

years since not only loud-mouthed infidels, but a considerable and influential class of scientific sceptics, were beginning to take it for granted that Christianity, as a supernatural religion, had won its last victories and was deemed to more or less gradual decay. To-day we see it organized and aggressive to a degree unprecedented in all its history. The churches are carrying on missionary operations at home and abroad with a liberality and enthusiasm which, however they may still fall below any ideal standard, were unknown and undreamed of in past generations. Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations are doing deeds of philanthropy, and bringing to bear moral and religious influences for the safe-guarding and saving of the young, which are without precedent in past history. Even great universities are turning out learned men who think it not beneath them to locate and live in Toynbee Halls and similar institutions for the purpose of bringing religious and social influences to bear for the elevation of the labouring classes in the cities. The women of the churches, so long content with the position of silent worshippers, are now, by means of their mission circles and other active organizations, raising large sums of money for missionary purposes, and are originating and carrying on organizations and operations of various kinds for Christian purposes, with a zeal, an assiduity, a self-denial and a success, which often in comparison throw the doings of their fathers, brothers and husbands into the shade. The Salvation Army with its wonderful discipline, its fearless aggressiveness, and its unconventional methods, has become a world wide power for good among the uncultivated, the poverty-stricken and the outcasts. And now in these last days have arisen the Young People's Societies of Christian Endeavour, which in the phenomenal rapidity of their growth and expansion, and in the intensity of their fervid enthusiasm, are far surpassing all other religious organizations, even the churches to which they hold themselves loyally subordinate not excepted. Whereunto all these religious agencies, which have thus strangely enough sprung up in an age of materialism and mammon-worship, will grow, it is impossible to predict. But each and all of them, in their turn, and above all the latest developments of them in these Young People's organizations, are as well worth study, if only as psychical phenomena, as any of the great popular movements of the day, and as such we commend them to the attention of the philosophically, not to say the religiously, disposed amongst our readers.

OTTAWA LETTER.

AFTER a tiresome and not by any means exciting session of four months and a-half, the Parliament of Canada was prorogued on Saturday last. During the last few days of the sitting very little of interest transpired. In fact, prorogation was really dependant upon the time taken by the Senate to consider, amend, if necessary, and finally pass the Criminal Code and Redistribution Bills, over which by far the greater part of the time of the Commons had been occupied. In neither case did the Upper House make any very radical change. When, however, it is considered that the Criminal Code is a document containing one thousand and seven clauses it is easily to be seen that the very labour of reading it was a physical work of no small dimension. And, moreover, the Senate embraces amongst its number many lawyers of ability and eminence, who were by no means disposed to pass the new clauses without comment and discussion. As it was, no very important alterations were made, and the Bill stands much in the same shape as when it passed the Commons. The ceremony of prorogation was unostentatious. In fact, both the opening and proroguing ceremonies were quite simple this year, compared to the magnificent displays on several former occasions. For various reasons the social season in Ottawa was unusually quiet, and gay dames who accompanied their husbands with the expectation of participating in a whirl of excitement, found themselves so sadly disappointed that most of them graced the capital for a very brief time with their presence.

At eleven o'clock on Saturday when the Commons assembled, amid a downpour of rain, it was found that the absentees were largely in the majority. Sir John Thompson, in reply to Mr. Mills, said that the Government meant to consider during recess the re-appointment of Sir Leonard Tilley as Lieut.-Governor of New Brunswick. The member for Bothwell argued that there was an irregularity in the continuance in office by Sir Leonard, long after his term of office had expired.

Having made the formal noon adjournment, the House reassembled at half past two o'clock. In the meantime His Excellency was hurrying along Sussex Street to perform his gubernatorial function. A sad thing occurred, or, the right thing failed to occur, when he arrived in front of the main entrance. The faithful foot-guards, who for so many years have stood in waiting for His Excellency, did

not come up to time, and had the mortification of being, to use a common expression, "a day behind the fair." For when they arrived in position they found that the Governor had gone ahead, and he of course could not wait for his attendants before entering the Chamber.

There were but few present in the Senate, and those few were somewhat indifferent and listless. Sir John Caldwell Abbott and the Hon. Frank Smith stood on either side of the throne whereon sat His Excellency, while the Lieut.-Governor of Manitoba, Mr. Schultz, was among those who had seats on the floor of the Chamber. A number of Bills having received the Royal Assent, the formal speech from the Throne was made by His Excellency. The most important item in the speech was that dealing with the question of the use of the Canadian canals by American vessels and *vice versa*.

The Governor expressed the hope that the proposal submitted by the Canadian Government, to that of the United States, whereby in return for concessions on the part of Canada as to the canals, the United States will restore the concessions which were made by that country by the treaty of Washington, will meet with the approval of the American Government. So closed the session of 1892. It was surpassed in length only by the sessions of 1873, 1885, and 1891, the last famous as having been interrupted by the death of Sir John A. Macdonald.

In the House the Government is much stronger than when the session commenced. They have gained greatly in the bye elections, the Opposition having with difficulty retained some of their strongest seats. Whether the record of the Government during the past session has justified the confidence reposed in them by the country is a matter for difference of opinion. At any rate, they have no reason to be dissatisfied with their present standing in the House, while the Opposition, in their thankless position of critics, have not failed in their duty to the country.

T. C. L. K.

IRISH HOME RULE.

A CERTAIN irascible Marquis, of Sandeau's creation, is made to exclaim: "*Mais ce sont donc des cannibales qui l'ont rédigé, votre code!*" And this sentiment, it is believed, might be pertinently applied to various plans of Irish Home Rule which have from time to time been laid before the public. The present system of representation at Westminster cannot endure. The Irish minority is unprotected against ignorance, misconception, and prejudice in the British House of Commons. Laws which Ireland does not desire, against which she cries aloud, may be forced upon her. Her most reasonable wishes may be ignored, her most glowing aspirations sneered at, her most piteous appeals jostled out-of-doors. Theoretically, therefore, there can be no redress of grievances so long as the brutal Saxon wills the contrary. But the charge of cruelty which is so persistently and so vehemently preferred against England is based on theory rather than on fact. Sometimes it has been indifference and sometimes selfishness which has caused the wrongs of Ireland to remain unsettled. Incredulity on suspicion may often have had a hand in the matter, and it is certain that the affairs of Ireland have frequently been displaced by questions of national importance. It is admitted, however, that Ireland has reason to complain. She has hitherto been denied the right of controlling the administration of her own local affairs, which she certainly ought to understand better than anyone else, and it is now recognized that she must be granted some form of local government. The Canadian system has been proposed as one which might, in its main features at least, meet the exigencies of the case. It is not the object of the following remarks to prove that the Canadian system would or would not be workable, but it is intended to show, by investigating the principles of other prospective methods, that the Canadian system is worth serious consideration.

The total exclusion of the Irish from Westminster (a Parliament having been instituted at Dublin) would obviously be unfair. While still forming a portion the Empire, contributing towards the maintenance of its power, helping to bear its financial burdens, and being a partner in its obligations and responsibilities, Ireland would, by such exclusion, be reduced to a position worse than that of a dependency, which, without representation in the council of the dominant state, is also wholly irresponsible for the engagements of that state with other countries. Those of England's colonies which possess native legislative assemblies do not contribute a penny to the Imperial exchequer. India keeps seventy thousand British troops under arms at her own expense. But India is ruled with a rod of iron.

To preserve the present membership of the Westminster Parliament, with the addition of a Dublin Parliament, might do very well for Ireland, but could not possibly be approved of by the remaining countries of the Union. Besides having the management of her own business, and having a loud voice in the concerns of the Empire, Ireland would be participating in the government of England and Scotland. She would thus be endowed with the power of influencing, intermeddling in, and obstructing the conduct of the local affairs of two countries, neither of which could so much as whisper in regard to her (Ireland's) local affairs. In order then to secure equal rights to all parties, it would be necessary to admit representatives of England and Scotland to the Dublin House, a measure cal-

culated to intensify those civil and religious jealousies which it must ever be the prime effort of wise statesmen to allay. Were an aggravation of difficulties and confusions contemplated, then a surer road to success could hardly be constructed.

To prevent Irish interference in the home legislation of England and Scotland (a Dublin House being in existence) a restriction of the Irish right of debate has been suggested. The Irish members would, according to this scheme, be debarred from taking part in discussions pertaining to the internal economy of the larger island and from voting on such questions. Their debating and voting capacity would be confined to regulations affecting national armament and defence, customs duties, diplomatic relations and commercial treaties with foreign countries, colonial affairs and all other Imperial interests. This arrangement would bring forth a curious and novel *usus naturae*. There would be in session in one place and at one time two Parliaments, viz., the Imperial and the English-Scotch. It is unnecessary to point out the duties of these bodies, and it will be understood, with but a little reflection, that the presence, in one hall, of two separate legislative assemblies, with distinct and clearly defined functions, is in itself an incongruity. The present House of Commons is already overloaded with work; its time is, one might say, more than occupied, and it ought, if possible, to be relieved of some of its arduous labours. The reverse effect, however, would be produced by the institution of a double Parliament, each unit of which would be in constant competition against the other to obtain the largest slice of cake. It would be easy enough, no doubt, to assign to each section its particular province of action, but it might be an extremely delicate task to decide, at any given moment, whether or not the section holding the floor was encroaching upon other people's rights by an improper use of time—not a new difficulty. It is assumed that the numerical strength of the new Westminster House would remain unchanged, so that individuals representing English or Scotch constituencies would sit in a double capacity, whereas the Irish members would be Imperial legislators only. Waiving for the moment the objections as to heterogeneousness, waste of time and much vexation of spirit, there yet stands in the way a spectre of threatening aspect: the Cabinet.

The Cabinet is, unfortunately for the last mentioned scheme, not composed with regard to race. It may be said that in some cases the sphere of operation of a minister is to be found either in home or in foreign politics, but it must be remembered that, in other cases, the scope of ministerial activity cannot be so clearly defined nor so exactly limited. It is not possible, under the prevailing order of Cabinets, to draw a fine line between home and foreign officials. It would therefore be necessary that the minds of those ministers, whose opinions might be demanded on home or foreign affairs, should be so nicely balanced as to give rise to no conflicts of views. For unanimity and stability are essential to the life of a Cabinet, and how could one reasonably expect, if a simile be permissible, a man standing on a bridge always to turn his eyes to the same shore? And this illustration gains in force when applied to a number of men. It has also been objected, as to the double Parliament, that the Cabinet may represent a majority of the House one day and a minority the next. If, for instance, the Liberal party were returned to power, with a majority of seventy seats, eighty of which were Irish, the Government would be secure enough as far as its Imperial policy was concerned, but might suffer defeat, being weakened by the absence of its Irish supporters in the first debate anent home legislation. Yet this argument is partly fallacious, for he who adopts it must close his mental vision to the following considerations: that a small but vigorous and combative faction may be a source of constant fear and danger to the Government; that no Government upheld by a small majority may venture to anticipate a long tenure of office; that, under the present system, the Cabinet represents a varying majority from day to day, and a small majority is not always better than a small minority; that an independent party, born of circumstances unforeseen by the executive, numerically and influentially strong enough to "hold the balance of power," may spring into life at any time.

The principal inconveniences of the system of Home Rule here under discussion have, it is hoped, been rendered clear. It was stated above that no attempt would be made to unfold the merits or demerits of the Canadian system. Yet it must have occurred to thoughtful minds that much might be said in favour of the adoption of a similar plan of Government by the United Kingdom. Be it left to an abler pen to set forth what weal or woe might ensue were the Canadian model to be copied by the Mother Country.

PENSANDO.

Do not take the yardstick of your own ignorance to measure what the ancients knew, and call everything which you do not know lies. Do not call things untrue because they are marvellous, but give them a fair consideration.—Wendell Phillips.

KIND words produce their own image in men's souls, and a beautiful image it is. They soothe and quiet and comfort the hearer. They shame him out of his sour, morose, unkind feelings. We have not yet begun to use kind words in such abundance as they ought to be used.—Pascal.