

tendency they belong to the same category, and are somewhat ominous. Meanwhile, those interested in the lumber business in Michigan are petitioning Congress for the imposition of various retaliatory duties upon Canadian lumber, and it is not unlikely, seeing that the Republicans will soon have control of both Houses, that their suggestions may be to some extent adopted. The advocates of the proposed tax upon fresh fish urge that it is rendered necessary by the bounty given by the Dominion Government to Canadian fishermen. The Canadian will, it is alleged, still have the advantage over the American fishermen in the home market of the latter. But, apart from the injury to both countries from the interference with profitable trade and the increase in the cost of necessities, there is more or less of danger as well as of damage in policies which thus harass special industries. It is not pleasant to see neighbouring peoples drifting in the direction of non-intercourse. These straws seem to indicate that the wind is just now blowing that way. Each party can inflict considerable annoyance and damage upon the other, but the bigger and richer has a tremendous advantage.

PROMINENT amongst the measures promised in the Speech at the opening of the Quebec Legislature is the District Magistrates' Act of last session which was disallowed by the Dominion Government. This Act is to be reintroduced "with certain modifications rendered necessary by circumstances." Whether these modifications will be of such a nature as to save the Act from a second Federal veto remains to be seen. As one of the objects for which it is to be re-enacted is "to assert the rights of this Legislature," it seems probable that issue is to be again joined with the Ottawa authorities. The Government "still expect to carry out" the conversion of the consolidated debt of the Province. It may be hoped that under the pressure of almost universal condemnation, and in view of the threatened injury to the financial credit of the Province, if for no better reason, Premier Mercier will modify or eliminate the compulsory clause, though no intimation is given of any such intention. Another question of more than local interest is that concerning the Jesuits' Estates Act of last session. The Speech announces that the carrying out of the provisions of that Act has remained and will remain suspended until the expiration of the period within which disallowance may take place. Strong pressure is being brought to bear upon the Dominion Government by Protestants of the Province to have the Act disallowed, but in view of the political embarrassments which would be sure to follow, seeing that the Act has the sanction of the Vatican, there is little probability that the Premier will venture to veto it. Nor is it by any means clear that its disallowance would be constitutionally justifiable, for however objectionable the Act may be in itself, it would be difficult to show that it is not fairly within the scope of the legislative powers of the Province.

THE remarkable decision given the other day by Judge Barrett, of New York, in the matter of the Sugar Trust Monopoly, may well encourage Mr. Clark Wallace, and those who sympathize with him, in bringing his bill again before Parliament. The grounds of public policy, on which Judge Barrett rests his decision, are necessarily similar to those which underlie Mr. Wallace's Bill, and the penalty, forfeiture of corporate rights, is, so far, substantially the same. "Fortunately," says the New York Judge, "the law is able to protect itself against abuses of the privileges which it grants, and while further legislation, both preventive and disciplinary, may be suitable to check and punish exceptional wrongs, yet there is existing, to use the phrase of a distinguished English judge in a noted case, 'plain law and plain sense' enough to deal with corporate abuses like the present—abuses which, if allowed to thrive and become general, must inevitably lead to the oppression of the people, and ultimately to the subversion of their political rights." It might, indeed, be argued that on the extremely broad principle laid down by Judge Barrett, special legislation is scarcely needed. "Plain law and plain sense" might be considered sufficient for the purpose of correcting all abuses. But few judges, perhaps, would be disposed to act on so liberal an interpretation of their powers. Nor can it be regarded as by any means certain that the decision, based on such general principles, will be, in the absence of specific legislation, sustained in the higher Courts. On the other hand, if all are agreed that the trusts and combines, as formed and operated, are inimical to the rights and welfare of the public, there can be no objection to such straight-forward legislation as may put the powers of the Courts beyond dispute.

THE best book that has ever been written about the United States has been given to the world by an Englishman. This is conceded on all hands, conceded by the Americans themselves. For completeness in treatment, patience in investigation, fulness of knowledge, mastery of detail, impartiality in judgment, freedom from prejudice, and just, kindly appreciation, Mr. Bryce's *American Commonwealth* has at once taken first place. The fact is beyond question, but years will be required to show its full significance. The judicial spirit in which the book is written will cause it to be read appreciatively by the people of the United States, and so read, it may be safely predicted, it will be to them the source of a vast and valuable fund of information about themselves, their institutions, characteristics and tendencies, such as has never before been accessible. In other countries, especially in England, it will do more, probably, than any other work that has ever appeared to give enlightenment, dispel prejudice, and help in every way to a better understanding of their trans-Atlantic kinsmen. On the other hand, the very fact that such a work has been produced by an Englishman cannot fail to have an excellent effect upon the tone and temper of the people of the United States towards all England itself. This is an aspect of the case which is well worth noting, and upon which both nations may be congratulated. As the *London Times* says:—"Written with full knowledge, by a distinguished Englishman, to dispel vulgar prejudices and to help kindred people to understand each other better, it is in a sense an embassy of peace, a message of good will from one nation to another." As such it is most opportune.

TWO announcements of some interest came across the Atlantic in Monday's cablegrams. "The rumour that the British Government will appoint a successor to Lord Sackville as Minister to the United States, after the inauguration of President Harrison, is confirmed." This means of course, that no minister will be sent to Washington during the remainder of President Cleveland's term of office. This was pretty well understood before, but is only now put into diplomatic phraseology. On the other hand it also announced that Minister Phelps will sail for the United States on January 31st, anticipating the period when his formal retirement might have been expected, in the ordinary course of events, by a few weeks. This means that England is not to be allowed to have a monopoly of the dignified resentment business. The Great Republic is going to retaliate in kind. Happily this international sulking is not now the dangerous game it would once have been. The Ambassador at a foreign court is not the important and indispensable functionary he was in other days. By annihilating distance the telegraph has greatly diminished both his influence and his usefulness. It is even gravely proposed in the House of Representatives to do away with the office so far as the royal courts are concerned. The suggestion will not be acted on. The United States, with all her alleged Republican simplicity, is far too conventional, too emulous of the methods of the effete monarchies to venture on such an innovation as that. Nevertheless, things will go on pretty much as before, both at London and at Washington, though neither Government has a full fledged diplomat at the other's Court. There may be a little embarrassment about the return to the old usage when the proper time arrives, but Lord Salisbury has left an open door, and will not, we dare say, hesitate to take the initiative. President Harrison will follow suit, and in a short time all will be forgotten and friendly relations be re-established on their old serene basis. We may, at least, hope so.

THE "National Congress" of India which assembled at Allahabad on the 26th of December, seems to have been conducted with an ability and a moderation which augur well for its future success. Over 1400 delegates were in attendance. The speech of the chairman and the resolutions proposed are understood to indicate that all the efforts of the "Congress" will be devoted to the single end of securing representation in the Legislative Council. It is proposed that the members of the Council be increased to thirty, half of the number to be elected, and half nominated by the crown. This seems to those accustomed to representative institutions a sufficiently modest demand. The *Spectator* objects that "it transmutes the vital principle of Indian Government, as thenceforward the secretary of State could give no final order either for the passing of a law or a military expedition." This is, of course, true, but it is a result inseparable from any effective introduction of the principle of self government. "The vital principle" of the present system is, as Lord Dufferin so frankly pointed

out, simple absolutism. The alternative must necessarily be such a curtailment of executive authority as will give the native representatives a real share in making the laws by which they are governed, and deciding upon the military expeditions for which they are taxed. The crucial difficulty, upon which Lord Dufferin lays so much stress, that of race and religious jealousies and hatreds, will emerge when the question of the nature of the electorate is reached. Whether any plan can be devised which would not give all power to the Hindoos, and infuriate the Mussulmans, seems to be more than doubted by those who ought to know. The capacity of the educated natives for administration seems to be pretty well proved by the success of the few municipalities which are already organized. Mr. Caine, M.P., who has been making a study of these, says that they will compare very favourably with similar corporations in England.

SELDOME have the civilizing, organizing and governing powers of the British race been shown in a more remarkable manner than in the history of the Malay Peninsula during the last fifteen years. Within that period, as is shown by a recent account in the *London Times*, the Malay States have been converted from disjointed centres of piracy and faction-fighting, into what is practically a Malay Federation of peaceful and wealth-producing communities. Private wars have been put down, roads opened up, railways and telegraphs introduced, rivers made navigable, forests cleared away, mines developed, and rich and remunerative crops, previously almost unknown, produced and cultivated. And all this has been accomplished without military force or menace—save in the single instance of the punishment of the murderers of Mr. Birch, the British Resident in Perak, in 1875—mainly through the moral influence and under the guidance of not more than a couple of dozen of British Residents, stationed at various important points, pursuant to a policy conceived by Sir Andrew Clarke, when Governor of the Straits Settlements some fifteen years ago, and carried out by him and his successors.

IN these days when we hear so much of the poverty, crime and wretchedness of outcast London, it is refreshing to have the obverse of the medal occasionally held up before our eyes. The Rev. George W. McCree, a well-known pastor and philanthropist of Southwark, sends to the *Daily News* a very encouraging account of the progress that is being made in removing the causes of "the bitter cry" that still goes up from the abodes of poverty and misery. Mr. McCree is convinced that the poor of London are far less poor, less ignorant, less wretched and less vicious than they were twenty-five years ago. In the matter of sports the people are less cruel, brutal, and depraved than they were. They are cleaner in their habits, and consequently more healthy. There is less disease and a wider acquaintance with sanitary laws. Not only can nearly all the poor read, but they do read, and with much that is evil there is far more that is healthful in their literary tastes. The consequence is that they are far more quick and intelligent, and aspire more than they did to further social improvement. There is every reason to hope that this picture is true to the facts. The active philanthropy of the day is turning the electric lights of sanitary science and Christian sympathy upon the darkest corners and slums of the great city, and revealing depths of misery whose existence was unknown and unsuspected. But the light does not create the misery, though it may help to disperse it. The knowledge that the evil is being gradually overcome will not discourage philanthropic effort, but rather stimulate it by adding the impetus of quickened hope. And if the progress has been encouraging in the past, it should be much more rapid in the future, for never before were so many powerful agencies at work for the regeneration of the "lapsed masses."

SAMOA is just now becoming the object of considerable attention. The question of chief interest to the outside world is whether the United States will feel called on to interfere to counteract the effects of German intermeddling. Not much reliance can be placed upon the rumours in regard to alleged activity in American naval quarters, for it is by no means likely that a demonstration of force—even were it not made ridiculous by the disproportion between the navies of the two countries—would be made until the effect of remonstrance at Berlin had been tried. It is generally conceded that the mysterious and elastic Monroe Doctrine cannot be stretched so far as to touch the Samoan question. But on the other hand it is alleged—