

And as to the *ancien regime*, the irresponsible rule of Downing Street checked only by the rival but worse domination of a handful of irresponsible officials in the Colony, those who can be welcome to think a return to it endurable. The tree must yield its fruit. Union or no Union, Canada can never be tolerably governed without representative institutions.—And representative institutions imply Responsible Government, or none—the British Constitution, or Absolute Democracy.

The more cheering view for me. In the late difficulties between the Governor General and his Council, I see no necessary consequence of Responsible Government, but merely mistakes made by men who should have known better. The cause of quarrel is not to be sought in the peculiar circumstances of Canada, which by some have been thought to make the experiment of constitutional government here unduly hazardous; in the sectional jealousies of two newly united Provinces, the past feuds of its two races, the rival claims of religious sects, the unforgotten animosities of civil war. It cannot even be referred to the peculiarity of the Colonial relation which has made some doubt the possibility of introducing the essential features of the British Constitution into any Colony. It was no question of Downing Street dictation, no matter at issue between the Colonial Office and the Colony; but simply and solely a question between the Representative of the Crown and his Provincial advisers, a question with reference to which Canada is so nearly in the position of an independent state, that in deciding it we may safely follow the very letter of British precedent.

At home, the relations between the Crown and its advisers have long since been settled beyond controversy; and there, ever since the revolution which established it, the system of Ministerial responsibility has in all respects worked well. The position of the Crown at home differs from that of the Representative of the Crown in a Colony in one particular alone. The Sovereign is held responsible to no one, and absolutely incapable of doing wrong. The Representative of the Sovereign though responsible for his acts to no one within the limits of his government, and incapable therefore of doing any wrong of which they can be the judges, is responsible for all his acts to the Sovereign whose delegate he is. Ministerial accountability at home is established by the mere will of Parliament; the two legislative bodies tacitly agreeing to hold certain servants of the Crown responsible for the exercise of all its Prerogatives, and the Sovereign acquiescing in the check thus placed on his authority. In a Colony the result is attainable only with the permission of the Mother Country, as the Governor's responsibility to the Crown makes it impossible for him to acquiesce in such a system unless with that permission. He must have had leave to act by Colonial advice and in accordance with Colonial opinion; and the instructions he receives from time to time must

be framed to admit of his so doing. As regards Canada, this permission has been accorded; and it is our own fault if we fail to hold our Governor's Ministers answerable to ourselves for the acts of his Administration. No doubt the Governor, from the fact of his responsibility to the Imperial authority, stands in a somewhat different relation to his Council from that in which the Sovereign stands to his Cabinet. The Sovereign can agree to any thing; the Governor, only to what he may conceive consistent with his duty as a delegate of the Sovereign. His share, therefore, in the actual administration of affairs must be more active than that which the Crown need take at home. He is bound to be of his Council in fact, as well as over it in name. But this distinction in no way affects the essential principle. We hold only the Councillors answerable to us; the Crown alone holds him responsible. If, indeed, the Crown were to command him to do what no Councillors responsible to the Colony dare be responsible for his doing, the case would be one of threatened collision between the Colony and the Parent State. In such a case, however, there would be far less probability of actual collision than under the old system; for the discussions to which such orders would give rise, instead of at once coming before the public to excite the public passions, would be carried on quietly at the Council Board and by confidential despatches, between public officers sworn to the discharge of their duties, and who may be presumed to have a common interest in preventing mischief. But that, I repeat, is not this case. Whether the retiring Councillors were right or wrong, is a mere question as to the relations between a Governor and the Members of his Executive Council; and British usage is the test by which it is to be decided.

In my opinion, the retiring Councillors were in the wrong; so decidedly in the wrong, that I cannot hesitate to charge upon them the deep responsibility of having brought about, by their mistakes, the collision that has taken place. I say "mistakes," advisedly, because I have no wish to charge them with any graver fault than a misapprehension of their public duty. Some of them, I feel sure, must have been drawn reluctantly, and against their better judgment, into the rash course they have taken, by the over-urgency of the more unquiet spirits of their number. And even of the latter class there are those, whose personal motives no one but a hostile partisan would impeach.

On Monday, the 27th ult., Mr. Lafontaine announced in the House the fact of the resignation, in terms altogether unexceptionable, promising an explanation at as early a day as he and his colleagues should be in a position to render it. The day but one after, Mr. Baldwin proceeded accordingly to give it, in a speech of considerable length and ability, which stated, however, no special facts out of which the resignation had necessarily arisen, but merely asserted, and sought to prove, a general difference of views as to Responsible Govern-