

when we have to take gross flattery of Augustus with his finest sentiment and most perfect art. What a revolution a government may work in a few years! Where is the Horace of Philippi? But compare him with Catullus, a man whose private life was stained with the vices of the young aristocrats of his time, and whose political bearing, we may be sure, was in great part due to the sentiments of freedom which still lived, even though they could not bloom in the cold and cruel shadow of despotism; compare Horace's adulation of Augustus with the contempt of the earlier poet for Julius Cæsar himself, and his manliness in telling the dictator what he thought of him and of his loathsome morals. A few years and the loss of all freedom had done its work.

The great men who fought for free institutions did not confine their aims to the efficient discharge of the functions of government—still less to mere routine administration—though with the former, in any true sense, all they desired would follow. They have dwelt on the incidental effects, the reflexive influence. Men are so constituted that they naturally look up to those exercising the powers of government, this approaching nearer Divine action than anything man can engage in. We make our Divinity and in turn our Divinity makes or mars us. Men love, and the object of an affection, made dithyrambic by passion and illusion, either sublimates them or settles their fate—as, for this last, witness Samson, Anthony, Rudolph, Dilke, Parnell, Boulanger. The millions of the obscure, over whose blanching bones the Syrens sing and the waves of destruction roll, of these we do not hear. The god cannot be higher than the power of moral conception of the worshipper, but this one may be initiated into the cult of gods who, like those of the mythology of Greece and Rome, when the simplicity of the old worship had long been lost, shall influence towards vice rather than virtue. So with those who occupy the highest positions in a country. If they are not what men in such positions should be, what must, according to inevitable law, be the result? We are not speaking now of the certainty that their measures will be defective, that their administration will be perfunctory or corrupt. We are speaking of the effect on the character of the community, of the effect especially on the young. They will not call forth enthusiasm, and one of the feeders of national life and national sentiment is lost. More than this. They will provoke contempt and educate in cynicism. Barren satire and fruitless jibes will flourish where constructive energies might have been called forth. This applies to the better minds. The mediocre and feeble, who have had a smattering of knowledge, who swell with a sense of never-before-dreamed-of importance when they find themselves one of a small set who, like the "Three Tailors of Tooley Street," fancy themselves the embodiment of a whole nation; the honest, hard-working people whose main occupation is the noble one of performing the ordinary work of life; on such the malison of a low ideal falls in one of two ways, of which it would be hard to pronounce the worse: either they take a common-place individual for a great man and make a hero out of a mass of cellular tissue, feebly illuminated by a farthing candle mentality, or they think that while you require a clever man to win your case in court, or to conduct your business, or manage a large farm, or make a watch, or shoe a horse in good shape, any sort of man is fit to govern. We have already expressed our confidence that the right course will be taken.

No sight more calculated to inspire hope for Canada can be conceived than that presented by the Young Liberals a week ago and the Young Conservatives on Monday evening. It is on the young men we must rely for the future, and from those of them who spend their evenings not "in toys or lust or wine," but in political study and political disquisition, engaged in, as it should be, with a view to supplying an alternative, a tonic to the party the society affects, we may hope for shaping influences instinct with wisdom and patriotism, and men who will one day fill with credit the positions of leaders and legislators. To youth belongs enthusiasm, and therefore the potentiality of every achievement, of all greatness. So long as decay and moral death have not laid their hands on a people, the ever-flowing fount of life is there. Woe to the statesman who destroys the high ideals of generous youth. Whatever damps its enthusiasm—whatever makes even a noble illusion impossible—is bad for the individual and destructive for the nation.

Let us for argument sake suppose that Mr. Abbott should fail to reorganize his Government. A greater calamity could not, at this hour, befall Canada, and this would be equally true whether or not the bye elections should add to or detract from or destroy his majority. Take the first probability. The bald fact was made no secret from the first, that the Premier pledged himself to reorganize. During the months which have elapsed since, his business power and his suavity have impressed the members of the Conservative party in both Houses. But what has impressed them more than anything else is the satisfaction that there is in doing business with him. More business is done now in one day in Council than in any three sittings in previous years, and this effectiveness characterizes all his political dealings. Many persons, even among Conservatives, have mistakingly thought that Sir John Macdonald paltered with his promises. There was no foundation whatever for this. If Sir John Macdonald made a definite promise, it was the same as if it was under seal. But men who construed the polite demeanor, the exquisite urbanity, the pleasant words he had for everybody, as assurances that what they wanted would be done, and who went off at half cock, diffused an idea which those

who knew him well, knew to be unfounded. The ways of the Bank Parlour, of the Railway Directors' room, of the commercial lawyer charged with a multiplicity of affairs, have followed Mr. Abbott to the Premier's throne, and, though he will have to be, and no doubt has been, on his guard against valuable habits of mind so far as these are unsuited to the work of a political leader, they have given definiteness and despatch to his transactions, and inspired trust in his reliability, his honourableness, his sincerity, and all this growing confidence would be shaken and shattered did he fail to redeem his pledge. The effect on the best sentiment of the country, which again and again has sought in vain to roll away that corruption which ever more came back.

Et semper victus, semperque recedit, would be despairful, and this at a period of our history when we need every bracing and every hopeful influence—an hour when a few fools are clamouring in a corner of Ontario for that which, were it to take practical shape, blood would flow like water from Halifax to Vancouver. If failing to re-organize, the bye-elections were to detract from his majority, we should have a Government weak in the number of its supporters—a calamity in itself—but we should have to contemplate a still greater calamity, a Government morally weak as well, and, though in the coming years the Ministry should be gradually reinforced, the effect would have been lost of the moral impression, the fresh inspiration of presenting to the country such a reorganized Treasury Bench as would mean, or, at all events, give hope that a newer and better political era had dawned.

It is hardly necessary to discuss the third possibility, because the writer thinks it beyond the pale of the probable. Not to speak of other things, there is actually in the very bosom of the Reform Party a very palpable and impressive cause for Conservatives maintaining their hold. That cause is found in one of the ablest among the leaders—Sir Richard Cartwright. The commercial community have profound distrust of him. He is like the monkey in the tree-tops: they don't know what he might be at. He has impressed the trading classes, much of the public, and perhaps it may be said, Parliament generally, as a political rogue elephant. They regard him with uncertainty and dread. They know not round what branch of our commercial system he might fold that terrible trunk and trumpeting ruin, destroy what could not, in the course of many years, be repaired or replaced. Even were they dissatisfied with the way the teacups are dusted they do not want a bull in their china shop. His attack on a government is very powerful—powerful after the manner of a morning storm blowing from the west, as though it would beat back the sun. It blows away and over without attracting anything, founding anything, and as so often happens, without even destroying anything, while the lord of day pursues his light-giving beneficent course. Should Sir Richard Cartwright ever come to gain the confidence of the commercial classes—and he could only do this by a sobriety of ideas and a moderation of language out of keeping with his impulsive and restless readiness to take up policies without thinking them out and his passion for superlatives—he will be a power in political dynamics very different from what he is to-day.

There can be no doubt of the anxiety in Ontario and the west, as to whether Mr. Abbott will reorganize thoroughly or not. How can he fail to do so? He is a man of judgment. He knows the opinion of Parliament; the necessity of the situation, the sentiments of the country. No "deluge" has come, but were popular hopes blighted, or even disappointed, there would be a cyclone in which forces long pent would break free, and before which all this young nation is content to see quietly die, would violently disappear.

NICHOLAS FLOOD DAVIN.

PARIS LETTER.

THE correspondents attest that Parnellism is still a force in Ireland with which Mr. Gladstone must count, and if its support be wanted, it must be purchased on its own terms. The death of Mr. Parnell, it is further alleged, will break up the Triple Alliance by Mr. Gladstone squeezing Italy out of that association. This would render Italy powerless, for Mr. Gladstone would never permit the English navy to interfere, while that of France was smashing up the Italian fleet, in order to secure the freedom of the Mediterranean, etc. The isolation of Italy, in compromising the unity and hegemony of Germany, would place Alsace at the feet of France. Q. E. D. And to think that the "city of light and intelligence" pins its faith to such day-dreams, and glibly reads a future so painfully dark and uncertain to the keenest political ken. But Boulevard politicians, like Guzman, know no obstacles; even panting time toils after them in vain.

The series of railway collisions continue, and so not only contribute to frighten the timid, but to alarm the brave. The "block system" in France consists in blocking nothing at all. In the case of the Saint-Maudé accident, the station-master sends on a death-making train, fully conscious the line was not free; at Brunoy, a few days ago, the accident was due to the engine-driver totally disregarding the signal to stop with his cattle train. Public opinion demands a drastic remedy for these acts of systematic personal carelessness. It is not the railway *matériel* which is in cause, but the railway officials—the human element as represented by, not now, over-worked station-masters, engine-drivers and pointsmen, who have

become insouciant, judging, that as a million of trains have passed without accidents, so must every additional million. A philosopher attempts to explain the lamentable unsafeness of railway travelling to the degeneracy of psychic power in officials, whose minds are overstretched through keenness of watching. Be it so, however, it is to be hoped the law will visit all psychic short-comings with imprisonment from six to thirty-six months—*pour encourager les autres*.

Paris is to hold a congress next year, sacred to hotel-keepers. It may be accepted as granted that the gathering will not be exactly in the interest of clients. The aim, as I am informed, is to organize a kind of Inn-zollverein between defined categories of hotels. Perhaps the real object of the congress is to arrange for the issue of an international "Black List," similar to what the dress-makers and jewellers of Paris possess, to protect themselves against bad and dishonest clients, and where the pecuniary status of the members of the fashionable, etc., world is classified. It is a notorious fact that there is a large floating population of Jeremy Diddlers, who actually live by swindling hotel proprietors in running up credit, dodging to postpone settlement, giving bills, not worth the paper, if necessary, to show their desire to pay. Ultimately, the landlord, satisfied he has been swindled, implores them to leave, at no matter what sacrifice; and instances are not rare where he has presented them with money to pay their fares. Once such people gain a footing, they, as belonging to a respectable hotel, readily obtain credit from tradesmen. The hotel proprietor is known to have an aversion to appear as a prosecutor of a swindler. The publication of the private "hue and cry" will be further strengthened by detective inspectors, who will keep travelling between the grouped hotels, and so competent to identify black sheep, and cut short their campaigning and raiding.

It is well known that one of the causes why so few persons now go to the theatre is the high price of the seats, and the latter is the consequence of the ruinous expenditure upon scenery and costume. There is another reason for the decay of the stage—the absence of plays that possess interest, and that induce an audience to take an interest in them. The taste for the drama is not on the decline among the masses, but there is a decline in giving the masses the drama they can comprehend and feel, and at a rational charge. The public, when a play absorbs them, pay very little attention to poverty of scenery or economy in costumes. At the present moment the best paying houses are those which are representing revivals some forty years old: *L'Honneur de la Maison*; *l'As de trèfle*, and *Kean*, draw crowded houses. These plays are full of emotion, of charm and of amusement; the acts are well knit, and continuously lead up to a simple and natural dénouement; each scene is logically developed; each situation has its special sentiments; each figure is distinct, living and interesting, and all gravitate round a divined and defined end. People go to the theatre to be interested, and, above all, to be amused; everything outside these does not belong to the theatre.

During the year 1890, the opera most frequently represented was "Faust," twenty-seven times; and next, "Romeo and Juliet," eighteen times. One representation of the former produced nearly 23,000 frs.; and one of the latter only 4,695 frs. In comic opera Gounod also took the lead. The Comédie-Française is rehearsing Shakespeare's "Taming of the Shrew"—*La Mégère apprivoisée*, and in which Coquelin is said to be inimitable. Mounet-Sully, the actor, who is a stock-broker in the daytime, is not only retiring from the stage, but retiring somewhat from the world. He experiences a nausea for social life.

Sixteen robberies per night, therein included attempts to murder, waylaying, etc., is the official confession of suburban crimes. The police force is admitted to be inadequate; naturally, citizens are occupied with their own self-protection. Persons who never handled a revolver are now taking lessons how to do so. This new application of "help yourself and heaven will help you" has been applied with success. M. Berthant and his son, of Avron, resolved to watch their penates, each night, turn about. A few nights ago the son, at the small hours, observed a Bill Sykes, professionally equipped, dropping into the court-yard; he fired, the man fell, and his pals fled. The son then advanced, sent the contents of a six-chambered revolver into the thief, and then informed the police. The latter, on arriving, found the man had disappeared, but he was brought to the city hospital in the morning.

There are two weekly sailings from the Tuilleries quay to London direct, by French and English goods steamers. An excursion company, I have been informed, intends, next summer, to secure on these vessels accommodation for tourists who are not pressed for time, and who desire to enjoy the run down the Seine to Havre, across the herring pond, and then up Father Thames.

French vineyards suffer from the phylloxera; now there is in prospective a scarcity of wine bottles, as the bottle makers are on strike. France manufactures two hundred millions of black bottles yearly; if all were lined out, they would extend to the moon and back again. Astronomer Flammarion might try a bottle trick, and use the glass chain for interplanetary communication, pending his telegraph wire between our earth and Mars. The glass manufacturers are united to resist the demands of their employees. The latter want higher wages and shorter work-hours. The "glass-blower" can earn from