

on Her Majesty's Ministers a responsibility which ought to rest on his own shoulders. The riots at Montreal, the burning of the Parliament House, the attacks, which were not far from proving fatal, on the person of the Governor-General, are a mournfully familiar page of Canadian history. Lord Elgin incurred the imputation of want of nerve by not dealing more vigorously with the rioters. The Home Government could not understand his abstention from using the forces at his command for the re-establishment of order. The Americans could still less understand why he did not shoot the insurgents down. But his secretary, Major Campbell, writes: "Throughout the whole of this most trying time Lord Elgin remained perfectly calm and cool; never for a moment losing his self-possession, nor failing to exercise that clear foresight and sound judgment for which he was so remarkable. It came to the knowledge of his Ministers that if he went to the city again his life would be in great danger; and they advised that a commission should issue to appoint a Deputy Governor for the purpose of proroguing Parliament. He was urged by irresponsible advisers to make use of the military force at his command to protect his person in an official visit to the city, but he declined to do so, and thus avoided what these infatuated rioters seemed determined to bring on, the shedding of blood. 'I am prepared,' he said, 'to bear any amount of obloquy that may be cast upon me, but if I can possibly prevent it, no stain of blood shall rest upon my name.'" We may proudly contrast this humane resolution of a British ruler, notwithstanding the greatest provocation, with the swiftness to shed the blood of the people generally manifested by French rulers in case of disturbances, and mistaken by them for rigour, when in fact it is a mixture of cruelty and weakness. But the example set by Lord Elgin will be misleading, if it is forgotten that the mass of peaceable citizens have a right to look to the Government for the firm

maintenance of the law. Nor did the mild policy of the Governor-General wholly prevent the shedding of blood.

He accuses the Tory party of "doing what they can by menace, intimidation and appeals to passion, to drive him to a *coup d'état*. Petitions in favour of a dissolution of Parliament were sent in by the Tories, addressed not to the Assembly but to the Governor-General personally, with the object, it is alleged, of producing a collision between him and the Legislature. He received these petitions with courtesy but avoided any expression of his opinion, thus preserving his constitutional position. "If I had dissolved Parliament I might have produced a rebellion; but most assuredly I should not have produced a change of Ministry. The leaders know that as well as I do, and were it possible to play tricks in such grave concerns, it would have been easy to throw them into utter confusion by merely calling upon them to form a Government. They were aware, however, that I could not, for the sake of discomfiting them, hazard so desperate a policy; so they have played out their game of faction and violence without fear of consequences." We have already intimated the extent to which we should qualify these severe words.

To test the confidence of the Home Government in him Lord Elgin tendered his resignation, but was cordially confirmed in his office.

With reference to the unsuccessful negotiations for French support which preceded the fall of the Tory Government, Lord Elgin comments upon the absence of any questions of principle or public policy to divide parties, and the personal and selfish character which the negotiations consequently assumed. In the same strain his biographer complains that "parties formed themselves, not on broad issues of principle, but with reference to petty local and personal interests, and that when they sought the support of a more widespread sentiment they fell back on those