

is that of two neighbouring peoples, related, too, by the ties of a common language, religion, and blood, instead of in generous rivalry striving to fulfil their mutual obligations in a large and generous spirit, seeking thus to gain each a petty advantage over the other by what is little better than a play upon words, a narrow adherence to the letter rather than to the obvious sense and spirit of their mutual engagements! It is now obscurely hinted that if the United States Government carries out the proposed retaliatory policy, the Canadian authorities may strike back by imposing a tax upon all American vessels coming from the upper lakes to Lake Erie, as it is alleged that they can at present do so only by passing through Canadian waters. The whole business, whether it is seriously proposed to carry it to such extremes or not, is not only small but dangerous. It is among the not far off possibilities that it may one day land us in the folly and crime of commercial non-intercourse, a state of things which, as Sir Charles Tupper has well said, is not far removed from actual war.

SOME interesting and highly instructive facts, bearing upon the conditions of country life, at the present day, in different countries, and upon the alarming tendency of the country people to crowd into the cities, are given by Rev. W. Tuckwell, in an article in the *Contemporary Review*. The cityward tendency does not appear to be at all universal, but is specially manifest in Great Britain and the United States and other Anglo-Saxon communities. Some of Mr. Tuckwell's statistics are strikingly suggestive:—

In England the owners of estates above one acre in size are about 300,000. In France they are 700,000. In England the average size of farms is 390 acres; in France 10 acres—4,000,000 owners holding properties of two acres, while farms of 200 acres are so few that they can be counted on the fingers. In 1880, France exported £27,000,000 worth of food; England imported £80,000,000 worth. In sixty years 8,500,000 emigrants have left England; less than 500,000 have left France. In England the rural population is 33 per cent. of the whole; in France it is upwards of 75 per cent. "Questioning everywhere . . . we met with unbroken testimony to the prosperity, freedom, thrift of the labouring peasant, as due to the facility of acquiring land cheaply and at will." The agricultural colleges send out 700 trained farmers a year, to be scattered over the country and spread technical knowledge of scientific husbandry among all classes.

Commenting on these facts, the *Christian at Work*, of New York, to which we are indebted for the above summary, says:—

It will be a sad day for this country (the United States), which reduces the number of the small farmers and fruit raisers: for of all industries the hope of the nation lies not in the factories, but in the small farms of the country—insuring health if not wealth, and affording relief from the wretchedness and misery which abound in the congested cities.

The remark is true but perhaps misleading. There is no condition of life more comfortable, or more pleasing in some of its aspects, than that of the independent and contented small farmer. But it is evident that not even his means of independence, or of competence, are contained wholly within the limits of his acres, be they few or many. He might, indeed, be able to supply abundant food for the wants of himself and family without going beyond the resources of his farm. But it is evident on the slightest reflection that but for the market for his surplus products which is supplied by the congested cities, at home or abroad, he and his must suffer for the want of the means of purchasing most of the other conveniences and comforts of life, whether for body or mind. Hence the hope of the nation, if it be a reasonable hope, must be built upon the factories and other industries, no less than upon the farms, small or large, of the country.

THERE can be no reasonable doubt, we suppose, that the ownership of the land of the nation by the few has had much to do with the unrest which has of late years been driving the population of Great Britain to the cities, until it is said that in some localities "the country districts are emptied of population, so that there are not enough hands to cultivate the soil; the towns are overcrowded, so that pauperism is enormously increased." The breaking up of the great estates and the multiplication of small holdings which will result from better facilities for the sale and purchase of land, cannot fail to do much towards bringing about a favourable change in the condition of the agricultural classes in the Mother Country. It may do much to check the undue flow of the population

to the great centres. But there are at least two other considerations which enter as important factors into the movement so much deplored, but which the small holding can do nothing to modify. In the first place, is not the contrast between the plodding industry and thrifty content of the French or Belgian peasant, and the unrest which drives the Anglo-Saxon to the city, at least as much a matter of racial temperament and trait as of farming conditions? We cannot speak from personal observation, but the question is both interesting and important. It is impossible to estimate the effect that might have been produced through long years upon the character and habits of the British agricultural labourer, had he been brought up under the influence of such a system as that which obtains in the continental countries named, but we should be surprised if it did not appear, on investigation, that the question is at least as much one of race and religion as of land tenure. In this western world, at least, it is impossible for us to conceive of the adventurous youth settling down contentedly upon a small farm and spending a lifetime in unambitious toil, only once in a decade, or a lifetime, finding his way out into the whirl and excitement of the great city. In the second place, is it not the fact that the introduction of labour-saving machinery, with the consequent amelioration of the conditions of agricultural life, and the lessening of the cost of production, have put the small farm at a disadvantage from which it can never recover? If we are not greatly mistaken, the reaping and mowing and threshing machines have had more to do than any other single agency in driving the country labourer to the city for employment. The small farmer can neither afford to use these expensive machines on his few acres, nor can he enter into competition with them, with his slow hand processes. Add to all this the effect of the wider diffusion of educational influences, and the aspiring ambitions which are begotten of our social and political systems, and it will, we think, be sufficiently apparent that we shall have to look much farther than to the multiplication of small farms for the cure of the cityward tendency of the day.

#### OTTAWA LETTER.

ALTHOUGH the charges made against the Post-Master General, by Mr. Edgar, are not to be enquired into by the Committee of Privileges and Elections, Sir Adolph is not yet out of the woods. While those who believe the charges can be sustained profess great disappointment that the allegations are not referred to a committee of the House, they certainly should be better pleased that they are to be looked into by a commission, than allowed to go by default altogether. The ground taken by the Opposition that it is absurd to expect justice to be done, when the accused practically appoints his own judge, and prepares the charges, was not unwisely taken, but a good deal of the force of the contention was lost when Mr. McCarthy's rider came in, to the effect that the names of the gentlemen comprising the commission shall be submitted to the House for its approval.

Taking everything into consideration the Ministry played a pretty strong card, and so far have come well out of the affair. To have declined any investigation would have put them before the country in a very bad light indeed, and there are not wanting good reasons why the *enquete* should not take place before a Parliamentary committee. In the first place it would mean the extension of the session far into the summer; it would also increase the bitterness of party feeling, which assuredly is not a thing to be desired. It would appear for other reasons that a committee is not the best body to carry on an investigation of this kind, although it is also true that such a body has certain distinct advantages over a commission. Parliament is supreme, and can enforce its orders without let or hindrance. He who is summoned must come. Just to what extent a commission can enforce its command, seems a question for difference of opinion.

Sir Richard Cartwright's amendment declares, the Opposition do not consider themselves at all bound to treat the commission seriously. Sir Richard said that he for one utterly and entirely refused, as his friends, on the occasion of the charges made by Mr. Huntington in the Pacific scandal, entirely refused to recognize the authority of any such Royal Commission or to appear before it. Mr. Edgar, he proceeded to say, would not be justified in appearing before any commission to answer for one word which had been stated by him from his place in Parliament. There is, indeed, force in this argument, as there always is in what the member for South Oxford has to say.

If the debate on the Caron charges was noticeable for anything, it was for the clearness and decision with which the transcendent powers of Parliament were emphasized. Mr. Cockburn, quoting "Delolme," said Parliament had power to do anything except to make a man a woman or a woman a man. Queen Victoria herself has only a Parliamentary title, and reigned by virtue of a Parliamentary

statute. Such strong words regarding the power of Parliament recall a deliverance of Lord Chief Justice Coleridge in the well-known case, *Bradlaugh v. Gossett*, when the noted freethinker brought action against the Sergeant-at-Arms for forcibly expelling him from the House. The Chief Justice, on that occasion, said: "The House of Commons has full control over everything within its own walls, and the law courts cannot even enquire into any action within the House. If, therefore, its action were illegal, in the ordinary sense of the word, there could be no possible remedy."

The Opposition were very anxious that the debate should be adjourned, and three of their first-row men made three distinct and desperate appeals to the Leader of the House for an adjournment. Mr. Laurier first requested that further time should be allowed, but Sir John Thompson was obdurate, and having declined to listen to Mr. Laurier's petition, his fiat was not to be changed by anything Mr. Davies or Sir Richard had to say. The division came much earlier in the morning than was expected. The Government was supported by a majority of sixty-two, in a House of one hundred and eighty-eight members, so that the majority lacked only one of being equal to the entire Opposition vote. This was not very comforting to Mr. Edgar, who, it is said, expected that his motion would cause a split in the Government ranks.

The London election case, so far as it affects Judge Elliott, was reached on the order paper shortly after recess on Monday. The debate was resumed by Mr. Mulock, who spoke for over an hour. He was well armed for the fray, having on his desk articles from the *London Free Press*, which he said he could prove, by affidavits, were written by Judge Elliott, and some of which he read for the edification of the House. He pronounced the articles entirely blameworthy as proceeding from a judge, who was supposed, on his elevation to the Bench, to leave the bitterness of party politics behind him, and entered into a general arraignment of the gentleman whose conduct was in question.

The debate on this question lasted till after one o'clock on Tuesday morning. Mr. Tisdale followed Mr. Mulock, and in his most energetic manner attacked the petitioners and the mode in which the petition was started. The remaining participants were Messrs. Fraser, McDonald, Weldon, Lister, Sir John Thompson and Mr. Davies, and the result of it all is that the motion was voted down by a straight party vote, the Government having a majority of forty-two. So, for the present, *exeat* Sir Adolph and Judge Elliott from the stage of Parliament.

Mr. Charlton's Bill for the better observance of the Lord's Day, commonly called Sunday, was in committee on Monday, but did not meet with the consideration to which its projector thought it entitled, and was finally dismissed by the committee summarily rising, thus leaving the Bill to look after itself. It was in vain that Mr. Charlton appealed for a more courteous reception of his Bill. At least, let it pass through the usual stages, he urged, even if it be so mutilated as to bear no resemblance to its former self. The committee would not listen to anything of the kind, and ruled the question out of court by a vote of fifty-five to thirty-eight. When some of our great women deliberate in convention this coming summer, how they will lash the Parliament of Canada for its iniquity!

The general business of Parliament has been quite rapidly disposed of during the past week, and, were it not for the Redistribution Bill, an early prorogation might be in order. The Opposition would like to see the Bill stand over for consideration until next session, and there was a rumour afloat early in the week that such a course would be adopted. It is now thought, however, that the Bill will run its chance, though if the members to the left of the Speaker do not abuse it too roundly, some modification may be made in its provisions so as to render it less objectionable to the Opposition than it is now.

On Tuesday evening the House was warm over a discussion on the Intercolonial Railway, Mr. Haggart having pronounced for a system of retrenchment and reform, and stated to the House that he meant to economize by cutting down the staff and taking off certain of the trains, thus effecting a very considerable saving.

The members from down by the sea did not accept the proposal with any too good grace, while the Prince Edward Islanders said that they were singled out for vengeance since they would not fall into line and support the present administration.

Sir William Ritchie, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and Deputy Governor-General, has given his assent to a number of Bills in the Senate Chamber.

T. C. L. K.

It is foolish to lay out money in the purchase of repentance.—*Franklin*.

AMONG the Cambrian mountains an instance is related of an eagle which, having pounced on a shepherd's dog, carried it to a considerable height; but the weight and action of the animal effected a partial liberation, and he left part of his flesh in the eagle's beak. The dog was not killed by the fall; he recovered of his wound, but was so intimidated that he would never go that way again. Subsequently the owner of the dog shot at and wounded one of the eagles. The bird, nearly exhausted, was found a week afterwards by a shepherd of Seatoller; its lower mandible was split, and the tongue wedged between the interstices. The bird was captured and kept in confinement, but it became so violent that ultimately it had to be destroyed.