

fiscal year will approach \$220,000,000; and the chances are that it may reach the appalling sum of \$250,000,000.

PROPHESYING of coming events in France is a precarious business. The inference that we should hear little more of Boulangism after the overthrow of the agitator in the duel with Premier Floquet was a very natural one under the circumstances, but events have already proved it unsound. The weathercock has again veered in response to some new current of popular impulse. The vanquished but still doughty hero has been elected by three departments simultaneously, and by one or two of them with immense majorities. Thus it is clear that General Boulanger is still a force, and the most dangerous force, in French politics. But it is impossible that, even in France, a leader of the populace can long sustain himself on a policy of negations or ambiguities. That is what Boulanger has been doing hitherto, and it is evident that the moment he commits himself to a positive, definite programme, that moment his real difficulties will begin. The common desire to overthrow the present Government, though it just now enables him to count on the co-operation of incongruous and even hostile elements, is not such a bond of union as can be relied on for founding a stable administration. Even the reiterated demand for constitutional revision which may, at first thought, seem to be the one clear note to which the people are responding, is itself little better than a negation until the shape and character of the amended Constitution have been outlined with some degree of definiteness. This remodelling process will be the *experimentum crucis*. The result may prove Boulangism to be a constructive as well as destructive agency, but thoughtful observers may be excused if they remain for the present somewhat incredulous. In the meantime there are not wanting indications that the fiery young soldier who now sits on the German throne may at some inopportune moment intervene with unpleasant alternatives.

THE tone of the German press in commenting on Gen. Boulanger's electoral successes is unexpectedly mild. The *North German Gazette* thinks there is no ground for anxiety, seeing that Gen. Boulanger "has protested often enough that he has at heart the preservation of peace," and speaking apparently on behalf of the Government says that Germany "can live in concord with a Boulangist France as well as with a Bonapartist France." This might be very reassuring were it not for the fact that Boulanger, whatever his protestations of desire for peace, represents to the belligerent element in France the military idea, just as Emperor William represents the same idea in Germany. The prospect of Gen. Boulanger attaining dictatorial powers in France is exceedingly remote, but should the fickle populace ever be induced to clothe him with such powers, there can be no doubt that the chief significance of the act would be hostility to Germany and undying resentment of the loss of Alsace-Lorraine. Revenge on Germany was the cry which first brought the French General into notice, and only by appeal to the same national passion could he hope to maintain himself in power. With two military firebrands as rulers of the two nations it would seem impossible that conflict could long be postponed.

ACCORDING to the London *Times* of the 15th inst., the Government of India is probably about to take the offensive against Tibet, by attempting to storm the Tibetan entrenchments in Jalapla pass and drive the garrison back into their own country. It has been reckoned that eleven thousand Tibetans have been encamped in this pass and that they have recently been reinforced by three thousand more. Other passes, too, have been occupied and fortified by them, so that if the Tibetan equipments and fighting qualities prove to be at all good, the British, or rather Indian, troops will find the task assigned them no easy one. The attitude of Colonel Graham, who is in command, has, hitherto, been a waiting one. He has had strict orders not to cross the frontier, and so has been obliged to content himself with simply repulsing the attacks of the enemy. The Government has waited, until longer waiting seems hopeless, for the Chinese Government, as the Suzerain of Tibet, to pacify its refractory tributaries and hold their belligerent propensities in check. After the engagement of a few months since, reliance was placed on the assurances of the Chinese Government, that a new Resident it had despatched to Lhasa would persuade the Tibetans to acquiesce in their defeat. The Resident seems to be still engaged in the work of persuasion, but with little effect. Meanwhile the season is rapidly passing and the terrible severity of the winter will in a few weeks compel the Indo-British force to seek a milder climate. Meanwhile Colonel Graham is being reinforced, and he is believed to be under instructions to take decisive measures for putting an end to the campaign by crossing the frontier, driving back the garrisons and making

a descent upon Tibet. The origin of the quarrel is the little frontier state of Sikkim which both India and Tibet claim, the British having the advantage of actual possession. The Indian Government denies all covetousness or aggressiveness of disposition in regard to the Tibet Highlands, but the upshot of the affair will probably be another unpremeditated and "necessary" extension of the British domain in India.

"THE novel has become an enormous force in modern life." So said the Bishop of Ripon in a recent lecture at Oxford, on "The Prose Poems of the Day." The statement embodies a fact so patent to all observation that it may almost be considered a truism. And yet it is a fact which is not always so fully recognized as it should be, in view of its great significance, in relation to the shaping of modern life and thought. The clergy, who should be among the foremost to note, and estimate and utilize such tendencies, are, as a body, generally the last to do so, and it would perhaps be well for their influence upon the masses were larger numbers of them in the position of those whom the Bishop describes as putting one another through an examination in order to see which knew his "Pickwick" best. The Bishop seems disposed to complain that after having taken up science and art, entered the arenas of medicine and spiritualism, and claimed politics and history as its appropriate field, the novel should now have entered the domain of theology. But why not? It seems hard, he thinks, when one comes home tired with struggling with the problems of life, he should find the same problems confronting him when sitting in easy chair and slippers. But there are novels and novels, and it is surely easy, amidst the infinite variety, to select with reference to moods and brain conditions. And if it is true, as the learned prelate seems to admit, that the novel sometimes tells "parables which embody truths that told elsewhere produce only slumber," it is still well that such truths, presumably important, should be told somewhere in a form in which they will compel attention. May it not be, indeed, that the maker of sermons may have something to learn in such matters from the maker of novels? The moral of it all seems to be that the place of the novel in modern literature is impregnable, and that it is the part of wisdom for reformers of all classes to aim at improving and elevating the taste for it, and so its character, instead of wasting their energies in a hopeless attempt to banish it. Amending the old saw with regard to the songs of a country, the Bishop wisely says, "Give me the yellow-backs of the country, and I will leave you the blue books."

REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRAT.

RECENT events at Washington afford melancholy proof of the degradation to which our neighbours will stoop to serve party ends. The leaders of the Republicans in the Senate are men of good social position and character, who would not, in the management of their private business or even in the settlement of domestic political questions, resort to trickery or misrepresentation. They are not fire-eaters of the school of Jefferson Brick, but on the contrary friendly to the mother country and Canada, and desirous to be at peace with them. But an election is pending, which will either leave them in the cold shades of opposition for four years or place 40,000 offices at their disposal. The Irish vote, or a part of it, is believed to be wavering between Democrat and Republican, and they throw dignity and consistency to the winds to rescue their party from defeat. If they were to succeed at the polls they would ratify the treaty which they now condemn; if they are beaten they will probably give it a grudging assent when it can no longer afford political capital.

The fact that a very large part of the English people have changed front on the Irish question, and are throwing all others aside to do justice to the sister isle, ought to lessen the rancour of Hibernians in the United States, and disincline them to desert the Democratic party which a large majority of them have always supported, and to take service with the Republican, one of whom gibbeted them four years ago as devotees of "Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion." But a recent speech of Mr. Thurman, Democratic candidate for the Vice-Presidency, clearly shows the sensitiveness of his party to imputations of philo-anglicanism and discloses the motive for Mr. Cleveland's extraordinary message to Congress.

The Republicans in Congress having twisted the British lion's tail with vigour and effect, President Cleveland abandons, to all appearance, the treaty made with so much care by his Secretary of State, flies into a passion with Canada, and asks for power to punish her by stopping the passage of Canadian products in bond through the United States! Nothing more startling or absurd in form was ever proposed by the ruler of a great country. The President negotiated a treaty for the settlement of matters in dispute with Canada; the Republicans rejected it, and the President cries havoc and lets slip the dogs of war, not against the Republicans, but