

Prince Bismarck has fared badly at the hands of the German Reichstag. His pet Tobacco Bill has been rejected by a vote of 276 to 42. Notwithstanding his most strenuous efforts, his favorite financial schemes have suffered shipwreck. As a sign of the times this is deeply significant. It shews that Bismarck's is no longer a name to conjure with; that, however great his administration of Foreign Affairs, the intelligence of the country has pronounced decisively against his mischievous protective schemes. It points, moreover, to the growth throughout the country of a liberal spirit, impatient of Bismarck and his paternal theories of government. The object of the Tobacco Bill, by giving the Imperial Government sole control of the tobacco trade, was to provide it with a source of revenue independent of the contributions of individual states, and thus enable it to carry out its policy without the check that possession of the purse strings always gives the people's representatives. Bismarck is not the man to give up, under any circumstances, a scheme on which his heart is set, and more will doubtless be heard of the Tobacco Bill. Meanwhile, however, the stubborn opposition it has met with, shews that a spirit, whose force he has not accurately estimated, is rising in the nation, hostile alike to the absolutism of the Empire, the galling yoke of military bondage under which it groans, and the pernicious financial schemes which the Chancellor, in his short-sighted eagerness for a well-filled treasury, has devised.

The attitude assumed by the German Social Democrats in the debates on the Tobacco Bill, was noteworthy. They opposed the Bill, but they recognized its socialistic character and tendency. Prince Bismarck out-herods Herod in his zeal to pander to the socialistic cravings of the people, and thus deprive the social democrats of the influence they possess. These, therefore, are foremost among his political opponents. The necessary connection between Bismarck's paternal theories of Government and protective schemes, and socialism, they readily admit and welcome. They oppose them only on the ground of their aristocratic, anti-democratic character.

"Theoretically," said Vollmer, a social democrat, "we accept the socialistic character of the monopoly as a payment on account of our claims and as an acknowledgment of our just demands. If a trade is carried on by the Government, it is socialism; confiscation of large means of production is an essential injury to private property, and on that account, although only as a means to a definite end, will be welcomed by my socialistic brethren. We reject the tobacco monopoly, although it bears a socialistic character; we do so because it is not a democratic measure."

This is plain speaking. It is a public avowal of what has long been evident enough; that between Protection and Socialism there is a necessary connection; that the latter is merely a more extended application of the principles, as it certainly is the logical outcome, of the former. Once adopt the maxim that the State, as such, can become a source of wealth to any class, and Socialism in its worst forms is reached by easy and inevitable stages. If to one class, why not also to all? And between trade or commercial interference on the part of Government so as to increase the wealth of any class of the community, and monopoly of one or all of the sources of wealth, there is no essential difference, but only a difference of degree.

The origin of life upon the earth has of late years been attracting increased attention. The remarkable discoveries in Biology in connection with the attempts to verify the theory of Evolution, have only served to bring it into greater prominence. Hitherto amongst the most obscure, and by many confessedly regarded as among those ultimate problems of thought to which no answer is possible, the dawn of life upon this planet may be expected to engage still more earnest thought, and prove the occasion of some startling discoveries, especially if the possibility of its having been derived from some other planet can be demonstrated, as seems to be the case from the researches of Dr. Hahn of Berlin. A year ago Dr. Hahn announced the discovery of organic remains in meteorites. His investigations had been carefully made, 600 genuine specimens in the museums of Tübingen and Vienna having been examined by him. In these he claimed to have detected organic remains, which he identified as chiefly belonging to the most ancient forms of porous corallines, and including no fewer than 50 varieties of these creatures. The worthy Doctor and his discoveries were laughed at by many at the time. They seem, however, to have impressed Dr. Weindland, who at once set about to verify or disprove them. After a year's patient microscopic investigation, it is now reported that he has satisfied himself of the entire correctness of Dr. Hahn's observations. If true, this is an astonishing discovery, both in itself, and in the boundless field for investigation and speculation it will open up.

The demolition of the forts at Alexandria by the English fleet, was an act of self-defence. In spite of warnings and promises to the contrary, Admiral Seymour found that the fortifications on the harbour were being steadily increased, and the safety of his ships being thus imperilled, he had no alternative but to reduce them to ruin. The tension, however, continues, and at any moment a crisis may be precipitated. Arabi Pasha and his followers are a set of military adventurers. It is the height of absurdity to talk of the existence of a National party in Egypt whom they represent. They are striving merely to place the country under a military despotism, beneath which the very semblance of justice and good government, would disappear. Arabi's removal is, therefore, imperative, as the first step towards a lasting settlement; and on this point there can be little doubt that the Imperial Government will adhere to their ultimatum. The recent rioting at Alexandria revealed a dangerous condition of affairs that cannot be ignored. The interests of other nations in Egypt may be more or less sentimental; those of England at least, are real and vital, and demand the removal of a state of things by which not only the lives of Europeans, but the peace of Europe, is constantly endangered. Meanwhile the Government have acted wisely in seeking to preserve a European concert, and to avoid unnecessary complications, by a conference of the great powers. But whatever may be the outcome of its deliberations, the policy of England is clear. Along with the other powers as the mandatories of Europe, or, if need be, by itself, Arabi and his unprincipled adventurers must be summarily chastised, and order and a settled Government once more established.