

position, continue to be held "reputable" or "respectable," after accepting such an office and entering upon its duties? We put the case with this disagreeable plainness in order to emphasize an irresistible inference, which we have on former occasions stated more mildly. That inference is that there is something radically wrong in the case. That wrong lies too deep to be reached and removed by the simple process of appointing another public official to do what it is admitted the sheriff, the proper executive officer, cannot be expected to do. Whether it lies deeper than any possible mode of carrying out the capital sentence we need not now attempt to determine. The one thing that seems clearly demonstrated is that hanging, as a mode of execution, is a relic of barbarism, unworthy of and irreconcilable with the spirit of modern Christian civilization. The same objection lies against any other mode the success of which depends upon the skill and insensitiveness of an executioner. It can never be right or necessary, in the interests of justice and morality, to require a fellow being to perform an office which no virtuous or respectable citizen would perform. In the olden Jewish times, to which some of the speakers at the Presbytery referred, the evil was avoided by every citizen present taking a part in the execution. As a return to that practice is obviously impossible, the only alternatives remaining, so far as we can see, are the calling in of the aid of science so as to make some natural force, such as electricity, the immediate agent, and man's application of it as simple and remote as possible, or the substitution of some other form of punishment for the death penalty.

WE are glad to learn that a committee of the Senate of the University of Toronto has been deputed to consider the subject of University extension, on some such lines as those which have been followed with the most gratifying results in connection with the great English Universities. We have often urged the desirability of some forward movement of this kind by our Canadian Universities, and are glad that the Provincial Institution proposes to take the lead and set the example. We shall wait with interest to learn the result of the deliberations of the well-chosen and energetic committee of Senators who have the matter under consideration, and hope that they may see their way to devise and promote a large and liberal scheme.

THE Superintendent of Indian Affairs has, it appears, admitted his mistake in the threat made in his letter of a few weeks ago to withhold from the Protestant Indians at Oka their share of the Government's annual pittance, and has made the payment to Protestants and Catholics alike. This is well. It was, in fact, the only possible course, for, as the *Montreal Gazette* said a week or two since, the public opinion of Canada will not tolerate making a distinction in the distribution of this gratuity on religious grounds. Is it not now high time that this dispute should be taken in hand and settled once for all on equitable principles? The *Gazette* gives what purports to be a full, though it is certainly an unsatisfactory, history of the attempts that have hitherto been made by the Dominion Government to have the question brought before the courts. So far as we can gather, successive Governments have urged upon Mr. McLaren and other persons representing the Indians the desirability of having a test case submitted, and these gentlemen have tried unsuccessfully to bring about this result. The cause of failure, so far as appears, has hitherto been the refusal of the legal representatives of the Seminary to consent to such a reference. Whether that or something else be the real obstacle there surely must be some means of securing its removal. There is an element of danger, as well as of injustice, in the continuance of this long-standing quarrel. The nature of the difficulty is unfortunately such that an appeal is but too easily made to prejudices of race and religion. Surely the Indian Department can find some means of obtaining a legal decision of the main question. The rights of the Indians, as the weaker party, should be maintained at whatever cost; and should it even appear after full judicial enquiry that the law is on the side of the Seminary, public opinion will sustain the Government in dealing generously with the Indians, to the extent of providing them with a location that will be equally satisfactory with that they have so long occupied.

WHATEVER may be the political faults of Premier Mercier, of Quebec, want of courage and of firmness cannot be reckoned amongst the number. Perhaps in no case has he more conspicuously shown himself possessed of the former quality than in his declaration the other day,

in the course of the debate upon the Address, that the Government was fully determined to retain absolute medical control of the insane asylums of the Province; and it is pretty certain that in no previous instance has he had more need of the latter quality than he is likely to have, if he adheres to his avowed purpose in this matter. We need not remind our readers that hitherto these asylums have been in every respect, including medical attendance and supervision, wholly, or almost wholly, under clerical influence and control. The practice of giving over the care and general management of this most pitiable of all classes of the unfortunate to private individuals has long been a standing disgrace to the Legislature of the Sister Province. The case hardly admits of argument, save from the point of view of the religious orders. The very fact that the patients are cared for on remunerative terms, and that as a natural consequence it is in the interest of those who have the contract to have each remain as long as possible, condemns the system as radically wrong in principle. Then, again, every humane citizen who has given any thought to the subject, must feel that most solemn obligations rest upon society, and upon the Governments and Legislatures, which are its representatives, to see to it that the unhappy patients are placed and kept constantly under the very best conditions which the highest medical skill can devise, with a view to the amelioration of their state, and, wherever possible, the restoration of their health and reason. That these conditions can possibly be secured by farming out the poor creatures to the members of religious orders, with no medical training and no special skill in scientific nursing, and leaving it to the members of these orders to choose and summon medical advisers, is simply out of the question. It is greatly to be desired that the reform proposed should be radical, instead of partial, including the support and care, as well as the medical treatment of the patients. But it is very likely that Mr. Mercier has wisely determined to do one thing at a time. With the medical advisers under Government direction and control the worst defects in treatment can be remedied, and abuses, if such exist, corrected. There can be little doubt, we think, that the intention is ultimately to place the asylums wholly under Government management as in Ontario. The existing contracts have, we believe, yet a year or two to run, and it would, perhaps, have been premature, and therefore unwise, to have aroused the full strength of clerical antagonism by too sweeping a change. To Premier Mercier honour is certainly due for having attempted a reform which none of his predecessors had the nerve to undertake. It is to be noted, however, that time and growing intelligence have wrought in his favour, and that influential individuals and newspapers of both parties have been advocating the reform.

IF the *New York Herald* Bureau report by cable is reliable, General Laurie, M.P., took the role of "Candid Friend" at a recent meeting of the Imperial Federation League, in London. The report has, it must be admitted, a somewhat suspicious ring, not so much by reason of the statements ascribed to General Laurie as of the manner in which those statements are said to have been received. Intelligent Englishmen who would be found at such a meeting could hardly be surprised to learn that there is no sufficient reason for believing the McKinley tariff was conceived in hostility either to England or to Canada, albeit a recent speech of the Canadian Premier was adapted to convey that impression. Neither does it seem likely that such men would be either astonished or displeased at being told by a member of the Canadian Commons that Canadians are disposed to repudiate the implication of inferiority and subordination conveyed in the term "colonist"; and are coming to regard themselves as a nation *in esse* and their country as "a Dominion of itself, to be held in leading strings no longer." Some of the foremost British statesmen have long since recognized the fact, and would scout the idea of attempting to coerce the Dominion into any course different from that on which the majority of her citizens may at any time decide. The more clearly these facts are recognized in the Mother Country the less will be the danger of future misunderstanding or alienation. It may, indeed, have sounded strange to British free-traders who have not studied closely the Canadian situation, to be told that the only way to build up an united Empire is by united trade methods and preferential dealing, though it has again and again been pointed out by THE WEEK and other independent journals that this is really the only tangible inducement which could possibly make the proposed federation acceptable to Canada.

Whether such preferential trade, even if attainable, would prove a real blessing to our country may well be doubted, especially when the danger of arousing the hostility of other nations is taken into the account. The possibility of Great Britain sacrificing her free-trade principles at such risk is so remote that it seems scarcely worth while to discuss it. But if General Laurie said with proper courtesy what is ascribed to him, he deserves the thanks of both Englishmen and Canadians for having had the moral courage to speak the truth plainly and frankly, instead of repeating the empty commonplaces about Canadian loyalty which form the staple of so many speeches of Canadians in England. His remarks would have the greater weight as coming from one whose loyalty is, we believe, above suspicion.

THERE seems just now some reason to fear that events may prove that renowned explorers are not always either wise or magnanimous. Nothing can ever rob Stanley of his well-earned rank as the prince of African travellers, but it will be a thousand pities should his fame be permanently tarnished by evidence of that moral littleness which fails to rise above personal spite, or grudges to less fortunate comrades a generous share of the honours of a perilous expedition. Worse than all would it be should it appear that any ignoble distrust or prejudice had betrayed him into unmerited or unnecessary detraction of the dead. In the whirlwind of insinuations and counter-insinuations, horrible accusations and strong contradictions which are just now filling the air with the dust of furious controversy, it is impossible to form any reliable conclusion as to the merits of this strange case. Stanley has great advantages, not only in having been first to gain the ear of the public, but in being able to claim and hold it as the one towering personality in the controversy. His tens of thousands of admirers in both hemispheres will be very slow to admit the existence of serious moral defects in their hero. And yet it must be admitted that appearances are not just now wholly in his favour. The tide of popular sympathy is beginning to develop ominous eddies. The British love of fair-play cannot be repressed even by tumults of applause. The more critical among the onlookers cannot forget that Stanley, by his own showing, took liberties with the materials of his narrative in the way of modifying and suppressing, whenever he deemed it inexpedient that the whole truth should be known. This admission will not fail to have its weight when the case requires a balancing of conflicting testimonies. The affair has now reached a stage of complication at which nothing but a careful sifting of the whole evidence by a judicial tribunal will satisfy the public that justice has been done to the living and the dead by the explorer, whose lightest word would, but a few months ago, have been accepted as the end of all controversy. It is a great pity and shame that such disputes should have arisen to tarnish the fame of any of those entitled to share the honours of the most wonderful expedition on record, but it is now probably useless to suggest that any of the parties should let the matter drop. Perhaps the sooner some of the aggrieved or their friends bring a case before the courts the better for all concerned.

THE old adage which teaches one that he must go abroad if he would learn news about things at home is brought to mind by a paragraph in the last number of the *Christian Union*. This is one of the ablest, broadest and most reliable religious weeklies with which we are acquainted. Under the head of "The Outlook" it gives its readers every week, in a series of crisp paragraphs, a very readable and generally well-informed summary of the great movements in religion, politics, education, science and literature, the world over. These paragraphs we usually read with interest and profit. Hence we were considerably amazed on taking up the number referred to, to find one of them commencing with the startling announcement: "There is really a phenomenal movement in favour of annexation in Canada." Following up the brief article we learn, of course, that the McKinley Bill is the cause, and that the "Quebec" *Telegraph* has "placed itself"—fitly chosen words, no doubt—"at the head of the movement." We do not often see the *Quebec Telegraph*, and though we should, we suppose, blush to confess it, were not aware that it was at the head of any movement, or that there was any annexation movement for it to head. Quebec itself, grand old historic city though it is, is about the last place to which we should have thought of looking for the headship of any great Canadian movement. The *Telegraph* must, however, be an intrepid if not a powerful journal, for the *Christian*