

fashion in England, and this change is not less to be commended than the other. With a large party, general conversation is impossible: you can only speak to the neighbour whom fate happens to assign to you: with the rest of the party you have no more social intercourse than you would have if you were dining within the same four walls at a restaurant. We take the liberty of putting in a word or two, once more, in favour of the English fashion of small kettledrums. A small kettledrum is an extremely sociable and pleasant thing in its way. An evening crush, in the afternoon, crowded and hot, with a babel of voices against which you strive to make yourself heard by the person who happens to be jammed against you, is, we respectfully submit, neither sociable nor pleasant: it may be the easiest and most compendious way of doing your friends honour, but it is the hollowest of all mockeries of hospitality.

THE DUKE OF SAXE-ALTENBERG has instituted an order of merit for domestic servants who have been thirty years in the same service. His Serene Highness would not find many claimants for his order on this side of the Atlantic, where domestic servants seem to make it almost a point of honour to assert their independence by constant changes of places as well as, in too many instances, by troublesome conduct in any place in which they may be. Much more effective than any order here is the example of Mr. William Gooderham who, when a faithful and attached domestic is married, gives her a house and a lot for a wedding present, and himself attends the wedding. In this democratic society of ours there is a feeling against domestic service which, false and irrational as it may be, cannot fail in some degree to disquiet the minds of all but the most sensible members of the calling. To combat the sentiment with reasons is vain; no social sentiment is ever reached by argument. The way to counteract it is to make domestic servants feel as much as possible that they are not merely hired helps but members of the household, and that their zeal and attachment will be thoroughly appreciated and gratefully rewarded. They should be regarded as having a claim second only to that of the members of the family itself. Their names ought to appear in wills far more often than they do. Liberal remembrance of them is not only a personal duty but will improve and sweeten, as nothing else can, a relation which is indispensable, but which it is daily becoming more difficult to maintain.

UNDER the Scott Act, power was ostensibly given to counties and municipalities to decide for themselves whether they would adopt the Act or not. But it was not intended that they should really use the privilege. They were expected simply, in a spirit of devout submission, to register the will of the promoters of the Act. Some of them, however, have been so misguided as to fancy their freedom real, and decide the question for themselves. Thereupon it is proposed at once to coerce them by a Provincial plebiscite. Such is the notion which some people have formed of liberty!

THE *Globe*, the other day, in noticing Mr. John Verschoyle's paper on "The Condition of Kerry," in the *Fortnightly*, expressed the opinion that "There is good common sense, and good morality, too, in the advice of the National League to Irish tenants—though Mr. Verschoyle accuses the League very severely in this connection. That advice is to eat sufficiently, and clothe themselves sufficiently out of the product, before paying rent, and to give the landlords the remainder, if any. If the people act fairly on that advice they will do all that any reasonable moralist or economist can call their duty. To hold a contrary doctrine is substantially to allege that landlords are entitled to exact everything from their tenants but enough barely to keep body and soul together." Now, whether these landlords and tenants be in Kerry or Toronto is only a difference of circumstance which does not affect the principle laid down, that whosoever finds himself in straitened circumstances may in good morality eat sufficient and clothe himself sufficiently—and he is to be the sole judge of what is sufficient—before paying his debts. That is, in plain words, he may steal anything he may consider necessary to his well-being. He cannot do this with impunity as respects supplies he usually has to purchase, because those supplies would be soon stopped; but with respect to anything he has in his power to withhold from the owner—such as rent—it would be good morality to consume all of it he fancies he needs, handing over to his landlord, or to his creditor, the remainder, if any. Our moralist does not tell us what the landlord or creditor is to do—whom he is to rob—to adjust the balance, or, supposing the owner, as is often the case, to be a widowed woman with a family to support, and without other resources, how they are to subsist if her tenant or debtor uses her property to feed and clothe himself to any extent he may deem necessary. Happily the working classes of Toronto, however poor, are not likely to favour the teaching of Mr. Verschoyle; there is a

fund of honesty in Canadians that will forbid that; but yet it may be usefully remembered that the state of things in Kerry to-day is largely the result of such preaching of public plunder as has been endorsed by our contemporary.

THE decided victory of the Quebec Ministerialists in Chicoutimi, though it adds only one to their number, has, under the circumstances, more than a numerical importance; and it may be said to have brought the contest between the parties to a tie. What will now follow we know just as well as under the old system of elections in England people knew what would happen when the numbers were equal on the last day of the poll. We shall be lucky if the local patronage suffices for the inevitable operation, and we are not called upon to find out of Dominion funds, in the shape of some local job, the means of deciding the wavering convictions of Quebec patriots. There are those who think that Dr. Ross owed his reverse in part to the economical character of his administration. The French do not want economy; they want expenditure: if they are in difficulty they have only to go to the Dominion. While politicians are carrying on their intrigues with this or the other connection in Quebec, there is undoubtedly growing in Ontario a wish that we had remained clear of French connection altogether. As a group of British colonies, enjoying in common the citizenship of the Empire, under one flag and the same military protection, we possessed the chief practical advantages of Confederation. Our military security was even greater than it is at present. What have the British Provinces gained by a closer union with an alien nationality which cares nothing for them, but only for what it can get out of them? The inquiry comes too late, and if pursued might lead to a disagreeable conclusion.

SYMPTOMS appear of a deliberation in Ministerial Councils as to the expediency of holding a general election this Fall. What inducement there can be to the adoption of that course since Quebec has revolted, it is not easy to see, unless it be that there would be an advantage in going to the country while the patronage of Quebec is still in Dr. Ross's hands. A notable reason that for the exercise of Her Majesty's prerogative! It is time that a protest should be entered against this constitutional abuse if the right of the people to elect their legislators for a certain term of years is not to be entirely overridden, and the tenure of members of Parliament to be made absolutely dependent on the will and pleasure of the Minister. The last dissolution of Parliament was wholly unwarrantable. No constitutional crisis had occurred to render in any way requisite an appeal to the people. The pretence that it was necessary to take the verdict of the nation on the results of the new financial policy was evidently a mere subterfuge. There could be no more necessity for taking a national verdict upon that than upon any other legislative measure, especially as the question had actually been before the people at the polls. The real motive was the belief that, just at that moment, the wind was in the right quarter for the Government. This has now become the practice in which Governors-General seem helplessly to acquiesce. It is obvious that the consequence must be most injurious to the independence of Parliament, the members of which will hold their seats not for a legal term but at the sufferance of the Prime Minister, who may at any time, if they cross his will, inflict upon them a penal dissolution. British example may, no doubt, be pleaded: encroachment has flourished during a female reign, and the dissolution of Parliament by Mr. Gladstone in 1874, coupled with the offer of a bribe to the constituencies in the shape of a reduction of the income tax, was perhaps the most flagrant instance of all, while the result was most disastrous to the Ministry. The bad effects of the practice were miserably illustrated in England the other day, when, on the Irish Government Bill, a question concerning the very life of the nation, many members of Parliament notoriously voted against their consciences, and against the convictions which they expressed in private, under the threat of a dissolution. Still our law is clear: it gives the people the right of electing representatives for a term of five years. A defeat of the Government, rendering necessary an appeal to the people, or a deadlock between the two Houses, justifies the use of the prerogative of dissolution; the tactical convenience of the party in power does not; and the habit which has now crept in is a very patent and a very noxious usurpation. Is the Governor-General impotent? If he is, and if all the prerogatives of the Crown have passed into the hands of the leader of the party in power, the sooner that fact is avowed, and the forms of our constitution are brought into accordance with the reality, the better, because the forms at present are highly misleading. If he is not impotent, and if there is any justification for his drawing a salary of \$50,000 a year, with \$50,000 more for casual expenses, let him guard the law and the constitution. In doing so he will have the people on his side.