

and recommendations in regard to the future. If the state of the country be half so desperate as he deems, it is surely a time for men of thought and men of action to come to the front, not retire to the background.

THE struggle is over and the victors and vanquished are anxiously counting up their gains and losses. That they should reach widely different results is nothing new in such cases. The country has, however, once more sustained the Government of Sir John A. Macdonald and its policy. The exact size of the majority it is at present impossible to determine, estimated as it is all the way from twenty to forty-five. Perhaps it may be pretty safely put down as between twenty-five and thirty, though it cannot be forgotten that Government majorities have a marked tendency to grow during the earlier sessions of a Parliamentary term—a fact of which the Canadian general election preceding that just held afforded a striking illustration. The probability, therefore, is that Sir John will find himself sufficiently strong in the new House for all practical purposes and may safely assume that the Dominion as a whole has endorsed the proposed negotiations at Washington, which were the ostensible cause of the somewhat sudden dissolution. On the other hand it is evident that the Government in meeting the House at the end of April will labour under two considerable disadvantages. In the first place it cannot be doubted that the majority supporting it has been considerably reduced. In the second place, and this we are inclined to regard as a still more serious matter, its majority is now very slender in Ontario, by far the largest and most influential of all the members of the Confederation, and has been converted into an actual minority in Quebec, the province next in size and importance. It is easy to conceive of circumstances in which these facts may prove more or less embarrassing, though, of course, the equality of representative rights must be maintained, and the vote of a member from British Columbia or Cape Breton must count for just as much as one from Ontario or Quebec. Such a situation is, nevertheless, not free from danger. Suppose, for instance, a case in which Ontario, which does not hesitate on occasion to remind the smaller provinces that she has to pay the larger proportion of the bills, is outvoted in the matter of a railway or other appropriation for a New Brunswick or British Columbia constituency, by the nearly solid contingents from the smaller provinces, it is not hard to see how such an incident might tend to mar the harmony of the Confederation. There is, however, no means of providing a safeguard against a contingency, which it is to be hoped may never occur. Another somewhat ominous feature of the situation is the fact that the Government losses occurred almost wholly in the rural constituencies, while the cities rallied to its support more strongly than ever. It would be greatly to be regretted should this foreshadow any conflict between the real or fancied interests of city and country. Parliament has been hitherto, happily, pretty free from sectional jealousies of the one kind or the other. We trust it may long continue to be so.

IF it be true, as reported, that Sir John Macdonald proposes to summon Parliament to meet about the last of April—and the session cannot well be put off to a much later date—there will be little time for the proposed deputation to visit Washington and ascertain what can be done in reference to the proposed reciprocity treaty. It has seemed to us from the first that it would have been quite as much in accordance with precedent and preferable in other respects, had the deputation been sent and the outline of treaty agreed upon, or the possibility of agreeing upon one determined, before the dissolution. A majority in the new Parliament could then have been accepted as an approval by the whole people of the draft treaty itself. But the Government chose the other method. It has now received the public endorsement it sought. The course of the election has doubtless deepened in the minds of Sir John and his colleagues the conviction that such a treaty should be secured, if possible on terms consistent with Canadian self-respect, without delay. As any agreement reached will, no doubt, be made subject to Parliamentary ratification, it is specially desirable that the draft treaty should be submitted during the coming session. The whole country will evidently await the action of the Government and the result of the negotiations with anxiety. The interests of the Government, too, are largely involved in the matter, since a failure to obtain some such measure of reciprocity as that indicated as the ground of the dissolu-

tion would give an additional impetus to the agitation for unrestricted reciprocity. This movement, though condemned at the polls, has evidently acquired considerable strength and vitality, and is sure to be vigorously pushed, pending the negotiation of some less objectionable treaty. The Government can hardly hesitate to prove its sincerity and good faith by taking active measures to secure a conference with the Washington Government at the earliest possible moment. In view of these prospective negotiations it is, it seems to us, unfortunate that some of the successful Government candidates, and even the Premier himself, suffered themselves, in the heat of debate, to make use of very uncomplimentary terms in describing the characters and methods of United States' politicians. It may be that those politicians are too well accustomed to that kind of appeal to national prejudices for party purposes to be sensitive to it in their neighbours. Otherwise there might be some danger that the sting left by those disrespectful epithets, whether true or false, might render friendly negotiations between the two Governments difficult if not impossible.

THE bestowal by Mr. J. Ross Robertson, proprietor of the Toronto *Telegram*, of another \$10,000 for the purpose of enlarging and improving the Lakeside Home for sick children, of which he was the founder, is an act which demands thankful recognition by citizens of every class. It is difficult to conceive of a more beneficent charity than this. To have made it possible for every sick and suffering child in the city, whose parents are in straitened circumstances, to be transferred from the discomfort and danger of a close and dingy room in some crowded street or lane, and very likely with unsanitary atmosphere and surroundings, to a pleasant lakeside home with abundance of space, plenty of fresh air, beautiful surroundings and every facility for recovery which kind and careful nursing and good medical attendance can bring, is to have done a work the consciousness of which must bring gratification of no ordinary kind to a generous nature. We congratulate Mr. Robertson on the possession of the means which have enabled him to test the delight which springs from such unselfish deeds, and we congratulate him still more on the possession of the disposition and the motives which have impelled him to undertake and carry out this noble conception.

ACCORDING to a recent careful computation there are, the *Scientific American* tells us, in the United States, in this year 1891, 500,000 seekers for work—a half million people, of both sexes and all ages, looking for employment in gainful occupations—and only 460,000 places to be filled. The figures are based upon actual returns, from the census and other sources, of the total number of persons employed at different periods, and of the increase of the population, showing the average percentage added yearly to the number of persons engaged in all occupations. That is, to keep up the integrity of the work of the country—to keep it up to its full average standard of progression, and fill up the places naturally made vacant—460,000 new places will have to be filled, while the increase of the population shows that there will, in natural order, be 500,000 applicants for these places, without counting, in either case, "the great army of unemployed which through all ages has hung upon the outskirts of civilization." This calculation, on its face, would seem to indicate that after every available situation shall have been filled there must remain in the Republic 40,000 men, women and children, willing and anxious to work, for whom no work can be found. The writer in the *Scientific American* does not use the figures as a basis for any lugubrious forecasts. He even thinks that, in a competition so general and among competitors urged by motives of every degree of forcefulness, it can hardly be said that there is any inexorable law which decrees that only the most fit shall survive. He proceeds, however, to show that for those seeking to obtain employment the main questions will always be in effect: What can you do? and, How well can you do it? The figures are well adapted to suggest a different line of thought. Taken in connection with other facts which recent enquiries have brought to light, showing the depressed and almost desperate condition of the farmers of the Republic, those in the West, as well as those in the East, they present a strange and difficult problem. The first necessities of life are, of course, food and clothing. Both these are directly or indirectly products of the soil, and of the soil only. One might hastily conclude that, given an unlimited supply of arable land, one

of the first and surest results of the pressure of population and over supply of labour would be to stimulate the farming industry and render it remunerative, and consequently to create increased demand for agricultural labour. But in the United States, as well as in Canada, the very opposite seems to be the fact. The price of farm lands has suffered very large reduction in both countries, within the last two or three decades and seems to be still falling. Almost everywhere the farmers are seriously depressed. Many of them are either selling their lands at a very low figure or abandoning them in despair and flocking to the cities, where in thousands of cases they find it very difficult to earn a precarious livelihood. Various explanations have been offered to account for this alarming state of affairs, and many minds of would-be statesmen are even now seeking a solution of the problem, thus far without success. Meanwhile, though it is a poor and unworthy consolation for one in distress to know that his neighbour is as badly off as himself, yet the knowledge of that fact may sometimes be useful in preventing wrong inferences and rash movements. But, while it is well and right that discouraged Canadian farmers should know that the farmers in both the New England and Western States are little if any better off, on the average, it would be we think a *non sequitur* to conclude, as many are arguing, that for that cause we could derive no benefit from reciprocity. It is quite conceivable that two neighbours, equally distressed, may both be greatly profited by freely exchanging with one another those things of which each may have a surplus; and that by a combination of strength and resources they may engage in enterprises and develop industries which will tend to the enrichment of both. That is in fact the very law of trade.

PROFESSOR MAX MULLER, who is just now delivering the course of Gifford lectures in Glasgow University, is, if we may form an opinion from the fragmentary reports which reach us through the press, soaring pretty high in the rarified atmosphere of speculative philosophy. In a recent lecture he seems to have shown at least a decided leaning to a belief in the pre-existence of the soul. He pointed out that man has, everywhere, if left to himself, arrived at the conviction that there is a something within him, besides and distinct from the material body; that this something, this agency within, was conceived of as inhering in or connected with the breath, or *psyche*; and that this *psyche* was not conceived as mere breath or air but as retaining most of those activities which had been ascribed to it during life, such as feeling, perceiving, naming, conceiving, and reasoning. Thus far he does not see what can be brought forward against this primitive and universal form of belief. If there was a something in man that could receive, perceive, and conceive, that something, whatever name we call it, was gone with death. But no one could think that it had been annihilated—*nunquam nihil ex aliquo*. So long, therefore, as the ancient philosophers said no more than that this something, called breath or *psyche*, had left the body and gone somewhere else, he did not see what counter-argument could stop them. So far no exception is likely to be taken by the orthodox to his reasonings. It is when he proceeds to speculate upon the condition of the soul after death that the learned Professor treads on delicate ground. Unless, he says, we can bring ourselves to believe that a soul has a beginning and that our souls sprang into being at the time of our birth, the soul within us must have existed before. In this connection he naturally quotes the familiar lines from Wordsworth:—

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;  
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar.

Any rising apprehension lest the learned Professor should be about to revive, in some modified form, the old Pythagorean doctrine of transmigration of souls is quelled by a subsequent sentence in which he tells us that however ever convinced we may be of the soul's eternal existence we shall always remain ignorant as to how it existed. The conception of the future state hinted at in the following passage will doubtless appear vague and unsatisfying to those who are accustomed to look forward to such a joyful recognition and reunion as seems inseparable from the Christian doctrine of the resurrection:—

Our soul on awakening here is not quite a stranger to itself and the souls who as our parents, our wives and husbands, our children and our friends, have greeted us first as strangers in this life, but have become to us as if we had known them for ever, and as if we could never lose them again. If it were to be so again in the next life,