

POLITICS IN THE MUD.

Few things can be more painful to right-minded persons than to be compelled to see the degradation of Government. It should be calm, judicial, majestic. For a Government is more than a mere executive called together to do the political work of a people. If on the one side it has the people, on the other side it has God. It is not there in its place just to do what the people wish to have done—it is there to exercise reason, to administer justice, and to build up the national life. Some have fallen into that fatal error of thinking that politicians must take their policy from the voters only—find what they want to do, and then make the doing of it easy. But that is not the true idea of Government. It is *Government*, not a body of men called together to grant licenses. The man who holds himself as merely representing a constituency, and having no higher and separate ground—no duty as to good law—no responsibility as to morality—no obligations as to religion, is but a puppet, true to a few ill-informed people, but false to himself and his calling.

But even common morality and ordinary decency are whistled down the wind by our Provincial politicians. Government is dragged through the mud. The DeBoucherville party messed and muddled things until the Province was on the verge of general bankruptcy. Then the Lieut.-Governor stepped in at the wrong time and in a foolish way dismissed the party from office. The cry was at once raised that the Constitution was endangered, or outraged, or something, nobody could quite tell what. Explanations and further explanations were sent to the Governor-General, who did nothing; they were handed to the Government at Ottawa, who did less. Some of us imagined that if it was a mere question of law,—this dismissal of the Quebec Government while commanding a majority of votes in the House,—that the Dominion Cabinet might have referred it to the Supreme Court for a legal decision. But the majority of our House of Commons declined to give the people of Quebec any guidance in the matter—the Prime Minister declaring that it would be wrong to say anything definite while the elections are pending. And now it is a violent strife between parties. Blackguardism is the main force in motion. The last development of it—the Goff-Baker business at Montreal—is a disgrace to a people. Party papers are lending themselves to false reports of meetings, and the most reckless defamation of private characters. No wonder that it is difficult to get men with a reputation to lose to go into this fight among sweeps. They see well enough that the game is not worth the candle.

The only way to save the Province is for good men to risk a little—give a little attention and time to politics and try to raise it out of the mud. The Conservative party is thoroughly disorganized. We are told that M. DeBoucherville will not be the Premier again if his party should be sent back to power. But we want to know who the coming man is? We want to know also what changes will be made in the policy of the party? Will they reintroduce their Railway Bill, and their iniquitous scheme for taxing the Brokers? Will they reduce the expenditure so as to make the two ends meet? As a party they have made no promises to that effect at any rate. We are asked to "buy the Conservative pig in a poke," resting satisfied with the assurance that the animal is Conservative. Of course the answer is—we are the Opposition, and no statement as to policy ought to be demanded of us. But that is to talk nonsense. Each party is asking to be sent back to power—and it would be a dangerous thing to return a party which in the House would have to agree upon a policy and upon its leaders. The chances are that there would be disagreement, and divisions, and perhaps another appeal to the electors. If we ask a Conservative candidate, Who would fill the various offices if your party should get a majority? he shrugs his shoulders and says he doesn't know—he is only sure that M. DeBoucherville will not be where he was—and for himself he will pursue such and such a course. If we ask another he says the same as to the Premiership—but not the same as to matters of legislation. That must be fatal to the prospects of the party, for only blind, unreasoning partisans could be induced to vote for such a broken-down brotherhood.

The Liberals have leaders, not all of them of the best sort. Still, most of them are worthy of a trial. They have a policy of retrenchment and a purpose to carry it out. We again assert that this is no question as between the Liberals and the Conservatives of the Dominion. Sir John A. Macdonald and Mr. Mackenzie are not in the field. It is Mr. Joly or—

THE HON. JOHN YOUNG.

At our best we can do but a little for those who have passed away from us. Fond thoughts may follow them for a while; their names may be pronounced in pious remembrance; the bereaved ones may sob out their sorrow on each other's necks; but soon heaven and earth will have advanced another step, and silence will dwell upon the tomb. But, in passing, let us fling a wreath where flowers should grow for ever.

What we say here shall not be a mere panegyric. It is an impertinence to flatter the living; it is a crime to flatter the dead. To treat a noble man like a spoiled child, is not reverent, but only flippant. It is unjust to be ungenerous either in praise or in blame; only truth is beautiful. Whatever perfection men may attain in the kindlier circumstance of heaven—they do not reach a state of perfectness here—with great excellencies are combined great failings. When we speak of "greatness" as having regard to men, we mean it comparatively, and with reference to the age. The idea of greatness is comparative; it changes as men grow in their conception of what is human strength. At first the idea of greatness is that of extraordinary physical strength. At that stage the giant is the great man. It is so with the savage; it is so with the child. A little higher up craftiness is the quality most prized. Higher still, the intellect becomes supreme, and men bow down to power of thought—of understanding, of imagination, and of reason. Highest of all men learn to value moral qualities—heart forces—sentiments of philanthropy, of justice, and of truth.

Judged by the highest standard, the late Hon. John Young was a man whom to remember is to esteem, and whom to lose is irreparable loss. He was not perfect, but he was a MAN. He was not a great orator, a great statesman, a great leader, a great organizer—but, he was a MAN. A man possessed of head and heart. A Scotchman, having deep rooted in him all the persistence and tenacity of purpose which is characteristic of the Scotch, and yet was a true Canadian, loving with a great love the land of his adoption. He was rugged in appearance, rugged in speech, but tender as a child in affection. Cool and self-possessed, and an enthusiast withal.

In commercial matters he passed through vicissitudes of fortune, ending, it is said, not in what is popularly considered success. In politics he kept his hands clean, and his name good—a great achievement in this country and in these days. In matters of theology he was what is called liberal. He had the manliness to think for himself, and the courage to follow his own reasonings. They led him to Unitarianism. By no means a popular way for a man to go, and by no means a path to ecclesiastical honor or support in this Dominion. But he went that way because he thought it right. There was some pride of intellect, perhaps, and a great deal of manly honesty, for certain. He loved the past, but declined to worship it. He had respect, as we can testify, for his fathers who held to Scottish orthodoxy, but thought they may have been wrong. All the worse for him, some will say,—who shall decide the question? At any rate, his theology led to morality. Men do not shake the head, and shrug the shoulders, and look whole chapters of bad reading when the name of the Hon. John Young is spoken. No one seems to be ashamed of having known him. His memory is cherished by the country. That speaks well for his life, and seems to say, it is the MAN we care for, after all. That is the best creed which can produce the best kind of man. He was not narrow in his way of thinking, but broad, and kindly toward all who had thoughts of a different sort. Decided in his own opinions, he was not a bigot.

But, most of all, this man was an enthusiast. Ahead of his time, without doubt. He said that Canada has a great future. He had understanding of her marvellous resources. He said what great things she may yet achieve. He was her prophet. He was her servant. He planned; he sketched; he labored hard, and was a patriot. By no means an easy part to play, that of the patriot, in a country where there is no aristocracy, no tradition, no *esprit de corps*, but only thought of making money. But he played the part, and has left a good name behind; proof that he played it well. It would be better for us if we had some more of those enthusiasts. Not that we lack earnest men. We have men desperately in earnest about the making of money; also men who are enthusiastic about the matter of political place and honour. But the men in earnest about Canada—where are they? Mr. Young lived and worked hard for the country; where are his followers? Patriotism has yet to be developed among us. The enthusiast is looked upon coldly. By common consent he is kept under. The newspapers write him down, or put him down by their silence; politicians vote him down, and the general public neglect him. Partizanship is popular; protection is followed as a practice, whatever it may be as a theory. The country prefers to move slowly; so such men as the late Hon. John Young are before their time. But "their works do follow them." The memory of the worker is cherished for a time; the works of him are immortal. They cannot perish; time cannot wear them away; death cannot destroy them. May those of us who still must bear the brunt of the battle of life, take example and inspiration from those who, having done great (because disinterested) works, "have entered into rest."

To the bereaved family we proffer our profound sympathy. To the city of Montreal we would say: This man did great service for you—the Victoria Bridge, your Mercantile Library, your magnificent harbour, the canal in course of preparation, the valuable information given you in the report of Mr. Young's commission to Australia—all attest his devotion to public interest; find some way of expressing to his family the esteem in which you hold his work and memory. By doing honour to those who are worthy, we do honour to ourselves.