

but with a very general and warm approval which reflects credit upon the good judgment of the Minister of Justice and must be very gratifying to the appointee himself. Whether the practice of passing over the heads of those who have had experience on the Bench, in other capacities, in making such appointments, would be a desirable one to establish or not, is a question upon which there may be room for difference of opinion. This is not, however, the first instance in which it has been done. Perhaps in this, as in most other cases, the safest and wisest rule is to appoint the very best man available, wherever he may be found. Without disparagement of others whose qualifications for the position are undoubtedly of a high order, it is clearly the general impression that no better choice could have been made. In professional ability in the department of law which he has made specially his own, in student-like industry, in soundness of judgment, and, above all, in high personal character, Mr. Meredith is, by general consent, without a superior, if not without a peer in the profession in Ontario, or, to say the least, among those who could be thought of for such an appointment. Who will be chosen to succeed him in the leadership of the Conservative party in the Legislature is a question which it must be left to the party to answer in its own good time. After his long and faithful service as leader of the party under discouraging circumstances, every fair-minded member of it will probably admit cheerfully his right to retire to the dignified quiet of the Bench. The choice of a successor in the Legislature is a task which will test the wisdom and loyalty of the Opposition in no slight measure. Even admitting, as the Conservative press claims, that the party has many members, either one of whom would make an efficient leader, the embarrassment of riches may prove much more perplexing than if some one man stood head and shoulders above his fellows.

It would seem almost a fitting climax to the political evolutions and revolutions of this wonderful nineteenth century should its last decade witness the upbreak of the vast Chinese Empire with its hoary civilization. To such a consummation events seem just now to be swiftly verging. The prevailing impression with regard to the calculating shrewdness and power of passive resistance of the Government and people of this ancient Empire seem likely to prove to have been in a large measure mythical. Certainly nothing could be much more lacking in either quality than the conduct of the present war, thus far, on her part. Instead of the prolonged struggle which most of us were ready to predict, at the outset, no one would now be surprised should the Japanese generals be in a position to dictate terms of peace from the Imperial palace in Peking, within the next few

weeks. This result, should it take place, would, of course, be the result of the remarkable energy with which the Japanese have prosecuted the war—an energy which almost rivals that of the most progressive Western nations, and shows that this remarkable people have not in vain studied Western civilization and appropriated Western ideas. The prevalent rumours that Great Britain, either alone, or in conjunction with other great European powers, will interfere to prevent Japan from reaping the fruits of the great victory which seems now to be almost within her grasp, may be taken with many grains of salt. That they might interfere to prevent too cruel a humiliation of an ancient people, or too arrogant an appropriation of the spoils of war, is not improbable. But the Japanese are probably much too wise to shock the moral (or political) sense of Europe by any such barbarian tactics. On the other hand, it may be fairly questioned whether some such scheme as the division of the unwieldy bulk into four independent, or quasi-independent nations, might be not only best for the world and for civilization and progress, but best for the Chinese themselves, by preventing the falling into chaos which would otherwise be pretty sure to ensue. The nation is apparently already divided against itself. It is not easy to see why such a sub-division might not better serve the interests of Great Britain both commercially and politically, than they can be served by the present unwieldy mass. Four elastic buffers would be better than one inert one.

A powerful short "Story of the Civil Service," by Julia Schayer, in the *October Century*, depicts most graphically a phase of the iniquitous "spoils" system, which is not perhaps sufficiently taken into consideration, even by the most vigorous opponents of that system among our neighbours. The story purports to be the history of a man of education and refinement, who, having lost a leg in the war of the Rebellion, had been given a place in one of the departments, on the disbanding of his regiment. In this post he had served faithfully and efficiently for nineteen years, being rewarded with one or two slight promotions. Both the situation and the promotions were obtained through the influence of a powerful friend. After a time that friend died. From that time forward the man, who had married a beautiful and refined woman and had several children, had lived in constant dread of the "decapitation" which he knew might come at any moment should his position be wanted for another by some influential Senator, and was sure to come with the first change of administration. It seems to be one of the effects of service in a Government office that after a few years the clerk becomes unfitted for any other occupation. Realizing this, the man lived in perpetual fear, dwelling morbidly on the picture which would force

itself upon his imagination, of his wife and children suffering for want of the necessities of life, after he should have been discharged to make room for some successful rival or political opponent. The blow at length fell and his dreary anticipations were fulfilled to the letter. The agony of the desperate husband and father as, helpless and despairing, he saw from day to day the misery of wife and children, and the gradual dawning of the horrible temptation to which he at last was on the verge of yielding when help came, are told most powerfully yet with a verisimilitude which causes the reader to feel at every step that all this might happen, and has probably happened a thousand times, in all its essential features. Our admiration of the skill and power of the writer are swallowed up in fierce indignation at the system she depicts, which, pandering as it does to the intensest selfishness of all parties, seems well adapted to produce such effects. The story affects one almost like a miniature "Uncle Tom's Cabin," in its unfolding of the iniquities and cruelties of the "spoils" system, and one cannot but hope that it may prove, like that wonderful book, a potent agent in furthering the great reform to the necessity of which it points.

The speeches at the Convocation of the University of Toronto, the other day, contained matter suggestive of so much comment that it is difficult to know where to begin or end, when the limits of space at one's disposal are already nearly exhausted. The presence upon the platform and among the speakers of the President of an independent university was a pleasant and a promising innovation. Principal Grant's reminder that the true measure of the success of an educational institution is not the number of its students, the size of its endowments, or even the numerical dimensions of its staff, but the quality of its men, is one which can scarcely be too often repeated in these days when the tendency is so strong to measure greatness by a standard of bulk of some sort. Minister Ross' intimation that a great university has but a very narrow and inadequate conception of its functions and obligations, so long as it is content to expend all its energies and influence upon the comparatively few students, be they counted by the hundred or the thousand, who are able to come within its walls, was most appropriate and timely, and his citation of the fact that last year no less than 105,000 persons attended the lecture courses of the University of Cambridge alone should serve as a guide-post to every Canadian institution. In fact, the question might admit of discussion whether the state which has, say, the equivalent of an annual appropriation of \$100,000 to devote to the purposes of higher education, might not accomplish vastly more for the enrichment of the intellectual life of its citizens by using that money for the employment of competent professors and lecturers to carry