

with the dignified promptness with which Great Britain paid the Alabama award, though, without doubt, her statesmen were fully persuaded that the award was excessive (as the sequel has abundantly proved), if not fundamentally unjust.

A Perfect
Chairman.

"I believe it is the universal opinion of the House that in him we have, as far as is possible—a Speaker being human—a really perfect Chairman. Dignity, authority, courtesy, perfect fairness, quick decision, unrivalled knowledge of the rules of the House, power, gentleness, discretion, and every quality to be desired in the Chairman of the greatest deliberative assembly in the world—all these are possessed by the present Speaker of the British House of Commons. Happy the Parliament which has such a President to preside over its deliberations!" So writes an "Agricultural Artist" in a recent number of the *Christian World*. This is high praise, even for the son of Sir Robert Peel. One marked difference between the father and son, according to the same writer, is that the former had bitter enemies as well as admiring friends, the latter has no enemies, but only admirers. Yet it is difficult to conceive of any position demanding higher qualities of head and heart than that of the presiding officer of a great deliberative assembly, especially in a time of red-hot political antagonisms, such as the present in the Mother Country. One becomes almost bewildered on merely thinking of the arduous and varied duties of such an officer. The private member may escape for a time when he pleases, for rest and recreation. Even the leaders of the Government may, by relieving each other, find intervals of relaxation. But the Speaker must sit patiently through the slowly dragging hours of the driest and dreariest debate. Nor has he, like ministers and members, the privilege of varying the monotony by reading or writing, lounging or nodding. He must be perpetually on the alert, to keep the members in order and to the point. He must be "ready at a moment to deal with difficult points of parliamentary procedure; to watch who desires to take part in debate; and preserve due impartiality in the order in which those whom the time will admit shall be called; to keep refractory members from transgressing, and to nip disorder in the bud; to decide when, if appealed to, the closure shall or shall not be applied; and to be entirely fair towards all the parties and all the Members of the House." Happy, indeed, the Parliament which has, and can keep from year to year at such a post, an officer who can command not only the respect and confidence, but the hearty admiration, of representatives of both parties and of all shades of political opinion.

Welsh
Disestablishment.

The introduction in the British Commons of the long-promised Bill for the disestablishment of the Church in Wales is doubly significant, not to say portentous. It not only means the inception of a tremendous struggle between the advocates of voluntaryism in religion, and the defenders of state-churchism, but at the same time marks a stage in the progress of the contest for the overthrow of the veto-power of the House of Lords. There can be, we suppose, no reasonable doubt of the passing of the Bill by the Commons, unless the Government should chance to suffer shipwreck before that stage is reached, because many of the Liberal-Unionists will neither care nor dare to vote against a measure so dear to the hearts of all Nonconformists and other Liberals, including, we suspect, not a few of the adherents of the Establishment itself.

That it will be unceremoniously and promptly thrown out by the Lords is, we suppose, a foregone conclusion, though their doing so will give a stronger impetus to the movement for the abolition of the veto-power of the Upper Chamber than it has yet received. This secondary result is, no doubt, reckoned on by the Government as one of the effects aimed at. The Bill will be, already being, opposed by the believers in the State-Church with all their energy and resources, which are neither few nor small, because they clearly foresee in it the beginning of a movement whose end will be the over-throw of the Establishment in England. It will also be sternly opposed by the upholders of the prerogatives of the Upper House, because they plainly see the logical outcome of the disestablishing process once it is fairly begun. Hence the progress of the struggle will be watched by the thoughtful as one involving in its issues the fate of two great political principles, as well as that of two great national institutions.

A University
Commission.

At the brief session of the Legislature on Monday the Minister of Education made the important announcement that the Government had decided, at the request of President Loudon, to appoint, at the earliest possible moment, a commission to make a searching inquiry into the cause of the recent troubles, with full powers to investigate all charges that may be made. As we suggested last week, this is a much more dignified position for the Government to assume, than that of challenging the students to make specific charges of incompetency against their own instructors. An investigation had become inevitable, unless the *prestige* of the University was to be seriously impaired. President Loudon was certainly well-advised in demanding it on his own behalf and that of the Institution of which he is the head. We congratulate him on having so far taken the initiative. It is to be hoped, for the sake of all the interests concerned, that the commissioners chosen may be men whose competency and impartiality are above suspicion, and that the process of inquiry be kept as free as possible from hampering formalities and legal obstructions. If this be done, if the names of the commissioners be such as command universal confidence, and if they be permitted and aided to make the inquiry as searching and complete as possible, the result can hardly fail to be such as will tend to restore confidence in the University and re-establish the harmony and good feeling between principals and professors and their students which is so necessary to the success of a university.

The "Initiative"
and "Referendum."

How to prevent lobbying is one of the most perplexing and discouraging problems which the lovers of good legislation in the United States have to solve. Not only in the national Congress, but in many, if not all, of the State legislatures, the power of the lobbyists in pushing bad laws through the House, and still more in preventing the passing of good ones, is such as may almost cause the patriotic citizen to despair of the future of the Republic. During the last two or three years an agitation has been carried on in New Jersey in favour of the "Referendum," as the most hopeful and readily available method of defeating the lobbyists. At least, this is urged as one of the strongest arguments in favour of the adoption of the Swiss system. The occupation of the lobbyists, it is argued, would quickly become profitless were it understood