

indeed, it were strong enough to compel attention to its demands. We have also seen, not long since, the United States Government refusing to admit, in the case of Chili, the very principle insisted on by itself when it was the ox of the other party which happened to be gored. It is so far satisfactory to find the Government of the Republic now indirectly admitting the injustice of its course, though one cannot help reflecting, as we have intimated, that a more magnanimous nation would have admitted the defect at the time when an expression of the regret would have gone far to heal the wounded feelings of the weaker nation. As we pointed out at that time, the plea of inability on the part of a nation to do what is just and right, because of defect in its own laws or constitution, could never be accepted as a satisfactory reason for withholding from another nation the satisfaction required by the unwritten international law, since otherwise any enormity might be committed without possibility of redress. The United States were clear enough on the general principle involved when they refused, and rightly refused, to accept the plea of defective legislation as freeing Great Britain from responsibility for the escape of the *Alabama*. It is the business of a nation to make its legal machinery effective for the prevention of wrong to other nations or their citizens.

LIKE a bolt out of the blue sky came the defeat which led to the resignation of the French Government a couple of weeks since. The event might almost warrant the framing of a new proverb to the effect that there is danger in the *via media*. Perhaps the old metaphor of the two stools will answer the purpose. The defeat was the result of an astonishing coalition for the nonce between the extreme Conservatives and the extreme Radicals. It was like a temporary union between fire and water. The explanation was, however, simple enough, though such a crisis would not have been possible under a system in which the party principle is more logically carried out and members trained to look at future as well as immediate results. The difficulty arose in connection with the Government's Associations Bill, a measure which limits the rights of constitutional association in several important respects, and which was supposed to be directed against the religious orders. On this ground it was enthusiastically supported and pushed forward by the Radicals. But in the course of debate M. de Freycinet, the Premier, took occasion to declare emphatically that the Government had no animus against the clergy and that the Bill was not aimed at the established orders. The Pope had assured the Ministry of his approval. He had also by his recent encyclical recognized the Republic, declaring that it is the duty of all good Catholics to accept the legally established Government and not attempt to change its form. The prospect of an understanding between the Government and the Church was displeasing alike to the Monarchists, who saw in it the death-blow to their hopes of a restoration, and to the anti-clerical Radicals, whose programme includes the disruption of the alliance between Church and State. The consequence was that both refused to vote the resolution of confidence for which M. de Freycinet asked. The Cabinet handed in its resignation to President Carnot. No other party being strong enough to carry on the Government, the upshot is, as appears from recent despatches, that after several abortive attempts, an Administration has been formed with M. Loubet at its head and M. de Freycinet and other members of the late Government in important positions. The new Prime Minister is said to be a staunch moderate Republican, though he does not seem to have given any indications of special ability during many years in the House. The probabilities are that things will move on in very much the same course as if the former Government had remained in office. Meanwhile the episode has given to the French Chambers and people an object-lesson, in the shape of a bit of fresh experience in the working of responsible Government.

THE information yet to hand concerning the riots in Berlin is far too meagre to warrant any very positive opinion as to their real significance. How far are they merely the outcome of discontent on the part of the unemployed with existing industrial and social conditions? To what extent are they the unregulated and lawless expression of a growing spirit of genuine democracy, in revolt against absolutism on the throne and privileged aristocracy in the State? No doubt the immediate actors in the work of disorder and pillage belong neither to the ranks of honest industry nor to those of organized demo-

cracy, but to the anarchist and rowdy masses, which are always swarming on the outskirts of civilization, ready to take advantage of the first indications of serious discontent, whether political, social, or industrial, as an opportunity for the plunder and outrage in which they delight as their native element. But for that very reason these outbursts of popular fury are generally found to have a deeper meaning than any which shows itself on the surface. The coming together of the social vultures is too often the first indication of serious disease in the body politic. It has long been one of the wonders of civilization that one of the most intelligent, energetic and brave of the nations of Christendom should submit so quietly to a *regime* such as would precipitate a revolution in Great Britain in a twelve-month. It seems incredible that even the staid Germans can very long endure to be addressed in such terms as those in which their Emperor delights to assert his divine right to rule over them. Some of his latest utterances bring irresistibly to mind the trite Roman saying touching the manner in which the gods deal with the monarchs whom they doom to downfall. It is not easy to conceive how anything less than a monomania or a judicial blindness could prompt a monarch, under a nominally constitutional system of government, to speak as William is reported to have done at Bradenburg the other day. Even a Bourbon would almost have shrunk from coupling the hereditary ruler with the Almighty as those in whom the people must trust for the "quieter days" in which presumptuous critics would stop "nagging" at their heaven-sent rulers; or from advising discontented persons to "shake the dust" of their native land from their feet, in order to leave those rulers free to work their own sweet will in the nation. The present disturbances will no doubt be put down quickly with a strong hand. Indeed, the most liberal government in the world could do no less than enforce the reign of law and order in the State. The Anarchists, who are the worst enemies of reform, though themselves the product and proof of the abuses which make reform necessary, may prolong the struggle for a little time, and by so doing retard the gaining of the needed changes by proper, constitutional methods. But there is little room for doubt that the irritating assumptions of the Emperor, superadded to the social and industrial inequalities which are becoming more and more deeply felt, are hastening the day when the voice of the German people will make itself heard demanding in irresistible tones such radical reforms in the system of government as will bring it more nearly into accord with the self-governing principles which are embodying themselves in the foundations of every modern free nation.

#### OTTAWA LETTER.

PARLIAMENT was opened on Thursday afternoon, 25th February. We are living in a very democratic age, and are a very democratic people; but judging from the crowds which gathered in Parliament Square the love of pageantry is no less strong in us than in our fathers and grandfathers. The ceremony varies little if at all from year to year. There are the usual anxious spectators without the House, around the main entrance and within the Senate Chamber. For years a detachment of the Governor-General's Foot Guards have formed the guard of honour, the band of that battalion has played the National Anthem and the Princess Louise Guards have galloped up Sussex Street as the cannons boomed from Nepean Point. Lord Stanley makes a point of being punctual, and it was three o'clock precisely as he descended from his carriage and passed through the assembled people to the Senate Chamber, preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms and followed by Colonel Gzowski, A.D.C. to the Queen, Major-General Herbert, Viscount Kilcourse, A.D.C., Captain Streetfield, A.D.C., and other military notables. The Senate Chamber is always beautiful, and when Parliament opens it is brilliant. Ladies in full evening dress, the judges of the Supreme Court in their scarlet and ermine, the varied uniforms of the military, the purple of the Roman ecclesiastics and the sombre black of the dignified Senators made altogether a striking and unique scene. In due season the faithful Commons trooped into the presence of Her Majesty's representative, having been duly summoned by that inimitable master of ceremonial bows, Mr. Kimber. His Excellency sat upon the throne. On his right stood Mr. Abbott, gorgeous in his embroidered Windsor uniform; to his left stood Senator Frank Smith. These two were the only Ministers around the throne; others came in with the Commons and remained before the bar of the Senate. To those who witnessed many openings of Parliament, there was an element of sadness throughout the proceedings. Even yet, Ottawa seems hardly Ottawa without Sir John Macdonald; and very certainly his presence is, and will long be, missed in Parliament. His jaunty, cheerful air, his bright look and hearty laugh as he shook hands with political friend or

political foe, were sadly missed while the Commons were waiting the accustomed summons. However, there was an attempt at cheerfulness. Tories and Grits mingled and greeted each other as warriors of old used to do before the strife began. Mr. Laurier shook hands with every one and had a kindly smile for all. Sir John Thompson looked happy and contented, but did not for a moment forget the dignity which is his especially strong characteristic. In a private member's seat on the Opposition side of the House, used by the Government overflow, sat Sir Hector Langevin. He looks worn, old and ill. Jaundice has been playing havoc with Sir Hector. He appears to take his novel position quietly, and busied himself in writing letters, now and then rising to shake hands with an old acquaintance, or to tap his desk as a mark of applause when a new Conservative member was introduced.

Mr. Foster was not in the House, neither was Sir Richard Cartwright, nor Mr. Mills. There is no disguising the fact that the Liberals who were present were gloomy, and their gloominess seems to increase with each day that passes. The oldest politicians say they cannot account for the reverses which the party have met with in Ontario and elsewhere, and it is rumoured that there is much dissatisfaction in their camp. It is said that Mr. Laurier means to resign the leadership, but this story comes from a Conservative source. Among the Liberals there seems to be little sympathy with the change which would reduce the French leader and promote Sir Richard Cartwright. The general opinion is that during this session at all events there will be no change in the Leadership of the Opposition, though it is not unnatural that in view of the reverses which the party has sustained Mr. Laurier may resign in caucus as a mere matter of form.

The Conservatives are jubilant to a degree. They talk of fifty of a majority and their only fear is dissension in their own ranks. They apprehend that Mr. McCarthy who laid low during the crisis, and while the party was weak, may spring a bomb on the House by some of his anti-French measures and set all the country at odds and ends again.

The reply to the Address from the Throne was to have been moved on Friday, but as Mr. Laurier was unwell Sir John Thompson moved that the matter be left over until Monday.

The mover of the Address was Mr. Northrup, the young member for East Hastings. A new member needs to be unusually able to create much of an impression under the trying circumstances of making a speech almost as formal and colourless as that to which it is a response. Mr. Northrup, however, is above the average parliamentary orator. He speaks fluently, audibly and rapidly; he had the good sense to learn his rôle. There was, however, nothing particularly striking in what he said, nor did anyone expect there would be.

Mr. Bain (Soulanges), the seconder, spoke in French. As a matter of policy and in view of the coming elections in Quebec, it was a neat little compliment to the French-Canadians and a sort of confirmation on the part of the Government of the ancient agreement whereby the French and English languages are on an equality on the floor of Parliament. This little incident may have no inconsiderable influence upon the habitant who is utterly indifferent to the graver questions involved in the election. It was a pleasure when Mr. Laurier rose in his seat. It is always a treat to listen to him; he spoke with force, but with courtesy and even with kindness. Naturally he pointed his guns at the census, contending that it was ridiculous to talk of prosperity in a young country like Canada which had only increased five hundred thousand in population during the last decade. This has become an old story, but an old story will stand a good deal of repeating by a man like Mr. Laurier. Sir John Thompson, in his reply, was the impersonation of dignity. He contented himself with replying to the few objections raised by the Leader of the Opposition.

Just before the House adjourned Mr. Laurier read a press despatch announcing that Sir Julian Pauncefort and Mr. Blaine for their respective Governments had signed the Behring Sea Treaty, subject to the approval of the British Parliament and the American Congress. He asked Sir John Thompson if the treaty would need to be ratified by the Canadian Parliament, and said that in view of the interest this matter had for the Canadian people it would be a great disappointment if the acquiescence of this Government were not required. Sir John in reply announced that at present he could not say whether or not the question would be submitted to the Canadian Parliament. It might be held by the Home Government that it was an imperial concern and did not come within the range of Colonial jurisdiction, and he appeared to be of the opinion that while the treaty might be formally submitted to this Parliament it would not depend upon its action for ratification.

While the debate was going on in the Commons a matter of some interest was taking place in the Senate Chamber. The address was moved by Honourable Mr. Landry, the new Senator from the Stadacona district of Quebec, and was seconded by Honourable A. A. Macdonald of Prince Edward Island. It was a great surprise when after the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, the Honourable Mr. Scott, had resumed his seat, the Honourable Mr. Boulton, probably the most vigorous and talented Senator in the Chamber, commenced a speech announcing his disapprobation of the fiscal policy of the Government.