

Montreal disclosed the fact, if it were not known before, that there is a fearful amount of ignorance and superstition still prevalent within her borders, and the many disgraceful riots witnessed in her streets during the past few months in opposition to the efforts of the Sanitary Committee, would seem to indicate that this ignorance, this superstition, is prepared to sanction violence of the most outrageous character in defiance of constituted authority, when such authority interferes with its unsavoury traditions. We will venture to say that the same persons who destroyed private property, insulted peaceful citizens, resisted the police and the medical staff in the performance of their duties in staying the course of the plague, might, every man of them, have been found among the shouting mob which assembled in Montreal on the Sabbath day succeeding Riel's execution to condemn the government for refusing to stand between a traitor and his righteous doom. If we are right in such a supposition the bubble will soon collapse; touched by the finger of respectability and sober reason it will vanish in a moment. But supposing that we are wrong, and that the French Canadians as a whole are in full sympathy with the sentiments and expressions so freely uttered in their midst, why was that sympathy so late in finding its voice? Surely it would have been more to the purpose if the members of the government had been made to understand, as they might have been, that the withdrawal of the bolt which sent the spirit of the martyr to eternity, to consort, doubtless, with the spirits of those other martyrs who have died in the cause of humanity, should also drop from beneath their feet the platform of office, leaving them suspended in chains of everlasting obloquy before the gaze of an insulted and outraged people! Surely it would have been more in the interest of the martyr himself if his compatriots and admirers had massed their enthusiastic thousands in the public places of Montreal and Quebec the Sabbath before (if they must use the Lord's day for such a purpose) instead of the Sabbath after his death. If Sir John Macdonald and his colleagues are the venal crew we are told they are, they must have called a halt before such a tremendous expression of French wrath as immediately burst forth when the subject of its frenzy was cold in his grave. True they were between two fires: there were the "Orangistes" of Ontario, who it seems were howling up and down the country, clamoring for Riel's blood.

But their fury would have been of small moment compared to that of those *enfants terrible*, the French. Besides even were they made the victims of Orange hatred and revenge their sufferings must have been assuaged by the certain prospects of canonization awaiting them. Now they are only regarded as fairly honest men who did what they conceived to be their duty to their country—in the other case their names would have been entered on the immortal roll of saints and been handed down to posterity as the names of those who had immolated themselves without a pang on the sacred altars of French nationality! And more, Riel would have been alive. Why so late, Messieurs, in giving vent to your enthusiasm in his cause? Did you not know on Friday that the messenger of death was on his way? Did you not mark his progress on Saturday? Was there not still time on your favorite day, the Sabbath, to send the echoes of your denunciations thundering to Ottawa? Was it because you were hopeless? While there was life there was hope. Or was it because Riel's fate was only a secondary consideration? Was it because you had at last found a grievance in denouncing which you might unloose all the floodgates of your hatred of the English speaking race? We do not say it was. We do not think it was, because we do not yet believe, as we have before said, that the sober second thought of the French Canadian people will endorse the suicidal course into which political demagogues, would-be leaders of public opinion, and place hunters are trying to drive them. We cannot give up our hope that law and order shall find the majority of the people of Quebec arrayed on their side; that the just punishment of a rebel who to his many crimes would have added the betrayal, for a consideration, of those who trusted him, of the cause he professed to champion, will be regarded by them not as a blow at their race or their religion, but as an imperative necessity if law and order in this Dominion are to be maintained at all.

Since the above was penned it has become painfully evident that the excitement over the execution of Riel is spreading among the people of Quebec. The editor of *Le Canadien*, Mr. Tarte, addresses a letter to the *Toronto Mail* in which he complains of the utterances of that paper in its editorial columns; claims that the French Canadian people have a perfect right to seek constitutional redress for an act which they