

are drawing a cork with a steam engine of the most cumbrous and expensive kind. After all, will the cork be drawn? Will the Sample Room be reformed by the Scott Act? "W. F. C." admits that the Act is "clumsy." But experience seems to show that it is worse than clumsy, that it substitutes the contraband for the license system, and thereby increases that secret drinking of which the Sample Room is a specimen, and which, notoriously, is of all kinds of indulgence the worst. Can it be shown that intemperance is so prevalent and so much upon the increase in Canada as to call for extreme measures? If it can, the "Bystander" has always said, let extreme measures be adopted, as they would be adopted in case of plague or war; only let them be thoroughgoing, effective, consistent with public justice, and the same for the rich as for the poor. In the meantime, he ventures to advocate the inspection of liquor, an unpretending measure, but one which would perhaps do more than is supposed to prevent the growth of the fatal craving. On one point he most heartily concurs with what appears to be the opinion of "W. F. C." The Legislature is bound to settle this question for the whole country; to leave the settlement to local agitation is an unworthy subterfuge. Such a device bears no analogy to the submission of a constitutional amendment to the popular vote: in that case the Legislature initiates; in this case the initiation is left to some irregular and irresponsible caucus, which is always lying in wait, and, when it has manipulated a constituency to its satisfaction, snaps a vote, general disturbance and uncertainty prevailing in the meantime; while the practical result is a country chequered over with contradictory systems, and in which the free counties wage war by a line of frontier taverns on the morals of their prohibited neighbours. But to speak of the conduct of the Legislature is to touch the rotten part of the whole crusade. The politicians of the House of Commons shut up their own bar in deference to the Temperance Vote, and then run across the building to refresh themselves at the bar of the Senate.

SPEECHES on Imperial Federation by Mr. Forster and others continue to fill the papers; but it is idle to debate this project further till it shall have assumed some definite form. Let us see an intelligible and practicable scheme. The feeling of the British in the colonies towards the Mother Country is all that Federationists can desire, and anything which appears likely to strengthen the tie of affection will be assured of the most respectful consideration. But we cannot deliberate on a vision or an abstract idea. We might as well be called upon to discuss the advantages of a Constitution or of an Association in general without being told what the particular Constitution or Association was to be. All the reasons given for declining to frame a definite scheme are utterly hollow, and it is wonderful that they should impose on the minds of practical statesmen. It is not only that the details have not been worked out; the general objects of the league, political, military or commercial, have never been clearly defined. Do the Federationists propose commercial union with a common tariff? Some of them apparently do: Mr. Forster, it seems, does not; yet without commercial union the political structure will scarcely be very solid, and the commercial diplomacy of the league will be an intricate affair. Free access to Colonial ports is the one thing which the manufacturers and merchants of England specially desire, and would be their main inducement to concurrence in an Imperial scheme the political and military objects of which have little attraction for their minds. In the meantime events march and Englands are being practically multiplied, while Federationists and their Committees are dreaming about the political expansion of England.

In the States the prospect is bright. The President-elect is wisely reticent; but all that is heard from him, or of him, tends to the belief that he will adhere to the principle of the Civil Service Bill, and do what in him lies, by limiting as much as possible the number of removals from office, to deliver his country from the spoils system and the record of his party from a deep stain. If he persists in his integrity he will not be long in coming into sharp collision with Tammany and the corrupt ring of his party; but for this he is probably prepared; and as the Irish generally bolted to his rival he fortunately owes them nothing. His avowal of a desire to avoid the shock of sudden change extends no doubt to the general policy of the state. Negro fears of a reaction in the direction of slavery or anything akin to it, if they exist, may safely be pronounced baseless. Mr. Cleveland cannot endow the negroes with political intelligence and independence any more than he can make them white; but he will believe every indication that he has given of the bent of his mind if he allows anything that was settled by the war to be disturbed, or does anything but cultivate, to the full extent of his limited power, good relations between the races at the South, and between the South and the rest of the Union.

Mr. Blaine, in his letter of acceptance, declared the main issue to be the Tariff, and proclaimed that his own defeat would be a death blow to Protection. It is natural that the Cobden Club should take him at his word and be now in a state of hopeful excitement, looking for an immediate change of the commercial system. But Mr. Cleveland has warned them that he is an executive officer with no legislative power except a qualified veto. His election does not alter the balance of the legislative forces or deprive the Republicans of their superiority in the Senate. Nor was the party which elected him identical with that of Free Trade. Pennsylvanian Democrats are Protectionists, and so probably are many of those who joined in the Republican bolt. A reduction of taxation will come as a part of the general policy of reform; the practice of raising and squandering an enormous surplus will be abandoned, and the burdens of the people will, as reason and justice require, be measured by the necessities of its government. So far Free Traders have good grounds for their rejoicings. But American statesmen, even if they are themselves in principle Free Traders, shrink from hasty or abrupt dealing with the mass of vested interests which has grown up under the present system. Nor has the fact that Protection does not really raise the rate of wages yet fully dawned, though it is beginning to dawn, upon the mind of the American artisan. The Cobden Club must have patience, and it will do well to abstain from any excessive jubilation, much more from any interference, which can give colour to the belief, so sedulously propagated by American Protectionists, that Free Trade is the interest of England. Tariff Reform approaches in the United States; but the first measures of Free Trade, in the proper sense of the term, will be Free Trade Treaties, not with England or with any European power, but with Canada and the other communities of this continent.

THE Lords have marched out with the honours of war, but there can be no doubt that substantially it is their House that has surrendered. Their leader's avowed aim was to force a dissolution, by which he would probably have been a gainer; in this he has been foiled, and foiled after advancing pretensions which have been rebuked, and bringing his order under a fire of controversy by which it has been seriously and permanently scathed. The Franchise Bill passes. This was the momentous measure and the real subject of contention, the Redistribution Bill being of secondary importance, though its probable effects were magnified in order that the refusal of the Government to produce it might form a plausible ground for resistance. A Redistribution Bill which merges the small boroughs in the county constituencies and increases the influence of the county would be favourable to the Conservatives with the present franchise, but it is not likely to be favourable to them when the franchise has been extended to the labourer. Each class, generally speaking, is antagonistic to the class just above it, and the labourer will be disposed to vote against the farmer, who is his immediate superior and, as he is apt to believe, his tyrant. It seems that Lord Salisbury was prepared, as a party move, with a Female Suffrage Bill, in the belief cherished by Conservatives that the women would vote for the Tories under the influence of the clergy and thereby offset the votes of the farm labourer. By this readiness of a patrician chief to use the relations between the sexes as ammunition for a faction fight, we are enabled once more to appreciate the Conservative wisdom of a privileged order and the superior conscientiousness of aristocratic legislation. Radicals are exasperated, less perhaps at anything in the Redistribution Bill than at the postponement of the great battle with the Lords. But even those who are most firmly persuaded that a reform of the House of Lords is desirable and inevitable, if they take a large view of the interests of the country, will hardly deplore the adjournment of a domestic struggle when they note the dangers with which England is at present surrounded. It is true that not the least of those dangers arises out of the selfish struggles of a caste to regain its noxious power; yet, upon the whole, wisdom surely counsels the nation first and above all things to secure itself against dismemberment. When the compromise was made the Parnellites showed their teeth; nor did they want the effrontery to upbraid with ingratitude a Government which they had been thwarting, harassing and vilifying to the utmost of their power. But finding themselves unable to shake the general concord, or to play the game of coalition with malcontents, they change their note and now boast that they will be the gainers by the settlement which they were ready, if they could have found allies, to oppose. Their impotence in presence of this temporary union of parties shows that faction alone has made them powerful. They proclaim their hope of carrying a number of English and Scotch constituencies in favour of dismemberment through the strength of the Irish vote. If their hope is fulfilled, and English electors can be found so lost to patriotism and duty as to betray the realm into the hands of its