

courage to oppose the organization of a new party, claiming that the real national party is to be found in the Bleus. M. Nantel, member for Terrebonne, does not object to a new party, provided its principles be Conservative; if the *Quotidien* be assigned suitable leaders it will be ready to follow; nothing can make *l'Événement* approve of sedition; while *l'Étendard* alone joins the *Globe* in justifying the insurrection. The *Courrier de St. Hyacinthe* names Judge Angers for the new leader. The diversity of aims is the thing most apparent at the very moment when so many voices join in the chorus for union on national lines. At the great political meeting held in Montreal on Sunday a union of the French was advocated simply and solely as a means of defeating the Government, in revenge for having allowed the law to take its course in the case of Riel contrary to the wishes of the great majority of the French population of Quebec. We fancy, however, that it would be rather awkward for Mr. Blake, after offering \$5,000 for the head of Riel in 1872, to join a united French party now for the purpose of condemning his execution. If a public man could be compromised without his special consent, Mr. Blake would be in some danger.

ALREADY there are signs that the Ultramontanes are alarmed at the possible consequences of the commotion which, more than any other faction, they through their organs in the press have helped to raise. Above the general din the voice of *l'Étendard* was heard in denunciation of the "Orange tiger," which had long been waiting for his prey, and of this "judicial assassination"; and it told its readers, among whom it boasts five hundred priests, that the intention of the English element was to establish the arbitrary reign of injustice; that henceforth any French-Canadian who commits an act of "pretended illegality" will suffer the penalty of death, while on the other side every act of tyranny, of dishonesty, of disloyalty, will be licensed. The French would be provoked, exasperated, persecuted, and made to suffer the horrors of the penitentiary and the eternal shame of the scaffold. This was the *régime* which was now to be definitively established over the French, whom it was intended to treat as the pariahs of society, and to make "the victims of the ferocious cruelty of a barbarous and sanguinary sect." It is impossible that this could have been written in good faith, and under the inspiration of a genuine fear. On the day after the execution a scaffold was raised at Montreal, the obnoxious members of the Government were burnt in effigy, boisterous students marched through the streets, and a large part of the French population acted as if it had taken leave of its senses. *l'Étendard* applauded these "manifestations of ardent patriotism," and showed a real satisfaction at the success which its excitation had met. It was profuse in its admiration of the "universal respect for the victim and of execration for his persecutors." The effect had been such as comes from putting a match to a heap of straw. But would the sacred fire continue to burn: "*va-t-il s'éteindre comme un feu de paille*"? That would depend upon the action of French members in the House of Commons; if these would resign in a body the salvation of their race might yet be secured. The students and the *foule* had been worked up to the requisite excitement; but of what use would this be if the parliamentary delegation would not resign? It does not seem to have occurred to Senator Trudel, "director" of *l'Étendard*, to set the example of resignation. Amid all his rejoicing, the director was not without one cause for regret: the students had overdone their part. Their shouts should have been for creed and nationality alone, but just when their thoughts for the Church should have been uppermost, they broke out into the revolutionary Marseillaise, which they provokingly continued to repeat. This part of the demonstration cannot be said to have had any serious political significance; but the association carried terror into the hearts of the chief patrons of *l'Étendard*. Singing the Marseillaise will not restore Jesuits' Estates. The students were asked, out of pure respect for the memory of Riel, who in his lifetime hated everything like revolution, not to repeat a song which outraged his sentiments. The effect of this appeal showed the organ of the Church what it ought to have known before: that it is easier to raise the whirlwind than to calm its fury. The streets continued to resound to the air of the Marseillaise. *l'Étendard* in a state of alarm denounced this "outrage to the majority of the devoted defenders of the national cause." It would be a curious fact if the calming of the excitement over the execution of Riel should be due to a knot of students finding a vent for their superfluous energy in singing the Marseillaise.

THE *Globe* asks "all fair-minded English-speaking citizens to put themselves in the place of men of Riel's race before charging them with offensive sympathy for an indefensible rebel." If an Englishman had been hanged for high treason, of which Riel was proved to be guilty, under the circumstances in which Riel was convicted of the crime, not one of his

countrymen would have taken the ground which some of the most respectable French journals now take: that, guilty or innocent, his nationality ought to have saved his life. No number of petitions for pardon and protests against execution, however great, conceived in this spirit, could safely be acted upon. If public frenzy, the product of race prejudice, would be sufficient to save a culprit's life, the next step might be a call for innocent blood. When the *Globe* says that the French-Canadians "ask nothing more than justice," it assents to the demand for the resignation of all the members of the House of Commons from Quebec; and it accepts the doctrine that the laws should not be executed against great criminals if they be of a particular race. This view of the question is one which the good sense of Ontario will assuredly refuse to endorse. Nor will Ontario consent to accept rebellion as a permissible specific for every delay in yielding to just demands, such as those which the Half-breeds had to prefer.

A CONTEMPORARY suggests that there is now an opportunity of testing the validity of the late leader of the rebellion's plea of insanity. A well-known alienist could now, it thinks, satisfy the public by an examination of Riel's brain. Apart from the general futility of such examinations, many considerations point to the inexpediency of such a proceeding. The chances are very many to one that any symptoms could be found. Autopsies on the insane rarely, if ever, throw light upon the past actions of the deceased. It is hardly a rash assertion to say that more cerebral lesions have been found in the mentally healthy than in the mentally diseased—specific cases, such as alcoholism, softening, or congenital malformations, excepted. In the future of medical science, when microscopical pathology has much further advanced, *post mortems* for this purpose may be of use. At present they are valueless. Even if, in the present instance, a distinct abnormality were discovered, few experts, we venture to assert, would positively declare its consequences on Riel's conduct. And if no lesion were discoverable, fewer still would insist that this was of any appreciable medical value. Neither alternative would prove anything, and each alternative would in all probability renew factional disputes now happily beginning to be allayed. The surest test of sanity is that derived from a man's actions. In the case of Riel these were examined with a patient and careful scrutiny far in excess of its necessity. We doubt if any truly unprejudiced person holds to the contrary. Strangely enough in the same issue in which appeared the suggestion referred to, was printed a letter from the late rebel chief which the same contemporary characterized as "beautiful." This gives a clue to the motives inspiring such a suggestion. They could scarcely have been prompted by a sincere desire to learn the truth. For at the most what could be gained? The penalty has been paid and cannot be undone. But in reality the plea of insanity is urged only in cases involving capital punishment. Had Riel been convicted of assault and battery only, no expert examination would have been requested.

No one desires that unnecessary severity should be inflicted on the subaltern actors in the late insurrection, most of whom were the dupes of others. For the Indians who were guilty of deliberate murder not a word can be said; but there are others for whom an appeal for mercy ought not to be made in vain. The sentence passed on Poundmaker is disproportioned to any offence of which he has been shown to be guilty. The evidence against him might even have warranted an acquittal. There is little room to doubt that he did his best to keep the Indians in check. He was attacked on his reserve without authority from General Middleton; and if he had desired he could probably have annihilated Otter's force when it was in retreat. On his behalf the clemency of the Crown certainly ought to be exercised. Severity toward the minor offenders is not necessary, and their cases ought one and all to receive the favourable consideration of the Executive.

SPECULATION is busy trying to discover the cause or causes to which Sir John Macdonald's visit to England is due. A probable reason for his departure at the present time is the desire to consult the British Government on the negotiations which will be likely to take place after the opening of Congress on the subject of the coast fisheries of British America and the trade relations between Canada and the United States. Sir John was appointed by the British Government Commissioner for the negotiation of the Treaty of Washington, and in whatever character he may act in the pending negotiations he will take a leading part. Nothing is more natural than that he should desire to come to an understanding with the British Government as to the terms on which Americans may be admitted to our coast fisheries. It is to be hoped that some plan will be hit upon that will settle the question for ever. The fisheries on the Banks of Newfoundland are practically inexhaustible. The annual catch has no perceptible effect in lessening the quantity. The waters on the Banks are, according to