

views which may be held concerning them. To some—we should be surprised not to find certain members of the Government among them—the making of speeches on public affairs when Parliament is not sitting is a pernicious custom developed in a degenerate age. To such minds a Government appears as an agent to whom a general authority has been very properly delegated by a young and inexperienced employer, an agent liable to be called to account not from time to time, but only once for all, and under no sanction but the power of summary dismissal: an agent whom you must no more embarrass in his operations by impatient and meddlesome inquiries than you would worry your gardener by digging up his seeds to make sure that they are sprouting. That which is some day to be brought to table for the final test, must be planted in the dark and kept in the dark—the longer the better. The duty of the principal is to trust his agent absolutely, and even on the verge of apparent ruin to possess his soul in silent patience. This view, in time of war, leads directly to a rigorous censorship and a hankering after martial law: it is not unlikely to develop into a contempt for public opinion, and it certainly has been known to produce a lack of mutual sympathy between the people and their representatives. It is a view which is characteristic of one kind of Englishman, and it is honestly and courageously held: we respect it, but with none the less certainty that though commanded by all the honesty and courage in the world the sun will not stand still. The times are changed; and not only, with deference to Lord Salisbury, by the diminution of time of transit. We doubt if the news of Colenso or the recent anxiety as to the prolongation of the war, would have made a much less painful impression upon the mind of the public if South Africa had been three months rather than three weeks voyage distant, and the telegraph had not been yet invented. We do not believe that such a theory could be supported by a reference to history. Disasters and anxieties did indeed produce somewhat different results a century ago, but for another reason: the minority who con