

It seems to me, and many more, that all the fuss and fury of the *Globe* and its satellites over the Pacific Railway Syndicate are quite unnecessary and very foolish. The first grievance appears to arise from the fact that the whole bargain with the Syndicate to build the Pacific Railway is not made known in detail, and the second that Sir John A. Macdonald has not succeeded in making so good a bargain as he had hoped to make. As to the first cause of complaint: It would doubtless be a good thing for the newspapers if they could have the chance of discussing the scheme before Parliament meets; they could analyse, and build up syllogisms about it—"therefore" always telling conclusively against their opponents, but they would only succeed in taking the matter out of the sphere of business to which it properly belongs, and discussing it as a political and party question. More than that, the scheme could hardly be given in its entirety, even if the agreement between the Government and the Syndicate is complete—for we can hardly expect that the Premier would do more, at the most, than inspire a newspaper article. If he intends to call Parliament together, and make his statement there, it is absurd to imagine that he ought to make his statement to the country through the press first.

As to the second cause of complaint: If Sir John has partly failed; if he could not carry out his scheme to the full on behalf of Canada, is he to be credited with a crime? If he has done his best, we ought to be satisfied. The building of the complete line was decided upon by Parliament after a long debate—the Lake Superior and British Columbia sections included; and Sir John could do no other than bargain with the Syndicate for the whole line. Of course better terms could have been made if the company were only asked to build the road so as to open up the North-west; but the company have to build through unpaying as well as paying parts of the country, and in view of the tremendous risk they have to run it can hardly be a matter of surprise if they have exacted terms which appear to bear hard upon the country.

The following remarks by Mr. Labouchere convey, I believe, the ideas of a great majority of the British people on the question of limiting or abolishing the House of Lords:—

"Notwithstanding the reckless folly of the House of Lords in throwing out bills passed by the House of Commons, and in emasculating others, it was not likely that at the close of a session the latter House would take into serious consideration a proposal to deal in a drastic fashion with the former. The question, however, will have to be seriously discussed, for if our mode of making new laws be defective, injury must accrue to all legislative action.

"Assuming that two separate Chambers are desirable, it surely cannot be contended that the Upper House in its present form is the ideal of perfection. The Conservatives have a permanent majority in it, and this renders all independence of judgment impossible. So long as a Conservative Government is in power, the influence of the Upper House is not an antagonistic one, but when the Liberals are in power, every Government Bill has to be prepared, not as framers would wish, but in such a way as is likely to satisfy the Upper House, or, in other words, the Conservative party. This is transparently an absurd position, and the only reason why we have not up to now apprehended its absurdity is that we are accustomed to it. But reverse the position, and suppose that there is an Upper House composed of Democratic shoemakers, would a Conservative Government consent to submit all its measures to the revision of such an assembly?

"The two practical objections, therefore, to the House of Lords are, 1, that its members are taken exclusively from one class; 2, that the majority of this class belongs to one party.

"The question whether one or two Houses be desirable is a large one. The plea for the double Chamber is that it is almost universally adopted; but against this it may be urged that either one Chamber invariably swamps the other, or that the dualism is productive of disputes. On the whole, the balance of argument is in favour of one Chamber.

"But are we likely to effect so radical a change in the Constitution as is involved in the substitution of one Chamber for two? Being a Radical myself, I perhaps am prejudiced. I think, however, that we are, because at present, although the Cabinet is probably the most Radical one that ever was called into existence, the House of Commons is more Radical than the Cabinet, and the country is more Radical than the House of Commons."

The battle of the parties in the United States is becoming interesting. It seemed at first as if it must be a one-sided affair, the

Republicans having it all their own way. But General Hancock has been steadily growing in favour, and the as yet undecided election in Maine is enough to cause the Republicans grave apprehension. To the main portion of the American people, however, the coming Presidential election must be a matter of small interest. Probably not half the voters could give a definition of the differences between the Republicans and the Democrats. The *New York Herald* can find only this: The Republicans are for a protective tariff, the Democrats for a "tariff for revenue only." The Republicans favour large internal improvements, the Democrats would draw the public strings closer, and refuse subsidies and grants. The Republicans are likely to deal liberally with the national banks, the Democrats would probably seek to narrow their powers. The Democrats would undoubtedly take care that the new judges should be strict constitutionalists of the Constitution, the Republicans would on their part be careful to select judges inclined to construe the Constitution liberally and in the direction of centralization of greater powers in the federal government." When nothing more definite as a dividing line than this can be found, and no greater issue can be raised as an election cry, it must be a question of parties rather than principles.

At last some of the American papers are entering protests against the constant and always contemptible cry of "fraud" on the part of every class of disappointed people. The general American mind seems to have the idea that falsehood is at the basis of everything. Let a boat-race come off, and whoever wins we are sure to hear that the race was sold. Let it be a walking-match, and it is certain to be asserted that somebody was paid not to do his best. It is the same in politics. Mr. Hayes is holding an office procured for him by fraud. In the recent Maine election it seemed at first as if the Democrats had carried the majority, when the Republicans—believing it far more likely that Democrats could be guilty of fraud than that Maine electors could in large numbers change their mind and party, began to shout "bribery." On further returns being made it began to appear that the first conclusion was premature, and perhaps altogether wrong; so the Democrats at once took up the cry of "fraud." This is not only pitiable, but simply ruinous to all society. Honest men take honesty in others for granted, and do not bring charges of crime until there is some ground for them; but rogues judge other men by themselves. Unless an effort is made to effect a change for the better in this respect, it is certain that the time is at hand when men who respect their own character will have nothing to do with politics.

Another turn of the political wheel in France and still Gambetta prospers. He works and waits with marvellous skill and patience. When the country, weary and wasted with war, wanted peace Gambetta announced himself as the champion of the sheathed-sword and industry. He was an unlooked for, particular genius. Gradually he began to overmaster the popular mind. MacMahon was called to place, but Gambetta took the real power. MacMahon was compelled to resign and the prudent Grevy was installed in the President's office—Gambetta biding his time. But it is quite evident to an uninterested onlooker that he has all along been actuated by one dominant idea—revenge of the disaster and losses and shame France was compelled to suffer by the Franco-German war. He helped the country to get rich in order to create a great army—he has been careful to cultivate the friendship of European nations and to get the mastery of public opinion in France. When M. De Freycinct made it evident that in his mind peace was to be the end of peace, and counselled moderation in dealing with the Church, he found that he was out of harmony with the real master of the Cabinet, and resigned accordingly. By putting the premiership into the weak hands of M. Jules Ferry Gambetta has assured himself once more of his own position. They can sympathise with each other in recalling the days when the one went over Europe tearfully begging for help to save La Belle France, and the other made great, but ineffectual attempts to get France to save herself; and it is quite conceivable that both are in accord in the desire to wipe out the disgrace and save the losses. As against that it can only be hoped that the French will meantime learn to love peace and prosperity too well to put the latter in risk by throwing away the former.

EDITOR.