

day. It is perfectly clear, in spite of all decorous professions, that the sympathies of the French are with Riel on grounds of religion and of race. It is equally clear that the sympathies of many Irish Catholics are with him on grounds of religion and of hatred to the British flag. We know what the effect of this must be upon ministers who depend for their tenure of power upon the French and the Irish-Catholic votes. We know that the French Vote alone was enough to make a Prime Minister stoop to the indignity of protesting before Heaven in public that he earnestly desired to catch Riel, while in private he was contriving and aiding his escape. Apprehensions of this kind are suggested by the ambiguous appearance of Mr. Royal, all the more because he has been formally disavowed. Wanting in the sentiment of patriotism very likely the politicians are not; but their characters have become steeped in the influences of their calling, and they shrink involuntarily from an adverse vote as a sensitive plant shrinks from the touch. It is a pity that the Governor-General is not a military man. If he were, we are sure that the sense of the best part of the community would support him in treating the situation as military, and taking matters a good deal into his own hands. As it is, the prime object with all of us who care only for the country ought to be to strengthen the hands of General Middleton, and secure to him, as far as possible, that freedom of action without which the work entrusted to him cannot be done.

ALL except fierce partisans rejoiced when the Conspiracy Case came to an end, and to an end by which public morality was in no way compromised. The defendants were acquitted of conspiracy, the indictment for which was found, after a careful examination of the case by the Chief Justice, not to be sustained by the evidence. But they were not acquitted of bribery, nor can there be any reasonable doubt that they or some of them were guilty of that offence. The Jury after leaving the box to consider the verdict was recalled, at the instance of the Counsel for the defence, to be specially reminded by the Judge that conspiracy not bribery was the issue on which the verdict was to be given. Once more, it is unquestionable that the money placed in the hands of the Speaker was money which had been offered as a bribe. Uproarious jubilation therefore on the part of the defendants is out of place and seems like a triumph over principles which the nation, it is hoped, will never suffer to be impugned. A more heinous or dangerous offence than the corruption of members of the Legislature there cannot be, and if the law does not treat it as a crime and annex to it condign punishment, this only shows that there is a grave defect in the law. But unfortunately it is not merely of misplaced jubilation that the community has had reason to complain. Things have been written in the frenzy of the party fray of which the writers must by this time have repented, and which it is perhaps best not to recall to recollection by comment of any kind but at once to bury in oblivion. Nor has the butchery been confined to the characters of those who were involved in the political battle, or who might be held to have given extreme provocation. The Crown Attorney, Mr. Fenton, on whom every opprobrious epithet has been heaped, did nothing but his duty. That he should begin at once to consider the form of a novel and peculiar indictment which he was informed that he might soon be called upon to frame was only natural and implies no improper eagerness on his part to convict anybody, nor anything discreditable to a servant of public justice. The examination of Mr. Fenton in fact was altogether irrelevant and would, we feel pretty sure, have been stopped by an English Judge. And now it is to be hoped we are really at an end of this most repulsive and miserably mismanaged affair. That the Government can be so ill-advised as to take it up once more when the Legislature meets again is totally incredible even after such mistakes as we have seen. Let the defect in the law be amended and bribery of legislators made a punishable offence; there is nothing more to be done.

It is to be hoped that no jibes will be allowed to prevent the rational consideration of the question whether it is wise to leave Toronto and other lake cities of this Province absolutely without defence against a raid. They face a foreign shore, which is only two hours run from the greatest and richest of them, and where a large portion of the population is at this moment bitterly hostile to the British flag, while dynamiters and banditti of various kinds have recently been multiplying apace, and have more than once got the better for a time of the local authorities. Toronto has a nominal defence in the shape of a battery, which has become almost worthless. That the chances are greatly against a raid nobody doubts; the chances are enormously against an attempt of burglars on anybody's house; nevertheless we have bolts to our doors. If St. Albans could be raided from Canada, Toronto may be raided from the United States. There is no expenditure which we grudge more, or more naturally, than that for

defences which may never be needed: but there is a point at which economy becomes folly. We should have grudged the cost of a force of eight hundred or a thousand men in the North-West, yet it would have saved us an immense outlay, and we shall have to maintain it after all. If we are resolved to remain an independent power on this continent, we must accept the liabilities. Supposing there are any treaty restrictions, a modification of them may surely be negotiated with the United States so as to allow the equipment of a single gunboat on each side. The events that have occurred since we spoke of the subject have not diminished the necessity of serious deliberation. A war with Russia will quicken into activity all the powers of mischief.

THE Scott Act people ask why an absolute majority of the electors should be required in a Scott Act Election more than in any other election. For two reasons, each of which is conclusive. In the first place, there can be no warrant for the sumptuary legislation which trenches on private liberty except a positive declaration of opinion on the part of a majority of the people that such legislation has become necessary. In the second place, it is notorious that unless the feeling, and the strong feeling, of a majority, and a large majority, of the people is in favour of the measure a sumptuary law cannot be practically enforced and general evasion with its moral consequences is the result. Neither temperance nor justice, however, is any longer the dominant object; the dominant object is to force the Scott Act upon us.

THE war in the Soudan will probably be cited by historians hereafter as a proof of the weakness of governments during this period of political transition; for nothing can be clearer than that Mr. Gladstone was thrust into it against his wishes by what is styled public opinion, that is to say by the clamour of a certain portion of the press aided by the factious violence of party. The very people who are responsible for its commencement are now evidently growing sick of a murderous struggle against a brave but barbarous enemy, and at the same time against a deadly climate, without any definite object or settled purpose. The redeeming feature is the conduct of the British soldier, which is more than worthy of the days of Quatre Bras and Inkerman. Nothing tries steadiness so much as a surprise. On the 22nd March the troops had reached their camping ground, arms had been piled, food and water had been served out, one regiment was moving into its zareba, when some horsemen of the Indian contingent came dashing in with shouts that the enemy was at hand. At the same moment a great roar was heard all round the encampment, and a strange noise as of the rustling and cracking of vast quantities of brushwood. Three minutes after from every bush round the whole circle burst a throng of frantic Arabs, who, sweeping over the transport lines, charged down, a terrible wave of black forms, leaping, roaring and shrieking as they came, upon the troops. Then came a stampede of baggage animals, horses, camels, mules, in one struggling, screeching, helpless mass, which, besides spreading confusion among the troops, covered the advance of the enemy. The Arabs leaped the zareba and captured the sandbag redoubt at the corner, hewing and slashing with their cross-hilted swords, and stabbing right and left with their formidable spears. Yet terrible as the tension of the moment was, the troops lost neither courage nor presence of mind. Inside the zareba and outside, men of all arms and corps mingled together, they fought back to back with desperate tenacity, and no Arab who got into the zareba went back to tell the tale. It is reasonable to hope that the nation to which these men belong, though like them it may be taken at a disadvantage and thrown into confusion for the moment, has in it the stuff which will carry it through its perils.

WHEN there is the right stuff in the nation leaders in any line can hardly fail to appear. But at present the want of leaders in English politics is a dangerous feature of the situation. The dearth is especially felt, as Mr. Thomas Hughes in his last letter pointed out, on the Conservative side. There could not be a more abject confession of it than the appointment to the leadership of Sir Michael Hicks Beach, who has proved himself a passable subordinate, but whose place in the state coach is decidedly not on the box, but on the foot-board. A party, unless controlled by a leader of ability, and one who has a high reputation at stake, can be nothing but an engine of mischief. The most violent and unpatriotic element is sure to prevail: the most violent and unpatriotic element of the Conservative Party is prevailing now, and this with the nation on the brink of war and amidst gathering peril of every kind. Lord Randolph Churchill will soon have the bit between his teeth, and his lordship has told us under his own hand that his principle is victory for the party, let morality say what it will. He has carried his principle into effect by alliance with Disunionist rebellion, and he is perfectly capable, in case of