

ways in accord with your friends, and that they ill-judged you; that you were for the coalition which *La Patrie* desired and not for the fusion which *La Patrie* denounced when it said with Mr. Thibaudeau "Mr. Chaplau wishes conciliation, but on condition that everyone accepts his opinion and follows him." You say, finally, Mr. Mercier, that you have never ceased to be faithful to your party leaders. You were not of that opinion when you stated in the House that you would not follow any line of conduct dictated by a political party; that you had imposed upon your electors the condition that you should be free in your actions and in your political sympathies. You have, unfortunately, a bad memory. In an interview with a reporter of the *Star* in October, 1881, did you not make this confession:—

"Is it true, Mr. Mercier," asked the reporter, "that you have abandoned the eminent position which you occupy in the ranks of the Liberal party on account of the conduct of your own friends?"

"There is some truth in that statement."

"They turned against you when you proposed to form a coalition, is it not true?"

"Yes, many among them."

"Is it on that account that you are retiring?"

"That is one of the causes of my retirement. What is the use of working patriotically for one's country when one's party renders one's efforts useless?"

Mr. David, the only really sincere man among you, translated your thoughts when he said in *La Tribune* of the 8th October, 1881:—

"Our conclusion is that all those who are in favor of a coalition must accept Mr. Chaplau as First Minister. Their efforts should be devoted to the work of surrounding him by strong men possessing the public confidence."

It is your friends, your newspapers, who thus excuse and accuse you. For myself, who know your opinion on the subject, I blame you for one thing—that is, not having to-day the frankness of your opinions at that time. Let us have no subterfuge, no quibbling; make the confession of your faith full and complete. Those who have blamed you, those who have accused you will pardon you the more readily if you will only be frank. Ah, gentlemen, if I did not know the wonderful versatility of Mr. Mercier's talents; if I had not seen him at my side fighting the Liberals to the death in 1862, and seen him afterwards constitute himself their most ardent defender; if I had not seen him afterwards coming back timidly to his first love, to return again

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to his vomiting imprecations against those who had had his first vows, I would be astonished to read, not only the declarations of others on his account, but as well the recital of his own movements since the day when power placed in his soul ambition without limits, and in his heart an ardent thirst to possess it. At this moment his dream is not changed, and each irksome awakening has caused to revive more intensely and more vividly the desire to see the dream continued. [Cheers.] Yes, if I did not know to the very depths the Mercier of to-day as I knew the Mercier of the past, I would be astonished to see him defend the contradictions of his political career with a suppleness of argument that has only its equal in that of his own political conscience. But I know him; I can go farther and say I have always had for him a leaning because I was his first master. I know him and I am not astonished. I then take courage and despair not; I believe that he will yet return, and that his last loves will be those of his earlier days, so true is it that the first impression on a new vase rarely disappears and that the first flame can never be extinguished, as they sing at the opera. But a truce to badinage; the fault of Mr. Mercier is that he had not the courage of his convictions; everyone would have applauded him if he had followed his own first movement. The fault of Mr. Trudel is that he desires to make impossible all idea of union between the public men of our Province. That is more than a fault; it is a crime, for where, indeed, will these violent dissensions bring us.

#### THE CONSEQUENCES OF DIVISION.

To what point are we drifting with these violent dissensions? What point is the destination of everything that is divided? Is it not ruin? Or, is it not, at least, insignificance. An eminent politician, an Italian Minister, wrote not long since that the great danger of constitutional governments among the Latin races was the crumbling away of opinions, the breaking up of parties. Every faction raises fresh difficulties, gives rise to new discussions. Time is lost in expedients to destroy a faction or to absorb its existence which must be maintained at any price, and as each party is too weak on account of its internal divisions, new compromises are necessary every day. Time passes, strength is lost in the effort to maintain equilibrium and the useful work of administration is

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