

ing to lay down certain principles, and in being too active or positive in enforcing his views on certain great public questions, when masterly silence would have been far more judicious and infinitely more effective for the accomplishment of his ends. For instance, why make a speech on the Orange Incorporation Bill; or if necessary to say something, why not say a few meaningless words, and so pass the subject over as lightly as possible? A man who wants to get into power is under no necessity to antagonize any class, but—and this is the essence of the whole matter—he is bound to offend *none*, and aim to conciliate *all*. This is not a high-minded standard, but it is practical, and adopted by all the most successful parliamentary leaders of the world. Why make the brilliant oration on the Irish question? It would please some, but it would be sure to *displease* others. The aim should be to *displease nobody*. Why make a great speech on the Riel question? Why not slide over the question as lightly as possible? Somebody is bound to be hurt by such a speech, and the true policy in opposition is to hurt nobody, if you can help it, but the Government.

It was not necessary for Mr. Blake as leader of the Opposition to lay down a definite and substantive policy. It is not wisdom for Mr. Laurier to do anything so foolish at present. It is the height of madness for a trained politician to cry out for a policy in opposition. It is the acme of folly for a political leader in opposition to set up a bantling policy to be criticized. The philosophy of this is as plain as the rule of three. The Government has the advantage, in a contest, of patronage and power. The country is full of subservient persons who want to hang about the skirts of the Government, and get something. The party in power in its ordinary transactions has numerous opportunities of making friends, of doing favours, of showing courtesies, of exhibiting magnanimity. These are the incidents that work for an administration. But there are drawbacks. The Government has to have a policy, and to do things. No policy can be propounded which has not its opponents fierce and bitter. Hence, in carrying forward a Government, powerful interests are bound to be antagonized. If you do something to please the wool men, you are bound to offend the woollen men. For every vacant office there are ten or twenty applicants. You can please one, and leave a rankling sore in the breast of nineteen. If you enforce the customs law vessels must be seized and merchandize confiscated, and *enemies made*. If a traitor has to be executed in furtherance of sound policy he may have a clan or a race at his back who will resent his treatment.

These are the difficulties with which a government has to contend, and these are the opportunities of a judiciously managed opposition. Why, then, should the Opposition needlessly and purposely set up a policy which can scarcely be propounded before it is assailed by various interests? The very instant an opposition propounds a policy—a definite policy—it is placed in a position as bad as a government without any of its advantages of patronage and power. When an attack is made upon the policy of the Government, instead of being put upon the defensive, the apologists of the Government simply say, "This is very well; but what do you say of the policy propounded by the Opposition?" No policy can be propounded which will not antagonize many individuals and many powerful interests. The Government must have a policy, because they have to do things and govern the country. But the Opposition have no such responsibility, and it is their business to antagonize nobody, except of course, the political machine which is against them. To show that this policy has been adopted by the shrewdest and most experienced of political tacticians, it is only necessary to cite the case of Mr. Gladstone. He was in power in 1886, and brought forward a measure of Home Rule, which was defeated in the Commons and disapproved by the country. It was indeed a measure open to grave criticism, not only in principle, but in detail. The very moment he was delegated to opposition he took occasion to declare and reiterate in the most emphatic manner that the measure of 1886 was dead—no longer a matter for consideration; and now what Mr. Gladstone's policy is has become a profound mystery. Again and again have both Tory and Unionist appealed to Mr. Gladstone to declare what he proposes to do with the Irish question in case he is returned to power. But not a word. He knows very well that he could propound no scheme that would not be amenable to criticism on every side. Hence he has no policy. He simply aims to make the British people dissatisfied with the present government, and when this is accomplished they will vote it out. Mr. Gladstone will then take office, and that is the time to propound policies.

Let no one interested in the welfare of the Liberal party of Canada worry the Liberal leader about declaring a policy. It would be the very worst thing we could do. Let no man, in like manner, be worried over the leadership. The Liberal party can win under Mr. Laurier or under any one of twenty of the gentlemen who compose the Opposition, nay, they can win without a leader at all. Their first and supreme object is to get a majority of the people of Canada dissatisfied with the Government of Sir John A. Macdonald. Everyone should be got under the umbrella that has any ground of complaint against the party that has been so long in power. No person should be driven from it. Nothing should be said or done or propounded, that would make any man or any body anxious to get out from under it.

One other practical suggestion. Let no man who is playing the practical game of politics ever waste any time

over the abstract. It is the concrete that tells in politics. For instance, never stop to enquire "what Ontario will do" at the next election. There is no Ontario in general elections. There are a number of individual constituencies. These are what should be considered and looked after. The attention should be directed to the eminently practical question: What will York do? Middlesex, Bruce, Grey, Durham, Northumberland, Lanark? Get a majority of these to elect men who will vote Sir John A. Macdonald's Government out, and the aggregate will indicate what Ontario will do or has done. But in practical politics begin at the primaries. Start with details. The result will be the generality. But if you begin with generalities, nothing effective will ever be accomplished. To get a majority of constituencies to send men who will vote Sir John Macdonald out of office is the supreme aim and contract of the Liberal party. It is not a question of leadership, except in so far as the leader is capable by his personal influence in inspiring the local workers in individual constituencies to make the most vigorous and intelligent efforts to secure the best results in the constituency. Any man who can bring about this result in a wide-reaching manner is useful, whether leader or not. But as a propagandist of ideas, principles and policies, the less that is heard from the leader, or any leader, of the party, the better.

Let no sublimated *doctrinaire* arise and say, "What degrading Machiavellianism!" I do not hesitate to say that it is not a high ideal which has been held up. But we must determine what we want and then act accordingly. If it is the aim to elevate the standard of political morality—to win moral victories—then let us set up an ideal, and follow it reverently and heroically, with the guerdon of perpetual opposition. But if it is believed that the interests of the country require a change of administration, then let us proceed by sensible and effective methods to get the Government removed. One thing is certain, Sir John A. Macdonald will smile at "moral victories." His creed is to win, and he can only be defeated by men whose creed is to win. That he can be defeated, and defeated thoroughly at next general election is beyond a doubt. The question is where are the men ready to begin the work of preparation to-day in all the constituencies throughout Canada. Perhaps it is being done. If not, it is time work was commenced.

Many mortals there are, doubtless, who think that Sir John A. Macdonald is the right man to govern the country, and that he should not be disturbed in his protracted reign. For such this little essay has not been written. It aims simply to clear away some delusions from the minds of those who think otherwise, and who sincerely desire to see a better government in Canada. The essence of the matter is, "give over any idle talk as to who shall be leader, and have as little policy as possible, and proceed by intelligent and practical methods to elect one hundred and ten or more men who will vote out Sir John A. Macdonald's Government."

Halifax, July 22, 1890.

A CANADIAN LIBERAL.

#### A MODERN MYSTIC—IV.

WHEN we met the next day, instead of strolling round Parliament Hill, or sitting in the Pagoda, McKnom having said, "Let us walk into the Park—*videtur agan*—too much of anything is not good." We went into those pleasant little grounds—one of the best parts of Ottawa, if you except the Chaudière Bridge, whence to admire those noble buildings rising from their unequalled site. We sat down; a nursery maid had seated herself not far off and the baby in his carriage gazed at all the wonders by which God and man had surrounded him. Here was a spot where Horace might have loved to walk and moralize, nor sighed for Lucretius and his Sabine farm, and where Mæcenas, on some quiet summer day, had found in the sound of those waters a countercharm to his insomnia.

"Our Lord Jesus," said McKnom, "spoke not as the Jewish teachers of the day, but as one that had authority. He was not only a divine philosopher but a man of action. There was 'a noise, and a shaking,' as he went through Palestine. Flesh and sinews came to the bones and where there had been gaunt skeletons—nay, scattered bones—all was beauty and life. Plato could do nothing like this. But look what he arrives at by reasoning—he was necessarily a rationalist, yet no apostle of Christianity dwelt more strongly on the necessity of faith, and in the Laws."

"Is it not doubtful whether he wrote the Laws?"

"Doubtful!" he cried with indignation, "every line bears the impress of Plato—and if they were not written by him—you remember what I said about the egg—then by some disciple into whom all the honey of the Athenian Bee had passed. In the passage I had in my mind we have not merely Plato's faith in a Supreme God infinitely good, but a picture of the home of the pious among the old Greeks. He almost apologizes for the argument of natural theology on which he is about to enter."

"How," says he, "without passion can we reason to prove the existence of God? It must be with bitterness of heart, with hatred and indignation against those men who force us to enter on such an argument. They who once trusted to the tales which, lying on the breast, they used to hear from their nurses and their mothers; who heard them blended at the altar with prayers and all the imposing pomp of a splendid ritual, so fair to the eyes of a child whose parents are meanwhile offering up the solemn sacrifices, praying for themselves and their children, hold-

ing by means of vows and supplications communion with God, as in truth a living God; who, when the sun and moon rose up and passed again to their settings, witnessed all around them the prostrate forms of Greeks and Barbarians alike; all men in their joys and sorrows clinging as it were to God, not as an empty name, but as their all in all; to those who despise all this—and compel us to reason as we do—how can we expect to teach, and that with calm gentle words, the existence of God?"

"The Rationalist Plato recognizes there is something within us which speaks with even more authority than reason respecting the greatest truths. That passage will show what is abundantly shown elsewhere, that Plato saw the importance of the heart in the perception of truth—saw that youth with highly developed intellect, violent passions and no principles is not only a dangerous but an unnatural monster. You saw that in the prayer of Socrates, which I read to you yesterday, he prayed for a 'beautiful soul.' That meant everything for the good and refined Greek. All beauty—the beauty of man and woman, of sun and sky, of star and stream and flower came from God—was showered profusely on the earth, not only for man's delight but to lead him, as Plato taught, up to God. The virtues stood out before his mind as beautiful, and the affections of the heart as surpassing all material splendour in their loveliness. No man could be holy or heroic without love—love to parents, brothers, friends, for whom he would even die. In the 'Phædrus' he speaks of our affections as 'wings of the soul,' which raise us up to a living God. God's image is in man, and our brother man has therefore a twofold claim on our love. Is there a longing for a life beyond our little span? Then live in the lives of those whom you have helped to model after the image of God, and let the lamp of virtue be passed from soul to soul by an eternal inheritance. And then there was the spiritual world behind the material veil. Here too was an object for the affections. There is a God; God is goodness itself; I am safe in His hands. What can shake such a man? God must first be shaken. Moral truths, like the God who has implanted them in our nature, are immutable. Experience can overturn theories respecting the material world, but goodness will be always beautiful, vice be always ugly and hateful—now such is the teaching of Plato—and what wanted he that a true Christian has? I answer, Nothing, so far as his own moral growth was concerned. He had attained to most of the great truths of Christianity by reasoning, by faithfulness to his higher instincts, by watching the effect on the young men of the teaching of the Sophists. If we see that a young man holding fast to God, believing in his Providence, seeking to have a beautiful soul like Him, can conquer passion; that the same young man, from sceptical, becomes a scooped nut, crushed by the first temptation—what are we to conclude but that belief in and love to God are natural to man; that belief in and aspiration after a future life are natural to him, and therefore true, as true as that food taken into the stomach upholds animal life—and that without food life passes away? We can describe certain changes which food undergoes, but we cannot go deeper."

"Well, tell me what Plato lacked."

"I have said," answered McKnom, "that he anticipated Christianity in many of its greatest truths. But, great as he was, can you fancy him preaching the Sermon on the Mount? But that is not what I mean. He was always looking for a young man of great talent, goodness, genius, spirit to embody and propagate his teaching—he saw clearly the necessity of a personal object of love for the young—and he thought he would find that in his teachers, the masters in his ideal Republic. He never found this. Now don't you see that the Preacher of that Sermon on the Mount was exactly what Plato longed for in vain—good, persuasive, pure, eloquent, righteous, without blemish, heroic, capable of inspiring boundless love, and dying for mankind?"

"Tis very strange."

"Strange!" he said, "is there not a certain cogency of proof in these anticipations of a pure soul like Plato, and his wistful looking for a person who should be an object of affection to instil his teaching into the young?"

He paused, and Helpsam said: "There is the sore place in our educational system. We manufacture teachers by examinations in certain branches of knowledge, whereas no man or woman is fit to be a teacher who is not educated. This, of course, embraces high moral qualities—is not mere instruction."

McKnom: "You are quite right. But your remark goes wider than our educational system; it touches everything. I will tell you a story."

"We were yesterday talking of Orpheus. When the Thracian women tore Orpheus to pieces, the Greeks deified him, and we learn from Philostratus that his head and lyre floated down the Hebrus to the sea, and were borne by the waves to the island of Lesbos; his lyre, as Lucian relates, touched by the winds, giving forth a responsive harmony. His head was buried, but gave oracles from the grave, while his lyre, which, by the sweetness of its spell, had drawn to him wild beasts, and the trees of the forest, was suspended in the temple of Apollo, where it long remained, until Neanthus, the son of Pittacus the tyrant, learning that it had drawn trees and savage beasts by its harmony, earnestly desired to own it. He therefore corrupted the priest, took the lyre of Orpheus, and fixed another like it in the temple. But considering he was not safe in the city, he fled by night, and when he had got into the country he began to play on it. He confounded the chords, yet fancied he was producing a Divine