever dug deeper into the documents of the period with which he deals. In our own judgment, no one has made fairer and more legitimate use of his materials. It is not that M. Taine always writes with perfect calmness; we should think worse of him if he did. There is, on the contrary, a suppressed fury in many of his statements. But we believe he thinks with perfect calmness. There is everywhere evident

* *Les Origines de la France Contemporaine*. Par H. Taine. ii. *La Révolution*. Tome 3. *Le Gouvernement Révolutionnaire*. Hachette, 1885.