

did not know beforehand what was to be sung. But, at any rate, he neither sat down nor uttered any protest. Probably he did not dare; but this consideration only brings out more clearly the sense of the meeting. It may be interesting to our readers to hear Mr. Bright's opinion on this subject, and we give it:—

"It is a song," says the veteran Liberal leader, "written obviously to glorify the men guilty of the Fenian outrage and murder committed in Manchester on the 18th September, 1867. I am not sure that the author of this song was not present; at least three members of Parliament are reported to have been present, one of whom, the member for Huddersfield, was or is, or is expected to be, one of the whips of the present Opposition, and of the new Government which the disappointed and the hungry are so anxiously looking for. I will not reason with the three members or the expectant whip. I know their case and they know it. But I may reason, not with your frantic public meeting, but with the thoughtful and moral men, who were in former days many, and who, I hope, are not a few among the electors of your once honoured constituency. Are they prepared to glorify the actors of the Fenian outrage of 1867? Will they join in singing the praises of men of whom even your editor says, 'They rightly paid the penalty of the homicide of which they were guilty'?"

For the present our painful task is ended. Who does not wish that these facts could be disputed, or that the inferences from them were less certain? Alas, it is impossible to hesitate. The facts are indisputable, the meaning of them is plain. Did we say too much when we declared that the Boycotters and a large proportion of the Home Rule Party are committed to the policy of murder?

THE DEBT QUESTION.

THE Parliamentary Session at Ottawa is drawing to a close, and conclusions may be arrived at in regard to the work which has been done. It can hardly be said to have been eventful. The sole act of national importance is the endorsement of the Treaty formulated at Washington on the question of the fisheries, and its significance is greatly lessened by the evident determination of the Republican Senators to stop its progress, not because they disapprove of its provisions, but because they desire to obtain materials for an anti-British cry at the coming Presidential election. If, however, as appears certain, Mr. Cleveland will be elected by a larger majority than he obtained four years ago, and his party is strengthened, sympathetically strengthened, in both Houses of Congress, the action of the Canadian Parliament will produce an ample harvest in harmony of feeling and freer trade with our neighbours than has been possible to attain during twenty years past.

It was generally believed when the Session opened that the Government desired to economize in every possible way and were resolved to shut their ears against demands for money to be used in the construction of local works. It cannot be asserted that these good intentions have been carried out. The addition of \$20,000,000 to the Government debt arises in large part, no doubt, from the expenditure voted in past years, but much of it will be spent on works authorized during the present Session, and it is evident that the evil has not even been checked. When there is need for such a measure as the guarantee of \$14,000,000 to the Canadian Pacific there are sure to be large simultaneous additions to the debt for the benefit of the Province of Quebec. Our French fellow-citizens understand perfectly when they have the Government at their mercy and take care to profit by it. This time it is the assumption of several millions of debt contracted by the Montreal Harbour Board to improve the navigation of Lake St. Peter and provide accommodation for shipping at Montreal. An attempt was made to add to this a grant in aid of a bridge across the St. Lawrence at Quebec. It has been refused for the moment but will no doubt re-appear next Session. There are already two bridges across the middle St. Lawrence, more than sufficient for the present traffic, and when there is need for more they can be built much more cheaply near Montreal than Quebec. It is certain that no national interest can be served by a bridge at Quebec, and that the advantage to that city itself must be small. If it is large, however, why should not Quebec build the bridge herself and collect tolls to recoup the expenditure? The Chignecto Ship Railway has also received a large grant of money. It is designed to carry vessels by rail across the neck of land which divides the Bay of Fundy from the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Residents of the Maritime Province assert that this work will benefit no one, that it will not be used, and that in any case it would be cheaper to pay the owners of vessels who might use it the cost of the voyage round Nova Scotia than to build and run the road. But it passes through a constituency represented by a Minister of the Crown, and it is to be commenced.

The Dominion has reached this point: No railway, canal, bridge, pier, breakwater or harbour can be built without aid from the Ottawa Government. Very many works are undertaken which serve no good purpose. They owe their being to the competition of towns and villages with more fortunate neighbours. They would not be thought of if those who hope to profit by them were required to furnish the money. No town is content with one railway, it must have two, and the Dominion Government is expected to furnish a large portion of the cost. Harbours are constructed where there are no natural facilities and no business to be done. The member pushes the claim; it helps him in his canvass, and he may even get a slice out of the expenditure for local party purposes. He makes alliances with others similarly situated. When a vote is likely to be close they cry, stand and deliver, and the Minister yields. Who can wonder that under such a system the public debt should go up by leaps and bounds, and who can contemplate without dismay its extension throughout the

North-West? To what dimensions will the debt have grown when that vast territory is supplied with even the rudiments of civilization at the cost of the national treasury? It is vain to look to the parliamentary Opposition for a check upon expenditure. A feeble cry is raised when the debt takes a jump upwards. It is popular in the general to denounce expenditure, but when it comes to the particular the Opposition will not resist any expenditure which benefits some of their own friends. They try to upset the Government by other means, waiting with eagerness the time when they in their turn will be able to distribute money among the constituencies.

In these days of cheap money and commercial enterprise, spreading from the great financial centres to the ends of the earth, the cases are rare in which it is necessary to call for the aid of the Dominion Government in industrial enterprises. When a new country has been opened up by a trunk railway, the construction of rival roads and branch lines should be left to the law of supply and demand. If a harbour of refuge is needed for vessels in danger of wreck, Government money may fairly be employed in its construction, but a purely local port should be improved by those who use it. These are commercial enterprises which do not call for the aid of the Government. They can be constructed and managed more cheaply and effectively by local than by Dominion authorities, and they will not be undertaken unless there is a reasonable prospect of being used. Our American neighbours threshed out the question of local improvements very early in their history, and settled it on these lines. Britain, although a small country easily controlled from the capital, has done even less than the States for such works. Be sure that Canada cannot better their action.

It is easier to point out the errors of the system than to show how an amendment can be brought about. So long as the people can pay interest on the debt the outlay apparently will go on. According to a distinguished authority it does not matter what we owe or how the money is spent, if we borrow at a low rate of interest and are able to scrape together enough to keep our day with the British creditor.

SAVILLE.

THE SWIFTEST THOUGHT.

Oh, sounding winds, that tirelessly are blowing
Through the wide, star-lit spaces of the night!
Oh, eager rains, that sweep the distant height,
And restless streams impetuously flowing,
And clouds that will delay not in their going,
And ships that sail, and vanish from the sight,
And happy birds that stay not in their flight,
And suns upon their skyey pathway glowing:—

Poor laggards all! One tender thought outstrips you:
Go, little thought, and tell my love from me
I care for him to-day as yesterday;
Ah, how its strength and swiftness doth eclipse you,
For now the answer comes invisibly
And instantly—and in the surest way!

A. ETHELWYN WETHERALD.

MONTREAL LETTER.

WHETHER it was zeal for the salvation of unfortunate child-widows in India, or mere curiosity to see and hear Pundita Ramabai, that so vast a multitude crowded the Queen's Hall on Friday evening, only future accounts will show. Tropical plants and multi-coloured texts adorned the platform, where, had she not been supported by white-faced, grimly dressed western magnates, the dark-visaged Hindu widow, clothed from head to foot in the soft, graceful folds of an immaculate texture, would have appeared wonderfully at home. After some preliminary speaking, singing, and praying, the Pundita rose and addressed us for what seemed over an hour. Her voice is extremely low, and she speaks very rapidly. While rather shorter than the ordinary woman, Ramabai's dignity of bearing, and subtle pride that reflects itself in her well-poised head, her eyes, her mobile mouth, many a tall beauty might envy. The certain something people describe as "personal magnetism," but which after all is nothing more than sincerity of sentiment warmed by enthusiasm and expressed with intelligence, the Pundita possesses in no small degree. It was very simple, this discourse of hers, delivered with hardly any alteration of tone, yet one could hear the heart-throbs ever and anon, and then would fall some softly spoken words of scathing sarcasm.

After telling us about the origin of castes, Ramabai explained how women had sunk to so servile a position in India. Two thousand years ago co-education flourished, but the priests were fallible, it seems, and to obviate the horrors of certain lectures they found that their wives must be kept in perfect ignorance. Science and masculine generosity strengthened this decision by declaring on the one hand, woman was not strong enough for mental work, and on the other, she had quite sufficient to do already. Such being the state of affairs, it is hardly surprising to learn that by the census taken in 1881, out of 100,000,000 of women only 200,000 could read and write, and many of these did not boast both accomplishments.

However, despite all her other privations, her European sister's perplexing dread of spinsterhood is generally unknown to the high caste Hindu girl. Ladies unaccompanied by gentlemen, it seems, are forbidden the Indian heaven, but no objection can be made if some lucky male has