

place in England, either or both of which may be the beginning of changes the end of which it is now impossible to foresee. We refer to the simultaneous meetings of the Commons and of the National Liberal Federation. It is predicted that each will take an attitude of determined hostility to the House of Lords. Probably the only hesitancy, if there be any, in either case, will be that caused by doubt as to the extent to which the masses are prepared to follow the Liberal leaders in a crusade for the "mending" or "ending" of this ancient estate of the realm. This question, in its turn, will be decided mainly by the extent to which the masses resent the rejection of the Home Rule Bill, and the modification, or mutilation, as they may deem it, of each of the other two great measures of the session. Have the Lords' amendments really emasculated the Employers' Liability Bill and the Parish Councils Bill, or have they merely affected details, leaving the underlying principle of each intact? These are the questions at issue. Mr. Smalley, the somewhat famous correspondent of the *New York Tribune*, does not help us much here. He says, at the outset of a long despatch, which is now before us, that the Lords' amendments to both measures are "matters of detail"; that there is hardly a broad, visible issue in either, on which to raise the country. But again, with singular forgetfulness or inconsistency, he tells us in the same despatch that some of the amendments to the Parish Councils Bill are "extreme, some illiberal, some certainly unwise." Mr. Chamberlain does not hesitate to declare that the Lords are really just now the true representatives of the people. If this be so, all efforts of the Radicals, either in or out of the House, to stir up popular feeling to the pitch of decreeing the abolition of the Upper Chamber, must fail ignominiously. On the other hand, nothing is more certain in British politics than that the people will not permit the hereditary Chamber to stand in the way of any advanced legislation which they have once made up their minds to have.

There is, however, another influence to be reckoned with, both in the House and in the Federation, which Mr. Smalley and the other cable correspondents fail, we think, to estimate at its true value. In fact, they scarcely refer to it at all, so far as we have observed. This influence is that of the Nonconformists, who constitute a very important element of Mr. Gladstone's strength, if they are not really the backbone of his party. The great majority of these Nonconformists, as is well known, care more about disestablishment than about Irish Home Rule, or even about improved municipal government, though as the essential aim of the latter is to dethrone the Squire and the Parson, so long the chief powers in local politics, and to set up the people in

their places, they have, undoubtedly, a strong interest in the Parish Councils Bill. Among the Nonconformists those of Wales are in the most dangerous mood just now. The *British Weekly* tells us that the defeat of the official Liberal candidate in the Horncastle election was received with jubilation all over Wales. The Welsh representatives in the House of Commons are a small but compact body. They have seen the promised disestablishment bill so long delayed that they are becoming very anxious and determined, and it is more than hinted that they may some day leave the Government in the lurch in the House, just as their sympathizers left the nominee of the Government in the lurch at Horncastle. The tone and action of the Liberal Federation at the present meeting will probably determine the question of the party loyalty of the Welsh members through the coming session. If the Federation reaffirms, without hesitation or modification, its former position in respect to disestablishment, the Liberal leaders may count upon the continued support of the Welsh contingent. If there is manifest any disposition to procrastinate, or "hedge" on the question of disestablishment, that support can no longer be relied on. Thus it will be seen, from every point of view, that the struggle between the forces of Radicalism and Conservatism in Great Britain bids fair to be fiercer than at any time in recent history, while the issues to be decided are probably broader than were ever before submitted to popular vote in the history of the kingdom. In a word, the triumph of Radicalism means Revolution, whether beneficent or baneful.

The delay in the assembling of Parliament is beginning to call forth protests even from supporters of the Government. It is feared that important interests may suffer in consequence of such delay. Moreover, as is well known, the sitting of the great council of the nation during the heat and consequent lassitude of mid-summer is not conducive either to good legislation, or to good temper on the part of the legislators. The latter are likely to be much more irregular in attendance and to have their attention when present much more distracted by other matters, in the business and holiday seasons, than would be the case were Parliament to do its work during the less busy months of winter and early spring. Hence, for some years before his death, Sir John A. Macdonald seemed to be impressed with the desirableness of having early sessions, and to be working in that direction. So far as appears, there is at present no cause for unwonted delay other than the desire of the Government to watch the course of tariff-legislation in the United States, and to know what shape the Wilson Bill, if passed, will finally assume. Whether it is necessary, or consistent with the interests and dignity of the Dominion Parliament, to thus regulate its movements by those of the

Congress of a foreign nation, is a question which we shall not just now attempt to answer. There is, however, much force in the contention that were our Government in downright earnest in regard to its promised tariff reform, it would hasten to give to languishing industries and especially to depressed farming populations in the Northwest and elsewhere, the relief which they so much need from the oppressive burdens which the present tariff lays upon them. For the same reason one would have supposed that our rulers would have been anxious to anticipate their neighbors in the work of reform, and to have, by their own liberal measures, given all possible aid and encouragement to those who are so bravely struggling, in the face of tremendous difficulties, to accomplish a reform which, while of course made without reference to our interests, will unquestionably, if accomplished, materially improve the conditions of life in Canada, as well as in the adjoining country. The present Dominion Government is the last which the public would have expected to find holding their own legislation in abeyance in order to get their cue from Washington.

After the foregoing article was written, but probably not in consequence of it, an extra of the *Canadian Gazette* was issued, calling Parliament to meet on March 15th for the transaction of business. A month only is thus left for preparation for what, unless all present signs fail, will prove to be one of the most important sessions that have yet been held. The great question will, of course, be that of tariff revision. That the Government will fulfil its promise by proposing some substantial reductions of the present tariff goes without saying. Failure to do this in the present state of public feeling would jeopardize its very existence. That it will endeavor to preserve, at the same time, the protective character of the system is equally certain, from repeated declarations of the Finance Minister and other leading members of the Administration. That its proposals will, for this reason, fail to satisfy the leaders of the Opposition is a matter of course, for the latter are just as unequivocally pledged to the very opposite principle—that of tariff for revenue as a present resting-place, a kind of half-way house on the high road to absolute free trade. This difference in principle and aim marks a dividing zone between the policies of the two parties sufficiently broad to form, as no doubt it will, the battle-ground for many a fierce oratorical contest. On which side of the zone the majority of the people, who are so unmistakably demanding reduction of taxation, will range themselves, it will be unsafe to predict. Much will, no doubt, depend upon the extent of the reform offered by the Government. But, aside from this vital question there will, no doubt, be much bitter conflict between the two parties on other