

with high political character. His outcry about the murder of Scott before the elections in 1871 was mere demagoguism, and not a very exalted type of that. But it seemed when we came to his London speech carefully written out upon his recent return from England, after the execution of Riel, we were about to have from him a loftier standard, when he declared that he was not willing to build a political platform on the scaffold of Louis Riel. That declaration had an air both of consistency and hope. But it was too good to last. The political intrigues began, and it was very soon apparent to all the world that Mr. Blake had become the ally of Mr. Laurier, the Rouge-leader of the Province of Quebec, to build on a Riel platform with the wildest possible cries of rancour and revenge, in our mixed population. It is true Mr. Blake's task, in his new position, was a very difficult one; and it must be admitted that he played with wonderful skill, the role of the "Artful Dodger;" his task being to reconcile two totally inconsistent positions, as represented by the feelings exhibited respectively in the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec. His clear Grit allies, in the House, however, followed him straight in the wild grab for office, acting as though they had never had any principle, with the honourable exception of Mr. Mackenzie, who stood up alone among them and voted in vindication of his own personal honour and consistency.

Coming to the next great question which has divided for the last 8 or 10 years, our political parties, viz, that known as the National Policy, we find, here again, that Mr. Blake's political character will not bear investigation. For the last eight years, nothing could exceed the vigour of the denunciations of him and his allies of the protective principle involved in the fiscal policy of the Government of Sir John Macdonald. It was declared to be retrograde, outrageous and corrupt in some of its incidents; and disastrous in its consequences in relation to the prosperity of Canada. But now, when it comes to be seen how strongly this policy has fastened itself upon the sense of the country we have again the spectacle of Mr. Blake wheeling round and declaring that his success at the polls would not imply the reversal of the National Policy; and we have already seen Grit protectionist manufacturers at Brockville and elsewhere, declaring to him in addresses that they are satisfied with his definitions of policy. Are not these men touchingly confident and easily satisfied?

A change of this kind, and in such circumstances, is simply an offer to barter principles for power, and it is a sign by which the most vulgar of demagogues and tacticians are known. It is something which is quite different from a disinterested change of opinion; and the moral courage which leads to its confession. But it is a phaso of character which is totally inconsistent with any high type, or indeed, any type of political morality; and it is a very curious commentary on the blatant claim to possession on the part of Mr. Edward Blake, of superior political morality to that of his fellows, and his claim to the "white flower of a blameless life."

The electors who are so partizan, or so blind, as to be deceived by that cry, cannot be said to be men from whom much could be expected in relation to the political development of the country; and any success which might attend its use at the polls would not augur well for the future of Canada.