

of the nation was stirred to its depths by the desire of accomplishing a revolution which promised to all classes the removal of an immense pile of abuses and the inauguration of a better and cheaper government. The farmer is by no means disposed, on abstract grounds of philanthropy, to share the suffrage with his labourer, especially since his bitter war with Joseph Arch and the Agricultural Labourers' Union. If the Conservative leaders were not so deplorably bad as they are, and the party in the House of Commons would behave with some semblance of patriotism, instead of outvying the most reckless factiousness of the lowest demagogue, victory, and even ascendancy, for some years to come, might be within their grasp. But no reflecting enemy of revolution can fail to see that the straightest road to that which he wishes to shun would be through the government of arrogant and insensate reactionists such as Lord Salisbury and Lord Randolph Churchill. The friends of revolution see this very clearly, and are by no means unwilling to resign themselves to a brief period of Tory rule as the means of killing Moderate Liberalism, which they justly regard as their most dangerous foe; from the hands of the Tories they think, and are right in thinking, that power would soon come back into their own. The Parnellites, with whom the Conservatives, true to the traditions of Lord Beaconsfield, are not ashamed practically to conspire, have objects of their own in overturning the Government which has done, or tried to do, so much for Ireland. Toryism, if it gains the day, will requite them with a heavy hand, and in that portion of its policy, at all events, it will have the hearty concurrence of an insulted and imperilled nation.

Of the spirit in which the Tories will rule if they succeed in grasping power, and of the probable effects of their temporary ascendancy on the prospects of a rational Conservatism for the future, the Bradlaugh case is a portentous sign. Sir James Stephen the other day, while he rejected Bradlaugh's appeal to his court on the ground that the House of Commons was a tribunal whose decision, however unjust, was final, intimated plainly, though in reserved and decorous language, his opinion that the decision of the House of Commons had been unjust. That Bradlaugh's sentiments, both on social and religious questions, are more than extreme, and his expression of them singularly offensive, is very true; as it is that little respect seems to be felt for him outside of a small and ultra-revolutionary circle. These are proper matters for the consideration of his constituents. But his constituents have decided; nobody questions the legality of his election; and having been legally elected, though he were ten times an atheist and a revolutionist, he would have as good a title to his seat in Parliament as the Queen has to her throne. He has neither done nor said anything disloyal, nor given any reason for the suspicion that he means to make any bad use of his political trust. If he can be lawlessly excluded by party hatred from his place in the House of Commons, there is no lawful authority in England. The folly of persecuting into factitious importance a man who, if he had been allowed his right, would, like many others of the same stamp before him, have subsided into comparative insignificance, is truly astonishing, when we consider that those who are guilty of it are men of the world; but the folly is swallowed up in the injustice. The Speaker ought, on the first occasion when Mr. Bradlaugh presented himself after having been duly elected, to have insisted on performing ministerially the duty imposed on him by law; he ought to have accepted the oath, and left it to Sir Stafford Northcote afterwards to move the expulsion of Mr. Bradlaugh, if he thought fit. The House is now in the worst and the most humiliating imbroglio into which it has got itself since the Middlesex election, the Stockdale and Hansard case not excepted. It is evident that Bradlaugh will be continually re-elected, and that the House will have, at last, to make its choice between a disgraceful surrender and the barefaced exclusion of a particular man from his civil rights on the ground of political and social antipathy. Religion has nothing to do with the business; she has spoken by the lips of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Selborne, who have cleared her of complicity in the iniquity which political hypocrisy is committing in her name.

A SHORT time ago a curious document went the rounds of the European press. It purported to be a letter written by a Russian Nihilist, from a State prison. It was written, we were told, in blood, and it unfolded a fearful tale of cruelties and horrors. It described damp walls overgrown with fungi, neglected sufferers wallowing in filth and covered with vermin, wretches rotting away in diseases so infectious that the doctor dared not touch the patient's pulse, putrid food, foul pails, the yells of the mad, the shrieks of the scourged, a woman fighting desperately to save her new-born child from the rats. In Dante's *Inferno* there was nothing more hideous. Even the London *Times* inserted this thrilling narrative, and commented upon it in the accents of outraged humanity. To some, more sceptical, or

warned by the catastrophe of previous revelations, it occurred that those who made a practice of murder would hardly scruple to lie; and that if they found it expedient to lie, this was just the sort of lie that they would tell. An Englishman resident at St. Petersburg has now inspected the dungeon, and this is his report published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, a strong Liberal journal:

Not wishing to give you any second-hand information, I obtained permission through the Minister of Justice to visit at once the Troubetskoi bastion, the scene of all these horrors. I was shown through the guardroom, and into a long, well-lighted, and perfectly clean corridor. The floor was of asphalt, the walls of a light blue wash and quite fresh. To my right was the yard and garden containing the bath-house; on my left I saw the doors opening into the several cells, some of which, being empty, I entered, measured, and sketched. These cells are, as nearly as I could judge by stepping across them, about twenty-five feet long, fifteen feet wide, and about twelve feet high in the middle, the walls being slightly arched. At the further end of the room there is a window about seven feet by three feet, on which I could perceive little dust and no cobwebs, as asserted. The furniture consists of an iron bedstead, close to which is a table of the same metal, and both fastened down. On one side of the door, and therefore invisible from it, is an air closet, on the other a washing stand. An electric bell communicates with the soldier on duty in case the prisoner is unwell or nuisances need removal. Formerly the bedsteads were of wood and movable, but as the prisoners used them as ladders to reach the window, and thus communicate with the inmates of the neighbouring cell, fixed iron ones were substituted. It appears also that it was reported to the authorities by an informer, that in case members of the secret society were caught a system of communication by taps on the wall was invented, and that the boards of the bedstead served as their means of communication. Tapping on the wall is therefore strictly forbidden. Insubordination is punished, not by the knout, but by imprisonment in a room quite as clean and furnished the same as the rooms above described, but the room can be completely darkened, and a rug is substituted for the straw mattresses. A few cases of madness have occurred, but there has in every case been a reason for it other than the prison discipline. It has either been in the family or the poor victim was already a crazed fanatic before his arrest. In cases of sickness the invalids are removed to a hospital—when the brain is affected, to a special asylum. The gaolers are soldiers picked out for their good conduct; their wives attend on the women when necessary. The story of the stripping and the outrages to morality are but pure inventions. I then asked to see the kitchen and prison fare. The former was perfectly clean, and two cooks were preparing the dinner, which consisted of two courses. The first was a very good "borsch," or soup prepared of beet-root and meat, half a pound of which was given to each man. They could have as much soup as they liked. The second course consisted of a fairly sized piece of stewed beef (½ lb. is the regular size), potatoes and salt cucumber. I have often eaten a much worse lunch than I made off these two dishes. A vessel in the kitchen attracting my attention, I enquired its use, and on examining it more closely I found it to be a contrivance for keeping the prisoners' fare hot while carried through the corridors. In the centre of this vessel there is a small stove, which, when heated, keeps the contents almost at boiling point. I then visited the garden, where I saw a prisoner taking his solitary walk, two never being taken out together. Solitary confinement is doubtless a terrible punishment, but here it was the only one as far as I could judge. Men who take means to keep a man's dinner hot are not likely to treat him with unnecessary and wanton cruelty.

Not long since, it will be remembered, an English missionary named Lansdell took advantage of his mission to explore the Siberian torture-houses of the Russian tyrant, and found them to be really prisons on the general level of Russian civilization, while the penal quicksilver mines, on the horrors of which fancy had so often feasted, could not be found at all. Yet it would hardly have been wonderful, or have proved the Czar to be a fiend, if there had proved to be more truth in these stories than there is. If any men are out of the pale of humanity, they are who make a system of murder. Moreover, the hourly fear of assassination is proverbially of all things the most maddening; perhaps the only man whose nerve it ever failed to shake was Cromwell; and there would be little reason for astonishment if a Czar whose path and bed are beset by assassins, whose faithful servants were falling round him by dynamite or the dagger, should in his fury break all bounds and launch into the utmost excesses of retaliatory cruelty. That Czars, and not only Czars but communities threatened by the Terrorist, are too likely to be goaded into defending themselves by means repugnant to humanity, and may thus relapse and drag back the world into moral barbarism, is a strong reason for steadfastly withholding sympathy from murder, whatever grievances the murderer may allege, or however lofty the aspirations which he may be pretending to fulfil. Sentimental anarchists have told us that we ought to welcome liberty even in the guise of a serpent. The allusion probably was to the serpent which represents the struggling power of good in the opening of Shelley's "Revolt of Islam". But Shelley's serpent is not a cobra da capello.

Whenever we see charges against Russia, it is to be borne in mind that Reuter's agency, the Vienna press, a great part of the German and no small portion of the English press, are in the hands of Jews, and that the Jews are bitterly hostile to the power which is invoked as a protectress by the Christian peasantry of Eastern Europe, who are groaning under Jewish extortion.

A BYSTANDER.

MRS. SPURGEON, the wife of the far-famed London preacher, has been engaged in the past year in a rather novel but extremely laudable undertaking, viz., the supplying, from a fund placed at her disposal, of books to clergymen who are too poor to add to their scant libraries. The income of the fund for one year, it is stated, is not far from \$9,000; and no fewer than 11,351 volumes were distributed among 1,155 needy ministers. Here is an example any wealthy Canadian might follow with profit not only to the recipient of the books, but to the congregations ministered unto.