

opinion is of the slightest value now believes that such an expedient would have been either wise or successful. There is now no room to doubt that irresponsible rule was continued too long, that it survived the circumstances which formed its only justification at the time of its birth, and that when it had outlived its utility it became an occasion of evil and disaster. The members of the official hierarchy could not be expected to join in the revolutionary movement. They held the fort of which they had been placed in command, and they cannot be blamed for defending it. But they were blamable for misrepresenting the condition of affairs and the bent of public opinion to the Imperial Government. The Imperial Government had no disposition to do injustice to the colony; but even Lord John Russell continued, almost to the time of the Union, to regard Responsible Government as incompatible with the Imperial relation. The agitation for bringing about a revolution, which was regarded with aversion and dread, found no favour in the Colonial Office. The resistance it met there only served to give keener edge to the aggression, and the rebellion was the result.

The rebellion left behind many bitter memories which did not always pass away with the generation by which it was witnessed. Carried away by what he feels to be a just indignation, Mr. Dent, in recalling the events which preceded the outbreak, frequently seasons the narrative with a strong infusion of the spirit of the old struggle. Whether this be done unconsciously or by design, we cannot help thinking that the time has come when a calmer and a more judicial tone ought to prevail. Consciously unjust he has evidently no intention to be. Though the faultiness of a system of government cannot absolve the Family Compact from moral responsibility for the acts of its members, there were among them men who, in spite of their errors, have strong claims upon the esteem of posterity. Chief Justice Robinson, without being perfect, was a fine type of man, whose superior, take him all in all, the period in question did not produce. Mr. Dent's hero, Dr. Rolph, can of course be set off to advantage by contrasts strongly drawn. But contrasts of this kind have their inconveniences. The men opposed to the Oligarchy were assuredly not all perfect. Some of them, for whom Mr. Dent asks the crown of political martyrdom, were not worthy to wear it. Of two of them, Judge Thorpe and Sheriff Willcocks, this may safely be said. Judge Thorpe ought to have known that he could not be allowed to retain his seat on the Bench along with a seat on the Opposition side of the House of Assembly. The two positions were incompatible; and before he sought election to the Assembly he ought to have resigned his seat on the Bench. That the dual function was permitted to be exercised by friends of the Government was no warrant for the anomalous action of Judge Thorpe. The official hierarchy had a right to claim neutrality from the judge, and his liberal principles should have saved him from the error into which he fell. He delivered strong invectives against the official party, and though there was abundant room for criticism, we must, before giving implicit credence to his statements, take into account the nature of his mental constitution. Judge Thorpe charged Wilberforce with perpetuating the slave trade twenty years after it was in his power to have enforced its abolition; and this imaginary sin of the great enemy of slavery he affected to trace to an unworthy motive: that it might serve "to uphold the pendulum in its vacillancy between the minister and the people." As judge in Sierra Leone, Mr. Thorpe had come into collision with Wilberforce, as in Canada he had come into collision with the Family Compact. The complaint was that Wilberforce did not force Pitt to carry abolition twenty years before the House of Commons was willing to accept it. The truth is, Pitt needed no compulsion; personally he was in favour of abolition, even when he felt it his duty to vote against Wilberforce's motions. Had opportunity offered, Judge Thorpe would probably have rebuked the Saviour of mankind for delaying the scheme of redemption from the time when he disputed with the doctors in the temple to the day of his execution on the cross. Posterity will, we think, refuse to accept Judge Thorpe's removal as a political martyrdom.

Sheriff Willcocks's case requires a fuller statement for its complete elucidation than Mr. Dent has given. Mr. Willcocks opposed the Government whose servant he was, and lost his office in consequence. Under the Oligarchy opposition of this kind was a serious thing; and, if persistent and bitter, it would not be allowed under the responsible administrations of to-day. Willcocks was an aerial writer, who knew how to hang a great array of denunciation on a very slender thread of fact; but he must have been comparatively harmless from his habit of dealing in generalities. For instance, in No. 5 of his *Guardian* (1807), he mildly attributes to the Government a "wish to keep the people of this Province in a state of perpetual ignorance, and that every act of tyranny, oppression, extortion, fraud and iniquity may be not only perpetrated with impunity, but buried

in oblivion." And, nearly five years later (*Guardian Extra*, June 9, 1812), while boasting that he had sold to Richard Hall, Esq., a pronounced Tory, his "crazy" printing material for four times as much as would "purchase a new and complete set of types and press," he denounces the "band of sycophantic office-hunters, pensioners and pimps." The *New York Morning Post* described him as the editor of a little paper published at Newark, "which uniformly opposed and calumniated the Government of Upper Canada." In the extra just quoted Mr. Willcocks made loud vaunt of his loyalty; and when the war broke out he offered his services to the Government as a volunteer, but only, it would seem, with the design of deserting to the enemy. When Fort George was attacked his local knowledge would be of essential service to the enemy. Accordingly, we find the American General Boyd, when in possession of the Fort, Aug. 17, 1813, winding up his despatch giving an account of the capture in these terms: "The Canadian volunteers, under Major Wilcox (*sic*), were active and brave as usual." On this state of the facts we submit that it is no defence of the conduct of Mr. Willcocks in deserting to the enemy, in the hour of supreme peril, to say that he had been goaded by oppression suffered at the hands of the local authorities.

These illustrations, to which additions could easily be made, are given to show the difficulty Mr. Dent is likely to encounter in the execution of his bold and magnanimous resolve to set up an impossible hero in the person of Dr. Rolph, surrounded by a number of minor heroes, and to exalt his virtues by contrast with the shortcomings, real or assumed, of other public men of the period. The Rebellion of 1837-8 continues too generally to be discussed in a tone of acrimony which, at a later period, will wholly disappear. Two works on the subject, in French, published last year, are even more rancorous than "Blanc et Noir," produced at a much earlier period. And that the subject is still capable of evoking strong feeling a discussion in the Ontario House of Assembly last session made plain. If Mr. Dent's book is pitched in a key which some may think too high, other writers and speakers, even the most recent, are open to the same criticism. Perhaps we are too near to the events related to be able to regard them without some excess of feeling, personal or political. THORPE MABLE.

#### NOTES FROM THE CONTINENT.

##### PARIS, FRANCE.

THE second volume of the "Mémoires sur le Second Empire," by M. de Maupas, are, considering his political opportunities and position, very impartially written. The ancient home minister of the Second Empire claims for himself alone the principal rôle in the *coup d'état* of December, 1851. He is severe on Marshals Saint-Arnaud and Magnan. However, it was not the less their plans which made the crime successful. The author says Prince Jerome Napoleon was kept in the dark about the conspiracy, and his father also, the old ex-king, lest he might peach, the first being connected with the demagogues. The financial swindlings of high officials are judged in a manner worthy of history, as also the personal politics of Napoleon III. M. de Maupas approves of the maladroit marriage of the emperor, and lauds Prince Napoleon for his "transcendental talents," also for his military courage, which opinion does not credit him with, although certified to by Marshal Canrobert. The conduct and consequences of the war in the Crimea, Italy, China and Mexico, the responsibilities of the 1870 invasion, and the revolution springing therefrom, are masterly descriptions, but too short.

TENNYSON is known to French literature since a quarter of a century, and is studied as a classic. "Enoch Arden" and the "Idyls of the King" are on the official list of school-books. He appeals to the most cultivated tastes, and, to be felt, he must be studied under the conditions in which he has written—that is to say, in solitude, calm, and with forgetfulness of or disdain for vulgarities: in a word, in the tranquil fulness of intellectual power. "The Idyls of the King," more than any other of Tennyson's works, the French consider to be the product of distinct inspirations laboriously pieced together, where the mosaic joinings are visible. It is thus that royal residences are ordinarily constructed: just as it has been observed of Fontainebleau, a palace *rendezvous*, aged, and of different styles. Arthur is the personification, as he ought to be, of the "flower of kings." Tennyson has given to that oft-sketched figure polish, finish, elegance, and artistic splendour, making him the apogee of a civilization. Arthur is not only the ideal of society but the superior soul of humanity.

The French best like Tennyson's poems of real life—the peasants and the sailors. He observes the characters in the truest of all ways, by living in their midst. Out of simple materials, apparently beneath prose, he makes poetry. This explains why "Enoch Arden" and the "Grandmother" are popular and great favourites. "Enoch Arden" may be estimated by a reference to Zola's boast about his book: "It is the first that has truly the odour of the people." Be it so; but if the people has its odour it has sometimes, too, its "perfume," and that perfume exhales from every page of "Enoch Arden." Tennyson is not ranked by the French as the exponent of the Anglo-Saxon genius in the sense as are Shakespeare and Dickens. He possesses the art of composing the science of proportions, and an exquisite sentiment of form and sound. He sculpts, he