

H I N T S

ON THE

CASE OF CANADA,

FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

“ Do I discourage rebellion, mutiny, rapine, and plunder? You may think I do, believers, but Heaven forbid! No: I encourage you to all these laudable undertakings. You shall plunder, you shall pull down the Government, but you shall do this upon my authority.”

DRYDEN'S *Don Sebastian*, A. iii. S. 3.

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IF states or statesmen ever benefited by experience, or if their high station exempted them from the fate which awaits the general mass of individuals, how many of the pages of history, now teeming with interest, would have been barren of events :—how many of the examples which have pointed morals to the age, would have been lost to posterity !

These reflections must have often suggested themselves to the mind of every one ; but they have been emphatically forced upon us by the perusal of the papers now laid before Parliament relating to the Canadas, and by the reports of civil tumult which have lately been received from that quarter. These are but ominous presages on the commencement of a new reign, and they might have created some anxiety in the minds of abler men than those to whom the destinies of this great empire have for some time been intrusted. But

“ Fools rush in, where angels fear to tread ”—

and after having, under the specious pretext of Constitutional Reform, for their own ends, brought this

great country to the brink of revolution, and after having blighted the fair name which Great Britain long maintained among the nations of Europe, by a course of foreign policy such as had never been adopted since we took a leading place in the economy of the world, our Ministers have now, by the same base subserviency to the cause of agitation which had marked their career at home, most flagitiously tampered with the safety of the Queen's colonial possessions, and especially have given such encouragement to the malcontents in the Canadas, that the whole of that province has at last broken out into open rebellion.

Those who have watched the indulgent mode in which the refractory portions of the community, both at home and abroad, have invariably been treated by the present Ministers, could have scarcely anticipated any happy results from the temporizing policy (to call it by no worse name) which has marked the dealings of this Government with the disaffected in Canada. All kinds of low subterfuges to avoid taking the plain and obvious course for enforcing obedience to the Queen's Government might have been expected from them,—but no one could have been prepared for the extreme baseness which has led them to compromise the dignity of the Crown, and to endanger the safety of its colonial possessions, in order to preserve for a brief period the sweet voices of the Radical phalanx in the British Parliament.

The days of ministerial impeachment are happily gone by, and breaking flies upon the wheel is said

to be a foolish pastime. Many men, however, have lost their heads for political charges of a lighter hue, than those which might be brought against the present Ministers; and in ordinary times, (to say the very least of the matter), no public men could have been allowed to retain their places after such repeated exhibitions of their incapacity for government.

It will be sufficient for our purpose to produce a few of the chief articles of impeachment which might be exhibited against them. They may be classed in the following order:—

1st. For misprision of treason in not having called to severe account the avowed authors in this country of treasonable correspondence with the Canadian malcontents; and for having neglected to arrest, in the province itself, those persons who had long been objects of suspicion from the language which they had held in their communications with the King's representative, and who for some time past had notoriously been in preparation for active rebellion.

2nd. For having, through a misplaced confidence in the professions of political agitators, surrendered to the Canadian Assembly the power of the purse, and thereby deprived the Crown of one of the main sinews of government; and for having at various periods refused to repair the mischief which had been done, in defiance of the strong representation of those whose peculiar duty it was to give advice in the conjuncture.

3rd. For having encouraged the expectation that

the executive Government would ultimately yield to the popular demand, that the legislative council of Canada should henceforth be elected by the province, and in so far admitting one of the most important prerogatives of the Crown to be brought into question.

4th. For having taken no steps to give confidence to the loyal population of the Canadas, and to relieve them from anxiety respecting the fate of their lives and property ; and for having removed those who, as governors, enjoyed the confidence of the well-disposed colonists, and supplied their places by individuals not by any means suited to the emergency of the case.

5th. For having—from a base desire to conciliate the favour of the Radical party in the House of Commons, at a time when the intentions of the Canadian insurgents were but too apparent—allowed the season for sending reinforcements to Canada to pass by, and thereby compromised the safety of one of the most valuable possessions of the Crown.

It will be proper to consider each of these charges in detail ; and, as in order, we now proceed to the first.

It must be confessed that our Ministers have, of late years, manifested a most magnanimous contempt of danger at the hands of our revolutionary colonists and their abettors. They seem, indeed, to have adopted the advice addressed to Macbeth—

“ To take no care

Who frets, who chafes, nor who conspirers are.”

As far back as the month of March, 1834, we find Mr. Joseph Hume, M.P., in active correspondence with Mr. Mackenzie, long known as the chief agitator in the Upper Province, and lately distinguished as the leader of the insurgents in the attack on Toronto, and thus expressing himself on the disputes pending between the mother country and the refractory colony :—

“Your triumphant election on the 16th, and ejection from the Assembly on the 17th, must hasten that crisis which is fast approaching in the affairs of the Canadas, and which will terminate in freedom and independence from the baneful domination of the mother country, and the tyrannical conduct of a small and despicable faction in the colony.”

In former times a tirade of this kind would have been followed by an intimation from the Attorney-General that such treasonable language could not pass unnoticed,—that no British subject could be allowed, with impunity, to incite others to revolt. Excepting, however, by some vapid and apologetic syllables which fell from Mr. Spring Rice, (enough, and no more than enough, to show that his mind had condescended to observe the symptoms in progress,) no notice appears to have been taken of this unhallowed alliance between one of the Commons' House of Parliament and a disaffected body distinctly organized in a distant colony; and we are now reaping the fruits of the seed which was then sown, and for

the proper eradication of which no steps were then taken.

The task of governing our transatlantic colonies has at all times been one of considerable difficulty, owing to the blunders which were committed by the statesmen of the last century, and the heavy losses and disgrace which were brought upon this country by the American war.

The example of successful rebellion exhibited by the United States has unquestionably not been lost upon our colonies in that quarter of the globe ; and the increased weight to the democratical influence in the House of Commons, which has been given by the Reform Bill, has added materially to the difficulties of maintaining the authority of the Crown either at home or abroad.

If agitation, indeed, had not been the watch-word of the present Government ; if it had not been, like the breath of their nostrils, absolutely essential to their preservation—it would have been fair to make great allowances for the embarrassments experienced by them in their dealings with our colonial possessions, owing to the course adopted by Mr. Hume and his associates, in espousing their cause.

The colonists do not know—how should they ?—that the advocates for extreme measures are but few, and of little credit, in this country. They judge, by the deference which is paid to their party by the Ministry of the day, that they speak the voice of a

powerful body in Britain ; and hence it is apparent, that, though powerless for good, these very ignorant meddlers in matters far beyond their reach are capable of producing incalculable mischief.

In the very outset and bloom of Canadian democracy, we find Mr. Hume, in conformity with his character of advocate-general of the human race, adverting to the exclusion from the rights of British subjects to which the colonists were condemned, owing to the improved system, by which all virtual representation in Parliament was abolished, and maintaining, with some show of reason, that certain of our colonies ought now to be allowed to send members to the House of Commons.

In a letter to Mr. H. Taylor, of Lower Canada, dated 4th September, 1833, he thus expresses himself :—" As long as the Canadas remain under the direction of the Secretary of the Colonies, my opinion is that they should have representatives in the British Parliament. But my wish would be to set the Canadas and the whole of British North America free to govern themselves, as the United States do, by their own representatives, and to cultivate a good connexion with the mother country for their mutual interest. Until that takes place, neither the Canadas nor Great Britain will derive those advantages which they ought to have from a different and more economical management of their resources."

Having taken upon himself the prominent duty in conducting the general cause of agitation in the House

of Commons, at home, it is possible that Mr. Hume considers himself equal to the charge of the colonial business also, and that we shall hear no more from *him* of colonial representation. Less evil, however, would arise from a legion of delegates, "black, white, and grey," who might be deputed to represent our colonial possessions, than has been experienced from the loud and uproarious voices of those who have of late come forward in Parliament as their *paid agents*. It is to be hoped that, taking warning by the example of Canada, such colonies as may hereafter unhappily embark in dispute with the mother country may look for support to safer guides, and that they will feel, as they ought to do, that nothing but disgrace and discomfiture can arise from a connexion with a clique so personally contemptible as they have recently linked themselves with.

Whatever may be the excuse got up by the Government for their leaning towards the chiefs of the Radical party at home, there can be none for their culpable neglect of the necessary *surveillance* over Mr. Papineau, the prime mover of disaffection and civil tumult in the Lower Province. Careful as he may have been to keep himself on the windy side of the law, it is scarcely possible that he should not have exposed himself *some time ago* to the penalties of treason; and if so, he ought, before the disorder came to a head, to have been secured. Lord Gosford must have strangely ne-

glected his duty, if he failed to apprise the authorities at home, that a considerable importation of arms had taken place into the province, and that constant drillings engaged a portion of the population in the neighbourhood of Montreal. Why were these significant warnings not listened to ? Why were no steps taken, till too late, to avert an evil of such aspect ?

The second charge which may be brought against Downing-street is one in which the blame does not altogether lie with the present possessors of office. The cession to the assembly of Lower Canada, of the duties raised under 14 Geo. III. c. 88, a sum sufficient to defray all the material charges of the Civil List, was carried into effect, most improvidently, whilst the Earl of Ripon was at the head of the Colonial Office. A very short time sufficed to shew that the Assembly were not disposed to execute their part of the bargain ; and the Earl's successor, Mr., (now Lord) Stanley, from an early conviction of the glaring impolicy of Lord Ripon's Act, brought a Bill into Parliament for its repeal. Unfortunately, however, for the cause of justice, and for the due assertion of the authority of the mother country over its dependency, Lord Stanley was induced to abandon this Bill, and to confine himself to entrusting the whole examination of the question in dispute, to a Select Committee of the House of Commons.

Before this body, as it is understood, were laid,

without reserve, all communications (even to the private letters of the Governor,) which had been received in Downing-street; and, however satisfactory may have been the result, as far as showing how groundless were the grievances of which the Canadians complained, the greatest injury was done to the cause of good government, and great wrong to the Governor individually, by the disclosure of his private correspondence, and by the tacit condemnation of the mode of administration which he had found it necessary to adopt.

It is not our business to enter into a minute detail of the steps which were taken by succeeding colonial Ministers in dealing with the affairs of Canada. Suffice it, that when Sir R. Peel was driven from office in the spring of 1835, the administration which then came in found a nobleman of considerable political consequence and name already prepared to go out for the purpose of settling the difference with the Canadians, for which not very enviable task he had been selected by Lord Aberdeen. Considering the urgency of the case, it would not have been surprising if the new Government, in order to save time, had at once adopted the scheme of their predecessors, and allowed the appointment to go on upon its original footing.— They did no such thing, however: they decided that a Commission to report was preferable to a Plenipotentiary to act, and they thus hung up for two years at least the grievances of Canada, and for so long put off all regular settlement of the sums due to the

various civil servants, whom the perverse conduct of the Assembly had reduced to a state of no ordinary distress. After the lapse of a twelvemonth, two Reports are received from the Canada Commissioners. They announce to the Colonial Secretary that the time is now arrived when, in their opinion, it would be necessary to adopt some decisive line, (they allude more particularly to the suspension of Lord Ripon's Act,) and that the course taken by the Assembly on receiving Lord Gosford's overture, was such as to preclude all expectations of an amicable adjustment of the questions in dispute. Even if this declaration had not been sufficiently explicit, the reports from the province, and the general tone of the communications made to the Governor from the Assembly, ought to have satisfied the Ministers that no possible good could arise from any further attempts at negotiation.

With a degree, however, of amiable simplicity, which would be amusing enough if the case were of less importance, the guardian of our colonies, in replying to these urgent representations of the Commissioners, maintains an opinion completely at variance with that of the men who were sent out to afford information upon which the Government was to act, (or why send them out at all?) He states his conviction that the time for such prompt measures was by no means arrived; that he should wait until the Commissioners had reported on all the points upon which they were directed to inquire; and, finally, that it was not the intention of the Ministers (whatever

might be said or done, we suppose,) to be “hurried into premature and precipitate conclusions.” Such a strange abdication of all the functions of Government requires no comment. So much for the correspondence of 1835 and 1836.

The papers which were laid before Parliament on the 23rd ultimo, and which have recently been printed for circulation, are certainly the most curious *Pièces Justificatives* that ever were exhibited by any public department. These “*disjecta membra*” of official dispatches are not more singular for the very imperfect notices which they give of the gradual process by which a dissaffected colony may ripen into rebellion, when left in the charge of unskilful or unwary statesmen—than curious for the glimpses which they afford of much matter being kept back, which the Government have not thought it prudent to produce. It is not with garbled and slipslop documents of this kind, that the public of this country has usually been satisfied, when events of such future importance as the revolt of a large portion of our Colonial possessions are to be laid before them; and it is our firm conviction that it will be one of Sir R. Peel’s first duties when Parliament meets, to move for a Select Committee for the purpose of ascertaining the causes which have led to this unhappy result, by an examination of those papers which have been as yet only presented in the form which the Government thought most advantageous for their own personal purpose.

Much might have been matter of conjecture had they not appeared ; but now it is difficult to say, after a perusal of this singular correspondence, whether the Colonial Minister at home, or the Colonial Governor abroad, appear to most advantage.

Nothing can equal Lord Gosford's confidence in the loyalty of the Canadians, excepting Lord Glenelg's implicit faith in the Governor's statement, and it is really surprising to see, in spite of all the warnings which were given, the alternation of alarm and of renewed confidence which seems to have effected the minds of both parties.

Thus, after two years of fancied security, the Secretary of State all of a sudden perceives that there is "something rotten in the state of Denmark," and begins to suspect that these very loyal Canadians may require the surveillance of a larger force than that by which the Canadas were ordinarily guarded. He holds out, therefore, in his letter of March 6th, to the Governor, who at that time seems to have entertained no notion of their being wanted, the *probability* (for it is nothing more) that two regiments may be sent out as reinforcements ; but scarcely has he done so, when—as if afraid of the rashness of the act which he had committed, in holding out this problematical aid,—he revokes his original intention, finding, as he states, that inconvenience will attend the sending these two regiments ; and instead of this, he despatches to the Governor a provisional order for troops from Nova Scotia, having discovered (as it would appear, since the date of his former letter,)

that there are 2,000 or 3,000 men in that province and New Brunswick, who, in case of need, might be called upon to give assistance. Now the St. Lawrence, as every one knows, is not navigable during the winter ;—and the journey from Halifax to Quebec is considerably more than 600 miles ;—and for the most part through a country not easily traversed even in summer. The order, therefore, upon Sir Colin Campbell was not quite a bill at sight ; for the possibility of benefiting by it must entirely depend on the season of the year when the requisition might be enforced. Nevertheless, with this illusory and unsubstantial reinforcement, the Government at home remain perfectly satisfied ; and Lord Gosford, having at first hesitated about making use of the provisional order, at last (in June) avails himself of it to the extent of one regiment ; but does not, until November (as announced in his despatch of the 6th of that month), when the winter season had, of course, commenced, determine upon calling for the further aid which, by his instructions, he was entitled to look for from Halifax.

By this time, M. Papineau, by some overt acts of treason, which could not be misunderstood, had at last opened Lord Gosford's eyes, and is pronounced to be bent upon mischief. The rioters were in fact at this time parading the streets of Montreal : but Lord Glenelg, although on the 14th July he had come to the conviction, that “ the time when it was right to pause and deliberate had passed away,” does not, until the 27th of November,

accept Lord Gosford's offer of retirement, nor communicate to Sir J. Colborne his appointment as his successor; and it is not till the 6th of December, in spite of serious disturbances which were taking place in the province, and Lord Gosford's urgent representation (dated 12th of October,) as to the inadequacy of the law—and of the powers at the disposal of the Government to put down insurrection—that authority is sent out to Sir J. Colborne, to proclaim martial law in the province *if necessary*.

One fortnight after the date of this dispatch, advices were received in this country, of the Canadian malcontents being already in arms, and that the Queen's troops had actually been engaged with the insurgents!!

We now proceed to the third charge on our list.

One of the worst features of the present day, in the estimation of most thinking people, is the dread which seems to pervade all classes of our public men (almost without exception) of venturing any battle for the Royal prerogative, and of urging, to the reasonable extent to which it might be carried, the fair claims of the Crown at a time when so large an increase has been given to the democratic scale.

In former times there were certain subjects which no public man of character presumed to moot: they were considered sacred, and unfit for discussion. Opinions, however, are now avowed which no one would have ventured to promulgate a very few years

ago; there is no established point of our political creed which is not liable not only to be called in question, but to become the subject of Parliamentary inquiry. The existence of the House of Lords, the expediency of an Established Church, Colonial Allegiance, are all become as familiar topics for debate, as a turnpike or an inclosure bill.

In this manner we may observe how the demands of the agitators in Canada have increased in presumption, in proportion as they found a disposition to concede to them on this side of the water. Their financial grievances were practically removed by the measure which placed the Crown duties at their disposal, but there was still a bone of contention to be reserved, some darling grievance to be cherished—and this has been supplied by their pertinacious clamour for an Elective Council; a demand which they have urged with the more perseverance, because, instead of refusing to admit the possibility of the Crown conceding on this point, an equivocal answer has always been given, which did not extinguish the hopes of the party, though it compromised, at the same time, the principle in question.

Even so lately as the last Session of Parliament, Lord J. Russell's 4th Resolution declares that "it is not, in *the existing state* of Lower Canada, expedient to make the Upper Chamber of the Legislature an elected body, instead of its being appointed by the Crown:" and thus, in spite of all the objections which have been urged and admitted against the pro-

posed change, our cautious Ministers persevere in this temporizing course of policy, for fear of offending the prejudices of some Radical adherent, or, may be, some subordinate associate in office.

The fourth charge is one which, *mutatis mutandis*, has been brought against the present Government (and unfortunately with too much justice), for the system they have adopted in the government of Ireland.

Having given up the power of the purse, however, in Canada, we are so far worse off in our controversy with the Assembly of that province, than in the conflict in which, thanks to agitation and all its concomitant evils, we are now engaged with the lower Romanists of Ireland. We have in Canada, as in the sister island, a large and bigoted Popish population, greatly superior to the Protestants in number, but immeasurably inferior to them in enterprise and intelligence. Too much scattered, and too ignorant to be aware of what is passing in the world, they are satisfied to return to the Assembly the most active and persevering demagogue who may solicit their votes ; and M. Papineau in the one province, and Mr. Mackenzie in the other, have figured in their several spheres the worthy *doubles* of Mr. O'Connell and his tail in the British Parliament. The same game of addresses, petitions, public meetings, &c., has been gone round, and the same exaggerated and insolent tone adopted by these parties in all their communications with the public authorities ; the same

base and futile attempts exhibited by the servants of the Crown to conciliate and satisfy a demagogue whose cue it is never to be satisfied, and who would sink into his original nothingness if he were to cease from being a professional agitator. That the loyal population of the province should have been disgusted at the favour which was shown to the French party, to their utter neglect, is not surprising; that they should have combined for their own defence is still less so; and in the present conjuncture, such is the insufficiency of the military force, that the safety of the colony may be perhaps entirely due to the public spirit of those whose lives and property have been placed in immediate jeopardy by the supineness or culpable indifference of the Government at home.

It is very natural when party spirit runs high (as it does at present) that the administration of the day should desire to place in high public situations, both at home and abroad, those whose opinions on points of what is called general policy coincide with their own. There should be a limit, however, to the changes which a rigid adherence to this principle would of course occasion; and the thirst for patronage which has produced, by some means or other, within these few years, a complete change in the government of almost every colonial possession of the Crown, ought to have some bounds—especially where, as in the case of the Canadas, able and efficient officers, who possessed the confidence of the people whom they governed, have been removed to make way for men of minor

qualifications. It can be no compensation to those who have been so dispossessed, if a more perfect acquaintance with these merits and the stress of circumstances should compel the Government to call again for their services, however satisfactory this unwilling homage may be to the colonists themselves.

The last charge in the list which might be brought against the Government, is the heaviest of all ; and one from which, we fear, the Ministers have no royal mode of escaping.

We have already pointed out the urgency with which representations were made to them from different quarters in regard to the insecure state of the province ; and when matters were gone so far as the drilling and parading of the insurgent force, the Governor, however inclined to shut his eyes to the first approaches of rebellion, could scarcely have been ignorant of what was going on.

How then is the strange dereliction of duty on the part of Government, in not sooner sending out reinforcements to Canada, to be accounted for ? It surpasses all that has or can have been reported of the inertness of the colonial Government in former days ; and the only intelligible explanation is,—one most disgraceful to them ; viz., that in the face of a dissolution of Parliament, when the support of the Radical party was of vital importance to the existence of the administration, they could not venture to offend this powerful phalanx, by taking the proper measures for curbing the excesses of their transatlantic allies.

Hence M. Papineau has been allowed to bring to maturity his treasonable practices without check or molestation. Hence the safety of the whole colony was menaced by insurrection, without any step being taken for increasing the military force in the province, except by the hazardous expedient of marching troops from Halifax through New Brunswick to Quebec.

At last, when it is too late in the season to take any decisive steps, when the St. Lawrence is frozen over, and all access to the Canadas nearly impracticable, our rulers are roused into sudden activity by the rumour of war in the Lower Province, which reaches us (though not, be it observed, through any official channel), that the insurgents, relying upon the advantage which they would gain from taking the field during the winter season, are already in motion.

We look in vain for any dispatches from the Governor of the Province to the Colonial Secretary, detailing these important events. No time, however, is to be lost in despatching reinforcements to the scene of action ; and, regardless of the dangers attending a winter navigation in that quarter of the globe, and regardless, at the same time, of the expense which must follow from the unhappy necessity of adding to the strength of the army, which recent improvident reductions have rendered doubly costly and difficult, the Ministers, with an unsparing hand, order out regiment after regiment ; and, in spite of the vituperations of their Radical supporters, (and at no time, not even during the party con-

flicts of the American war, which have been brought forward as examples of similar violence of language, was such doctrine as that advanced by Mr. Leader and Sir W. Molesworth ever uttered in the House of Commons) :—in spite of all this, the Ministers talk big, and manifest a most righteous abhorrence of all that savours of treason and disaffection in the harangues of their Republican associates,—simply because they well know that they are secure of the support of the Conservative party, as they always have been, whenever, by any happy chance, they have acted in a manner becoming British Statesmen.

It does not require any very uncommon share of perspicuity to foresee what will be the issue of this first essay of the movement party abroad. As by good luck the Canadas are now intrusted to the charge of Sir J. Colborne, one of our most distinguished military commanders, this outbreak of the democratical spirit will, in all probability, soon be quieted, and tranquillity be restored, at least on the news of fresh troops being under orders, if not before any such intimation can reach the Colonies ; but, with this return to good order, will confidence and loyalty again revive in the breast of those of the inhabitants who have experienced, in their persons, their property, or their families, how great are the evils attendant on civil war? This can scarcely be expected; and it is therefore to be feared, that the alienation of feeling produced by this example of unsuccessful rebellion, will entail upon us the expense of maintaining a

large military force in North America, and render the subjects of Great Britain in that quarter less faithful adherents in any future struggle with the United States. How soon the Canadian loyalty may be put to the test, it may not be easy at present to foresee. The speech, however, of the President, recently received, seems to indicate a soreness on the delay which has attended the settlement of the Boundary question, and an anxiety that the controversy on this point should be brought to a close, which is rather remarkable at this peculiar conjuncture.

It is yet to be seen what are the legislative measures (for it is to be presumed some will be necessary) which the Government will propose by way of rendering the task of governing the Canadas more easy in future. They may take away from them (nor can the rebels justly complain if such a severe reckoning be demanded) the constitution granted by the act of 1791, by which the two provinces would be again united. Some reform might also be introduced, which would give to the settlers of British blood a fairer chance of admission to the Colonial Assembly; or the island of Montreal with the townships might be taken away from the Lower Province, and given to the Upper.

All or any of these are plain straightforward measures, which might be adopted with more or less advantage to the cause of order and good government; but will the present Ministers not rather fly to some of their usual subterfuges, and chalk out for them-

selves some course more palatable to those by whose favour they have hitherto lived ?

Already we find their supporters are attempting to depreciate the value of our colonies, in anticipation of their escaping from our grasp, forgetful that, if such were really the state of things, and that Canada, for instance, had been an expensive and burdensome appendage—and such were in reality the opinions of our Ministers—they should have gone altogether upon a different tack, and prepared the way for amicable separation ; a course which, however impolitic it might have been, and however little it might be approved of, would have been at least consistent with their general tone of acting.

There is a time for all things ; and colonies, like other children, when arrived at a certain growth, should be allowed to shift for themselves, and to escape from the superintendence of their nurses and guardians. It would appear, however, that our Canadian brethren are not yet ripe for self-government, or powerful enough to assert their independence, and that they have been premature in all ways, even to their anticipations of the approaches of winter.

The experiment which was determined upon in 1791 (and tried too by men who possessed the understandings and feelings of statesmen)—that of giving a particular constitution to a newly-acquired territory, has, it must now be confessed, unfortunately failed. It is easier, however, to pull down a constitution than to repair it (as our present rulers have found) ;

still more difficult is it to reconstruct one, which has been long subject to throes and convulsions, such as that of the Canadas.

The chief error in the original design of governing the Canadas by the constitution which was given, seems to have been the neglect of all the ordinary means by which a British character might have been infused into the province which was henceforth to become an integral part of the British Empire. French law, French language, and French institutions were allowed to prevail as heretofore, no steps being taken for gradually substituting those of the parent State ; and in those cases where it was attempted to assimilate the two countries by analogy, as in the creation of an aristocratical body, which might form the third party in the State—(as the legislative Council, whom it is proposed to make elective, are supposed to do now,)—the scheme failed entirely, because the materials were not to be found among the natives of the soil.

Although, however, all was not done for the Lower Province which was calculated to render it an obedient and useful dependency of Great Britain, it is scarcely just in the Canadians to complain of these sins of omission on the part of the statesmen of this country. By their connexion with Great Britain, and by British capital and mercantile adventure, Canadian produce to an incalculable amount has been brought into circulation ; and, by the example of British industry, wealth has accumulated

in the province, which would not have found its way there by any other channel.

It matters little however that England, as is generally admitted, has never been a severe task-mistress to her dependencies;—that, in spite of sundry anomalies, and many mistakes in her mode of dealing with them, they have grown up under her fostering care, and arrived at a pitch of prosperity which none ever reached before. It is vain to urge, in proof of the strong desire of the mother country to allow to her offspring a very reasonable latitude in legislation, that the acts of the colonial assemblies are considered by the executive power with the caution and indulgence which their importance demands; and that except in cases where their provisions militate against some received principle of British legislation, they are ratified and become the law of the land. The ingenuity and acuteness of political economists and journeymen statesmen, have lately discovered that colonies are expensive appendages to a nation; and that the bond of union between the mother country and her offsets, is a slavish compact which ought not to be submitted to. It is to be hoped that a more correct view of the relative situation of a colony and its parent state, and of the advantages which arise to both from a close union of interests, will be taken by the thinking part of the community, both here and abroad; and it might conduce to render one party

at least more contented with its condition, if the prospect held out to the Canadas by separation from Great Britain were more clearly delineated.

Our North American provinces, on separating from Great Britain, may either form a confederacy of themselves, or they may be incorporated in the States of the Union.

In the former contingency, is it likely that our ancient dependencies will escape the fate of all confederacies? Would the inhabitants have fewer taxes under M. Papineau, as their first President, than those which so lightly press upon them at present?

Their annexation to the United States, on the other hand, is an event by no means probable; for we are much mistaken if it would suit the policy of General Jackson's school to give additional strength to the New England States by such an incorporation. The utmost, therefore, which they can possibly look to, is a feverish and troubled existence, such as has befallen the revolted colonies of Spain. A gradual infusion of British population and of British capital may, in process of time, it is true, much alter the case.

One of the most prejudicial effects of the acrimonious feeling which has been excited in Canada against the Home Government, is the degree of jealousy with which all emigrants from the mother country are looked upon by the French party in Canada, as well as the companies associated for the

purpose of turning to advantage the waste lands and timber of the province.

A tariff for defraying the charges of the sick and infirm emigrants who might be landed at Quebec, was not to be objected to at the time when the ravages of the cholera had filled the hospitals of the town, and brought an unparalleled degree of misery into the province; but every vessel which conveys healthy and hard-working countrymen to those shores ought to be hailed by the loyal population of Canada with cordial good will, and the diffusion of wealth and employment which must follow the introduction of British capital should render them desirous of encouraging the companies which have been formed in both provinces.

The country which receives the emigrant is not, however, the only party which benefits by his movements; for, in the over-stocked state of the British Islands, a safe outlet for our exuberant population is of no small importance; and let this consideration have its due weight with those who underrate the value of Colonies, as well as with the rising provinces, whose agitators are thus prematurely panting for an independent condition.

Before, however, they enter on an untried state of existence, and before it is too late to recede with credit or advantage, we would implore our fellow-subjects in Canada, for whom the most kindly feelings are generally felt in this country, to pause and consider on the step they have taken, and to profit

by the opening for forgiveness which Lord Gosford's most strangely vague proclamation so mercifully holds out. For, whatever may be the detriment which we may suffer from any diminution of our colonial power, the loss cannot fail to be still greater on the side of those who will be deprived of the substantial support and protection which Great Britain holds out to her colonies.

That the Canadas have at all times been peculiarly favoured—witness the constant complaints of the state of the timber-trade, and of the favour which is shown to the lumber, the grain, and the fisheries of our North American Colonies—to the exclusion of foreign competition both at home and abroad. Witness, too, the sums which have been expended by Great Britain in giving to the Canadians a strongly-defended frontier, to preserve them in future from the attacks of the United States. They have, in fact, now no real grievances to complain of; and, whatever opinion may be entertained of the merits of the present Ministers, they certainly cannot be accused by the people of Canada of any deficiency in the quantum of concession.

To the other neighbouring Colonies, although they happily have shown no symptoms of being infected by the mania of the time—we should urge the necessity of the utmost moderation, and circumspection in the conduct of their debates, and in their dealings with the Queen's representatives. Let the Colonial Assemblies be satisfied with the power they enjoy;

with the disposal of their own finances (which it is quite just that they should possess) ; but let them, on the other hand, remember that the people of this country have heavy taxes to pay—the result of wars, and other expenditure for the public cause—and that the Colonies cannot reasonably expect to be relieved from all contributions to the public revenue.

If, indeed, these froward children are not to be reclaimed—if Great Britain is to be exposed to all the expense and trouble of retaining as foreign conquests those possessions which ought to be attached to her by the ties of mutual kindness—it may become a question how long a connexion so disadvantageous to both parties can be kept up. Let those, however, whose mistaken policy has brought about this unhappy tendency to separation, recollect that the Crown cannot afford a repetition of such spoliation and dismemberment ; and that, unpopular as the name of Colonies may be in these days among a certain class of politicians, yet neither commerce nor shipping can long be maintained at a high pitch without them.

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