

SLUMAGH'S SENTENCE.

The murderer, SLUMAGH, a man of more than seventy, has rightly been condemned and in accordance with the law, sentenced to death. Most will, at first thought, cordially agree in this case with the hanging sentiment. We, however, venture to doubt whether the feeling is in this instance sufficiently well grounded. SLUMAGH is, it must be remembered, an Indian, more than seventy years old. This means that he was a full grown man, bred and reared in a state of savagery, ere civilization and Christianity first entered, and then but very partially and imperfectly, this Province of ours. SLUMAGH therefore grew up, as he has since remained, a man of savage instincts, with all the wild and passionate feeling of his race. He lives in this state—having reached a period of life when such a man is largely impervious to outside influences for good—until he has passed the three score years and ten of average longevity. Then, one day, he meets another Indian with whom he has long lived at variance. The two have a new quarrel, in which, as Slumagh asserts, the other calls him names such as ever stir the wild blood of an Indian. Then a sudden uprise of ungovernable wrath, the flash of a gun, and Bee, Slumagh's enemy, lies dead at the latter's feet. This, of course, is murder, and murder ghastly, too, on which we shall not further dwell.

An old time poet of another clime and race, however, once said, not wholly undiscerning, that furious anger is the madness of a moment, and this certainly is even more largely true of the passion of an old and rude, untutored Indian than of the wrath of an ordinary man. We may indeed almost say that Slumagh's act was

indeed almost say that Slumagh's act was that of a man temporarily "out of his mind." Such a one must, of course, after such a deed, be for ever restrained from the possibility of any like action in the future, and were Slumagh a young man it would perhaps be best to rid the world, forthwith, of one so dangerous. But here we have the case of a man, savagely incapable, tottering on the verge of the grave. Surely, therefore it is enough for the law to place him for his few remaining days in the closest confinement and under the strictest discipline, instead of hanging him outright.

We know that it will be said that capital punishment is in this case necessary as a deterrent. True, too, it is, that several murderers and would-be murderers here lately escaped with comparatively slight punishment. Yet despite this we do not think that a remission of the death penalty in this case, mainly by reason of a man's extreme age, will be taken by any one, even though an Indian, as any indication that the death penalty will not, for the protection of society, be ruthlessly inflicted hereafter on murderers in general. The fate of BIRCHALL already stands in proof of this. We, therefore, after full consideration, put in a plea for mercy on old SLUMAGH.