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CURRENT TOPICS.

The unexpectedly large majorities by which the Rosebery Government has been so far sustained on the Budget, changes to some extent the whole aspect of the political situation in Great Britain. Should the same success follow in regard to the other measures of the programme which are to come close upon the heels of the Budget, the result may be to relegate the much-talked-of dissolution to an indefinite future. Evidently the recent speeches of the Premier and other Radical leaders have not been without effect. Perhaps the most significant thing about these majorities is the practical reminder they give that the ranks of the Opposition are filled with recruits scarcely less heterogeneous than those who make up a considerable part of the Government following. The Liberal-Unionists are evidently as far from being a unit either with the Conservatives, or by themselves, as is the party composed of Radicals, Anti-

Parnellites, Parnellites, and Welshmen. Lord Rosebery's firm words with regard to Home-Rule and the necessity for reforming the House of Lords may have had something to do with the improvement of his prospects. Whatever the cause, the position of the Ministry is materially strengthened, for the moment at least. Of course another turn may at any instant be given to the kaleidoscope, and a new phase of the situation appear. But there is some reason to believe that the critical moment has passed, and that the Opposition having failed in its attack upon the most vulnerable point, the Government programme may yet be carried through.

Alexander of Serbia is probably preparing to give to history another illustration of the way in which the gods deal with kings whom they wish to destroy. Whatever temporary success may attend the coup which has fallen so suddenly that it has paralyzed his opponents and driven many of their leaders into exile, it is improbable that a people so strongly impregnated with radicalism as the Servians, will long submit to be dragged backwards towards absolutism. Had the step been taken with the sympathy and approval of Russia, as a movement in that direction would have been likely to be under other circumstances, the forces arrayed against self-government might have proved too strong to be resisted. But as this attempt is made not only without Russia's approval, but at the instigation of ex King Milan, the evil genius of Alexander and of Serbia, who is specially obnoxious to the Czar, it must lack even this element of stability. It is impossible, of course, at this distance, with our comparatively scant knowledge of the real state of feeling among the masses toward Alexander, and with only the fragmentary cable reports to cast light upon the situation, to speak with any confidence of what is likely to happen, but it will be surprising if so high-handed a manœuvre can meet with more than a temporary success. Everything depends, for the present, no doubt, upon the degree of reliance the King may be able to place in the army, after he has weeded out those officers whose personal loyalty he suspects; but as these seem to be numerous, even they will form a formidable element in the case of revolt against his usurpation.

There is no more pressing practical question for learned discussion at the present juncture in the world's history than that

of the application of sound ethical principles to the solution of the labour problem, and all the social and economic perplexities which spring from, or are closely connected with that problem. It was, therefore, a happy and worthy thought which led to the establishment in the United States two or three years ago, of the School of Applied Ethics, for the thoughtful discussion of such questions. A recent announcement shows that the enterprise has met with at least sufficient success to warrant its continuance. Its third summer session is to be held this year at Plymouth, Mass., beginning on the twelfth of July and continuing for five weeks. The Executive Committee of the School is composed of Professor Felix Adler, of New York; Professor C. H. Adams, of the University of Michigan, and Professor C. H. Toy, of Harvard University, each of them distinguished as a specialist in this line of investigation. In the long list of lectures we note the names of many of the best known thinkers and writers on economic and ethical questions in the United States. The subjects to be discussed are among the most interesting, and at the same time the most intensely practical that can occupy the human mind. It can hardly be otherwise than that some immediate good may result from the concentration of so many powerful minds upon these difficult topics, while, if the school can succeed in attracting a large number of students and setting their thoughts to working along these lines, the future good to society and the nation may become incalculable.

It is, we think, to be regretted that Mr. Coatsworth's Bill for the prevention of cruelty to animals is so little likely to be reached this session. The necessity for more effectual work along this line is too often apparent. There is, in this intensely practical age, a disposition on the part of many to regard any unusual effort or enthusiasm in this direction as the offspring of a morbid sentimentalism. It is not sufficiently considered that the repression, as far as possible, of all manifestations of cruelty to the lower animals is more desirable for the sake of the human being than even for that of the suffering and usually defenceless animal. The educative effect of such repression in the name of the law, is salutary. Cruelty is no doubt more often the effect of thoughtlessness than of deliberate fiendishness. Nevertheless the gentle poet spoke as a philosopher when he said that there is no vice which shoots more rapidly into luxuriant growth if unrestrained. We have no