

There are many elaborate, argumentative, and even cynical propositions in Mr. Penny's pamphlet which really do not, under the circumstances, deserve a reply.

One, however, will for a moment claim our attention.

The question of the selection of a permanent seat of Government for the two Canadas, was referred to Her Majesty the Queen by a vote of the Legislature. Ottawa was chosen by our Sovereign, and at that point handsome buildings have been erected. There may at this moment be serious doubts as to the eligibility of the site. Mr. Penny throws the whole responsibility of the choice on the Colonial Office.

Her Majesty cannot in this connection be absolved from responsibility. She may have fixed upon Ottawa by the advice of Her Ministers, but the decision was arrived at in accordance with the loyal address to Her from both branches of the Canadian Legislature. Although intense dissatisfaction has been created by that choice, still, the principle on which Her Majesty desired to put an end to internal jealousies, by selecting a central point between the two Provinces, can scarcely be condemned. It may serve a purpose now to create prejudice in the minds of British Statesmen on this subject, but the ultimate success of Confederation cannot be affected by appeals to past error or indiscretion. If, under a Union of the Provinces, the central seat of Government is to be changed, and the favor be conferred on some other City, the adoption of Confederation will have relieved Mr. Penny's mind as to the injustice perpetrated in 1858, by the choice of Ottawa.

The pith of Mr. Penny's arguments in the concluding part of chapter 2, is to the effect that the people have not really given their consent to the scheme. The Imperial Parliament is "called upon to act" and that action—it is pretended—can only be taken after a deliberate vote of the people at the polls, consenting to the scheme in all its details. As we have already stated, Hon. Mr. McGee has fully laid down the policy of the Government with respect to an appeal to the people.

We are not, as Mr. Penny would insinuate, "like the poor spirited freemen of the middle ages." If the "Parliamentary and Literary ability of the country" has become seriously "enlisted in the cause," it betokens some chance for the scheme. The British Government already possesses "the power of coer-

cion," but does not exercise it, as every liberty has hitherto been granted to us; and we shall probably continue to enjoy in the future the fruit of these concessions to Colonial manners and customs, for which we have to thank our protecting Home Government and the admirable calmness of the majority of our people. The "power of coercion" tempered with discretion, on the part of those possessing that power, is an element of the British Constitution, and may be considered in fact the basis of Liberal Monarchical Governments. We surely cannot complain of the misuse of that power for the past twenty years; still Mr. Penny would have it believed in England that the "power of coercion" is something to which North American Colonists are thoroughly habituated. The "long years of dreary political warfare" between the extreme Liberal party of Canada and Downing street influences, culminated in the temperate and tolerant concession of Responsible Government. If, in the use of those liberal concessions, we have erred, both Conservatives and Reformers are jointly responsible for the errors committed.

Mr. Penny then writes as follows:

"The object of these pages has been to show that there exists no right in the Executive or Legislature of Canada to ask the Imperial Parliament to over-ride our liberty of legislation for ourselves, by enacting the Quebec Constitution; and that the request cannot be complied with without a palpable encroachment on Colonial rights, some of them recognized as inherent by the Mother Country for more than a quarter of a century."

The right of petition has always been looked upon as one of the undeniable privileges of a British subject. Now, we are coolly told by Mr. Penny that "there exists no right in the Executive or Legislature of Canada to ask the Imperial Parliament" to "enact the Quebec Constitution."

Has our system of Parliamentary Government really been "a farce" during the last "quarter of a century"? Mr. Penny knows that in thus assailing the conduct of our legislators during that time, he shows as a knife that is keenly double-edged.

We throw upon him the full responsibility of a scurrilous libel on the Baldwins, Lafontaines, Dorions, Haultons, and others; who have reached the surface of Canadian politics by their own talents and the good sense of the people who placed them in those positions of trust assigned to them by a free people, acting