

OTTAWA LETTER.

ends of life by multitudes, there is happily another side to the picture of modern tendencies. It may be true that never before in the history of the world was so much human energy devoted to the pursuit of either the sordid or the frivolous. But it is, we believe, equally true that never before was the attention of so large a percentage of the people of all classes devoted to serious thought, or philanthropic effort. If anyone is inclined to doubt whether the present age can compare in earnestness and stability with former times, let such an one note carefully the discussions in the periodical and other literature of the day of the old but ever-living questions of truth and duty. Let him further note what time and labour and sympathetic attention are being bestowed upon the study of various educational and sociological questions. We might also point to evening schools, and to university extension and Toynbee Hall movements—the latter are, we are glad to see, beginning to take root in the United States, where they should find a most congenial soil. The multiplication of summer schools and summer sessions of colleges and universities afford another indication of the growing demand for opportunities for improving spare moments and holidays by combining intellectual with physical recreations. Our attention is just now directed to this subject by the prospectus of a summer school in a new and special sphere which lies before us—the “School of Applied Ethics,” which is to hold its first session, beginning July 1st and continuing six weeks, at Plymouth, Mass. “The matter to be presented has been,” we are told, “selected with regard to the wants of clergymen, teachers, journalists, philanthropists, and others, who are now seeking careful information upon the great themes of Ethical Sociology.” The subjects of discussion include departments of Economics, History of Religions and Ethics. These three departments are to be respectively under the charge of Professors H. C. Adams, Ph.D., of the University of Michigan, C. H. Toy, of Harvard University, and Felix Adler, Ph.D., of New York. The list of subjects and lectures is full and comprehensive. Topics of living interest, which are at the present day receiving the attention and study of many of the best thinkers and the foremost philanthropists, are to be discussed by men many of whom are well known as among those who, on this continent, are best qualified to discuss them. The movement strikes us as one of great interest, and we should not be surprised if summer schools for the special discussion of questions of applied ethics and Sociology generally should become common in the near future. Such schools cannot fail to be useful in the highest sense, if only from the fact that they tend to direct attention to these great subjects, and to stimulate thought and enquiry in regard to them. It seems to us open to question whether the programme before us may not err on the side of being too full. We are inclined to think that if there were fewer formal lectures and courses of lectures, even by professors of the highest standing, and ampler provision for free discussion, the end in view might be still more effectively promoted. Perhaps the same remark may hold good in relation to all the summer schools.

NOW that the Pope's Encyclical has been published in full in this country, justice compels the admission that it is not the jumble of generalities and platitudes which the first cablegrams led us to suspect. It proves to be a strong and able document, dealing in a spirit of unwonted and surprising liberality with the great problem of the day—the Industrial question. The Holy Father does not, indeed, throw much new light upon the subject. Certainly he fails to make clear the way in which the great evils which he graphically describes are to be removed by either the Church or the State, or by the unequal union of the two which he no doubt regards as their only proper relation to each other. At the outset he combats vigorously the doctrine of State socialism, which is becoming so formidable a foe to the established order in Europe. He takes as his “first and most fundamental principle,” the inviolability of private property. To deny this is to strike at the best interests of every wage-earner by robbing him of his personal liberty and taking away his spur to effort, deteriorating his character in the process, and breaking in upon the family relations, which are the basis of social order. State socialism would, in short, end in the “leveling down of all to the same condition of misery and dishonour.” With all this we are very familiar, also with the threadbare assurances that toil and suffering, riches and poverty, are a part of the common lot, and must be so to the end. Such teachings do not surprise us; we expect to find them in the Encyclical. What does surprise us as

emanating from the Vatican is what follows. The Pope freely admits that the workingmen are suffering gross injustice; that under modern conditions they are not receiving a fair share of the products of their toil, and that not only the Church but the State has a duty to discharge in the matter. The part assigned to the Church does not differ materially from the teachings of Christians of every name. The rich man may have a right to the possession of his money, but he has not a right to use it as he pleases. He must not “consider his outward possessions as his own, but as common to all.” This is no doubt good Scripture doctrine, and were it acted upon by all, the Labour Problem would cease to exist, and society would rapidly approach the millennial condition which His Holiness has before warned his readers is now and ever will be unattainable in this world. This too is familiar enough. The real difficulty comes when the Pope goes on to say not only that hours of labour should be shortened; that the labour of women and children should be limited and regulated, that wages should be made “enough to support the wage-earner in reasonable and frugal comfort,” but that if all this cannot be brought about otherwise, it should be done by the State. All this may be true and right. We are not just now affirming or denying the right of the State to interfere in such matters. But what becomes of the anti-social principles laid down so carefully at the outset? The question of the right of the State to interfere is reduced after all to a mere matter of social or moral expediency. But when once the State begins to restrict freedom of contract, to regulate hours of labour, to prescribe *minimum* rates of wages, and so forth, who shall draw the line to limit its movements, or stay its interference? Has not His Holiness neutralized his own fundamental principle, ranged himself unmistakably on the side of the new Political Economy, and in so doing given another illustration of the drift of the tide of tendency which seems everywhere to be setting in the direction of that very State socialism he so earnestly deprecates?

THE recent reports of the managers of the leading banks in Ontario and Quebec give on the whole a much more encouraging view of the state of business in the country during the last year, and a more hopeful outlook for the future, than many had expected. So far as the earnings and deposits of these institutions are reliable indexes and they certainly are so to a large extent, the state of the country is on the whole encouraging. A net profit of over three and a-quarter millions divided among nine banks, and a grand total of deposits amounting to the handsome figure of eighty-two millions, prove beyond question that at least some classes, and pretty large classes, of the people must be fairly prosperous. In order to be able to judge with greater accuracy of the full significance of these figures, one would need to know by whom the deposits are chiefly made, and especially to what extent the farmers are represented amongst them. The chief causes which have led many to take a somewhat gloomy view of the situation are two-fold. First, it is well known by all who have business relations of any kind with the country districts that many of the farmers complain bitterly of the hard times, and deplore their inability to raise money to meet even their newspaper subscriptions and similar small obligations. Probably the true explanation is that suggested by Mr. Hague, manager of the Merchant's Bank, who says that while in some districts the farmers are undoubtedly having a trying experience, in many others they have done well and are prospering. To what extent their general prosperity will be affected by the McKinley tariff will be better known a year hence. The other circumstance which has tended to give rise in many minds to the impression of which we speak is the fact that so many of our people, the young in particular, have crossed and are constantly crossing the lines to seek their fortunes in the great Republic. Such a movement is to a certain extent inevitable, we suppose, in the case of a smaller and poorer people living on the borders of a great and wealthy nation. It is the part of wisdom and of patriotism to take the full encouragement which the bank statistics, and the words of their experienced and far-seeing managers, are adapted to give, and at the same time to use all diligence to discover and to adopt the very best methods available for promoting a still greater development of our resources, and a more rapid growth of our population in the future.

Men say of women what pleases them; women do with men what pleases them.—*Segur*.

THE new Premier has declared himself, and has struck the key-note of his future action with no uncertain sound. His speech in the Senate, followed up by Sir Hector Langevin's announcement in the House of Commons, that “the policy which has hitherto guided the Liberal-Conservative party will be carried out,” sufficiently indicates that the Cabinet is prepared to work harmoniously to that end. The unavoidable delay in making this announcement has greatly exercised the patience of the Opposition, and, their wish being father to their thought, the columns of their journals have been filled with anticipatory rejoicings over the coming Government collapse. We know to what straws drowning men will cling, but after the testimony freely borne by men of every shade of opinion as to Mr. Abbott's peculiar fitness for the position he now holds, it seems strange that it did not dawn on the minds of the writers of these brilliant and epigrammatic articles that because of that fitness the consolidation, instead of the disintegration, of his party must ensue as a matter of course. The colleagues of the late Premier are now his colleagues, and they will work together on the old lines which were laid down for them by one “who being dead yet speaketh.”

That the crisis in the political history of Canada which seemed imminent even a few days ago has been safely tided over was convincingly proved by the large attendance at the caucus held last week. The entire Conservative party attended it, with scarcely an exception, and a full delegation from the Senate joined their voices with those of ministers and members in cheering to the echo their new leader and assuring him of their entire confidence. Such a spontaneous and unreserved tribute of the kind has not for many years been paid to any statesman at what we may call the outset of his career, for, of course, this is an entirely new departure for the former leader of the Senate. In spite of his modest and deprecatory remarks as to being the least obnoxious of possible prime ministers, it is certain that he has the diplomatic instinct which has enabled him to seize the *mot d'enigme* of the present state of things, which might have escaped a politician of more brilliant parts but of less insight and discretion. The only dissatisfied member of the Cabinet at present is the Secretary of State, who continues to urge his claim to the portfolio of Railways and Canals. This has been refused to him, as it would seriously complicate the policy of conciliation in other directions, and if he is as much of a philosopher as he ought to be, he will console himself with the axiom of his compatriot, “*Tout vient à qui sait attendre*.”

The sultriness of the weather has not as yet mitigated the heat of argument which has been rather notably displayed on one or two occasions lately. Mr. Davies, of Prince Edward Island, who is always thirsting for information, and usually demands it, as it were, at the point of the bayonet, upbraided the Government with delay in pushing on the Tarte-McGreevy enquiry, and demanded with a good deal of excitement an explanation from the Government or from the Chairman of the Privileges Committee. Sir John Thompson replied with more warmth than he usually allows himself. The irrepressible member for Queen's at once seized the opportunity of giving that *tu quoque* character to the debate which distinguishes his utterances, and though he was backed up by the Leader of the Opposition, the Minister of Justice had the last word, demonstrating that though the enquiry in question was a most grave and important one, there had been a still more pressing matter at issue during the last few days—the formation of the Cabinet—which naturally took the first place in the attention of the Government.

Monday was a field-day in the House of Commons. The leader of the Opposition, who had been prevented from opening his batteries on the Government last Friday, seized the earliest opportunity, directly the orders of the day had been called, of making his attack. It was unexpected by the public at large; Monday being a private members' day, but anyone who saw Mr. Laurier in the House on Friday must have felt sure that he was primed and loaded and ready to go off. His speech was a good one, but perhaps had rather less of that suggestion of “reserve force” than usual, and his accusations against the Government of disingenuousness and needless delay in the avowal of their policy were indefinite. When he came to the more personal question of the choice of a Premier, he certainly struck a wrong chord in alluding to Mr. Abbott's heartstrings as being bound to the C.P.R. Railway, even though he had severed his pecuniary connection therewith. Sir John Thompson, in the finest speech he has made this session, did not fail to seize every weak point in his opponent's logic, and played upon the “heartstrings” with especially good effect. The force of the very dignified and manly tribute he paid to the character and efficiency of the Premier was heightened by a quotation from the Hon. Mr. Power's speech at the opening of the Senate, in which he, though a Liberal, expressed in unstinted terms his approbation of the choice of a Leader made by His Excellency. A long and animated debate followed, lasting until early this (Tuesday) morning in which the Hon. Mr. Costigan and Mr. Hazen distinguished themselves by very forcible speeches; and when the division was taken at 1.23 a.m., there was a Government majority of 20. The Opposition, beaten once more, had to console themselves by welcoming the returned prodigal, Mr. Joncas, of Gaspe, who has unaccountably been straying into the Government Lobby since the beginning of the session.