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THE TIMES.

LETELLIER AS A MARTYR.

IT is not easy to determine from reports whether the Letellier "demonstration" at Montreal on Friday last was a success or a failure. On the whole, it appears to have been somewhere between the two extremes; the torchlight procession was a fizzle; there was a big crowd in and around the residence of the Hon. Mr. Huntington, and the speeches made were remarkable for nothing so much as their mediocrity. That the hosts, gathered from all ends but the West-end, were enthusiastic, there can be no doubt, as all who were there had come to shout upon every possible pretext; and that they were, are, and will, be stout defenders of our glorious Constitution need not be called in question. The right of Mr. Huntington to impose his crowds upon his neighbours; to deny residents in the same street their natural rights of coming and going; to have bands beating the tom-toms of their party's conceit, may well form a subject for serious enquiry, however. M. Letellier's admirers came from the Eastern suburbs of the city, and from the adjacent municipalities, and as it is hardly likely that Mr. Huntington's neighbours are more amiable than the ordinary run of respectable people, or that they were all in sympathy with the "demonstration," it would have been at least more considerate if the promoters of the meeting had gathered their friends together in one of the business squares of the city.

But it is time to take strong objection to the much-talked of idea that M. Letellier is a hero and a martyr. That was the key-note of all the speaking on Friday last—just as it has been the key-note of most of the Liberal speaking since the now famous act by which a Ministry, having a majority in the Assembly, was dismissed. M. Letellier has been trumpeted as the "saviour of the people of the Province of Quebec"; as "the hero" of the day, and, since his dismissal from office, as the "martyr" who nobly sacrificed himself to the cause of political purity. Such rushing from pillar to post, from extreme to extreme; such extravagance in the use of language, and such efforts to make heroes out of ordinary stuff may very well serve the purposes of political partisans, but they are, and must be, very demoralizing to the general community. We ought to cultivate a habit of sober judgment, so that we may know the real value of men's actions, and how to appraise their motives. It is a disgrace to belittle men; it is a disgrace to flatter men, and as a matter of wrong-doing the latter is greater than the former, inasmuch as it works greater harm to all parties concerned.

The statement has never, I believe, been seriously disputed, that the dismissal of the DeBoucherville Ministry was, in all its main features, a party move. If the Hon. George Brown was not the leader in the movement, it can only be said that the Hon. Editor of the *Globe* has borne the charge with more than his usual grace and patience. It may be that conscious innocence has filled him with a spirit of meek endurance; it may be that he deemed men's speech about him as worthy of only silent scorn, but it is more likely that he was the head for which

M. Letellier lost his own. That the dismissal of the corrupt DeBoucherville Government was for the good of the Province, and in the interests of the cause of purity, I have no manner of doubt; for it substituted men of principle for a mere railway ring; it put men into office who had at least a strong desire to do what is right for the people. But that was an incidental good. The *coup* told on the side of the electors; unquestionably M. Letellier cared for the interests of the electors enough to hope and believe that it would do so; but, first and foremost, he thought and acted for the Dominion Liberal party.

To talk of M. Letellier as having done this at any and all risks to himself is absurd. At the time he could hardly have considered the possibility of his removal from office—he had not the most distant vision of that decapitation he has since suffered. He was assured of the countenance and support of his party at Ottawa—that party was in power, and was confident that the coming elections would result in its return to office, if with a diminished, still with a good working majority. Where was M. Letellier's heroism then? Where was the self-sacrifice? He believed that even a change of Government could effect no change in his official position, and a change of Government appeared a very remote contingency. Sir John A. Macdonald moved a vote of censure in the House of Commons, and got voted down, not to say snubbed. M. Joly was sustained when he appealed to the electors of the Province, and it seemed as if the movement had succeeded admirably and ended all right for the party and the Province. It was only after the general election, when the stiff-necked Free-traders had been swept away by the N. P. deluge, and M. Mousseau and other irreconcilable Frenchmen were hounding Sir John to death that the Lieut.-Governor of Quebec began to fear the political guillotine. But then he could do nothing but sit still and wait the development of the plot. His hope was first in Sir John, then in the Governor-General, and then in the Privy Council; then again in the Governor-General, and then—he lost his head.

So that there is not the slightest foundation in fact for calling M. Letellier a martyr. A man is only a martyr when he has pursued a course which he deemed to be right, all the time clearly foreseeing the possibility of having to pay a painful penalty, and not being prompted by self-interest. But M. Letellier did not foresee the consequences—could not have foreseen them, in fact—and he worked for his party, that is to say, he worked from interested motives. If M. Letellier has lost his health in his great anxiety about the matter, as his friends so loudly proclaim, it only gives one more proof of how little he is capable of playing the part of even a political martyr. He should be quite satisfied with losing his place for the gratification of having put good and true men into office. This endeavour to make political capital out of ill health is anything but true courage. Why should a man suffer himself to be harassed, almost to death, by the chance of losing office? Party devotion is a poor thing, but it ought to rise superior to that. M. Letellier complained that while M. Joly shouldered the responsibility for the dismissal of the DeBoucherville Government, he, M. Letellier, had been compelled to suffer. That may be heroic—it may be the rôle of a martyr, but if so times and ideas have changed, and we shall have to begin a new calendar of a new kind of brave martyrs.

AFFAIRS AT QUEBEC.

After all, the fifteen unenlightened Councillors at Quebec appear to be accomplishing something. The Ministerial majority is made up of so many raw recruits, and men looking out for the main chance, and men afraid of the risk and expense of another appeal to the electors, that it got demoralized by the ridiculous, but determined