

past, we have an array of causes more than sufficient to hinder the success of any man or body of men liable to be influenced by such considerations. But, on the other hand, the consummate skill and capacity for leadership which have been shown by Sir William Harcourt in his capacity of Premier, and the excellent records which have been made by several of the younger members of the now defunct Administration, must have gone a long way to counteract the effects of any deficiencies in the aristocratic Premier. But whatever may be thought of the Newcastle programme on its merits, on which opinions will vary according to the political faith of the individual, it cannot be denied that the career of the Rosebery Cabinet has been a brave one. The ghosts of the reforms they have failed to carry will be perpetually rising to plague their successors.

The Keil  
Demonstration.

The great naval display to celebrate the completion of the canal by which direct communication is opened between the North Sea and the Baltic, must have for some minds a suggestion of incongruity in that it seems like a great warlike demonstration to celebrate a work of science and industry in the interests of peaceful commerce. It is, we may assume, this semi-warlike aspect of the affair which has caused so strenuous an objection on the part of French patriots of a certain class against the presence of French ships at the *fete*. A great gathering of representative merchant ships of all nationalities would have seemed, in some respects, more appropriate, but that would have been, probably, impracticable. Certainly it would not have commended itself to the tastes of the German Emperor, whose ambitions are always deeply tinged with militarism. It is to his credit, however, that on this, as on other occasions, he shows himself ready to make advances toward more friendly relations between Germany and her powerful but not very placable neighbour. It would be too much to expect, we suppose, from any conqueror, that he should make advances towards reconciliation with the conquered on the basis of friendly negotiations for a rearrangement of the boundary line laid down on the field of victory. Apart from any such impossible magnanimity, it is, no doubt, much easier for the victor than for the proud, but vanquished nation to forgive and forget. Nevertheless, such mutual courtesies as those which are reported to have taken place between the commanders of the German and French warships, as the result of the French Government having consented to take part in the display, indicate that a gradual healing process is going on which may lead to the eventual toning down of French animosity, and the bringing in of something better than a perpetual state of ruinous rivalry in land and sea armaments between the two nations.

The Leak in the  
Barrel.

Few men are better qualified to speak with authority upon the merits and demerits of organized charities than Mr. Goldwin Smith and we have read with attention his brief comments in our last number upon a paragraph in these columns. Those comments suggest that there are two distinct points of view from which the question of the importation of pauper children should be regarded, and that, in order to gain clear conclusions, these should be carefully distinguished. These are the charitable or philanthropic, and the patriotic. It may be that on the whole "the immigration of pauper children is, except where there is extreme need of population, more certainly beneficial to the children themselves than to the country to which they are brought." Whether this is so, in a given case, would depend in a large degree, we should think, upon the kind and extent of the training received by the children before distribution through-

out the country into which they are brought. But, so long as their presence cannot be shown to be the cause of positive harm to the country, their importation seems to us, from the philanthropic point of view, to be worthy of commendation and encouragement. We return to the question, however, with no controversial purpose, but because we would gladly add any emphasis which it may be in our power to give to Mr. Goldwin Smith's remarks upon the exodus of many of our Canadian youth, which is, we believe, still going on, though in greatly diminished proportions. We have not the faith that most of our governments seem to have in the Royal Commission as a panacea for all political ills, but this exodus, be it small or large, is a question eminently worthy of being enquired into by a non-partisan, or, if that is unattainable, a mixed, committee of the wisest and best men the Dominion can supply. Such a commission could investigate both the question of fact and that of cause and cure. Why not?

That Railway  
Transaction.

The directors of the Atlantic & Lake Superior Railway Company have done well to order the return to those persons who have subscribed for the bonds of the Company, of the amounts they have paid on account of their subscriptions. If their intentions in the matter were honourable they could do no less than decline to retain money subscribed under a misapprehension as to the nature of the guarantee which was relied on in making the subscription. The Finance Minister was certainly caught napping, as he himself virtually and with commendable frankness admits, when he accepted a loan under such peculiar conditions. Without impugning the good faith of those who offered the loan, it is clear that the circumstances were such as would most readily lend themselves to misrepresentation. In fact, misapprehension, under such circumstances, would be almost unavoidable, and it is not easy to see how Mr. Foster could have failed to foresee the consequences of placing the Government in such relations to a doubtful enterprise. Were the Government to make a practice of accepting loans on such conditions it would be comparatively easy for any company which could manage to raise two or three hundred thousand dollars to start with, to put its bonds upon the market in such shape as to lead the unwary into believing that they were actually endorsed and guaranteed by the Government, and so obtain any desired sum on the strength of that supposed guarantee. Indeed, it would be difficult to prevent such an impression being conveyed. The Finance Minister could scarcely hesitate to cancel the contract and refund the loan once his blunder was made clear to him. On the other side, it is evident that, assuming the *bona fides* of the Company, a very serious injury will have been done them by the cancellation of the contract, after a Parliamentary and mainly hostile discussion.

Religious  
Education.

Not long ago we directed attention to this subject, and the recent Synods of the Anglican Church and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church show that the subject is deeply moving the public mind. The conviction is growing that whilst no education can be satisfactory which excludes or ignores religion, the instruction in religion given in our public schools is of no value whatever; and there seems to be a very general resolution to see whether some means may not be taken for introducing some more effective religious instruction into the schools. Of course opinions widely differ as to the best means to be adopted; but the most hopeful feature of the present movement is the general readiness to adopt any method which may open up a prospect of