

taught and spoken here? French is used in every part of the universe. Why, then, is there so much trouble about it in this country?

Its importance to-day is a consequence of its universality. So universal is it, that not long ago, as I had occasion to say on the 27th ultimo, from my seat in this House, a conference on the important question of public health being held in Washington, the delegates from different parts of the world could not understand each other unless they spoke French. During this very Session, a conference has been held in Berlin on the great question of labor. It was decided, at the very beginning, that the discussion should take place in French in order that the delegates from the various countries there represented might understand each other. After the conference was over and before the delegates left Berlin, a great banquet was given in their honor; Baron Von Berlepsch, Minister of Commerce in the German Cabinet, presided. He proposed the first toast, "The various States represented at the Conference," and spoke in French. The toast "to the German Emperor" was called and drank, when Bishop Kopp answered also in French on behalf of the Emperor.

French was also the language used, so far back as 1878, at a congress held in Berlin on the Oriental question.

At the great Geographical Congress at Venice, in September, 1881, French was again the language which had to be used.

A few years ago the attention of the British authorities was called to this very important question of the French language which to British statesmen seemed to be of so great importance that they advised its being taught more and more, as the following quotation will show. In the London *Times* of the 4th July, 1881, there is a letter from the Earl of Morley to the Rev. G. C. Bell, M.A., wherein I find the following:—

"The military authorities having had under their consideration the question of demanding and encouraging proficiency in the French language among the officers of the army, have come to the conclusion, that from the date to be hereafter fixed, and of which fair and ample warning will be given, to all whom this measure may concern, a knowledge of French, both scholastic and colloquial, shall be made obligatory on all candidates for admission to the various branches of the army * * * At the same time it is intended to request the Civil Service Commission gradually to raise the standard in that language at the preliminary examinations."

At the great exhibition of 1878, the Prince of Wales is reported as having said, in his address to the English exhibitors:

"Every well educated Englishman can read French if he cannot speak it."

On this side of the Atlantic, an American gentleman, Mr. Siddons, writing to the *Washington Republican*, says:

"I congratulate you on the article showing the importance and necessity of every officer of the United States Government knowing the French language. * * * No one ought to deny that French is the diplomatic language, that it is the language of every man who is well educated. There is not in the whole of the North, and particularly in the East, a single family where the French is not taught and spoken."

I might also quote the names of Mr. Edward Everett, a well-known literary man in the United States; Mr. Sumner, a prominent speaker, and Mr. Longfellow, the poet of world-wide fame, all of whom have boasted that they knew and spoke French.

Less than a fortnight ago, an election took place in Milwaukee, where both French and Germans are opposed to the exclusive teaching of English in schools. Those pretensions were made the platform of the election. The Democrats supported those views; the Republicans opposed them. A hard fight took place on the burning question, and the excitement was very great. Mr. George W. Peck, a Democrat, was elected by a majority of 5,000 votes. The question of one language was defeated, and fanaticism was once more punished.

A gentleman of high standing and great learning, a professor at the University of New Brunswick, wrote, in 1885, an article wherein I find the following ideas on this question—

"We are forced to admit that two languages will always have to be spoken in Canada. Those who may have expected in the past that French would disappear, may certainly give up such a hope. The thing would have been possible some fifty years ago, but to-day the idea is a ridiculous Utopia. Let all Englishmen admit, with their ordinary good common sense, that in the near future, our greatest politicians, our richest merchants, our best civil servants will be those who have the advantage of knowing both languages. Many I know, regret that is so; let them be convinced now and for the future, that the existence of two races and of two languages has never been an obstacle to the prosperity of any country. Does not peace, union, prosperity and abundance reign in Belgium, Scotland and Switzerland. The downfall of the Roman Empire did not begin when her great men began travelling in order to learn the different dialects of her colonies, but it began when her people became intolerant * * *"