

A CONFUSED CONDITION.

There has been great interest in the recent British election, partly because in these days all nations are drawn nearer together, and we see ourselves as standing closely related to the mother land; and partly because of the great and unusual issues involved. On the one side there was the cry for Protection and a larger naval expenditure; on the other the protest against the action of the House of Lords and the demand for fuller freedom. Except upon the question of the tariff it is likely that the feelings of Canadians would be largely with the Liberals; on that question there is division here as in Britain. We feel that we live very well here without a State Church and with far fewer public houses than are required in England; we do not believe in monopoly in religion and we have no desire to see "the trade" playing a prominent part in our politics. And we certainly would not grant to our Senate the power just exercised by the House of Lords.

The lesson of this election is surely that it is much easier to create confusion than it is to do noble constructive work. The Lords took the unusual course of rejecting a budget and so forcing a dissolution. Some of the wisest men in the House protested against this course, although they did not like the budget. If their advice had been followed the budget would have been tried, and if found unsatisfactory in the course of two or three years the Conservative party might have been returned to power in a natural and constitutional manner. As it is, they have succeeded in destroying the Liberal majority, but have not been able to build up one of their own, and hence there is a muddled condition. There has been great financial loss, and the affairs of the country are in a chaotic state. The Prime Minister would be justified in saying you have destroyed our power now, take the business in hand and make the best of it. He is trying to set the affairs of the country straight, and then will have something to say about the powers of the Lords.

It is not our business in these columns to discuss party politics, but in this connection there are some elements of common justice that ought not to be considered a question of party. For example, Mr. Balfour, some eight years ago, used the majority that was given for winding up the Boer war to destroy the school boards and introduce revolutionary changes into the educational system of England; the changes thus made were felt to be unjust by the great body of Nonconformists, and they have protested against them ever since. The House of Lords in that case did not represent any revising force, it simply represented the Conservative party, and when the Liberals returned to power with authority from the people to remedy some of this injustice they put every obstacle in their way. Of course, if people believed that there is only one party capable of governing Britain—and that is a belief some of our tariff reformers and imperialists are in danger of falling into—then all is satisfactory to them. But it is not likely that such inequality will be tolerated long. And now the Conserva-

tives themselves are willing to concede that there must be some reform of the Upper House. A Conservative body in the real sense would have reversed some of Mr. Balfour's measures as well as Mr. Asquith's, but there is a difference between being a conserving body and being a tool of the Conservative party, just as there may at times be a difference between real liberalism and the policy of the Liberal party. What we all need is to conserve the best of the past and go steadily forward. We believe that the good sense of statesmen and people in Britain will bring order out of chaos; but surely the lesson from the present muddle remains, that it is easier to destroy than to build, and that recklessness in the affairs of a nation is dangerous—whether it comes from high or low. We must all try to gain a large all round view of great questions.

We sometimes have to go abroad to get an unbiased opinion of our own public men. This seems to be peculiarly the case when our youngest cabinet minister is under discussion. In certain quarters it seems to be the standing rule among a few small-minded critics to be-ill and disparage the Minister of Labor; and so it is pleasant to be able to quote from a recent issue of the Boston Herald the following disinterested appreciation:

"The Hon. Mackenzie King, Canadian Minister of Labor, illustrates as perfectly as any case of contemporary politics of the higher sort, what may be achieved when a man determines to fit himself for public life of the most efficient service and enduring worth. Those who heard him at the City Club in explanation of the Canadian Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, not only saw and heard a youthful publicist with a phenomenal record of constructive administrative work to his credit, but a very winning type of a young Canadian whose capacity to state his case in an effective and also eloquent way is unusual. The speaker was a master of his theme. He knew it from A to Z. He made it throb with the human needs and passions, out of which the ideal legislation that Canada has on the matter had come; and he was not afraid to show that he had a heart as well as a brain. Best of all, he used the opportunity to plead not only for industrial conciliation, but for international arbitration, and for such action by the United States and Canada as will enable them to lead the world in the demand for an end of militarism. Harvard may well be proud of the fact that she gave him what he calls the best part of his education for public service; and he may be cited as a model of 'specialization' in education preparatory to public service."

EULOGY FOR THE GRAND TRUNK.

In the London "Times," of February 4th, an article appears from one of their travelling correspondents descriptive of a tour through America, in which the following appears:—

"By far the finest travelling I have done so far in America was over the Grand Trunk line from Montreal to Toronto. The Grand Trunk has admittedly a perfect roadbed. We ran at about fifty miles an hour on the 'International Limited,' and none of the English railways could beat it for steadiness."

This eulogy from one who is a world-wide traveller is very gratifying to Canadian railways.

At the induction of Rev. A. Thompson into the charge of Newburgh, etc., which takes place on 22nd March, Rev. J. McInnes, of Harrowsmith, will preside and address the people; Rev. Mr. Reid, of Pittsburgh, will preach; and Rev. J. R. Conn, of Napanee, will address the pastor.

LITERARY NOTES.

The February Blackwood contains an attractive bill of fare. There are two chapters of "Fancy Farm," a serial story by Nell Munro; "Sir Walter Scott: His Friends and Critics"; and "The Higher Side of My Official Life: Fighting the Dynamitards," by Sir R. Anderson, K. C. B. In "Musings Without Method" will be found short papers on matters literary, political, biographical—all treated in a bright and interesting way. Blackwood is always readable. Leonard Scott Publication Co., New York.

In Current Literature for March considerable space is devoted to "The Methodists and the Pope," as a result of the recent visit of Mr. Fairbanks to Rome, when he declined to cancel an engagement to speak in the Methodist church, although such a decision rendered impossible an interview with the Roman Pontiff. Our readers will turn with interest to such articles as "Is it a matter of indifference what our Religious beliefs are?" and "Is belief in miracles an essential part of Christianity? dealing as they do in an able manner with two topics of grave moment. All the departments are well sustained in this issue. 41 West 25th st., New York.

From Cassell and Company we have received The Quiver, Cassell's, and The Girl's Realm, forming a trio of magazines hard to equal for solid worth and meritorious attractiveness. In The Quiver, Love's Barrier, by Annie S. Swan, is continued, and the opening chapters of a new story, Mary of the Muir, by H. Halyburton Ross, is commenced. The Future of Family Life, a serious article, by Mrs. Creighton, will command the attention of thoughtful readers. Cassell's is brimful of readable matter, fully illustrated; and The Girl's Realm, deservedly popular with young people, promises well for the new year. The illustrations in the current number can not fail to help in the cultivation of a love for the beautiful among its readers. Cassell and Company, 42 Adelaide St., Toronto.

In The Contemporary for February Lord Courtney of Penrhyn deals with the political problem at present being considered by the British people, without discovering any insuperable difficulty in the situation. If in indicating the preponderance of the House of Commons we took pains, he writes, to make that House a more exact representation of the nation in its desires and its doubts, its resolutions and its hesitations, and if we purged the Lords of their elements of weakness, making them really a second deliberating line, we might without anxiety accept the Ministerial scheme for overcoming differences within the lifetime of a single Parliament. Continuing, with more special reference to the Lords, the writer says: "The reform of the House of Lords may be distasteful to some, and yet not be the end of the world. We cannot go on as we are. The trouble of moving is slight compared with the danger of standing still. * * * The Lords have provoked the new situation. Some of them dared the risk, knowing there was a risk; others, the majority, scarcely believed they were entering on an adventure. * * * The old order may pass, and the individual peer may find that his personal share in the government of the world has been diminished; and yet a very little while and a new equilibrium has been established, with conditions of security that turn out to be more stable than those which existed before." Other articles in this number are: "The Alleged Papal Charter—Is It Authentic?" by Rev. Canon Hammond; "Prison Life As It Affects Women"; "The Dilemma of Theism," by Rev. Robert Christie; "Forces Behind the Unrest in India," in "Foreign Affairs" Dr. Dillon deals with Leopold of Belgium, and present political dangers in (1) Cuba, (2) Abyssinia, (3) Turkey, Russia and Finland. The review of new books forms, as usual, an important department of the magazine.