

THE EXTRADITION CASE.

To His Excellency Sir F. Williams, Bart., K. C. B.,
Administrator, &c., &c.

SIR,—The people of Canada have cause to rejoice that at this most important crisis the Government of the country is in the hands of a heroic soldier, and a man of unblemished reputation. I say, an important crisis. I know nothing dearer to a country than the name it holds among the nations of the world—wealth, commerce, victories, are mean and trifling when compared with this—and the good name of Canada is at this moment in imminent peril. I need scarce say I speak of the unhappy stranger now in Toronto Gaol, who sought an asylum from his barbarous masters, and who, when he saw the *British flag* streaming from our battlements, kissed the soil which made him a man, because it made him a free-man.

It is possible he may have been mistaken—it is possible he may be dragged from a *British colony* to perish on the scaffold. And it is because this is possible that I now address Your Excellency.

On the law of this most painful case I will not detain Your Excellency. It appears to me to be perfectly clear, and it is a matter of astonishment how any candid man could view it differently. No evidence be given to prove the commission of the crime, according to the laws of the country in which the refugee has taken shelter, he cannot be given up—and in the case of Anderson I earnestly ask, is there a jury in Canada who could find a verdict of murder under such circumstances? The supposition is most absurd. If so, under what law or by what code are we to be dictated to. By the monstrous and bloody laws of a Missouri tribunal? If that tribunal which, defying the great laws of justice and right which the Almighty has promulgated, treat the workmanship of that *great Being* as the brutes of the soil? Oh shame! shame! shame! to my beloved country, should it prove to be so. Our children's children will curse the day when a stain was inflicted on the land of their birth.

But Your Excellency is already aware that in this famous case the judges are divided. One man, remarkable for his experience, his legal attainments, and his high honour, in whose bosom beats a heart as warm and as pure as in any living man,—this great and good man, this experienced lawyer, says that the slave shall not be given up. In the face of the opinion of a divided court, shall this slave be given up? May God in his infinite mercy forbid!

I now come to speak of the powers which are vested in Your Excellency. Official men and judges, accustomed to view every case in a strictly legal light, may feel themselves curbed and confined by their legal doubts and difficulties. Can I suppose, Sir, that you are capable of following or understanding these nicely drawn points and precedents—you who have been reared in a camp, and whose ears are more familiar to the word of command, the trumpet's note, and the cannon's roar? No! Sir, I have no such belief; but, happily for our country—happily for the cause of humanity—there is one thing in which you can act as a despot—and that is in GRANTING MERCY. Your powers in this respect are not crippled either by a Ministry or a Court of Law. You have to command, and you must be obeyed. Most glorious is this attribute of Majesty, which is reserved in Your Excellency's hands. Truly it is the brightest jewel in the crown of the Mistress whose deputy you are.

Think, Sir, of the joy which would fill the hearts of the people of Britain were they to learn that in the case of Anderson you had exercised this act of mercy; when they were told you had rescued him from the vultures and blood-hounds of Missouri!

In the name then of that beloved country—of that noble woman who sways the empire of Britain—in the name of thousands and tens of thousands of the people of Canada—in the name of mercy—in the name of humanity—in the name of God—let the slave go free!

I remain, with much respect,

Your Excellency's

Most obedient Servant,

JAMES DALLAS.

County of Simcoe, Dec. 18, 1860.