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CURRENT TOPICS.

As was foreshadowed by Lord Salisbury, the House of Lords has emasculated the Employers' Liability Bill, by the adoption of the amendment which was rejected in the Commons, permitting workmen to contract themselves out of its provisions. This, as we pointed out in a former paragraph, destroys the value of the bill for the purpose for which it was intended, the safeguarding of the limbs and lives of employees. In the fierce competition for work, the needy and despairing will be but too glad to sign any such contract as may be presented to them, and the employer or corporation which has most to fear from the operation of the Bill, that is, whose business is most dangerous or most deficient in proper safeguards, will be the one which will take care

to exact such contracts. It is now thought certain that the Parish Councils Bill will be modified in a similar manner during its passage through the Upper Chamber. In that case it is difficult to see how the Gladstone Government can any longer delay an appeal to the people, since it would make both Parliament and the nation ridiculous were the one House to go on indefinitely enacting legislation only to have it thrown out or made abortive by the other. The growing expectation that a general election will take place before many months seems, therefore, well founded. When it comes, the struggle between Radicalism and Conservatism, or, as the Gladstonians would put it, between democracy and class privilege, will be one of the sternest and most decisive in the history of the nation.

The cruel and dastardly attempt made by a miscreant, or more probably the tool of a miscreant, to perpetrate a wholesale massacre in the Chamber of Deputies at Paris, adds another to the rapidly growing list of Anarchist enormities. The fiendishness of such attempts is equalled only by their utter folly, so far as the accomplishment of any ulterior purpose, save to produce suffering and misery, is concerned. Such deeds can but evoke a stern determination on the part of an enraged people to stamp out the detestable band which plans and executes them, without mercy. The rise and growth of Anarchism, and the means used to propagate it, is one of the mysteries of human nature. Socialism, both in its better and in its more objectionable forms can be understood. It has an intelligible theory and a definite aim. Anarchism, so far as we have ever been able to discover, has neither. If we admit the thing denoted by the term anarchy to be an intelligible object, the means taken to accomplish that object are the most effective that could be devised to prevent it. What other result can so atrocious a deed as that perpetrated in the French Chamber have than that of uniting the whole nation in a stern resolve to make the civil organization a more thorough and perfect machine for the suppression or destruction of all such conspiracies against the social order. It is not unlikely that the attempt of Saturday may give the French authorities the cue which will enable them to unearth the brain which, from some hitherto safe concealment, directs the movements of the wretched dupes whom it sends forth to

execute its devilish decrees. The nature of the atrocity is such that it must destroy all sympathy in the breasts of any but the most utterly depraved, and thus turn everyonewho has a lingering spark of human feeling in his bosom, into a willing detective and a would-be avenger.

The question, who shall be our Chief Magistrate for 1894, is now pressing upon the attention of the ratepayers of Toronto. So far as we are able to foresee, an answer, and on the whole an unusually satisfactory answer, has been already found. Mr. Warring Kennedy having consented to accept nomination for the office, there is reason to hope that, in view of his many qualifications for the position and the very general favour with which his name has been received, the field will be left clear of opponents and he be elected by acclamation. We have no disposition to criticize Mayor Fleming's course very severely. He has given the city good service in many respects, and has no doubt honestly striven to do his best. If he has at times shown himself somewhat lacking in the self-command and personal dignity which should characterize the first magistrate of such a city as Toronto, he has, nevertheless, been generally found on the side of economy and straightforwardness. All things considered, Toronto has had, perhaps, few better mayors. But that is not to deny that it is quite possible that it might have a better one, could the choice but be made from the most eligible of our citizens. Those who are familiar with the character and abilities of Mr. Kennedy seem to be very thoroughly persuaded that, if elected, he will prove to be in many respects the best man for the position whom the city has had in many years. While he has had less experience in the Council Chamber and in the management of civic affairs than many think desirable, there is reason to hope, on the other hand, that his personal dignity, force of character, and business tact and ability, would more than restore the balance. Though it should be borne in mind that no ability or excellence in the Mayor can make a dignified and efficient Council out of the bad material which seems to so abound there, and that even more depends upon the choice of councillors than on that of the presiding officer, there is still good reason to believe that, if elected, Mr. Kennedy will do what an able and dignified Mayor can do to make the City Council what it ought to be, and that, we need not add, is something quite different from what the Council of 1893 has unhappily been.