

attacks, he has pointed to the confessional as a canker that has eaten the morality out of the system. To some of his references, in proof of the practices which he denounces, it is not hard to find the key. He tells much which, even if true, he was under the strongest obligation that can bind a human being not to reveal; and it is impossible sometimes to know whether he be a self-accuser, whose conscience would not allow him to remain silent, or whether all his denunciations are intended for third parties. It is difficult to read his book on the confessional without suspecting exaggeration; but some of the evidence in support of the charges of immorality is unimpeachable and cannot be put aside as doubtful or insufficient. In this category must be placed a letter from a well-known archbishop, written, however, before he reached that dignity, in which is given the opinion of theologians as to how often a confessor may sin without being accounted a bad priest. M. Chiniquy has braved the hatred of the whole body of confessors, whom he has accused of something like habitual immorality with their female penitents. But while it is possible to understand the hostile feeling which he has aroused against himself, it is not possible to excuse the outrages to which he is subjected. And whatever truth there may be in his accusations against the confessional, the men who form these mobs should be the last to resent them; for if any one suffers from the practices described it is the layman. But the outrages are the legitimate outcome of the teaching that no religion but that of the Church of Rome can show a right even to toleration.

WHATEVER the incident may portend, writers in Paris have begun to ask whether there are no conceivable circumstances under which the French Canadians would consent to return to the condition of a French colony. And the sorrowful reply has had to be given that there is none. At a time when M. Jules Ferry tells his countrymen that "the future is to the nations which seek expansion abroad," the feeler may not be entirely without meaning. The query is very much in the formula used by Lord Ashburton when the negotiations for settling the north-eastern boundary were in progress, and Colley Grattan, his lordship's solitary assistant, reported that there was no chance of the American negotiators accepting the English view of the case: "Do you think he (Judge Preble) would listen to reason?" Grattan confessed that the smile which accompanied the question seemed to cover a depth of finesse which he could not fathom. Whatever Lord Ashburton may have meant, he did not ask without an object. The Parisian is only curiously speculative; and whether he talks for the sake of hearing the sound of his own melodious voice, or wishes to hear a confirmation of his own views from Canada, he finds his answer echoed back from the banks of the St. Lawrence. As a suggestion of a re-marriage would be too prosaic a thing to leave much room for coquetry, we must accept the echo as a faithful index of the soul. Still such a question, put affirmatively and answered in the asking, is a curious thing. But if this be a speculative negotiation, say *pour rire*, Jean Baptiste does well by beginning with something more than a simple No. He adds that he has lost all relish for the conscription, to which he has become a stranger, and that on the whole he is doing very well under a Government which does not thrust upon him the honour of spilling his blood in defence of the British Empire at large, great as he feels the honour would be. He does not object to the excitement of an occasional campaign, as the militia rolls of 1775 and 1812 attest; but, strange as it may seem, he must confess to the degeneracy of having conceived a positive repugnance to the time-honoured conscription. With many thanks, his present mood is to say, and he does say: "*En toute sincérité, nous ne désirons pas de changements.*" The speculative Parisian will of course accept the answer as final and not be importunate in the attempt to gratify an idle curiosity.

FRENCH attempts at colonization in New Caledonia have met with the minimum of success. New Caledonia has been used as a second Botany Bay; but the convicts, when they have served their term of transportation, are incapable of being turned into prosperous farmers. The men who went in search of La Perouse described New Caledonia as the raw material out of which the genius of France would be able to make a new paradise—so inviting was the aspect and so sterile was the soil; and now nearly a century later, there are in New Caledonia three hundred men playing at farming with such poor success that if the heavy government expenditure were to stop they would be in danger of starvation. M. Jules Ferry will have to revise the formula in which he believes the political wisdom of the time to be comprised, and the new version will have to contain the confession that it is useless to seek profitable expansion abroad unless the means of securing it be employed. Neither in New Caledonia nor in Cochin China have they been successfully

used; and, what means a great deal more, the same is true of the favourite colony of Algeria, of which France is at so much pains to make the world believe she has countless reasons to be proud.

LOUIS RIEL is not the best possible agent for giving voice to the demands of the Half-breeds of the North-West. But they have accepted his agency, and he has given form to eleven different claims, some of which are reasonable and others quite the reverse. It becomes evident, on reading the list of grievances which he has drawn up, that his object is to ingratiate himself not less with the Indians than with his fellow Half-breeds. He tells the Indians that the Canadian Government ought to feed them. The Government, he complains, expends less on the Indians than the Half-breeds and settlers expend. He is ready with condemnation on the strength of this allegation; though he avoids particulars and offers no proof. But even to the voice of Louis Riel a deaf ear ought not to be turned when what he asks is reasonable. And surely the creation of new Provinces in the North-West, when a given population is reached, is not an unreasonable request. Safety must be sought in trusting the settlers. Whether the Half-breeds of the North-West should not be accorded the same consideration in the allotment of lands that was extended to their race in Manitoba deserves the consideration of the Government. It may be that many of these grants were parted with to white speculators for a very inadequate consideration, and it might be desirable to take some precaution against a repetition of like acts of improvidence on the part of the Half-breeds. But if they are to be treated as free men, it is very difficult to restrict them in the sale of their lands. It is not easy to see on what ground future Half-breeds, who may be born during the next twenty years, should have reserved for them lands, the equivalent of which the children of other settlers are not to get, or that four generations of Half-breeds, born and to be born in Manitoba after 1870, should be entitled to like exceptional treatment. The demand for the setting apart of two millions of acres to form a fund for the maintenance of schools, hospitals, and orphans' homes, for the exclusive use of the Half-breeds, is probably coined in the same mint that produced that for Government contributions to convents, wherever there is a sufficient number of these people to justify, in the opinion of the persons demanding the money, the erection of such establishments. But if extravagant and untenable demands must be met by refusal, that is no reason why those which justice and prudence recommend should not be granted.

#### "BYSTANDER" ON CURRENT EVENTS AND OPINIONS.

THE election of Cleveland is the triumph of administrative integrity and sterling worth over the arts of a brilliant but unscrupulous and untrustworthy schemer. It promises the adoption of a rational tariff, and closes the boundless vista of corruption opened by his rival's proposal to go on raising an enormous surplus revenue and spending it in Pension Arrears, River and Harbour jobs, or Negro Education. It promises also a foreign policy of good sense and sound morality, instead of the coruscations of a demagogic Jingoism. The best friends of the United States therefore, as well as the best men in the United States, rejoiced when the congratulatory telegram from Jay Gould to Cleveland showed, as it seemed decisively, that fortune had passed to the camp of Cleveland. To complete the grounds for satisfaction, it appears that Tammany after all was faithless to Cleveland, many Tammany votes having been bartered for Republican support in the municipal elections; and as the Irish Nationalists everywhere supported Blaine, and are proclaiming their readiness to go to the length of "blood" for him, he will after all be free from obligations to the great power of corruption and at liberty to tread the path of reform pointed out to him by the better section of his supporters and by the nation. He owes his success mainly to the Independent Republicans, and notably to *Harper's Weekly*, which by its intrepid adherence to the cause of reform has well deserved the gratitude of the country. Something is also due, accidentally, to the Prohibitionist candidate, who carried off a considerable number of votes which would otherwise have been chiefly Republican. Mr. Cleveland's personal bearing throughout the struggle, and especially with reference to the charge of youthful incontinence brought against him, made the most favourable impression and strengthened the hands of his friends. To place a libertine at the head of society would be very wrong; but Mr. Cleveland is not a libertine: he has once fallen; his tone in speaking of his fall shows that he feels rightly on the subject; and his fault is not one which directly affects his public character; it has in fact been only too common among men whose public characters were the highest. The President is an Executive Officer. His legislative power is confined to a qualified veto. But that veto may be put on Pension Arrears