

of the Jews, will be an unspeakable blessing to the helpless peasantry, who have never known just rule, on whom Arabi's soldiery would have trampled, and whom El Mahdi's fanatical savages would pillage and slaughter. It is something also to see that, miserable as is the behaviour of faction in Parliament, the conflict has evidently produced a swell of patriotic feeling in the nation. Let this continue, and the Irish as well as the Egyptian problem may be solved.

WHATEVER may happen in Egypt or elsewhere, the position of the Government seems to be secured by the abject weakness of the Opposition. It is one of the most serious features of the situation that there is practically no Conservative party. The leaders, besides being the feeblest and the most discredited that ever appeared at the head of any party in the British Parliament, are known to be quarreling among themselves; and the cause of their quarrel is the uncontrollable and shamelessly avowed desire of some of them to clamber at once into office by means of any alliance, however treasonable, or any trickery, however immoral. It is quite evident that they have no policy or definite line of action. They are actually engaged in constructing a platform, the planks of which are put in and taken out before the eyes of a curious world in stump speeches and magazine articles. One day they talk reaction, the next day they talk socialism, or an amalgam of the two, while the dullest mechanic can see that their socialism is merely a bait thrown out to catch his vote, and that if they were once securely installed in power, the socialistic pledges would be colourably redeemed by some futile Dwellings Act, while a policy of reaction pure and simple would prevail. The democratic Toryism which Lord Randolph Churchill has been preaching at Birmingham is nothing but a reproduction of the theories of Lord Beaconsfield, which again were little more than a reproduction of those of Bolingbroke, tricked out in the finery supplied by an oriental imagination. Not even when presented by Lord Beaconsfield did they exercise any appreciable influence on the course of events. Three times Lord Beaconsfield, under the name of Lord Derby, was carried into office without power, by a momentary break in the ranks of his opponents, and was ejected again as soon as those ranks closed. In 1874 for the first and only time he was carried into power; not, however, by his fantastic programme, but by a great Conservative reaction arising from the immense increase of wealth, and from the alarm with which all holders of property viewed the progress of communism in Europe and which caused a number of moderate and independent men to give, for the first time in their lives, a Conservative vote. Had he been the statesman that his admirers pretend he was, he would have recognized the true source of his victory, and would have consolidated the ascendancy of his party by pursuing a policy of moderation. Instead of this, he plunged, amidst the plaudits of the Music Halls, into a policy of disturbance, essentially revolutionary, and thus alarmed afresh, though in another way, and arrayed against himself the very class which by flying to him for safety had turned the balance in his favour. Then Conservatism, represented by Lord Derby, left his side, and at the next election he fell headlong, the moderate and independent electors passing back in a mass to the other camp. This is the series of events from which, rightly interpreted, wisdom might be learned, but from which the genius of Lord Randolph Churchill draws the inference that in showy programme, Parliamentary trickery, a revival of Jingoism and a compact with Disunion lies the real hope of the fortunes of his party. If there were now at the head of the Conservatives a man with half the claims on public confidence possessed by Peel, there would soon be a strong reaction in their favour. But such a man, beyond doubt, would discard as not less shallow than dishonourable the dodges which Lord Randolph Churchill presses upon the acceptance of the party as daring statesmanship, and wait with dignity and patience till he could by legitimate means obtain from the deliberate suffrage of the nation, not merely a month of office but real and lasting power.

A COLLISION has once more taken place between the austere morality of the Custom House and the license of classic writers. It is very easy to understand what effect a perusal of Rabelais must have produced on the mind of an honest custom house officer, totally ignorant, as he probably was, of the place which the great buffoon holds in history, and of the esoteric meanings of his buffoonery. It is too true that Rabelais is dirty, even for a French writer. His good things, it has often been said, are like pearls picked from a dunghill, and it must be added that the pearls are thinly scattered and the dunghill is very foul. Coleridge declared that out of the depths of hidden meaning in Rabelais he could draw sermons which would astonish all the churches; but his pledge was never redeemed, and if it had been, we may be very sure that the putative father of the sermons would not have known his own children. When the theory of cryptic doctrine

has been carried as far as reason will permit, there still remains a mass of the merest ordure, hateful to every gentleman as well as to every Christian. But filth unhappily is to be found in a large number of our great writers, including almost the whole of the Elizabethan dramatists with Shakespeare at their head; and the Custom House cannot discriminate; or rather, it is almost sure to discriminate the wrong way by excluding coarse licentiousness and admitting that which is ten times more dangerous because it is refined and subtle. Surely, common-sense and experience have settled the question as to the expediency of any censorship but that of public taste. At all events, the Custom House is evidently not qualified to play the part of censor.

THE Democratic party has more than once shown a disposition to adopt Tariff-for-Revenue only, as a plank in its platform, but has succumbed to the opposition of its Protectionist section. At the last Presidential election, indeed, the plank was actually inserted, but when the party was advancing into action, the Protectionist wing began to break away, and General Hancock was compelled to write a letter of explanation which, however, led only to the usual results of an attempt to change front under fire. What has happened before may happen again, and the declarations which are now heard of a resolution to adopt a Revenue Tariff plank and abide by it may once more evaporate when the hour of battle again arrives, and the Protectionist wing once more begins, as it almost certainly will, to break away. But the state of the case is greatly changed by the existence of this enormous surplus and the incontrovertible evidence of excessive taxation which it affords. There can be no doubt as to the growth among the people of a feeling in favour of reduction, and should commerce be dull and wages low in the interval between this and the election the feeling cannot fail to increase. Some of the Republican organs indeed begin to show a nervous consciousness of an incipient turn in the tide. In party politics very small bodies, if compact, cast very long shadows and produce an undue effect on the imagination of politicians. The Protectionist section of the Democratic party is compact and it is clamorous; but it is not large; and even supposing that it could not be kept from bolting, its secession might be more than compensated by an added measure of popular support. The bold policy may even, from a party point of view, be the best. Little, at all events, is risked by it. Without a Revenue Tariff plank the Democrats, having no good reason for a change of government to offer to the people, cannot win, unless the other party makes some great mistake in its nomination; with a Revenue Tariff plank and a candidate of high character, it is at least possible that they may.

THE *Contemporary* has an article entitled "Anarchy, by an Anarchist." The author is M. Elisée Reclus, who finds that the very life of humanity "is but one long cry for that fraternal equity which still remains unattained," and which he proposes to attain by the abolition of all law and government, thereby leaving the physically weak entirely to the tender mercy of the physically strong. Thus we have one set of regenerators whose ideal is an army of workers despotically regulated, and another whose ideal is an unregulated mob. The sole aim of Mr. Elisée Reclus and his friends, he says, is "to put an end to the endless series of calamities which has hitherto been called by common consent the progress of civilization," and there can be no doubt that if he had his way this aim would be accomplished with a vengeance. This social vision, if he only knew it, has been already realized by the Bosjesmen and the inhabitants of Terra del Fuego. Strange to say he speaks with enthusiasm of the grand discoveries which our century has witnessed in the world of science and of the industrial appliances, so marvelous in their character, to which those discoveries have given birth. Does he think that these are not integral portions of "the endless series of calamities called the progress of civilization?" Does he imagine that the industrial appliances, or even the scientific discoveries, were or could possibly have been produced without the exercise in the industrial sphere of a great deal of that authority which, in the political sphere, he deems absolutely incompatible with fraternity. He descants upon the unequal distribution of wealth. It is a subject of which nobody who has a heart can ever think without sadness. But is wealth the only thing which is unequally distributed, or which, if inequality is fatal, as he says, to human brotherhood, must be redivided before human brotherhood can exist? If, as he tells us, the Indian sage was right in saying that he who had no cart could not be the friend of him who had a cart, can the ugly be the friend of the beautiful, the weak of the strong, or the man whose brain power is small of the man whose brain power is great? Like other writers of his school, Mr. Reclus assumes that the wealth of the world is a sort of cake given by some external power, irrespective of human effort, and that having been unfairly divided it requires to be divided anew. A little reflection, if he