

WHEN witnesses condemned by their character and the nature of their calling are brought forward to impeach some of the highest personages in the land, the public will do well not to lend a credulous ear to the accusation. The *Pall Mall Gazette* expects its statements to be believed on the evidence of procuresses and abandoned women. A slight acquaintance with criminal statistics will show that the last hope of the worst criminals often is to stand well with the world. Probably of one-half of the murderers who end their lives on the gallows, though there is not the slightest doubt of their guilt, the last word is a lie protesting their innocence. Bad as they are, they wish to appear in the eyes of the world as innocent victims. With other criminals the desire to appear innocent, and if possible the victims of wrong, is not less strong. What more natural than that individuals of the class of which the *Pall Mall Gazette* has become the champion, should seek to show that they are not worse but better than people occupying high positions in society? There is no reason why the vanity which boasts acquaintance with distinguished members of society should leave these people when they become vicious; the vaunt may well give them, in their own eyes, a sense of importance, and therefore it is natural that it should be uttered. But the fact that it is uttered is no more reason why it should be believed than that credence should be given to the dying protest of the murderer, convicted on the clearest evidence, of his innocence. Few things interest the world more than the story of the betrayal of confiding innocence. The informants of the *Pall Mall Gazette* have naturally known how to produce the greatest effect by playing upon this string; and the gatherers of the sensational stories, if they had their wits about them, must have known that they were palming off on the public as undoubted truths horrors of which the veracity is extremely doubtful. It is pretty plain that they have no desire to have the alleged facts probed in a court of justice. The threat to produce the Prince of Wales, judges of the land, and members of Parliament as witnesses, if put on their defence, shows how anxious they are to be let alone. That anxiety has its root in the consciousness that they have stated more than they can prove. The needless parading and the industrious exaggeration of a vice, minute pictures of which must always be demoralizing is a crime against society, and it is a crime of which no one, not even the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, would like to be found guilty.

BRITISH Empire in India being one of the topics of the hour, Macaulay's Essay on Warren Hastings has been appropriately chosen by the University Senate as a subject for the matriculation examinations; and Mr. Mercer Adam has edited it with useful introductions, historical and biographical, for High School uses. The Indian Empire was not a work of the British Government: Chatham had nothing to do with its formation, otherwise than by breaking the rival power of France on a distant field. It was the work of two great adventurers, Clive and Hastings, the first of whom was the conqueror while the second organized the conquest, and both of whom have enjoyed the not unmixed advantage of being historically varnished by Macaulay. The genius of Hastings was recognized by Clive and was admirably adapted to his part. To the highest cultivation and the most statesman-like breadth of mind he added the coolest courage and the most invincible resolution. Surrounded at Benares by a furious swarm of insurgent natives, and in the extremity of personal peril, he contrived secretly to send out two despatches, one of which was an order to the commander of the nearest British force to hasten to his assistance, the other was a set of instructions for an agent negotiating a treaty on a distant field. There can be no doubt that he saved the infant Empire. It is equally certain that he won the hearts of the natives and left at his departure a name of which they long spoke with reverence, notwithstanding the arbitrary character of his Government, which indeed was no fault in Oriental eyes. To raise forces for the defence of the Empire in its extremity of peril he extorted money from its feudatories in the same way in which Indian sovereigns extorted it and certainly not to a larger amount. His worst act was the Rohilla war; and it remains a mystery how Pitt having defended him on that charge could turn round and vote for his impeachment on the charge of exacting from Cheyte Singh a sum which is now, we believe, admitted to have been less than that feudatory was bound to furnish. That Hastings had not been guilty of the enormous peculations of which Burke accused him seems to be proved by the fact that he was totally ruined by the expenses of the trial, and that his illustrious old age was rescued from indigence only by the liberality of the Company. He had a soul above theft, and if he broke the rules of right it was in the interest of the power which he served. Conquest is conquest; this is the true answer to Burke's invectives, and the one in effect given by Erskine in his famous defence of Stockdale. Burke did not propose to renounce dominion in India, while he persecuted the man who had pre-

served it in what was probably the only, though a most equivocal way. Burke's impulses were often more personal than his devout biographers suppose; he had been stung by the fall of his party upon an Indian Bill of which he no doubt was in part the framer, and he had leagued himself with Hastings' venomous enemy Philip Francis. That he had a generous sympathy for Hindoo wrongs and sufferings no one will question; but he had also a feeling against the adventurer who had trampled on those idols of the orator's imagination, ancient dynasties and consecrated customs. Burke seems always to have forgotten that he was himself an adventurer, and an adventurer who had not been too proud to receive a large sum of money from a political patron. The frenzied violence of his speeches was in itself almost enough to assure the acquittal of Hastings. Macaulay is in this Essay as everywhere brilliant, but untrustworthy; he writes from secondary authorities; overpaints everything for effect; trusts in rhetorical contrast and antithesis; and if he does not actually pervert facts fills in most freely from his own imagination. His account of Sir Elijah Impey, whose character furnishes the shadow of his glaring picture, is we are persuaded grossly overcharged, though the case has never been thoroughly subjected to critical investigation. The portrait in truth is that of an almost impossible monster. That Hastings was the real mover in the indictment and execution of Nuncomar, Macaulay tells us in his dictatorial way, can be doubted only by a biographer or an idiot. It is doubted, nevertheless, by the most recent writers on Indian history, who deny that there is any trace of connection other than coincidence in time, and call attention to the fact, certainly a significant one, that the case was never referred home by Francis Clavering and Monson, two mortal enemies of Hastings in the Council. Burke in his transports of wrath charged Hastings with the murder of Nuncomar; but the House of Commons repudiated the charge, and censured Burke for having made it. A searching inquiry into these matters is still desired by history.

#### IS CANADA A BRITISH COLONY?

ROUSED from the slumber of eighteen long years the people of Ontario are rubbing their eyes and asking themselves in wondering tones: Is this Dominion still a British possession? As they gaze around them and discover with what silent yet gigantic strides their French copartners in Confederation have advanced towards political supremacy well may they stand astounded and crestfallen. Everywhere they find evidence of their supineness and folly. Each succeeding day brings to light some new proof of French influence and French aggression. They see one-third of the people, by the power which organized faction and religious fanaticism ever possess over unorganized independence and religious toleration, practically dominating the remaining two-thirds. They see financial aid forced by threats from the hands of the Federal Government by a Province on the verge of direct taxation. They see both political parties, Liberal and Conservative alike, bidding one against the other for the support of the French Canadians, and each vying with the other in offering as the price for that support the birthright of Ontario. They see the Orangemen of Ontario marching side by side with the Ultramontanes of Quebec in a campaign against the interests of their own Province. They see the Liberals of Ontario, hat in hand, begging from the Rouges of Quebec permission to exist. They see our leading statesmen, Ontario's sons, bowing and cringing before the theocracy of Quebec. They see Protestant volunteers punished by imprisonment and hard labour for refusing to attend a Roman Catholic place of worship at the dictation of their French Canadian officers. They see the Government of Canada, representative of the whole nation, adjourning the House of Commons in the midst of a prolonged and busy session because the day is one set apart by the Roman Catholic Church for the commemoration of a saint. They see these same men, "patriotic" Canadians, the "fathers of Confederation," sitting in grave deliberation on public business on the day set apart by the country for the commemoration of the birth of the Dominion. They see legislators in the Parliament of a British Colony discussing the affairs of that Colony in a language practically unknown to a majority of its members. They see the French language, French history, French sentiment and French philosophy instilled into the minds of Canadian children in the schools of Quebec, while allegiance to Rome and Pontifical Infallibility are steadily inculcated in the churches and homes.

Seeing these things and recognizing as all intelligent men must to what if continued they will finally lead, can the people of Ontario longer submit in silence? Could but the heroes who rose that glorious September morning long ago on the Plains of Abraham before the astonished gaze of Montcalm and his troops return for one brief day to the scene of their