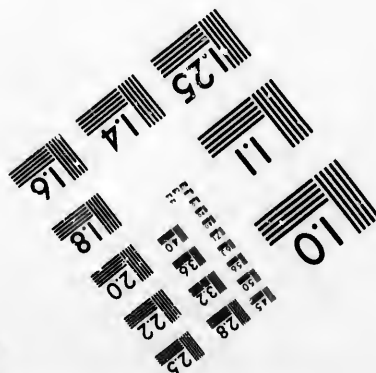
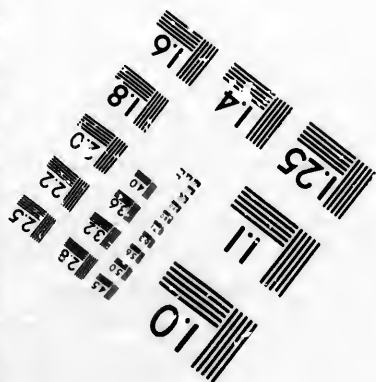
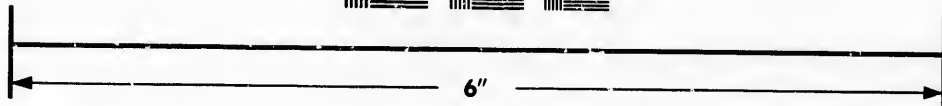
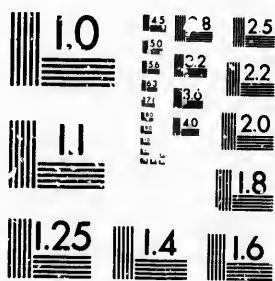


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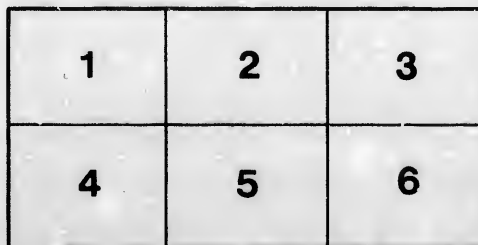
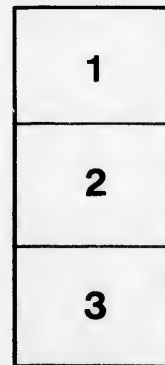
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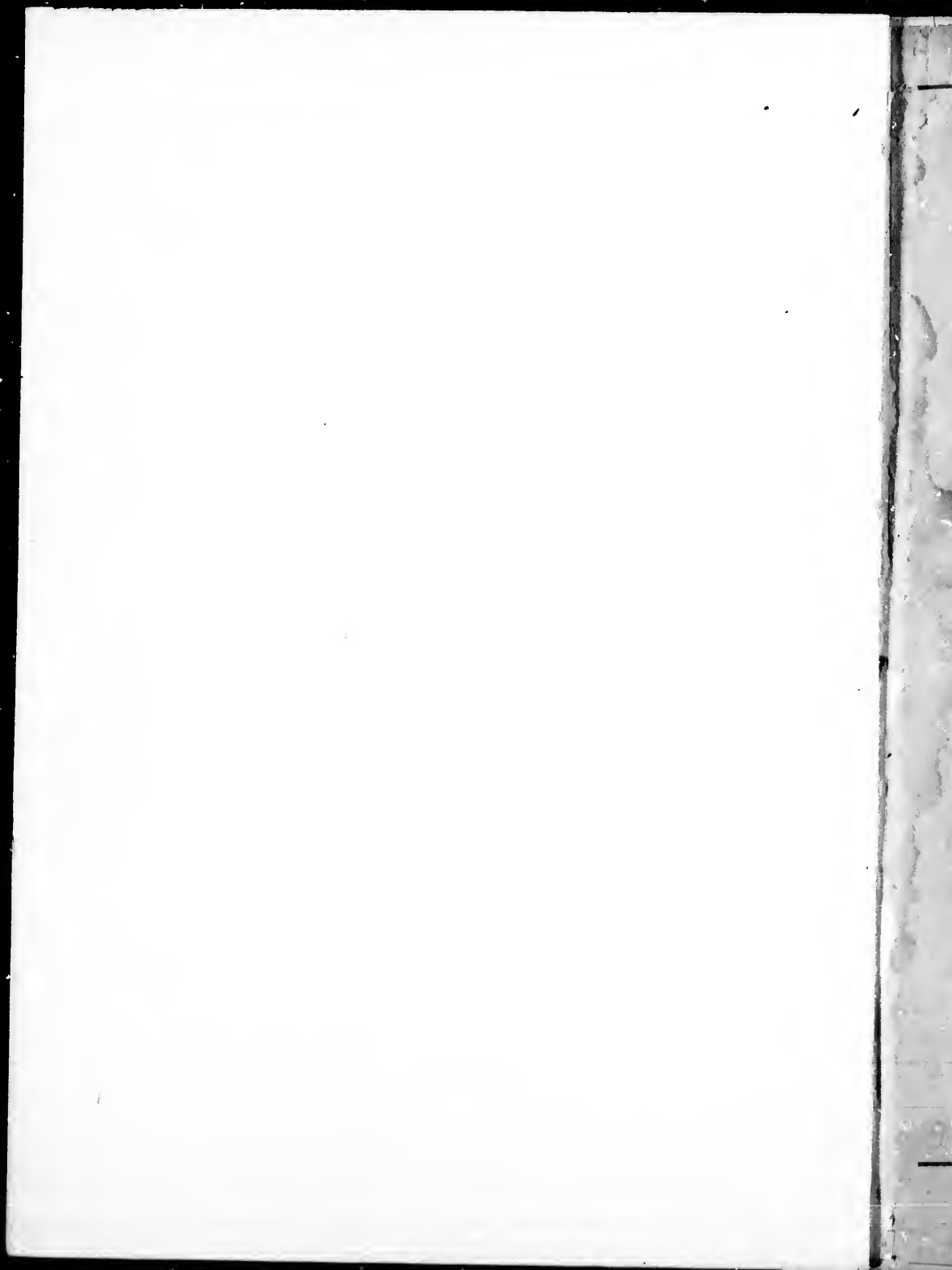
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AND  
GOVERNMENT BY PARTY.

BY  
W. G. MONCRIEFF.

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—*May*, vol. ii., p. 72.

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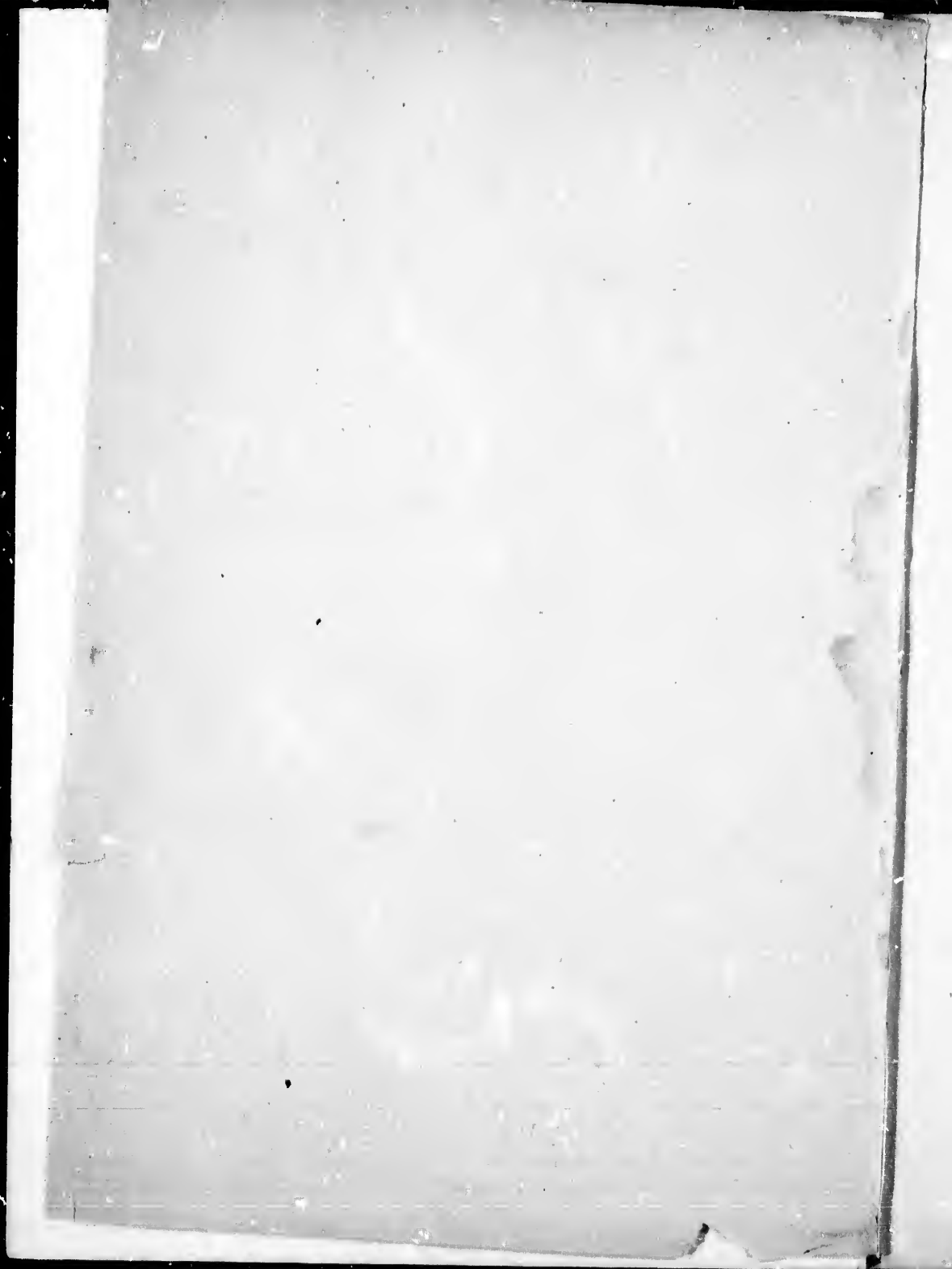
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PARTY AND GOVERNMENT BY PARTY.





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## PREFATORY.

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It has long been my faith that when a man has found anything to say, which, on much reflection, he presumes may be useful to his compatriots, the best plan for him is to speak it out intelligibly and without reserve. I am not unaware that developments in this work will seem strange to many readers, and almost fear that occasionally they may create offence. But to offend purposely is at a great remove from my design. The subject, as it appears to me, demands the fullest inquiry, and, with deference, these few pages are submitted to general consideration, as a contribution to the stock of thought with which the public is already familiar. I write because, in my judgment, good can be accomplished by a thorough revisal of the whole question of "Party and Government by Party," among ourselves. My time is too precious to consume its hours in composition the aim of which is to shake confidence in what, after all, has a fair title to be

preserved. That is an idle, and worse than that, a pernicious employment of the pen. Rather would I any day strip insects from the vine leaves, or pull weeds in my garden, than wantonly provoke any one by sporting with a subject that is probably well-nigh sacred in his esteem.

THE AUTHOR.

LONDON, ONT., SEPT., 1871.

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## PARTY AND GOVERNMENT BY PARTY.

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### CONSERVATIVE AND REFORMER.

WITH the correlated terms Whig and Tory—Conservative and Reformer—we are all familiar; and yet a brief explanation of them may not be amiss, so as to clear the way for after progress. What was originally Tory is now Conservative, and substantially they represent the same ideas; though we would prefer the latter—Conservative—simply for the reason that it is self-defining. To conserve is to keep—to preserve: of course, on this occasion it is used politically, and only so. Both terms express antagonizing ideas—conserving and reforming—preserving and changing. This antagonism has often been violent, as history discloses, and the battle has advanced with unequal success, the reprobated evils having been undermined and overthrown by the exercise of human energy, sometimes assuming the most dreadful shapes. Progress, in other words, has been the law, and the future will merely carry out the hopeful indications of the past.—Now, the genuine Conservative would retain what the liberal, progressive mind aims to annul. What the



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Reformer objects to he inevitably regards as hostile to the welfare of society: age lends it no sanctity in his view,—the impress of centuries no title to prolonged existence. We do not maintain that the Conservative bends himself to preserve what he knows to be prejudicial and unjust. There is no call to make any such illiberal and outrageous supposition. We can find ample reasons leading him into his position as a conserver without impugning his moral integrity. Early association, early training, personal and hereditary interest, and many other causes tend to produce the conservative character, or the attitude of conservation; and they who are best qualified to estimate the potency of such and kindred agencies will be the earliest to sympathize with those who have been moulded by their operation. Railing, like hissing at the pestilence, amounts to nothing; and we had better treat men who do not agree with us as we would like to be treated ourselves. It is in politics as in other departments of thought—philosophy, art, science, education, and even religion itself;—in all of them we are individually more or less the creatures of accident, and, as a rule, have small occasion to plume ourselves on our superior enlightenment or elevation.

The older the society the wider is the field of action for these two powers or agencies; because, in all human probability, there is more which is evil prompting to conservation, and the more work for reform in attempting its removal. From the day on which King John ceded the "Magna Charta," and before it, the history of England is a record of the struggle, marked by oscillating

fortunes, between men trying to keep what was found generally to be grievous, and valiant souls endeavouring to liberate themselves and others from burdens felt to be oppressive. Tory, originally a nickname, was, during the reign of the second Charles, for the first time applied to those in England who refused to concur in excluding a Roman Catholic prince from the throne; Whig, also a title of reproach and ridicule originally, was conferred on those who manifested a disposition to oppose the Court, and to treat Protestant Nonconformists with indulgence. Ireland supplied the first word—Tory; Scotland, its political companion. But though the names were new, the things they represent, in some shape or other, were old. The conflict between the Crown and the People,—between divine right and absolutism on the one hand, and limited or constitutional monarchy on the other,—between the long-established in use and wont, and the fresh and free instincts and aspirations of the people,—between the antiquated and the modern ideas,—had been going on for ages, and continued for many years after the two appellations were flung into the vortex of English political discussion. Only in very recent times has the relative position of the Crown and the People been satisfactorily adjusted; and there is no country at the passing hour in which the harmony between the Sovereign and the Subjects is more perfectly and sweetly balanced than in the Kingdom resting upon the British Isles. This royal conflict, which lasted so long, is but a section of that wide sweep which the enlightened reforming spirit takes. It demands responsible government, the franchise, eman-

cipation of slavery, the annihilation of class privileges and monopoly, the abolition of state-churchism ; and, in short, its triumphs manifold are accumulating with the procession of the cycles. Faster now than ever, they are accumulating ; and it is safe to predict they will yet swell up more rapidly, under the stimulus of an enlightened press, unrestricted oral discussion, and widely diffused educational advantages.

In those old lands conservatism performs a most useful part, even when it clings to its favourite objects with the utmost tenacity. Reform is very good, but there would be danger in its coming with a rush amid the fabrics of an ancient civilization. It might assume the aspect of anarchy, even when legitimately introduced. Men would get bewildered, things would be driven hither and thither, very plain objects would present themselves as trees walking, and the feeling might be engendered, better the venerable order than this novelty and turmoil. Out of the feeling might leap the will, clad in battle vim, to replace what had been removed. We have observed attempts to introduce, as in France, on more than one occasion, new forms, and methods, and institutions, as it were by the springing of a trap ; but the attempt has warned rational innovators from all such impetuous movements. The same remark applies to the English Commonwealth, and the Puritan legislation generally. Charles II. ascended the throne, and society bounded into shameful license as a protest against the rigor of Roundhead statutes. Gradual preparation is that which enables emendations to settle down firmly in their place

as beneficent institutions. Conservatism thus acts as a salutary drag on the wheels of progress, and the machine of state is protected from undergoing a catastrophe on the highway. The two powers thus are instruments in evolving the new order, as come it must, and only a moderate degree of sagacity is required to discern that the one holding back is often as useful as that which impels forward. Eager and narrow minds only become impatient while counting the delays and disappointments. The discerner of the times apprehends what is advancing, and can wait for the hour to strike when his highest aspirations will be accomplished. It may not, because it cannot, sound in the course of his life; yet he sees the good time coming, and dimly scans the scene in the distance when his plans and hopes fall on his country like a beautiful morning across the hills.

In recent days, we are accustomed to hear liberals amongst ourselves boast that they are conservatives of what is good and reformers of what is evil: a very good sentiment and a very good character, truly. As a sentiment, it is so far as appropriate to conservative lips, for he also conserves what is good, viewed from his standing-point. So that it amounts to nothing beyond this,—the reformer is in full possession of his senses. All men not bereft of reason throw a shield round what is valuable, or what appears to them to be so: a progressive soul—one solicitous for the welfare of his country—spontaneously sides with those who have discovered an evil, and are off to hunt it down. When words are played with in the manner alluded to, is it not a tacit acknowledgment

that they are losing their early force and bearing amongst us? The day has been when there was no license for that sort of dalliance, and when a reformer would no more have toyed with the word "Conservative," or any of its family, than with a viper or a skunk. It is now harmless, and in the odor of sanctity.



bloodless one. We have no Marston Moor, or Naseby, where absolutism struggled hopelessly with the embattled forces of right and justice. Yet we had to contend with and to modify imperial arrangements on our soil, and against institutions of native growth, that hindered the free exercise of political privileges, such as we now enjoy in a large and comfortable degree. We govern ourselves, and that is the secret of our happiness. Yet to reach this we had to contend against what was known as Downing Street influence and the Family Compact; we had to obtain responsible government, the abolition of all state-churchism, the wide extension of the franchise, representation determined by numbers, and the control of our own separate provincial affairs as members of the North American Confederation, whose circle of dependencies is in all probability to be completed at a time not distant. There are a few limitations to which we are still subject; but these awaken no complaints. They arise out of our connection with the Empire, and which we cannot escape so long as our relationship to it lasts. Oppressive these restrictions are not, and we are content, indeed it might be said proud, to bear them, out of love to the throne of our fathers, and the shelter embraced in the imperial ties. There is not a grievance left which can legitimately separate a reformer and a conservative; nothing that a conservative naturally inclines to retain as a conservative, and nothing that a reformer has to strive with his conservative fellow-citizen as a conservative to obtain. Names may continue distinguishing two parties; but their significance has vanished. Characterizing pecu-

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liarity there is none. Party lines have become like mathematical ones, without length or breadth. Schemes of administration and details may create a conflict of opinion; in vain a quest will be made for any fundamental variance which constitutes a political principle or furnishes a warrant for organizing distinct political sects.

It is a pity—shall we say so?—for the sake of those who continue to believe in the virtues of party government based on the old distinction,—Tory and Whig—Conservative and Reformer,—that some momentous question cannot remain with us for ever unsettled, that the essential distinction between them may be preserved in its completeness. For the country, it would not be good, though it might be good for the class about which we have spoken. Were the points of responsible government, of religious endowments, of adequate suffrage, or some such vital issue pending, our whole soul would be with the people and against any who would deny them their rights. With Toryism on such questions, with Toryism on no question, have we the most fractional amount of sympathy. But then we cannot blind ourselves to the fact that the conflicts about all such questions on this soil are dead as the Wars of the Roses, or Cavaliers and Roundheads. Happily for our young country it is so. Such has been the suppression of grievances during the last thirty years, that, so far as political privileges are concerned, the legitimate agitator has been thrown out of employment. And the world has not time to fight its battles over again. Living questions alone can excite popular interest. Worn-out



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banners are curiosities that attract only antiquarian notice. A new generation appears that can feel no concern, either here or elsewhere, in by-gone disputes, though they shook earth and heaven while they lasted; and having subjects of its own, movements of its own, developments of its own, it cares not a fig for past names, and, if necessary, lifts its own flags, and creates its own divisional and party names.

Under the transmutation that has taken place amongst ourselves, old names cannot remain, nor ought they to remain. An effort may be made to preserve them, but necessarily a spasmodic and fleeting one. The scaffolding is removed when the building is completed, and architects, mechanics and laborers seek other employment. We can readily understand how difficult it is for combatants who were resolute on either side to forget the old names when the controversy is allayed; and perhaps it is vain to expect them to regard these as having lost their meaning and strength. But they will fall into disuse by degrees, and men will wonder that they survived so long after the victors were crowned, and the dead buried. The new generation can never feel the same interest in them as their fathers; and they will inevitably turn their thoughts to matters of urgent moment, and rally round names, if they rally round any, that bear a meaning addressing itself to their diversified convictions as to existing projects. Our lot is cast exactly at this period in the history of the united provinces. We sympathize with the present. We cannot afford leisure to keep up dead distinctions, which neither

conventions, "rallying of the clans," speeches, pic-nics, brass bands, nor bellowing editorials can restore to life and potency. The fusion going on is in the order of nature and political necessity; and we believe that those who are looking around with impartial eyes will admit that these views are correct. This is emphatically true when the entire Dominion is surveyed; and it is well that it should be so. Its immediate interests are vastly superior to old names falling to tatters; and the statesmen in demand now are those who will devote themselves to immediate necessities, irrespective of flags and shibboleths that served their day. Practical improvements, material developments, claim the highest consideration in our several legislatures, and to the masses of our citizens over the Confederation it surely cannot matter what a man's politics may have been on past issues in some particular section of the whole, provided he is able and willing to offer such measures as will increase the comfort, the intelligence, the facilities and the employments of the people.

Again and again we have fruitlessly inquired of sagacious men on both sides to point out what vital principle divides them from their neighbors now. Any person can put the experiment to the proof, and a trial is suggested. Say to the first Conservative or Reformer of judgment and information you happen to meet, Wherein do we hold differently in our politics? Not wherein did we differ once, or wherein did our fathers differ; but on what principle are we at variance just at this moment? We vote under different names, still rally under different

party designations ; we have different political chiefs : now in what essential matter can we put our finger down on a difference ? You do not wish the funds of the country squandered : neither do I. Is there an institution you would keep in the name of liberty, that I would not help you to retain ? An evil you would abolish, that I would not assist you to destroy ? Your friend may admire his leader more than yours ; but that is not the matter in hand. The question relates to essential political principle : such great issues as have agitated our land, and happily convulse it no more. The distinction, so far as vital politics is concerned, is a distinction without a difference ;—the disparity, to make no ceremony about it—if a man will pertinaciously insist on a line of demarcation—between tweedledum and tweedledee !

In these circumstances, how can the stereotyped designations—Reformer and Conservative—long survive ? They are shells out of which the kernel has been taken ; bodies whence the soul has gone. It is quite true that with many they—the old names—still pass current for a great deal more than they are worth. Not a great deal more, let us admit, than they once were worth ; but a great deal more than their intrinsic value now. And they who still hold them to carry living significance and enduring value, comprise a goodly company of most excellent citizens, for whom we have large and unfeigned respect. They cannot get over old associations ; they feel as if what once was mighty ought to be as real and powerful in all time hence. The names sound in their ears like the trumpet to the venerable war-horse in his paddock.

But the past is past, and the sooner—in politics, as in other matters—that is understood, the better.

While there are many who find it hard—indeed, well-nigh impossible—to get done with old party names, there are, we greatly fear, a number who reckon it convenient, for selfish objects, to keep them floating before the constituencies. They are zealous—oh, how zealous!—for their country's welfare. The country, if you credit them, is misgoverned while certain men are “out,” and ruled to perfection when certain other men are “in.” It is their game; and one is curious to understand sometimes if they imagine no on-looker can pierce through the veil under which they perform their cantraps. With such operators, to descend to facts as to the position of parties would spoil their business. It would shut off grist from their mill. Their only chance is in keeping, so far as they are able, the old parties in existence; and they shout the names with loudest emphasis to convince others, as it were, of the strength of their faith and devotion. They see, or pretend to see, virtue nowhere save in their own ranks. The others are corruptionists, and knaves of the worst brand,—too degraded for the oriental “Happy Despatch.” It would be treason to their side did they allow any capacity, or honesty, or unselfishness in those who are regarded as their natural political enemies. Moderation would be their death. In the time of an election they are heard at the loudest with their kettle drums, tin pans, and penny whistles. Though all but nominal distinctions have disappeared, they must try to hoodwink their devotees still further about the vital necessity

of "responsible party government." Sometimes they wax very solemn, as if the country were on its death-bed, and they stood with finger on its wrist. But there is art in that, as in other attitudes they assume. It is time they were bid pass on with their tricks and grimacing. What this rising country wants is the rule of the people for the people's good, and Dominion politics for Dominion citizens. The main point is not how somebody is to be jostled out, and somebody else pitched in amid tremendous cheers; but how good laws are to be obtained, and who has the will and the capacity to supply them: the instrument even is of minor importance. The past, politically, of those who may chance to be in power is a trivial inquiry—a very trivial one, assuredly: the grand question is, What can they do for us now?

### MR. EDWARD BLAKE ON PARTY.

IN October last year, Mr. Edward Blake spoke to this effect in the London City Hall :—

“ He did not believe that there was a man in all this wide Province who in his heart, when he thought of political principles and his own feelings with regard to them, did not class himself with this party or that ; who did not believe himself to be a Conservative or Reformer. This he thought should continue, and that each one should avow his principles and act upon them, and only to support the party to which he belonged.”—  
(*Globe*, Oct. 26th, 1870.)

Though the “ political principles ” are not explained, we presume that amongst them may safely be enumerated the following :—Absolute sovereignty ; responsible government ; taxation conjoined with representation ; liberty of conscience ; class privileges or monopolies ; representation regulated by numbers ; right of petition ; freedom of discussion ; state-churchism ;—which catalogue is quite sufficient for our present purpose. Judging by the light of history, conservatism has clung to one view of these questions and reform to the other : for instance, conservatism

avored the concentration of power in the sovereign, and reform inclined to have it rather invested in the people, or in their representatives in parliament assembled. So we might go through the entire list, and any other issues of a kindred nature that have stirred the Anglo-Saxon community to its depths. We place Conservatives here, and Reformers there.

Now, let us ask, Is there "a man in all this wide Province" who has not accepted the liberal view of all these great questions, and glories in the complete circle of principles and privileges? Some of the questions never troubled our population, having been settled by our forefathers on British soil; and what of them created controversy here are now no longer in dispute. We are at one as to the "political principles," and they are every day commending themselves to the loyal devotion of this fortunate community. Are we not thus united? Put it to the proof. As a Reformer, say to any one of Mr. Blake's reprobated class, Are we at variance on any of these famous principles? He demands, What are they? and you proceed:—No arbitrary exercise of sovereignty; and he inquires, Do you imagine that I am living in the days of King John, or the first Charles, or the third George? Another is, no taxation without the consent of the people: he replies, Why bother me with that question, settled in Canada long ago? Another is, perfect liberty of conscience: and he responds, Who is not free by law, and where is the man who would dream of ordaining restrictions and penalties? Another is, the abrogation of all monopolies and class privileges: Have

mercy, he cries ; what order amongst us has privileges—civil, political or religious—in advance of the rest ? Another, to put it in the Reform aspect, is the abolition of state-churchism : he says, The last remnant of the system is gone, and I believe it was fair to all that it should go. Another is unrestricted liberty of discussion : of that, the interrogated one says, We have the amplest measure, and will fight for it to the death. Another is—and he interjects, Stop ! Not unreasonably, too, since, however far extended, a similar answer would certainly be evolved in pursuing the experiment.

Why should not this political orator be rather proud to see the change that has taken place in our country,—the old controversies, even to the limited extent that we had a share in them, at rest, and Conservatives, though in unreasonable fondness they still cling to a name, as devoted to the great principles as any who may have done valiant battle-service on their behalf ? But he is not satisfied that the ranks should have been most distinct while the conflict lasted ; he insists that the distinction should be kept up to perpetuity. And how is a man to determine what is his proper place among political warriors who, after all, have nothing in the shape of principles to fight about ? He is a Reformer or a Conservative, if he would only take the trouble to settle the point for himself. But if he thinks of the great principles, he—even though his name might seem to indicate the reverse—actually approves of them, and declares his purpose unalterably to defend the heritage committed to his trust. The more he thinks the more he admires, the more he loves.



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Since our Conservative thinks himself only into a greater harmony with reform sentiment and doctrine, he will find it hard to get up a difference with his reform neighbor, and, what is as worthy of note, his reform neighbor will find it as hard to get up a real difference with him. But there must be a difference, to please our Toronto statesman; the old ranks must be trumpeted into place, and every man must know his place and be ready to keep it, as when a tremendous issue agitated the national mind. How, how is the proper place to be discovered? That is the puzzle; and would that the speaker had been somewhat more explicit. The only way that we can imagine it possible, if possible at all, is by some such course as the following,—quite in harmony with Mr. Blake's rule of which notice has just been taken: probably it is the very rule itself; at any-rate, we venture to think he would not object to our recommendation. Well, then, let the inquirer after his proper political relationship, and of course designation, take any one of the well-known political principles of which several have been introduced, and then ask himself, with as much sincerity as he can muster—"How would I have acted during the controversy in relation to it? Would I, in all human probability, have sided with the Conservatives or with the Reformers?" That will settle what is his legitimate position now. He is, because he would have been in the past, a conservative; or he is, for an analogous reason, a reformer. And all this is to be done exactly in the same way as if one were solicitous to determine whether, had he appeared

in the age of Cæsar, he would have commended his ambitious aims or applauded the act of Brutus, the avenger; whether, had he lived in the days of Constantine, he would have joined the Christian standard or remained with the old Pagan superstitions; whether, had he been in Scotland in the era of John Knox, he would have sided with the ancient creed or lent his sympathies to the Protestant reformation. What he would have been, or thinks he would have been, in the circumstances supposed, he is bound to be so still, and wherever there is an opportunity to act consistently with the discovery. The process is a delicate one, and, as we judge, most likely to be in fault in this respect, that it carries a man back with his present views, affinities and prejudices, into other and vastly different circumstances. It leaves not the question free,—what, for instance, would have marked his conduct had he been a citizen of ancient Rome? but it inevitably takes this form—how would he, the man as he is, have felt and acted in Rome under Constantine the Great, or in the tempestuous days of the Scottish ecclesiastical hero? And supposing it could be accomplished with a higher probability of unbiased exactitude, it seems to us the resultant in the sphere of politics, as in any other sphere, would be a profitless triumph through a time-wasting speculation. The hours would be infinitely better consecrated by a Canadian at least, who breathes the pure atmosphere of freedom, to some real practical work bearing on the interests and the claims of life and citizenship.

As Mr. Blake invites each party—the Conservative and

Reformer—to avow his principles, we are greatly at a loss to know what the liberal principles are if they are not such as now indicated. There may be principles of the kind which have escaped our inquiry in the region of politics. We hear a great deal about “reform principles;” and we only wish the learned gentleman, or some one else on his side the gulf, would condescend to be very communicative in a definite way on the subject. It is time they were placed before the public—one, two, three, and as many more, old or young, as he is prepared to announce for our edification. We do not insist on any secrets of party policy: policy, if worth anything, will be erected on and guided by the principles: it is the principles we are curious to understand. All that we beg is, that they be specified in transparent language, and also that it be demonstrated that our Conservative neighbors are diametrically opposed to them—not that they should be in antagonism, but that they are there steering, as with a blind determination, anywhere save in the direction in which the hon. representative and every true reformer must go. It won't do to shake “reform principles” in our face, like a bunch of old keys. We desire to examine them one by one, as well as to hear of them. We object to be diverted with big words when things are in demand. Generalities are wagons that usually carry a great deal of rubbish. Down with the principles on the table, and we shall soon detect if there is aught “distinguishing” in them, so as to justify the loud claims of a sect pronouncing them their special property, and indirectly casting reproach on a large multitude of their fellow-citizens who are said

to have no affinity with them either in their life or in the unlit caverns of their consciousness. Anxiously inquire we—Where are the principles? Have they gone a-fishing?—or are they asleep?—or in the bath?—or, oh dear! slipt off to mist-land, as birds migrate, for reasons known only to their little selves? Sister Ann, high on the great tower, do you see any one coming yet?

Though the statesman whom we presume to review has palpably a low opinion of the genus Conservative, he perpetrates the singular inconsistency of demanding, first, that they shall remain where they are, and then, with other apostles, perambulating the country now and again seeking to lure them to better principles and better ways. A convert is an occasion of rejoicing; and if few join his ranks, verily he ought not to be surprised. Men cannot remain where they are, and step over to his shining company at the same time. Indeed, our ambassador needs to have his eyes opened to discern the line of duty and consistency with clearer perception. He cannot succeed by blowing hot and cold. He invites and repels with the same sign, and we can easily fancy that Conservatives are perplexed, for he is deep in the maze himself. If they are under obligations to remain where they chance to be located, why does he make an effort to attract them to another sphere? If they can be improved, and ought to mend, why does he wish them to continue as they are? And, finally, if they will not improve, and are so unworthy of his confidence and fellowship, how can he be content to see them holding power even for the briefest term? These extraordinary

words are found in the speech that has attracted our attention:—

“ He and his friends stated, at the election (1867), that “ there must be an opposition ; that *they did not care* which “ party was in power.”——

But a man with his views, if not a mere actor in the political drama, should care which party is in office. He ought to feel,—or they are not half so bad as he insinuates,—that it is a misfortune for the country to be ruled by Conservative statesmen. He should submit to their supremacy, no doubt, like a good citizen, while it lasts ; but to be content with it, instead of bewailing it as an unspeakable calamity, is what his patience should not endure. The truth is, Mr. Blake, as often happens, is a better man than his creed, and that a large amount of his party-inspired oratory directed against Conservatives and conservatism is simply rant and make-believe to tickle the ears of super-enthusiastic devotees who listen enraptured as the periods melt like rockets high up in the air.

## COALITION.

THOUGH it is partial, and therefore inaccurate, let us, for the present, accept Mr. Alexander Mackenzie's definition of a Coalition, that it is "an agreement, for the sake of office, among public men holding opposite political principles," and pronounce it a bad thing at the start. Such a government is based on a vicious principle, and deserves no more quarter than a Colorado bug, or a conspiracy to reconstruct the British Empire itself. That a young politician may distinctly comprehend what a Coalition, in the sense explained, would be, let us imagine a few cases for his guidance. Our object is to put him out of the fog, whether it ascends from the St. Clair river or from lake Ontario, that he may note with undimmed vision what sundry orators appear to have a pleasure in muddling for the advantage of all concerned. There was once a time, he will please to remember, in our fatherland, when there were two entirely distinct parties in relation to the Crown: the one contended that its power should be increased, the other that it should be contracted—in other language, that the power and privileges of the people should be amplified. Toryism, as formerly mentioned, insisted on the first; Whigism—or Reform—on the second. A union of statesmen from both ranks, by the abnegation of their special

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articles of difference, to obtain control over public affairs, would be a Coalition of the kind, deserving to be accursed. General evil would be its results ; and, worst of all, it would debauch the national conscience. Again ; the time was when the whole system of parliamentary representation was rotten, and when the electors were few : Toryism, or Conservatism, would retain the unwholesome order of things, while Reformers desired to get the entire arrangement remodelled, and the popular voice really heard, by a vast extension of the franchise, in the councils of the nation. A compact to seize the reins by leaders on the two sides of the controversy would be another instance of a Coalition, under which the community as a whole would suffer. Once more ; let us imagine the Kingdom, or its legislature, earnestly divided by the engrossing subject of state-churchism ; that the chiefs on both sides have uttered their thunder, and taken the most rigid postures, confronting each other in the lines of battle—the Tories pledged to the old, and the Reformers earnest for the new. We shall also imagine that the Tories are in office, and that their rivals, or a number of them, are longing to rest themselves on the treasury benches, and not remarkably scrupulous as to the means of achieving the result. Lo ! the morning breaks, and the political world is dumbfounded. A Coalition has been established—the question of establishments is shelved for the present, and those who had been foes sit calmly at the same board, and distribute juicy favors to their respective adherents. Corrupt spectators knowingly wink and smile at one another ; while thoughtful men, with the sentiments

of honor and patriotism alive in their hearts, mourn over the spectacle. But then, Coalitions are not all of this kind; and in certain situations, even when extreme party is the order of the day, are not merely expedient, but would seem to be quite justifiable on the score of necessity. For instance, if parties were evenly balanced in the House, and legislation came to a dead-lock, common sense suggests that, since the government of the country must be carried on, men of both parties, throwing the contested issue aside for the present, might join in forming a ministry against which it would be most unreasonable to bring a charge of immorality based on its mere organization. A Coalition was formed in 1864 for the purpose of establishing Confederation, and we all know who were the prominent men from both sides in the combination; it was justified in the circumstances, and in accomplishing its object conferred a signal boon on the provinces. So that party amalgamations are not always evil, and to be reprobated summarily.

But may we not advance even beyond this position? Suppose that the great questions recently mentioned by us were all settled in favor of right and justice, what would hinder chiefs on either side from composing a government to conduct the business of the country?—Because they differed once, must they be alienated and separated to perpetuity? Capable and influential as we shall conceive the Conservatives to have been, is their country to be deprived of their skill and forethought simply because they were unable to accord with the popular movement of the day, likely because they deemed



it premature rather than inherently objectionable? Back, back to the inactivity of private life and to woodland solitude, because they came not up to the mark in a season of perplexity, even though they may have more statesman-like brains and experience than the chiefs who rendered undeniable service when the several controversies were pending before the public eye! We fail to see the wisdom of that resolve, nay, reckon it hostile to the general good. As a policy, it is narrow, fierce and revengeful.

He has read the newspapers to little purpose who has not discovered that among religious bodies the tendency of the day is towards union and co-operation for a common purpose. Every one would deem a union between Protestantism and Catholicism quite incompatible, for the one is a standing protest against the characteristic dogmas of the other: fire and water cannot amalgamate, though they may exist peacefully apart. So every one would reckon an alliance between Trinitarian and Unitarian bodies unnatural: they hold such opposite principles, at least in theology. That co-operation, if it would not be unseemly, is hardly within the bounds of probability. If they would sink their differences for the sake of coalescing, the product would be an organization in which neither of them, we conjecture, would see anything to commend. But we observe an amalgamation established between different Presbyterian bodies that stood long apart, and approaches to union among other kindred denominations—for instance, the Free Church and the United Presbyterians of Scotland. This is justified on the plea that no vital principle really

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separates them in formula or discipline; so to speak, party lines, if they ever were broad, have contracted,—in fact, disappeared; and, therefore, why should the churches stand aloof, as if they were surrounded by impassible barriers? Permitting common sense and good feeling to guide them, they strike hands and work together in the common cause. Once apart, for ever apart, would have hindered those scenes of concord which have been so eloquently commented upon in our own land, and over the Christian world. These facts some of our politicians forget, or cannot interpret, even though breathing amongst them, and hearing them on high days held up to unqualified admiration.

It is the custom of several gentlemen conspicuous amongst those who deem themselves entitled to a monopoly of the designation "Reformer," to address occasionally large assemblies throughout the province,—a custom which provokes no censure from this pen. Indeed, the people enjoy the seasons, and are indebted to the men of mark who set their faculties into excited, if not always enlightened activity. Coalition, that has so far already occupied our thoughts, is dwelt upon extensively by the speakers—in a general way, however, without that fulness and distinctness of detail which only could give value to their lucubrations and point to their bolts. The hearers leave with the impression that a combination of the sort is immoral and to be anathema; but why it is so, and why any of our existing administrations are held to partake of this character, does not appear, if the reports exhibit a fair picture of the meetings. The Member for

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Lambton makes Coalition his speciality. He approaches it with bell, book and candle. He warms as he enlarges on its enormity. And yet he is indefinite, and open to the ancient charge of speaking, though not ingeniously, about smoke. Let us avoid his example, and settle down to things real, distinct and tangible.

As far as effete appellations are concerned, there is a distinction, for instance, between the head of our local government, Mr. John Sandfield Macdonald, and Mr. Carling or Mr. M. C. Cameron; but that is the sum and substance of the contrariety. It is in no sense a combination of antagonisms. Nothing is shelved that they might coalesce. They are perfectly in accord as to the policy of the administration; and that is of the most liberal and practical character. They are bent on realizing the reforms, or improvements, that have long been discussed, and long desired in the province. They are attempting, and with manifold success, to give us the substance of reform, while many are howling loud over its shadow. In their conjunction as a ministry there is no compromise—no sacrifice of principle; no more than there is discernible in a Board of Trade, or a City Council, where even opposite politicians meet harmoniously under the same roof to transact business in which they have a common interest.

It is easy to say that their only object is "office," and that in fact they are, in spite of protestations to the contrary, diametrically opposed. To say so is one thing, to prove it quite another. We profess not to judge the heart and conscience of men, and base our

opinions exclusively on the sentiments they utter, and the deeds they perform. Estimating them in this way, we hesitate not to affirm that they are a patriotic government, who, instead of jabbering about terms, engage in wholesome undertakings for the country's advantage. They are occupied in reform and economical work; and because anterior to the origin of the Cabinet they belonged to different camps, that work must be depreciated, and themselves bespattered with the most uncharitable reflections! Any so-called reform ministry doing what they have done, would in certain quarters be lauded to the skies. No mere greed and ambition of office in their case! The gifts, so to speak, that we have received from the existing administration are tainted by the hand that distributes them. From other fingers they would drop to us redolent with the odors of Araby—which means that divine invention yecept party government.

We can go higher than the assertion that in the union there is no sacrifice of principle;—and what is immediately to be written has as much application to the members of the Central as of our Local Cabinet. They are all, whatever designations they once bore, and are still pleased to carry, united heart and soul on the inestimable privileges of civil and religious liberty, and ready to defend them with manly courage. What sort of Canadians would they be if they were at variance on these momentous issues? It is easy to assert that they hold opposite principles: imagination can supply any materials to the tongue. Not one of the reckless dogmatists finds it convenient to tell us wherein the difference consists. The very statesmen

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themselves who, for reasons of their own, continue to keep up the verbal distinction, would, we venture to say, be baffled in an attempt to justify the party titles they assume. They are aware, no less than other citizens, that as to the principles, pointing towards liberty, that have created conflicts in the British community for ages, they are at one, and that their very position as dwellers on this continent has placed them ahead of present attainments on the soil of our ancestors. Questions unsettled there have received their quietus in these dependencies; and with our free institutions, and electoral rights, precious as gold to every Canadian, it is nothing more than a delusion to set value on names that have been deprived of their significance, in virtue of the very progress we have achieved, and which no mortal alive amongst us wishes to drive back or impair.

In these circumstances we cannot fail to rejoice, that while misguided and wilful men, who cannot see where the vast changes have left us, go from place to place uttering philippics against Coalition and coalitionists, and unfurling musty banners that speak only of what has passed into the archives of history, our ministers are attending to the business of the country, and by diverse methods rendering it more attractive to the stranger, and more a pride to its inhabitants. The champions of reform, as they esteem themselves, have gone all to wind and "old clo'!" An acre of swamp deprived of its unwholesome moisture is worth a ship load of their speeches about immoral party combinations. It is not a matter for which we have any responsibility, yet we regret sincerely to witness so much talent, that might be usefully employed, turning round and

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round on itself, blowing chaff—and only chaff—to every point of the compass.

When great principles are at stake in a community, the concessions demanded are uppermost in the public mind, and men, even the conspicuous agents in the crisis, occupy a subordinate place. No vital issue at stake, men are all the topic, and disappointed partyism sinks into faction. The writer of these paragraphs is old enough to recollect with considerable distinctness the first great reform agitation when William IV. was king. It is true, there were popular champions—Earl Grey, Lord Brougham, and other famous names; but the thing asked was the chief concern. It towered above all the heroes, and the community instinctively put them in their place. But with us, men and office are the chief points of interest and talk, because there is nothing of moment to contend about; no battle for right to draw the sword in. Hence the cry against the structure of our cabinets,—the everlasting harping on the incident that certain individuals, pronounced by the musicians fit only for ostracism, enter into their composition. In Mr. John S. Macdonald's administration, Mr. Carling and Mr. M. C. Cameron are the eye-sores of the discontented; and its economical management and useful measures count for nothing. These measures are all practical, rather of a materialistic class necessarily, and it is difficult to get enthusiastic over summary trials and experimental townships, over the building of an asylum, or the draining of a morass. The two were once ranked among Conservatives; they used to vote straight against our radicals in days gone by, when party spirit was lashing

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like the sea ; and because they did so, the separation that formerly existed must be eternal ! The spite—keen, relentless and undignified—is at them, not at the measures they produce ; at them, for being where they are, and especially at the head of the Cabinet, because, with daring presumption, he invited them to share in his public toils. This is very like Patriotism gone to the dogs ; Faction in the stage of audlin fury.

## ECLECTICISM IN CABINETS.

Now that the great principles of free government are accepted universally over the Confederation, and we individually enjoy complete liberty, and have local and general ministers to extol and abuse, it is time for us to inquire if the eclectic or combination method of forming cabinets is not the only sensible one in our fortunate circumstances. About the past, we need not trouble ourselves much. The party method may have wrought well in years past, and now, times being altered, we suggest that the plan after which administrations have been composed may be profitably changed too. That plan is, as Mr. Alexander Mackenzie once observed, "time-honored" by our fathers; and who does not know that a good many things that have long been respected at home are beginning, under the rattling musketry of public criticism, to show their flanks? Many of them,—rotten-boroughs and wealth-yielding monopolies, for example,—are off, like wild buffaloes on the prairie, never again to show themselves in respectable society. Let party government be called up for trial by our intelligent people, and they will, on patient inquiry, consign it to the tomb of all the Capulets. In this age, whatever is not of asbestos is fated to be burned; and the old cabinet system will not stand the



fiery ordeal to which the common sense of the country will yet demand that it be subjected. We have made a capital commencement—entered a practical protest against its continuance, and we trust the protest will not be withdrawn. The Eclectic plan exactly answers our situation, and wherever suitable men are found, and whatever may have been their party labels in times past, let them have the management of our concerns ; and if they are endowed with talent and courage, with tact and foresight, with prudence and ability to discern the signs of the times, with business capacity and diligence, they are just the ministers who will do honor to our institutions and lasting service to the state.

“Pledged but to Truth, to Liberty and Law,”

the country is safe in their custody ; and it has intelligence now, and opportunity now, to keep them at their work, and true to their oaths of office. We deal only here with the theory of our Cabinets, not with the existing personality. As to the ministers in power, we are no Daniel, no Rhadamanthus come to judgment. They have judges manifold, and are not invariably weighed in standard scales, or by those who have a fear of the Commandments before their eyes. It is the fate of their kind, and the blessed thing called Party has helped to embitter their lives. They deserve a modicum of sympathy, for their enemies comprehend not the sweetness of mercy, and twist their actions into the most hideous forms. Their skin ought to resemble that of a rhinoceros. A Premier especially, though furnished with the prudent judgment and the blandishments of Ulysses, is an unhappy mortal, ordained to be bated,

bastinadoed and gridironed,—the legitimate mark of those who “shoot folly as it flies,” and wisdom where it stands. Everything must be attempted to break his power, by lessening confidence in his rule; and all that some other unfortunate may seize his place to have incense burned before his nose by friends and suppliants, and to endure from the enemy—“the organized opposition”—the very torture his predecessor underwent, and which likely he aided to inflict.

In his Strathroy speech, during the election contest for the Local House, Mr. Mackenzie said:—“Now, what he held was this: there must be great political parties in all countries.” The doctrine is common among politicians of his class. We have the audacity to call it in question, although this—“fee, fo, fum!”—may smelt rank of heresy. Macaulay sings “the brave days of old,”

“When none was for a party,  
But all were for the state.”

And that was in Pagan Rome, before printing and “loyal oppositions” were heard of. Would Canada suffer were such days to dawn on her history? There’s no “must” about the business; at all events, there is no admissible “must” here. Parties may arise when as yet unknown questions start into being suggesting the wisdom of an organization to carry them on till they are embodied in legislation; then, of course, to vanish, like anti-slavery societies, and voluntary societies, and corn-law leagues, when their task is finished. But in the nature of things they are temporary—not enduring—organizations, like the

armies of the North that demolished the slaveocracy, and then melted back into the peaceful ranks of industrious citizenship. Principles, definite and peculiar, are the only basis for parties; but they become a nuisance and a mockery after their purposes are completed. We have shown, with abundance of illustration, that our two—Conservative and Reform—have played their part, and should now be carried quietly off the boards. It is worse than folly to endeavour to galvanize them into fresh vitality; and of this conviction we cannot be deprived, that should no successors at any time appear, the gain is all on the country's side.

It is natural for a man who fills the distinguished place of a leader in any division of our political army, to speak in strong terms of party as a sage and masterly device for guaranteeing good government and protecting the liberties of the people. To act otherwise would outrage his friends, and be a confession, in a political sense, of personal weakness. Everything conspires to build him up in the faith of the utility of such an organization; his thoughts have revolved round it, and his honorable aspirations have counted on its strength. But while our opposition chieftains are fanning the flame of rivalry in the hearts of their admirers, we do not find still greater men always expressing themselves so clear on the benefits accruing from the sectionalizing method. In February, 1866, speaking of Ireland, Mr. John Bright uttered these memorable words:—

“I believe if we could divest ourselves of the feelings

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“engendered by party strife, we might come to some  
“better results.”

And after eulogizing Mr. Gladstone, not then his colleague, he continued in this strain :—

“Take the right hon. gentleman opposite, the leader  
“of the Opposition (Mr. Disraeli); is there in any Legis-  
“lative Assembly in this world at the present moment a  
“man leading an Opposition of more genius for his posi-  
“tion, who has given proof in every way but one on which  
“proof can be given, that he is competent to the highest  
“duties of the highest offices of the State? Well, but  
“these men,—great men, whom we on this side and you  
“on that side, to a large extent, admire and follow, *fight*  
“*for office*, and the result is they sit alternately, one on this  
“side and one on that. But suppose it were possible for  
“these men, with their intellects, with their far-reaching  
“vision, to examine this question thoroughly, and to say  
“whether this leads to office and to this miserable notoriety  
“that men call fame, which springs from office, we will act  
“with loyalty to the Sovereign and justice to the People;  
“and if it be possible we will make Ireland a strength and  
“not a weakness to the British Empire! *But it is for this*  
“*fighting with party and for party, and for the gains which*  
“*party gives, that there is so little result from the intellects*  
“*of such men as these.*”

We reckon it no act of generosity to admit that there are some names among the Opposition that would do honor, on the score of talents, earnestness and integrity,

to any of our Cabinets. The country is not altogether bereft of their counsel, but we verily believe that, as members of an administration, their sphere of usefulness would be widely extended. While the mania and rivalry of party continues, no ministry will accept suggestions as readily from opponents as they would from the same gentlemen were they in office along with them. It is not in human nature for a government to welcome emendations from those who glory in every correction made, and in every chance to reduce ministerial prestige. Indeed, we can easily suppose that occasionally hints that might be beneficial are disregarded simply because they happen to proceed from an unfriendly quarter. That ought not to be, one may interpose; but then it is a very probable occurrence with frail human nature, and this vaunted partyism is at the bottom of the evil. Mr. Bright informs us of what he witnessed in the House of Commons, while he deplored the meagre results, in the case of superb intellects, that met his observation. Why should we perpetuate the wasteful system? Why should his country be deprived of the best services which any of our gifted statesmen can bring at her summons? On them be the responsibility of keeping back what might prove so advantageous to the general interest.

We are aware of the bondage in which they are held, though they will not own to the confinement; and for the sake of a country dear to us all, starting on its young and proud career, we could wish they would leap out into freer action, and contribute a higher service to the state. The point of honor that restrains them is delicate,

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but false. Some would brand them as traitors: their country would solace them with sincere commendations. Office! Not its emoluments, but the opportunity of prudently guiding the national steps, and rendering after ages their debtors for sagacious measures that time in its progress unfolded in their utility. Better, much better, in the seat of administrative statesmanship, than exaggerating every governmental error, construing everything to the reproach of high officers, who surely have an equal interest in their country and in their own personal reputation with their opponents; and concocting clap-trap motions, if possible to catch them in a moment of weakness and perplexity. Men aspiring to be ministers of the Crown should never descend to the level of tricksters, even if they will not burst their trammels and co-operate with those who are constitutionally entrusted with national affairs.

## PARTY IN ENGLAND.

THE "time-honored system in England," over which we heard Mr. Bright pour a wail of disappointment and sorrow from the depths of his noble heart, is not commending itself to independent reflective minds at home. Even before the words we have just quoted were uttered, signs had been noted of a slight amendment, as we would call it, in the long-established party domination. One sentence from the last page of May's first volume makes a record of these: it occurs in the course of some remarks on the oratory of the House of Commons, and runs thus:—

"But, of late years, independent members,—active, informed, and business-like,—representing large interests,—more responsible to constituents, and *less devoted to party chiefs*,—living in the public eye, and ambitious of distinctions,—have eagerly pressed forward, and claimed a "hearing."

Doubt as to the boasted utility of party is clearly on the increase among British thinkers, and this in no way astonishes us. Noticing a work entitled "Political Problems of our Age and Country," by Mr. Greg, the *Literary*

*World* (Sept., 1870) has this summary of one essay in the volume, which is entitled to considerate attention:—

“The effect of government by party is very ably analyzed: he shows conclusively, that whatever good may have resulted from it in past times, its most obvious characteristic now is that it prevents breadth, largeness of patience, and a regard to permanent duration in our legislative measures. Great measures require long preparation, thorough inquiry, often also tentative experiments, and a large amount of confidence and co-operation from all parts of the State. But neither Liberals nor Conservatives can secure this from each other. The mistakes of the government are invariably regarded by the Opposition, first and chiefly, as an occasion for securing power and office for themselves. Hence, instead of strengthening what is likely to be for the good of the nation, amending what is imperfect, and removing, after fair discussion, what seems impracticable or unwise, every mistake is dragged into delusive prominence, and a great measure is lost, and perhaps a ministry displaced, on the ground of some petty detail utterly irrelevant to the great issue.”



## MAY ON PARTY.

IN the second volume of May's History there is an informing chapter on "Party," which we would recommend to all who feel an interest in the general question. He narrates, with fulness of knowledge and discrimination, the rise of English parties and their lines of demarcation, their successes and defeats, their intermixtures and separations, their strifes and ambitions, their progress and modifications. It is frankly admitted by him that "in the history of parties there is much to deplore and condemn;" holding, however, that there is "more to approve and commend." His accumulative statement of the evils is more than impressive, and when read in conjunction with Mr. Bright's testimony formerly adduced, ought to convince reflective minds that the "time-honored system" is one of whose inherent wisdom doubt may well be excused. Hear his indictment:—

"We observe the evil passions of our nature aroused,—  
"envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness!" We see  
"the foremost of our fellow-countrymen contending with  
"the bitterness of foreign enemies, reviling each other  
"with cruel words, misjudging the conduct of eminent

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“statesmen, and pursuing them with vindictive animosity. “We see the whole nation stirred with sentiments of anger and hostility. We find factious violence overcoming patriotism, and ambition and self-interest prevailing over the highest obligations to the State. We reflect that party rule excludes one-half of our statesmen from the service of their country, and condemns them—however wise and capable—to comparative obscurity and neglect. *“We grieve that the first minds of every age should have been occupied in collision and angry conflict, instead of laboring together for the common weal.”* (p. 100.)

Having introduced what he delivers on the evils of party, it is only fair to present his estimate of its benefits ; and we observe no passage in its favor better than the following, immediately succeeding the one just quoted :—

“But, on the other side, we find that government without party is absolutism—that rulers, without opposition, may be despots. We recognize in the fierce contentions of our ancestors the conflict of great principles, and the final triumph of freedom. We glory in the eloquence and noble sentiments which the rivalry of contending statesmen has inspired. We admire the courage with which power has been resisted, and the manly resolution and persistence by which popular rights have been established.—“We observe that, while the undue influence of the crown has been restrained, democracy has also been held in check. We exult in the final success of men who have suffered in the good cause. We admire the generous

“friendship, fidelity and self-sacrifice, akin to loyalty and  
“patriotism, which the honorable sentiments of party have  
“called forth. We perceive that an opposition may often  
“serve the country far better than a ministry; and that  
“where its principles are right, they will prevail. By argu-  
“ment and discussion truth is discovered, public opinion  
“is expressed, and a free people are trained to self-govern-  
“ment. We feel that party is essential to representative  
“institutions. Every interest, principle, opinion, theory  
“and sentiment, finds expression. The majority governs;  
“but the minority is never without sympathy, represen-  
“tation and hope. Such being the two opposite aspects  
“of party, who can doubt that good prevails over evil?  
“Who can fail to recognize in party the very life-blood  
“of freedom?”—(pp. 100, 101.)

On calmly reviewing these two accounts, a question may be raised, Do the benefits so far counterbalance the evils as to provide a satisfactory defence of the scheme under which all this wickedness and outrage and national misfortune takes its origin? To our thinking it is a terrible price to pay for the gains, and more especially when we reflect that the same happy results might possibly have been achieved if there had been earnest opposition in the people's interest without the opposition of party. It may be said the evils are transient, but the good is enduring. Their transiency may be fairly disputed: that any evils of magnitude are ever of such a character in their influence on the fortunes of a country ought to be a matter of doubt. And then to a great extent are not identical scandals re-

peated at this moment on the same scene? Were party, in its exact sense, cancelled to-morrow, the wrongs inflicted in its name on the commonwealth would endure, one may safely maintain, long after the actors of the period had ceased to breathe. Upon the whole, the device of party seems fairly open to the charge of doing evil that good may come, about which two opinions are not found with reliable ethical authorities; unless, as the Duke of Wellington said of religion and war, morality has nothing to do with politics. Only if party was a duty—an inevitable necessity and obligation—can it be freed from responsibility in connection with the evils produced by its action within the circle of conscience and morality.

Does it not strike the attentive reader that while the first extract—on the evils of party—is very explicit and devoid of all confusion in the ideas and language,—of the second as much can scarcely be allowed with equal justice? All through it there is a haziness about the term “opposition;” haziness, at all events, to us who can, without difficulty, imagine an opposition not taking the hue and texture of party or organized opposition. “Rulers,” he says, “without opposition, may be despots,” and likely would if they get everything their own way. But why should they have that? In an assembly like the English Parliament, can they ever have an opportunity of the kind now? The same confusion creeps out further on when he proceeds:—“By argument and discussion truth is discovered, public opinion is expressed.” Shut off discussion,—forbid the expression of public sentiment, and if the government is not despotal, it may assume that *role*

immediately without restraint. But then, dissentient views and arguments, though opposition in their very nature, are not necessarily party opposition, in the correct acceptation of the term. Discussion may arise without being party discussion: opposition there may be without party opposition; and while every rational creature will approve of the first, as a means of eliminating truth, some may entertain grave scruples as to the expediency of the last.— Though there existed no political sections in the British House of Commons at this moment, “every interest, principle, opinion, theory and sentiment,” would infallibly find utterance; and it is taxing our credulity to affirm that party secures all this, for the people and their representatives would insist on it, though party went down the wind. In the old country, opposition—wisely or not—took the form of party; or, to state the case more correctly, opposing views based on cardinal principles called parties into existence, and they have struggled on with most evident advantage, we admit gladly, to the popular cause. But let us recollect the distinction between opposition and party opposition, and not confound things that differ;—on which a little more is reserved for a future section.

Let it be observed, moreover, that the writer whose words we are considering always supposes that his opposition, as a party, is based on principle, and when “its principles are right,” as a student of history, he feels warranted to predict that “they will prevail.” Party without principles he clearly does not understand. Likely he never dreamt of it, more than of a monarchy without a king, or a ship without a hold.

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According to the same authority :—" It is one of the first "uses of party to divide the governing classes, and leave "one section to support the authority of the state, and the "other to protect the rights of the people."—(p. 50.)

Mark it well, this is one of the *first* uses of party, and one that can have no existence here. What governing classes, like the great aristocratic families in England, have we to set by the ears? Do not all ranks with us support the authority of the state, and all stand up for the defence of the rights of the people—in other words, for *their own* rights? Hereditary rulers are unknown in the New Dominion; and, judging by appearances, Mr. Gladstone is, with swift hand, paving the way for their dismissal from their ancient functions in the parent land. So party will soon have one apology less even in its old retreats.

Nor will it do to alter the sentence and read it thus :— Party with us divides the representatives, and leaves one section to support the authority of the state, and the other to protect the rights of the people. No; for both parties, as divisions stand, are equally loyal in upholding the state or supreme power; and both are instinctively moved to guard the rights of the people. Why? Because they are of the people, and represent the people, and are responsible to the people, whether they are in power or not.

It may be thought presumptuous on our part to dissent from the verdict that "parties are inseparable from parliamentary government" (p. 18), and that they are "the very life-blood of freedom" (p. 101); nevertheless, we are constrained to do so out of respect to our own convictions. And we dissent the more readily in consequence of the

palpable confusion in Mr. May's phraseology concerning party and opposition, as already explained. That organized parties have done great service in parliamentary government, we concede frankly; that it was impossible for the same results to have been arrived at in any other way, we are not prepared to admit. No other method was tried, and as a consequence no comparison can be instituted. Probably party as it has been developed and wrought out was the best in the circumstances; and, for the present, on the abstract merits of the general scheme we are not at war with any individual. Only we stagger at the doctrine that party, properly so described, is inseparable from parliamentary government. We think it is not inseparable; we hope it is not. Our author himself says:—"Parties have risen and fallen; but institutions have remained unshaken" (p. 18); and if other parties, say those that exist,—whose very names are with some yonder, as here, a fetish to be clasped to their dying day,—disappear, parliament and other free institutions may even then be expected once more to survive the changes around them. Where there are no distinct and fundamental principles dividing parties, as with us, must they not cease everywhere to have an apology for continued existence? Even then, amid unrestricted discussion, representative government would proceed, and the life-blood of freedom flow through all the arteries and veins of the body politic. Surely nations, educated and enfranchised, will learn, as nations, to prize liberty because they possess it; and to hold the sacred boon with a firm grasp, and that grasp their own, and thank no one to keep it for them.

## OPPOSITION.

DELIGHTFUL era for ministers ! a voice exclaims ; no more opposition, and trade winds all the year round ! We can't tell what a silly or disingenuous mind may conceive, no more than for what design the weevil or the carculio were created. Opposition no longer ! Why, diversity of opinion is simply inevitable. Start any question, however insignificant, and men range themselves at once, some guided by intelligence, and some possibly by conceit. There are two sides to every question, and, what is very strange to the unreflecting, in many cases much may be brought forward on both sides, even when the most sublime themes are in debate. The author has been in an apartment in which there were five windows with curiously tinted glass in four of them. Looking through one, the landscape appeared as in spring, the second threw over it the aspect of summer, the third that of autumn, and the fourth imparted to it the frosty semblance of winter ; only he who viewed it from the fifth, furnished with the purest glass, beheld the scene as it actually was. Subjects are viewed by men in a similar way ; and, somehow, few of us reach the untinged medium of vision, or, better still, get the casement itself thrown open. It is not, however, for opposition that the advocates of party contend, without which



there would be no freedom whatever: they insist on an *organized* opposition, believing it essential to the dearest interests of the country. Apparently, it is not given to them to understand opposition in the absence of *party* opposition. With them, a right and a left are like the Siamese twins. They cannot trust each other to exercise free thought,—to judge of men and proposals by their merits; they must be enrolled in battalions, and each take its cue or command from a leader. Follow him not on what is denominated a party question, if you dare! He has frowns and other terrors at his command. Groans, black-letter, reading out, martyrdom, elsewhere! The House meets, and in march the Opposition, and sit there ready to attack ministers and their measures; never, if possible, to make a concession, by word or vote, to official shrewdness or skill. For the time being they are Her Majesty's loyal sappers and miners, not to be very particular if only they can hack and hew their way to the treasury benches. They are waiters upon providence,—all animated with the most exalted, never-say-die, patriotism. If they only had a bandage on their brow inscribed "organized fault-finders," and a symbolical grid-iron, to be transferable, like the seals of office, the equipment would be complete. Broiling is a part of their special functions; and woe to the minister when a chief with the spirit of an untamed Indian is at the head of his foes. For party aims, he is understood to be clothed with forked-lightning invectives; and in debate, wonder not, if he substitutes epithets for arguments, and deals more with the motives than the logic of ministers. In

brief, he and his lieutenants must be quick to detect the joints in the armour of those in power; and, above everything, they are bound to cultivate the most wakeful and morbid suspiciousness. On a field day, while gentle eyes look down from the gallery, it is

“Charge, Chester, charge;  
On, Stanley, on!”

Aloft the gridiron is flourished; the fray becomes more exciting; there is blow for blow; personality is often considered equal to spirit and edge; the most exciting passages of mutual recrimination agitate the assembly; and then, amid the small hours, the wordy hurly-burly concludes, and the elements are at peace. If the administration happens to be vanquished, the Opposition, as good Christians, are moved to exclaim, with grim old Oliver, “The Lord hath delivered them into our hands!” By the prominent among the victors the spoils are gathered, for, as on other fields, the generals get all the fame. This sweetly satisfies the rank and file. They have had “a glorious victory,” in the name of party government, and flap their wings and crow lustily in honor of the event.

In order to defend the old system of party government, involving an organized opposition, a web of mystery is artfully thrown around the institution of government, which can as easily be brushed off as cobwebs from the trellis. Looking closely into the matter, what is an administration but a Board of Directors to whom is committed the management of public affairs? We are the shareholders in the great concern—the nation; they, the managers, accountable

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to the general public for their behavior in office. In one sense, they are ministers or servants of the Crown; in another, ministers or servants of the community as a whole. We stand in no awe of them merely as high officials, though bound to honor them when they contribute due service, it may be renown, to the State. When they originate wise measures, or find in the prevailing sentiment the measures that are in request, an estimate too elevated can hardly be placed upon their contributions to the general interest.— But surely what they propose—all their policy, in a word—could be judged of by the members acting independently without this embattled and costly array, we had almost said farce, styled an organized opposition. In the light of reason and manliness the profit would be indubitable.— Nowhere else is an embodied opposition thought of; nowhere else would it be tolerated. Such a combination in a County Council, or among the shareholders of a Bank, or a Railway, or an Insurance Company, would be laughed to scorn as an impertinence, and hustled out of the room as a *prima facie* evidence of factious interference with the order of business. How happens it that only in a Parliament—which is a convocation of representative national shareholders—questions cannot be dealt with on their merits, and the conduct of the Directors estimated according to the same common-sense rule? If they raise money and spend it, how happens it that ordinary eyes cannot examine their projects and documents unless they are first covered by patent party spectacles? The average intelligence of the people is quite competent to detect the fallacy of the system; and we cannot doubt but that its boasted

virtues will lessen as they dwell on it, putting all prejudice and reserve into the back ground.

It is an imposition on our faculties to tell us that only in an organized opposition is there an effectual check on those in power. Verily this is no compliment to the rectitude of the people's representatives. It supposes that, acting on their individual responsibility, they would let even corrupt ministers have their way; that they must be split into two sections, the one to assist the government, the other to watch it, like so many spies, and to hold the lash over each other in turn. Even that is not uniformly a success! In any circumstances the plea is alike the abnegation of independence and individual conscience.—Why not the whole watch the Directors' movements, applaud when they act for the common good, check them when they are held to be in error, and vote them out—sweep the board without hesitation—when they violate or ride on their commission? By all means, let every matter be fully and fairly discussed, and the last objection heard and weighed, so that the course of public duty, and the conditions of public prosperity and safety, may be discerned with the surest vision. And, party aside, the temptation to succumb to passion will be reduced; and a broader vision will become the glory of untrammelled representatives. Send a man to parliament to fight for his party, and he is less of a man than when he goes to estimate measures by the sole standard of public utility. Encase him in an iron-pledge, and while his limbs are confined, his intelligence, whatever amount he may have of it, is in his envelope and not in his brain.

No form of opposition is so utterly contemptible as opposition merely for opposition's sake. Into this organized opposition almost necessarily tends to slide. To oppose it is felt to be a duty,—it is something expected of those in the shades, and their outside friends depend on them to denounce unsparingly, and to fling out their objections stiff and strong. We allow that censoriousness is not exclusively the custom ; but judicious criticism is too often substituted by that petty and irritating mode of speech. When a man proceeds to the House to vote against every government measure, he is driven to be captious in spite of his better judgment. On no occasion can he afford to be either generous or just. To be so would be traitorous to his party, for by one act of liberality and grace he would extend the reign of his opponents, and add a little weight to their official reputation. That member of the British House of Commons who thanked God that though he had often voted against his conscience, he had never voted against his party, was an unadulterated specimen of the organized.

While the members of a Cabinet ought to be vigilantly watched, since they are not without manifest temptations to illustrate the weakness of human nature, there is more suspicion of their deeds than gentlemanly honor and fair dealing seem to authorize. Judging by the language frequently employed, one would imagine they had ascended to their seats merely to drive the country to perdition, and cared no more for their good name than for their cast-off garments. They are supposed to be devoid of shame, and that is the last index of hopeless immorality. Much

of this wanton vituperation, we presume, is indulged in for effect; it is the traditional style of the organized, and, in ordinary cases, falls harmless on its objects. In turn, it is given and expected, and forms part of the edifying performance that goes on at the country's expense. Though usually borne by the victims with singular equanimity, we can readily imagine that it stings in secret, for a man cannot render himself callous to reproach, even when conscious that it is unmerited. That very fact may inspire some ignoble spirits with renewed vigor in dealing out the agony, and be their keenest enjoyment in the political arena. When men rise above confederated efforts to overthrow administrations, and are accustomed to try questions on their intrinsic properties, this evil will be modified. Of calmness there will be more, of patience more, in the deliberations; and yet ample liberty to resist what is deemed injurious, and to denounce acts that violate justice and compromise the honor of the country. What Mr. Bright said in his annual address to his constituents at Birmingham last year has a meaning for us here as well as for others yonder:—"But if I might say a word to people who are apt to criticize very much everything which a Government does—I don't ask them to approve beforehand, but I ask them merely to give to the propositions, whatsoever they may be, that same solemn and conscientious consideration which I believe these propositions have received and will receive from the members of the Government." Oh! it would be worthy of some of our chivalrous oppositionists to say, these are British not Canadian ministers. So be it. Take character

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from our statesmen, and exalt your country in the eyes of the world!

Since ministers are thus beset with temptation requiring organized vigilance to protect the state against their wiles, how happens it that the Opposition seek at any time to rush into their perilous circumstances? Better the censor's chair than exposure to defiling entanglements. The atmosphere of the treasury benches is deleterious; wholesome oxygen is exclusively found in the bowers on the left. Yet the opposition are eager to run the risk. They pretend to understand the danger, but have faith in their marvellous powers of resistance. A wise friend would urge them not to try. The apples of gold are more than parliamentary—at least ministerial—virtue can resist. And yet, after all, we cannot take them at their word. There is exaggerated danger in the one picture, and exaggerated virtue in the other. In office they would find it harder to carry out into practice their superlative maxims than they probably imagine; and experience has done little to render our present oppositionists acquainted with official difficulties. In office they would likely present a close resemblance to others who have gone before them—neither paragons of virtue, nor finished specimens of corruption. Human nature is pretty much the same in whatever quarter it is examined; and the loudest protestors of their purity and patriotism are not always those who stand the trial best. We make allowances for inherent weakness in others, unless we expect no allowances to be made for ourselves; and the broad system of government and of parliamentary action advocated by us, while

it might not add to the sum of official moral strength, would save our statesmen from party-inspired attacks, and encompass them still with that faithful surveillance which becomes to every one in a position of trust a formidable bulwark against enticements to do wrong.

Partyism ejected from the legislature, we would anticipate fairer reports and less biased criticism from the press. Whose side he is on, determines much concerning a speaker and a writer. If with us, he gets a full report,—verge and room enough usually to unfold his views; belonging to the other side, he is apt to be choked off without either ceremony or trouble. With considerable fidelity those who control pure party journals necessitate their patrons to act on Sidney Smith's advice:—"Don't read what those opposed to you say, lest you should be prejudiced." Little side incidents are all made promotive of our friend's glorification; he of the other party obtains a poor setting, and so appears to a disadvantage. Only those who chanced to be present have a correct knowledge of the assembly addressed, of the effect produced by the respective speakers, and the reception they received.—"At times," says a recent English non-political magazine, "we deeply regret to see that positive unfairness has crept into reports that ought to be exempt from any shadow of such an imputation. This is to poison for the people the very fountain of political truth. It is the distinction more of an intense taste for politics that it hardens men's hearts against political opponents, and makes them illiberal and unfair. A great orator sits down amid a hurricane of cheers; the *Times* fairly states the fact; but



“ the opposite organ to the speaker will merely put the “ stereotyped ‘ cheers,’ or even withholds that limited mede “ of approbation.” The same miserable partiality invades the domain of literature. On which side is he ? has often settled the verdict and the treatment a candidate for popular favor receives. The history of magazines like *Blackwood*, and the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews*, furnishes any amount of evidence on the perverting influence of party. Known to be a Whig, the *Quarterly* flayed the victim alive, and grinned at the writhing of his limbs ; one of the other ranks, and the *Edinburgh* was equally inhuman and equally unjust. To be of them was to be crowned ; on the other side was to be crucified. The chair of criticism in this way lost its dignity and its truth. We have seen palpable indications of a similar unfairness under our own skies. We have lamented the too apparent purpose to refuse justice to the living and the dead ; a determination to punish a writer, or tarnish his memory, because he had not repeated a certain political shibboleth, and lent his influence to a particular side. That all this would be debarred by the abrogation of party, we are not such simpletons as to believe. Men will need to be inspired with a higher love of truth for its own sake, and a sterner purpose to do right, before they concede opponents the fair opportunity to state their case, and to reach the public so as to win an unprejudiced verdict. It seems we can’t afford to do that yet ; nor is the infirmity confined to the department of politics, for we detect the same narrowness and partiality among those who occupy the most sacred fields of inquiry and debate. But though the aboli-

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tion of party might not introduce a perfect mode of treating those who dissent from our views, and invite calm, clear judgment to decide on their merits, it surely would cool down the fires of passion and prejudice, and shame the violent into something like decency and moderation.

## COURAGE!

SHOULD any one hitherto known as a Reformer join the author in advocating these views, and in giving them practical effect, a thousand chances to one that it will be said of him he is "off to the old Tory crew!" The very words have already been used to one in the circumstances supposed. They savor of abuse, and are a sop to the prejudices of the faithful. Now, let it be explained where the "Tory crew" is to be found, and by what rule of good citizenship the incensed are authorized to speak of any class in Canada in that style, who, to put it at a low point, are as respectable and patriotic as themselves. The crime of such a nonconformist is, that he has the hardihood to differ from certain self-constituted oracles; in a word, to think for himself. Ah! those who talk most of liberty are often observed to understand personal freedom least. They encourage you to think for yourself, so long as you think with them! Take your own course, and expect misrepresentation—expect sordid inuendoes—expect, it may be, pernicious slanders to be heaped upon your name; expect all that, and when the tin sheets

flash and the tin thunder roars you will preserve your equanimity. Concur in this testimony, and, it is to be feared, you will be put upon the wheel. Fall in, and, like the camel, bow down for the party load and the party bands: that's the rule, and there is no escape! But suppose you are classed with the "Tory crew," what serious harm is done? The word "Tory" sounds ill, and only for that reason is a favorite with those who will shoot a nickname at your head rather than behave themselves with decorum. It is, sounding from their lips, like the unexpected start of a cow-bell on a lonely road in a dark night; but, after a moment's reflection, it is a cow-bell, or a calf-bell, and nothing more. To refer to the measures of our amalgamated Provincial Cabinet:—What has a new election law, intermediate sessions for county courts, reclaiming bogs, opening up fresh territories instituting experimental townships, cheaply-built asylums, and the managing of the provincial affairs generally with frugality;—what have these, and the like, to do with Toryism? No more than mathematics with feeding pigs, or navigation with harvesting a field of wheat. But then "Tory" is a nickname, and appellations of the kind are known, like all sorts of abuse, to be distasteful. It or some such unsavory epithet is therefore flung at those who dare to dispute the party dictum, or to question the rationality of the whole system. And why? Mainly that others may be scared from breaking through the fence. But courage! Epithets singe no locks and break no bones.

"A man of independent mind,  
He looks and laughs at a' that."

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Strangers in the country, with home associations in their minds, may look with almost horror on a person who is said to have lapsed into Toryism ; but a little experience will convince them that political humbug is not confined to the shores they have left. We are quite a match for any in election tricks, and in holding fast the crowds who have hastened greedily to complete the exaltation of ambitious candidates. If the enfranchised would only ask themselves, "Are we men or voting machines?"—there would speedily be an end to the make-believe and terrorism that hold so many in bondage. Courage ! and deliverance is achieved. This, however, remember :—

" — who would be free,  
Themselves must strike the blow."

Hardly can we expect conspicuous men, who are sworn to party alliances, to acknowledge radical defects in the system with which they are associated. It would be like pulling down the ladder by which they expect to climb to a higher elevation. But, from reflection, and from conversing with intelligent individuals in several quarters, our conviction is, that the wedge is entering, and that the old fabric of partyism is about to be split up with unerring certainty. It cannot be done suddenly, but the rent is quite apparent already. There are thousands everywhere who have no interest in perpetuating a system that stands on a myth ; and they will, sooner or later, find it convenient to leave it to its fate. They will go, and others will follow. They will assist those who are endeavouring

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to rule the country by finding the best men, whatever may have been their antecedents; and leave the irreconcilables to play the old hurdy-gurdy "Coalition" tunes as long as they please.

## CONCLUSION.

It is a strange spectacle, and, were we not familiar with it, a satire on the boasted majesty of our species, to see in a grave assembly a certain portion almost constantly voting in one way, and the rest with equal uniformity voting in the opposite way. This is party. Now, let us enquire if there were no such combination as exists, whether the one side or the other would, with equal certainty, view the question under discussion in the given light, and vote as they happen to do? We cannot believe otherwise but that some who vote "yea" would vote "nay," and the reverse. In our estimation that uniformity derogates from the independence of the representation most seriously. The party member is held fast in the bonds that unite the body to which he belongs. He is inclined naturally to bend his convictions to those of his chief, or to the general voice of his organization. Think you the Author of man designed him to be hide-bound and tied hand and foot in that fashion? Nowhere else, we repeat, is it approved of, nowhere else would it be endured. Why the people's representatives cannot be unfettered is a problem we are unable to solve. We hear a good deal about the independence of parliament, and, even in the ordinary acceptation, it has a most important meaning ;

but there is a sense that seems never to have dawned on many who are earnest in correcting what is wrong in the conduct of representatives and in their relations to the government of the day. This is just the independence for which it is our privilege to contend. It will be the richest feature in our system of self-government. It will be the crowning of the edifice, and a substantial testimony to the intelligence of our people. The inhabitants of this country are sharing the priceless blessing of education; but the educated are not always independent thinkers. In truth, the tendency in the best educated lands is still to herd-thinking; not to the exercise of the faculties on one's own native strength and responsibility. It pervades politics, like other departments of mental activity; and party is the stereotyped form it assumes, under the guise of personal freedom. But it is not freedom—it is not manhood in its best type; nay, it is very far from being that. And why should we not have the finest form of it in this land? Why, if we have escaped the oppressions that still weigh down other peoples, should we not encourage the freest development of mind and investigation among ourselves? What imparts greatness to a people is thought-freedom and thought-power. Who will insist on that exalted development here? It is a lordly function, and, as it seems to us, the prime element of transcendent patriotism and civilization.

We are not blind to the controlling influence of rare talents in any community. They almost necessarily, in present circumstances, create parties—or sects in science,



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in art, in literature, in philosophy, and in the very highest region of human thought and life.

“The intellectual power through words and things  
Goes sounding on its dim and perilous way.”

And not unattended in its astonishing flights. But, in our view, this domineering of powerful individual minds owes much of its effect to the very evil of which we complain. Men are educated, it may be; but to think independently is not urged on them as their first and last duty and their birth-right. That consciousness would be a safe-guard against the over-mastery of genius even, and the serfdom into which millions too easily glide.

In this youthful country, everything should be done to cultivate not merely mind in its spontaneous evolutions, but the sincere and cordial brotherhood of man. Who does not know that the spirit of party tends to alienate citizen from citizen, and friend from friend? Who knows not that it generates bad feelings and bitter accusations? Who knows not that it creates unwarranted suspicions and violent words? That it too often blasts charity towards an opponent, and makes men stoop to meannesses for a paltry triumph that spoil the quality of their lives, and the concord that might be perpetuated among those who inhale the same atmosphere, and look upon the same sun? Would that it were as extinct as the Dodo! We might be a happy people, and begin a new stage in our career by consuming our petty strifes on a funereal pile. Everything seems to favor our national growth, and the base on which empire is to rise may amply satisfy our

highest ambition. Our Dominion stretches from sea to sea, and if mind is only emancipated, in the spirit of our free institutions, we may anticipate for those who appear on the scene in summers our eyes shall not behold, a greatness, a cultivation, a refinement, and an abundance, such as our dreams fail to represent. Never had we a fairer prospect than at this moment under the shadow of the great Treaty, which has been constructed by the two powerful nations speaking our mother tongue. Already, in soothing down animosity, the agreement has wrought like a charm. It is a pledge of peace, and substantially a model of international wisdom. It is an enduring illustration of how much better concession and compromise is than mulish adhesion to right drawn out to the last degree of imperilling tension; of how much better the spirit of brotherhood and goodly fellowship is than the scowl of anger, or the frozen isolation of offended dignity. If it can be preserved for a long period—and why should it not?—these two peoples will in every way be profitable to each other; and their fraternity will diffuse a humane influence over other states that no mind need attempt to measure. The compact is an invaluable protest against war; a medicine that may heal in days to come rankling troubles among the nationalities of the globe. To us it is a sign of rest, and an augury of enduring prosperity. Alas! had the now reconciled met in arms instead of round a deliberative table, we can imagine, though feebly; what pangs, and ruin and sorrows would have been our lot. Not unwillingly we should have borne our part in the Titanic strife; but better, infinitely better, for us that

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our fields should remain unpolluted by blood, and our farm tenements and towns and cities unblasted by the scorching and devastating storms of battle. Beautiful to us, and to all eyes, the cutting down and ingathering of the golden sheafs; but oh! never on these luxuriant plains be seen the reapers who "descend to the harvest of death." Tribulations await us, no doubt, while our history climbs up from youth to age, for to nations as well as individuals this mortal scene is chequered; nevertheless, let us hope for the best, and aim for the best.

"The future lies in it  
Gladness and sorrow;  
We press still thorow,  
Nought that abides in it  
Daunting us—Onward!"

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