

the blunder but the intensifying of Ireland's hatred of the Tory Government. It seems, however, highly improbable that any direct bargaining has taken place, and a prompt repudiation of such a charge may be expected. Meanwhile, until the full text of the decree is published, speculation upon its effect on the political situation would be premature and at hap-hazard.

It is to be hoped that the press reports in regard to the alleged coolness of the reception accorded by the Germans to Queen Victoria and her daughter, the Empress, are at least exaggerated. No two great nations of Europe have more in common than Great Britain and Germany, and they ought to be drawing closer together, year by year, in the interest, not only of mutual, but of European peace and good will. The latest advices seem to foreshadow a renewed, though possibly brief, respite for the noble Emperor from the inevitable fate which is overshadowing him. If it be true that all his waning energies are being devoted to reforming and liberalizing the Constitution, his struggle with death is a spectacle of moral grandeur, and his short reign may yet prove one of the most memorable in German history. These later despatches also represent the Queen as delighted with the heartiness of her reception, and so suggest the query whether the cablegrams are wholly unreliable, or whether, as is indeed not unlikely, the German Army and the German civilians represent two widely contrasted phases of opinion and feeling. It would seem as if German lovers of constitutional government must admire and honour England's sovereign, for her constitutionalism as well as her character.

THE press of the United States is still discussing the character and career of the late ex-Senator Conkling. Roscoe Conkling was first elected to Congress in 1858, and again in 1860, but it was not until his re-election in 1864, after some years of enforced retirement, that he became, what he continued to be until his resignation of his position in the Senate in 1881, one of the strongest forces in the political life of the United States. He was an ardent supporter of President Lincoln during the great crisis in the nation's history, though the moral victory over slavery had been won before his power began to make itself felt. If Roscoe Conkling was somewhat more than a politician, he was also somewhat less than a statesman. His methods and his mental habits were those of a Party-leader rather than a self-sacrificing patriot. He was a thorough believer in patronage, and one of the foremost manipulators of the "Machine" in politics. He came into antagonism with President Hayes and afterwards with President Garfield in consequence of their refusal to defer to his views in the matter of appointments. His resignation of his position as Senator was virtually an appeal from the decision of the latter President in the matter of an appointment. Finding that he had miscalculated his power and popularity, when the Legislature of New York refused to re-elect him he retired from public life, to sulk, Achilles-like, in private—nor could he ever after be induced to re-enter the political arena. His great influence, both as a Party-leader and as a lawyer, was no doubt aided by his splendid personal presence and physique, but he was also unquestionably a man of more than ordinary intellectual and oratorical ability.

THE debate on Lord Dunraven's Bill for the reform of the House of Lords and the subsequent withdrawal of that Bill on the promise of Lord Salisbury to introduce a Bill for the admission of life peers, and to consider other needful reforms, are significant. Once the spirit of unrest has got footing in that ancient institution and it so far yields to outside pressure as to enter upon the work of self-reform, it is hard to say where the innovations will cease. The effect of the change proposed will depend largely upon the number of life peerages provided for, but, unless under the vague description of other needful reforms, Lord Salisbury includes some provision for purging the aristocratic fold of its "black sheep," the agitation will not be quieted for any length of time. It is pretty evident, too, that, if the hereditary principle is to be preserved, some means of restricting the numbers, and selecting those with some taste and capacity for legislation, must shortly be devised. A state of affairs which makes it possible that a great measure for the good of the commonwealth may at any time be defeated by the votes of irresponsible young lords who seldom or never attend the ordinary sessions of the House, but come up to vote only on occasions when some prejudice or fancied class interest is at stake, is not likely to be much longer tolerated in a nation which has a special genius for self government.

At a recent meeting of the Philosophical Society of Washington, Prof. J. W. Spencer, of Missouri, formerly of Canada, contributed a paper on

The Iroquois Beach, a chapter on the geological history of Lake Ontario. Several years ago the author showed that the valleys of all the lakes were of pre-glacial date—that they were originally large rivers; but how these ancient water basins were closed was then unknown. According to Dr. Spencer, all the great lakes formed at one time one sheet of water at a much lower altitude than that of the lowest of them now. This immense lake has been named "Lake Warren," in honour of the first investigator in this department of geology, whom Dr. Spencer regards as the father of Lacustrine Geology. After the separation of Lake Ontario from Lake Warren it had a long epoch of repose, marked by the formation of the great beach seen at different points in the vicinity of Toronto, and called by Dr. Spencer the "Iroquois Beach," the Indians having formerly used portions of it as a trail. Burlington Heights and the gravels along the Davenport Road are portions of this old shore line. It can be easily traced through the townships of Scarborough and York; it forms the high ridge upon the slope of which are the residences owned by Dr. Larratt W. Smith, Senator Macdonald, and the late Senator McMaster; it extends to the west, roughly parallel with the present lake shore line, to Burlington. Mr. G. K. Gilbert, of Washington, followed this beach around the lake in the State of New York, and discovered that the old water line had been greatly warped. The work upon the Canadian side of the lake has been done by Dr. Spencer. The Iroquois Beach at Hamilton is one hundred and sixteen feet above the present lake level, whilst north of Trenton it is about four hundred feet, and to the north-east of New York State it rises to four hundred and fifty feet. East of Belleville it extends back of Oak Hills, to the west of Rice Lake, thence north-east to the Ottawa, and down to the St. Lawrence. Lake Ontario then was double its present size, and two hundred and fifty feet deeper, with an outlet six hundred to eight hundred feet deep. The closing of the Ontario basin was caused by the warping of the earth's crust to the extent of six hundred or seven hundred feet, more than half of which has been done since the Iroquois Beach was formed. In the sea cliffs in north-eastern New York, Dr. Spencer has found the proof that the whole of the barrier across the outlet of the basin has been the result of differential uplifts of the earth's surface. The age of Lake Ontario is not great; it dates back no further than the middle of the great ice age, when there lived the elk, the beaver, the mammoth, and man. Evidence of these has been found at various points along these old lake terraces. It is understood that Dr. Spencer will continue field work in Ontario during the coming summer months. This new departure in geological research is likely to revolutionize long accepted theories regarding the origin of our great lake basins, and it is gratifying to know that so prominent a part is taken in scientific research by a Canadian.

THE SCOTT ACT.

WE are told that at the restoration of Charles II. there were two causes of the general detestation of Puritanism by the English people: the tyranny of the good Puritans and the hypocrisy of the bad. It is, no doubt, true that England was not so Puritanical under the First Charles, nor so licentious under the Second Charles, as it might appear to those who study the literature of those periods. But a tremendous revulsion of sentiment must have taken place when Butler's *Hudibras* represented the ordinary Englishman's way of regarding the soldiers of the Commonwealth.

Something of the same kind of feeling is animating the counties which, one after another, simultaneously rather, are throwing off the tyranny of the Scott Act. When the Scott Act was accepted in various localities those who voted for it were conscious of the existence of an undeniable evil, probably believed in the good intentions of those who invented this remedy, and were unable to forecast all the consequences of such a measure.

That the lawful liberty of individuals was assailed, that an unjust advantage was given to the rich over the poor, that certain provisions of the Act in regard to evidence were a violation of all our precedents in that matter, that its enforcement must be attended with much inconvenience of various kinds,—all this was unforeseen by the majority of those who supported the Act. In point of fact, few of those considerations, important as they are, have weighed with those who have voted for the abrogation, not of the Act, but of its continuation where it had been adopted. Undoubtedly the practical working of the measure has decided most of its opponents in the course they have taken.

Attempts have been made by some of the Prohibitionist organs to account for the defeat of the Act in so many different districts; and one of the favourite explanations has been the failure of the authorities to enforce it. Now, we do not say merely that it is impossible to enforce the Act in a way that would be satisfactory to its supporters, although we