

definite treaty form, has been concluded between two other great powers which, though themselves wide as the poles asunder in their political institutions and forms of government, are yet united by the stronger bond of a common jealousy, a common dread, and perhaps even a common hatred of their great rivals? No one can for a moment doubt that if France felt strong enough to overpower her mighty neighbour and wrest the lost provinces from her grasp, the attempt would be made before this season is over. No one can doubt that if Russia felt strong enough, either alone or with the aid of France, the Eastern question would be settled in a fashion very different from that which on Lord Salisbury now felicitates the world. The Premier is represented as having attached great value to the visits of Emperor William and the Prince of Naples in assuring the world of the peaceful ideas of the great powers. But it is impossible to forget that these visits are between friendly nations and at least possible allies, and that, instead of allaying the animosity of the hostile powers, they have had really the opposite effect, of rekindling it to an intense heat. To hereditary enemies the warlike pageants and the roar of cannon which attend every step of the royal visitors' progress, speak the language of defiance not of conciliation, and stimulate revengeful passion rather than beget a love of peace. These methods may put off the evil day to an indefinite future, but the day of secure and lasting peace in Europe will never dawn until the work of general disarmament shall have been commenced in earnest. If Lord Salisbury and the Queen he serves could but bring influence to bear to bring about an international movement in this direction, they might indeed earn the gratitude of oppressed millions and inherit the blessing pronounced upon the genuine peacemakers.

**L**ORD SALISBURY'S speech at the Lord Mayor's banquet the other day touched upon many of the greatest questions of the time with the force that belongs to his strong personality, as well as with the weight that attaches to the words of the Prime Minister of Great Britain. To what extent the improved condition of Ireland is due to coercion, as distinct from the effects of the Land Act and other remedial legislation of this and preceding Parliaments, is a question upon which there is, notwithstanding his clear expression, room for difference of opinion. It remains also to be seen whether the absence during the present session of the obstruction which formerly hindered legislation is due so much to either or both of the above causes as to the fact that those who have hitherto played the obstructionist rôle have been weakened and almost paralyzed by the divisions in their ranks caused by Parnell's extraordinary course. There can be no doubt, however, that the successive Land Acts have proved most powerful palliatives of Irish discontent, as well they might, seeing that they strike at the root of the greatest evils which have so long afflicted that unhappy country. Whether these or any other measures, short of Home Rule in some form, will prove a permanent cure of Irish discontent, as Lord Salisbury believes, is perhaps more doubtful. The fact that Mr. Balfour is promising a large measure of local self-government, after the plan of that granted to England and Scotland, shows his conviction that something further will have to be done. Evidently he hopes, by the concession of the smaller measure of Home Rule, to obviate the necessity for the larger one demanded. Whether this result will follow, is at least doubtful. It seems quite as likely that the County Council may be accepted as the thin end of the wedge of Home Rule, to be driven further by a later Parliament, under the stress of the better organized pressure which the County Council system will enable the local "patriots" to bring to bear. Be that as it may, the course proposed by the Government is clearly the wisest it could adopt, and another proof of the astuteness of Lord Salisbury and his able lieutenant, Mr. Balfour. It is in the first place directly in line with the policy already so well inaugurated, that of the devolution of a portion of the burden of purely local legislation from the long over-laden back of Parliament to the shoulders upon which it most fittingly rests. And, then, in this case, as in that of the Land Bill, the Government will once more by adopting the safer and better part of the Opposition policy compel the Opposition, for consistency's sake, to support its measures. Meanwhile, the other remedial agencies already set in operation will be doing their work of pacification, valuable time will have been gained, and there is at least room to hope that the vitality of the Home Rule agitation may be gradually decaying.

**T**HE latest reports from China indicate that the area of disturbance is being enlarged. According to some accounts the whole Empire is in a ferment, and on the eve of another great rebellion. Hence the massacre of missionaries in one quarter and the placards threatening foreigners in others are regarded as the outcome of the rebel temper and policy, the chief aim being to embroil the nation with foreigners in order to embarrass and cripple the Government. Be that as it may, the fact that warships are coming together from all parts of Chinese and Japanese waters, and that the Yang-tsi-Kiang is covered with men-of-war flying the British, American, French, German, Russian and Spanish flags, shows that serious trouble is anticipated. The ambassadors appear to be acting in concert to a degree which is itself an evidence that they believe the danger to be serious. The Government at Peking is said to be paralyzed with terror, fearing lest evil days like those of the great Taeping rebellion may be in store for the country. It is quite possible that all these rumours are wide of the mark, and that the disorders may prove to be local in character and temporary. If it be true, as is rumoured in the last reports, that other mission stations are being attacked and further massacres of missionaries taking place, the Empire is certainly in danger of being held to a strict accountability. Hitherto, however, the Government seems to have done everything in its power to prevent, or put a stop to, outrages and protect foreigners, and so long as such a disposition is shown, it is likely that foreign nations will recognize the difficulties of the situation and act with forbearance, especially since they all probably desire the continuance of the present Chinese Government.

**D**URING his visit to the United States a little while ago, the Rev. Mr. Barnet made the startling assertion that labour conditions in the city of Boston were worse than in the city of London. In a series of sermons, the Rev. Louis A. Banks, an eloquent minister of the Episcopal Methodist Church in South Boston, has recently made public facts discovered by his own personal investigations which go far to prove the truth of Mr. Barnet's statements. Some of these facts are truly appalling. For example, a woman with a three-year-old child to support was making for a leading dry-goods firm white aprons, a yard long, hemmed across the bottom and on both sides, making, with the strings, six long seams. For these she was paid at the munificent rate of fifteen cents a dozen. By working sixteen hours she could make four dozen a day, but the care of her child prevented her from making more than three dozen, thus earning forty-five cents. Even this poor pittance was reduced to forty by an express charge which she was obliged to pay for the carriage of the goods. Another woman makes trousers, or "pants," some of them "custom" work, for ten cents a pair. Another makes cheap overcoats at four cents apiece, another knee "pants" for boys at sixteen cents a dozen pairs. Still another, an English woman, is working on fine cloth pants. By working very long hours she can complete four pairs a day. She receives thirteen cents a pair. Perhaps the most painfully suggestive among many harrowing cases is that of a young woman who was making overalls, in which by actual measurement there were in each pair 32½ feet of sewing, for five cents a pair, less expressage for the lot, to and fro. Says a writer in the *Christian Union*, from whose account we quote: "The poor girl stated that while she was compelled to make a dozen pairs a day, in the House of Correction, where some of the work was done, they had but to finish eight pairs a day and had comfortable lodgings and good food." Was it strange "that she had sometimes asked herself whether it would not be better to commit some crime and be incarcerated, where life would be far more endurable than in the close and noisome tenement?" Such are some of the fruits of the "sweating" process, as carried on in the "cultured" city of Boston, the home of American Philosophy. One would be tempted to preach a homily to his Republican neighbours on the blackness of human greed, or to moralize on the terrible fruits of the much belauded law of competition, in business life across the border, were one but sure that nothing of the kind is going on in our own city and country. But when we think of the prices at which many articles of ready-made clothing and other products of hand-labour are placarded for sale in the doors and windows of shops in the city of Toronto, we can but shrewdly guess and fear that the sweater is not unknown in our fair city, and that if we could but go behind the scenes and trace the process of manufacture of some of these marvellously cheap articles,

we might find that those who purchase them are dealing in the very life-forces of their fellow-beings. Alas, that even in our most prosperous places "bread should be so dear and human life so cheap."

**W**E have on former occasions commented on the injury that is likely to be inflicted on British publishers by the provision of the American Copyright Act which requires that, in order to enjoy its protection, the works of foreign authors must be printed from plates prepared in the United States. In other words, all the mechanical work necessary to publication must be done on this side of the ocean. If the same conditions were laid down and enforced by the British Copyright law in regard to the publishing of the works of United States authors in Great Britain, the two selfish enactments might counterbalance each other and neither country be much the worse. As matters are, the advantage seems to be wholly on the side of the American publisher. It has been popularly supposed, and the thought is one of the first that suggests itself, that the result of the clauses in the United States Act referred to might be that both the English and American editions of new and important works of British authors would be printed from American plates. But here another difficulty, and a very serious one, presents itself. American plates, as the *Times* has pointed out, involve American spelling, and American spelling, as we all know, is an abomination in the eyes of British readers. The conservative instincts of the people, so slow to accept innovations, would scarcely be able to survive the loss of the *u* in *labour*, *honour*, etc., and of various other superfluous letters in other words. The outcome of the difficulty will be watched with a good deal of curiosity. Meanwhile, British authors seem disposed to accept the new American law with satisfaction and thankfulness, leaving all such minor matters to adjust themselves, as they will soon do, to the new conditions.

#### OTTAWA LETTER.

**I**T was broad daylight on Wednesday morning last week when the division on Sir Richard Cartwright's amendment to the tariff resolutions was reached at last, but the galleries held a number of spectators, among them not a few of the sex described as fair. That adjective must be confined to physical qualities, for if ever you wish to hear the purest partisanship—it would hardly do to say unblushingly expressed—the talk in the little coterie of women who affect "going to the House" affords the opportunity. Even admiration of Mr. Laurier's or Mr. Chapleau's oratory, or appreciation of the conversational powers of certain "whips," is qualified by expression of feeling too strong and too keenly worded to be merely regret that the particular man under discussion is on the wrong side. His female critic is invariably on the right one. And as for the uncouthness, stupidity or general "bad form" of somebody, is it not always made up for by his being "such a good Conservative, you know," or Liberal, as the case may be? This simplicity of motive and thought is very feminine, and therefore doubtless very charming. Perhaps it but expresses the relative crudity of the Canadian masculine idea of politics. It leaves, however, the field still open for any ambitious woman who is qualified, capable and desirous to exercise in Ottawa that subtle, refined, and at times potent, influence which is well known at Westminster, but which has never been possessed to any extent here, even by the wives of the last two Premiers, with all the genuine respect and liking each of these gained in society at large and in their political relations.

The vote gave the Government a majority of twenty-six in an almost full House. Two seats vacant, which may fairly be put down as Conservative, would offset the possible defection of Messrs. Tarte and Savard, so this figure represents pretty well the actual majority. It shows that the Conservatives, in spite of minor differences, have made up their minds to stand solidly together on their old trade platform, and have not weakened at all in their waving of the old flag though the old leader is gone.

With the tariff debate out of the way, the clearing of the decks for the next serious encounter at close quarters began. The remainder of the week was given to legislation and a number of Bills, nearly all of minor importance, were passed and sent to the Senate, which body is now pretty busy. Among the incidents of preparation for the political struggle in the bye-elections was a Bill to extend the time for preparing the Lists of Voters under the Electoral Franchise Act from the 1st to the 15th of August. All available recruits are being actively drummed up by both parties, and the Revising Officers are having a busy time of it.

The Royal Assent that converts a Bill into an Act was given on Friday to this measure, two other Government Bills and a lot of private Bills, including four divorce Bills. For the third time this session the Assent has been given by deputy, as is usual during the course of a session, even when the Governor-General is in town. On this occasion