

eration in political disputes might have been established. Sir Charles Bagot, by relying on the practice prevailing in England, was successful, and for a time all parties appeared willing to refer their disputes to the decision of Parliament. Lord Metcalf adopted the old system, took an active part with one political party, and, in the end, found himself to be more powerless than if he had allowed the patronage of Government to be controlled by the provincial administration.

Lord Elgin has avoided every fault of his predecessors. He acted with impartiality on his arrival in the province, and left all great political disputes to the decision of Parliament, but this sort of parliamentary government did not meet the temper of the minority, for a minority cannot jump into office in a day, and office and power were the objects of their desire. What they found they could not immediately accomplish in the House of Assembly they hoped to effect by the aid of violent writers who conduct the most disgraceful newspapers published in any part of the world. When a majority determined any question these editors set up a howl. Every term of reproach and abuse was used against the Assembly, and it was supposed that Lord Elgin would follow the example of most of his predecessors, and be alarmed by the yells of a minority. Fortunately he was too well versed in the administration of a representative government to perpetuate an evil which he appears to have most thoroughly comprehended. His description of his position is so correct, so well expressed, and affords so perfect an explanation of the misfortunes which have long vexed the province that it is impossible to neglect it. Speaking of the language employed against the House of Assembly, he says:—

“To persons accustomed to the working of constitutional government in well-ordered communities it may seem incredible that such language should be employed by the organs of any respectable party in reference to a body comprising the freely-chosen representatives of a constituency formed on a most popular basis; but the cause of the anomaly is apparent enough to all who are acquainted with the history of Canada. For a series of years the popular representative body and the Executive, supported by the Legislative Council, were, in the lower province especially, in a condition of almost constant antagonism. To revile the one was the surest test of patriotism; to denounce the other, of loyalty. In a society singularly democratic in its structure, where diversities of race supplied special elements of confusion, and where, consequently, it was most important that constituted authority should be respected, the moral influence of law and government was enfeebled by the existence of perpetual strife between the powers that ought to have afforded to each other a mutual support. No state of affairs could be imagined less favourable to the extinction of national animosities, and to the firm establishment of the gentle and benignant control of those liberal institutions which it is England's pride and privilege to bestow upon her children.

"I am not without hope that a steady adherence to the principles of constitutional government, and the continuance of harmony between the co-ordinate branches of the Legislature, may lead in process of time to the correction of these evils; meanwhile, however, I must ascribe mainly to the cause which I have assigned the tone of arrogant defiance with which the resolutions, not of the Government only, but also of the Parliament, are treated by parties who happen for the moment to be unable to make their views prevail with either, and the acts of violence to which this inflammatory language has in the present instance led." * * *

"The scenes by which the city of Montreal has been lately disgraced are the natural fruits of an agitation of this character, operating on a people of excitable temper, who have been taught to believe that a race which they despise, and over which they have been wont to exercise dominion, has obtained, through the operation of a constitutional system, an authority which it could not otherwise have acquired. Hence, more especially, their vehement indignation against me personally, and the conviction, in many cases I doubt not perfectly sincere, that I have been guilty of a serious dereliction of duty because I have not, as my predecessors have often done before me, consented to place myself in the front of an agitation to counteract the policy of Parliament. The nature of the constitutional doctrines which practically obtain in this section of the community is curiously exemplified by the fact, that it is not the passage of the bill by an overwhelming majority of the representatives of the people, or the acquiescence of the Council, but the consent of the Governor, which furnishes the pretext for an exhibition of popular violence."

It is idle to discuss the merits of the Indemnity Bill. It was a mere peg on which to hang an opposition to the administration. The object of it had been assented by the most furious of its late opponents—but assented with this difference of time and circumstance, that when their assent was given they were in office.

But it may be asked if the Indemnity Bill was alone sufficient to have caused the late commotions? They most certainly had other causes. The union of the Canadas was not a popular measure in either section of the province. The assent of the Lower Canadians was not asked and the only reason of the assent given by the Upper Canadians was that their heavy public debt should be charged on Lower Canada. The debt is so charged, but the people of Toronto imagine that they have lost by the removal of the seat of government, and those of Kingston that the seat of the government of the united province ought not to have been removed from Kingston to Montreal. They cry "French" in all disputes, as some alarmists call "fire." The Tory leaders in Upper Canada also find that their importance is crippled, and the power of jobbing most amazingly curtailed at Montreal. There is no more money to be obtained from the British Treasury, and, as plundering and begging can no longer succeed, agitation is resorted to.

Now, for agitators there is no better place than Montreal; there

is there an idle, dissolute, violent set of men, ready to fawn and cringe for any petty clerkship, and equally ready to create disturbance. They remember how they got up and benefited by the last rebellion, and, though professing to be the most earnest of loyalists, are quite prepared to start another. The speech of Dr. Nelson above cited explains how the first rebellion was managed, but the late attempt does not promise equal success, and there is no reason to suppose that they will gain their end by personal violence to the governor, at least, if the colonial office performs its duty by according its sanction, which, on the immediate arrival of the late news, it hesitated to do, to the measures of Lord Elgin.

When the first performance of this party at Montreal, in relation to the Indemnity Bill, was enacted, it afforded an opportunity to Lord Stanley to attack Lord Grey. A riot in which Sir Allan M'Nab figured was grossly exaggerated as a sort of insurrection. Speeches were made in Parliament, very deficient in sense and information, and articles appeared in all the Anti-Grey publications in condemnation of the Canadian Parliament. The next packet was looked forward to in the expectation of being filled with particulars of further disturbances—it came—there was no news—there had been no more burnings in effigy of political chiefs, and Sir A. M'Nab was reported to have been occupied in making noisy speeches to the galleries of the House of Assembly instead of drilling his rebellious admirers. But there were those who said "wait until the speeches made in the English Parliament reach Montreal—let the opinions of Lord Stanley be known there and a graver disturbance will take place in Montreal." It required no power of prophecy to anticipate this. Those who know the character of the partisans of the *Montreal Gazette*, *Herald*, and *Courier*—the bludgeon men of the elections—the L. P. S. rebels—could entertain no doubt of the course they would adopt. They caught at the chance the debates in the British Parliament gave them. What an illustration this affords of the necessary consequences of the ordinary manner in which colonial questions are dealt with by official and ex-official men in this country!

It is well known in Canada that so much of Lord Durham's report respecting the contest of races was a gross exaggeration, made to give effect to the recommendation of the union of the provinces. The French Canadians would have been found to be really loyal to the British government, even during the rebellion, if their votes could have been taken on the subject. Those who "went out" deny that they did more than contend with a provincial oligarchy, and what they say is substantially true. Mr. Papineau does desire the annexation of Canada to the United States; but he is alone in this opinion among all the leaders of

his race. In Upper Canada, also, there are many who desire annexation. They are of the British race. They rarely see a newspaper published in England, and are instructed by the inflammatory dissertations of their local press and an extensive circulation of American newspapers; and some episcopal and ecclesiastical matters sustain a political excitement which there is little disposition to suppress in a country where social amusements are scanty. But even these persons could be kept quiet if a parliamentary government were allowed to exercise its due and proper influence in the province, if the government is not dictated to in the streets of Montreal, and the infamous language of the provincial press is not seconded in this country for party purposes.

The opinion of Dr. Nelson of the *French Canadian* is that of every sensible and honourable man of British origin. It is not from among the French Canadians that the proposal of putting down the supremacy of the British government will ever come, for any danger that has existed to that supremacy has always been in Upper Canada.

Lord Elgin has offered his resignation of the Governorship of Canada. It most certainly ought not to be accepted. His despatch explains very satisfactorily the principles of his administration. All parties in the province will now understand that he has acted with impartiality; and if he is confirmed in his course, they will learn to act in future with legality and moderation, and to submit themselves to the authority of their own chosen representatives.

One effect of the proceedings of the incendiaries at Montreal will always create lasting regret. The library of the House of Assembly was composed of the library of the former House of Assembly of Upper Canada, and chiefly of that of the former House of Assembly of Lower Canada. It was, in fact, the only library deserving the name in the North-American provinces. It was well chosen, and was a most noble collection, the accumulation of a long series of years. The rarer and more curious works, collected by the Lower Canadians, had been sent back to the old library of the Assembly at Quebec, but the destruction has included a vast mass of documents and of printed works, the loss of which every educated person in the province will deplore for many years to come.

RAILWAYS IN INDIA.—BENGAL.

THE EXPERIMENTAL SECTIONS.

Resumé on the state of the *East India Railway Question*.
Dated February, 1849. No printer's or publisher's name.

A letter to the *Right Hon. Sir J. Cam Hobhouse, Bart., M.P., President of the Board of Controul, on the Existing Railway Companies, &c., &c.* By a Friend to Indian Railways. London, Steil, 1849.

OUR article last month brought us thus far on our road. The far-famed guarantee, according to the plain English of the terms, was confined strictly to capital, must necessarily exclude the greater part, if not all, the preliminary expenses, and was liable to be reduced by any loss arising from the working of the line, for so long as it was worked by the railway company. It was only in February last that the Railway Company's directors, in an anonymous, though we believe official, paper, insisted that "a guarantee, in the shape of a return or profit on the capital to be expended, was indispensable, as an inducement to capitalists to expend their money in an experimental line."* The necessary submission of all arrangements to the will of the Indian government—the uncertainty of the cost of such a section—the necessity of selecting such a portion as would afford the strongest test of the experiment—and the impossibility of applying any measure to the intrinsic merits of a project so dependant on extrinsic influence for its results of profit and loss, all combined to raise the question of an actual guarantee over and beyond loss by working to a necessary precedent to the commencement of the undertaking. As the nature of the guarantee has now been seen, the contract might justly be considered to have failed for want of good consideration.

The East India Company having decided that the experimental section shall be such as may eventually suit either the direct political or the Rajmahal commercial line, and the guarantee being now entirely admitted to be dependant on the profitable working of the line, it is necessary to inquire into the prospects of the proposed experimental sections. Judging from the earliest, as well as the latest, reports of the East Indian Railway Company,

* "Resumé" p. 2. We consider this *brochure* to be semi-official, as though without name of author or printer—it was distributed by the Officers of the Railway Company.