

tion of the character of the Emperor, whose influence on the politics and peace of Europe is so great, and who has thereby shown that he is not yet very well understood. Whether the change is the outcome of mere restless fickleness, of a nervous dread of Socialism, or of some deeper purpose which will be hereafter revealed, are questions in which not only Germany but all Europe is interested. That it is more or less closely connected with the difference of opinion between Gen. Von Caprivi and Count zu Eulenburg in regard to the best mode of dealing with Socialism seems tolerably certain. This fact suggests the other interesting subject. That uneasiness in political, and especially in imperial circles, should be caused by the spread of socialistic ideas is but natural. But that any country which has even the semblance of constitutional liberty will make the mistake of attempting to suppress by arbitrary measures a movement which is propagated only by constitutional agitation is hardly supposable. Nor does there seem to be any good ground for expecting from the aged successor to the Chancellorship, Prince von Hohenlohe, any very vigorous aggressive policy, in respect to this or other matters. Apart from his age he seems to be regarded on all hands as, what Bismarck has styled him, a safe man. So both Socialists and politicians may again breathe freely.

It is by no means improbable that the news of the death of the Czar of Russia may be announced before these words reach the eye of the reader. What changes that death may bring to his own country, to Europe, and to the world, the future alone can reveal. Just now the people of other countries are moved to sympathy in view of the combination of ills which are visiting the Imperial household. Not only is the head of the household, and of the nation, himself at death's door, but his wife is believed to be completely prostrated, the eldest daughter is seriously affected with some nervous ailment, and the Grand Duke George, the Czar's favourite son, is said to be in the last stages of consumption. Just now the praises of the dying emperor as an amiable monarch and the preserver of the peace of Europe are being sounded abroad. What will be the character of the man who shall succeed him is the all-absorbing question—a question which no one seems able to answer with any degree of confidence, though it is not unlikely that not only the fate of Russia, but the peace of Europe, may be involved in the answer. Should his successor, as some think possible, enter upon a career of internal reform, by granting even a minimum of constitutional liberty to the people, the liberalizing principle, once fairly set in operation, may effect the peaceful transformation of the whole Empire into a constitutionally governed country, with the happiest effect upon all Europe. Should he prove to be of a differ-

ent type, more disposed to chastise his people with scorpions than his father with whips, the revolution, which has been so long smouldering, would probably not be long in breaking forth. For good or for ill, it is long since the people of Europe had their eyes fixed with so much anxiety and misgiving upon the deathbed of a single individual.

UPPER HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

It is a somewhat significant coincidence that in at least three Anglo-Saxon countries the question of the reforming or abolishing of the Upper Houses of Parliament is at present under discussion. In Great Britain, the Premier, himself a member of the hereditary House, has just thrown down the gauntlet to the Lords, on behalf of the Government and the Commons. The Upper Chamber, as at present constituted, is, he declared, a mockery and an invitation to revolution. His Government will, therefore, at the approaching session, submit to the Commons a resolution affirming that the House of Commons is unmistakably the dominant partner in the present partnership. This very indefinite statement may mean little or much, and will need to be put in much plainer terms in the proposed resolution, if it is to have any practical effect. The fact, if the forecast of his speech proves to be such, that even Lord Salisbury does not meet the affirmation of the Government with a square denial, but himself advocates such a reform as will introduce an elective element into the House of Peers, may be accepted as a pretty sure indication that some change of the constitution, curtailing the veto powers, or the veto inclinations, of that chamber, may be expected at an early day.

In the United States, where the Upper House or Senate has always played a much more prominent part in legislation than the corresponding chamber in either Great Britain or Canada, the events of the last session of Congress have aroused a storm of criticism and denunciation which may yet shake the institution to its foundations. Very radical modifications of its structure and functions are being seriously discussed. The fact that the Senate is elected by the representatives of the people in the State legislatures puts it, however, on quite a different footing from that of the other second Chambers named. Its history will supply valuable material for those among us who advocate that method, to a greater or less extent, for the reform of the Canadian Senate.

It is worthy of note, in passing, that in the United States the Senate seems to have wielded, from the first, and perhaps growingly in later years, a much more powerful influence, positively, in affairs of legislation, than the upper houses of either Great Britain or Canada. This may be partly due to the constitutional powers accorded to it, but it is probably the result, in a large

degree, of the mode of election of its members, one important result of which is a constant change of its *personnel*, and a constant infusion of able and ambitious men. Be that as it may, it is pretty evident that a powerful reaction has set in against the present mode of election of its members by the State Legislatures, and in favour of direct election by the people. Twice already have resolutions been passed in the House of Representatives favoring popular election. But there, as elsewhere, the natural difficulty presents itself—the difficulty of inducing the body that needs reforming to vote for its own reformation. Naturally, too, the greater the need of reformation, the smaller is the possibility of inducing the body to aid in the work.

The important question of constitutional change in the constitution of the Upper House in England, as in Canada—a question which is likely to have special prominence in the former, and possibly in both countries, during the next few years—divides itself into two parts and hence is pretty sure to divide the advocates of reform into two parties. The alternative propositions are modification and obliteration. A part of Lord Rosebery's sympathetic audience, the other day, refused assent to his view regarding the necessity for a second chamber of some kind. The logic of his position must have been difficult. The strength of the argument against the House of Lords is drawn from its non-representative and consequently irresponsible character. We do not yet know on what lines Lord Rosebery constructed his argument in favour of a second legislative chamber of some kind, but it is pretty sure that the basis of the argument must have been the alleged need of imposing some check upon rash legislation. The only rash legislation which would be likely to threaten the well-being or stability of the State would be legislation in accord with the popular sentiment of the day. Now, it is evident that the only body which could be relied on to apply the brakes, in such a case, must be a body independent of the popular favour. Just in proportion as the element of responsibility to the people is introduced into the constitution of the checking body, just in that proportion will it be unfitted for its purpose. The principle which Lord Salisbury is supposed to favour would seem to be, for that reason, unworkable. Unless the elective element were made the preponderating one, the old complaint would still hold good. Make it preponderant, and the irresponsible element, hereditary or otherwise, would be useless because powerless. Let the two be made to counterbalance, and the result would probably be either a chronic dead-lock, or a perpetual struggle which must eventually lead to the obliteration of one or other of the conflicting elements. The only third plan of which we can conceive would be