

events he can hardly deny that it is somewhat inconsistent to call Canada a mere dependency when it suits him, and when it does not suit him, to call it virtually independent. Again, anxious to impress upon us the disadvantages of our connection with the Mother Country, he asserts that because of it no amendment can be made to our Constitution. "The constitution," he says, "imposed by Parliament upon Canada twenty years ago has disclosed serious defects. The Senate, especially, has proved a dead failure or worse. Yet, the constitution is practically riveted on the colony because Parliament can never be got to attend to amendments. Thus the political development of the colony, instead of being aided by the supposed tutelage, is impeded in the most important respect." It is scarcely possible that language could be more misleading. Our constitution was not imposed upon us. Every line of the British North American Act was drawn up by Canadian statesmen. It was the outcome of the political experience and wisdom of our best men. It has been amended already. It can be amended again, whenever the Canadian people express their desire for an amendment. Our Senate is a failure, but the Senate stands, simply because neither of our two political parties has declared against it. The great reason why the Opposition has not done so is because Canadians have not made up their minds whether they can do without a second Chamber, or what amendment to the present method of constituting one would be most successful. It is the inconsistency of Dr. Smith's language, however, rather than its inaccuracy that I wish to point out. While, here, he deplures the difficulty of securing a constitutional amendment, elsewhere, he still more vehemently deplures the fact that under the Parliamentary system the most radical amendment may be passed, it may be in a single session, in Great Britain. He contrasts this with happy Statia, where he shows again and again that an amendment to the constitution is all but out of the question, save in connection with a life and death struggle of the nation, a nation too that is becoming so unwieldy, that in future still more than in the past, it will be well-nigh impossible to get the consent of three-fourths of the people through the State Legislatures or conventions to any specific amendment. His real position would seem to be that constitutional amendment can be obtained too easily in Britain and not easily enough in the United States. As we are British, how is it possible that we can be in the same plight as the United States? *Are we not in the happy mean between the two extremes?* The people of Canada must first vote into power a government with a programme. Should a constitutional amendment be involved, it can be obtained with very little delay, but should there be strong opposition, the necessity of going to the Imperial Parliament gives opportunity for reasonable delay or reconsideration. Such a safeguard against hasty action or violent proposals on the part of an accidental majority of the people is a boon not a yoke. But, whether he admits this to be a boon or not, he cannot be allowed to sit on two stools. He cannot complain of the facility with which, under the British system, revolutionary changes may be made, and the next moment complain that our constitution is practically unchangeable. I have not dealt with the essay on the "Empire," in detail, because so far as Canada is concerned, it is

little more than "Canada and the Canadian Question," over again, and as that has been answered already in THE WEEK, it is unnecessary to say more at present. While he criticises, let us "rise up and build."

By far the best essay in the book is the first, the one on "Social and Industrial Revolution." Its chief defects are due to his lack of faith in the good sense of the people of Great Britain and the United States, and the exaggerated importance he attaches to ephemeral productions of the Jules Verne type, like "Looking Backward," and to wild-cat proposals in favor of land nationalization, fiat money, and such like. He welcomes, yet seems to dread, popular education and unlimited discussion. He believes in the steady advance of humanity, and yet seems to think it possible that the soundest and most conservative nations may lose their senses. He is religious himself, yet fancies that the most religious people in the world may become infidel and surrender themselves to the pig philosophy, "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." If he himself had more faith he would not despair. Assuredly, he would do more good if he cultivated a more hopeful tone. Let him reflect that there is not one of the great changes that have been made during the Victorian epoch that he would unmake if he had the power, and yet, how many of those were believed to involve the deluge! It can now be seen that all have been along the lines of justice, of mercy, of peace between classes and nations, and the dawn of a still better day may be discerned. Of course, evil exists and is strong. The enemies of society are numerous. But, in vain do the heathen rage. Even in the heart of the Irish Celts, whom he thinks so hopeless, and in the heart of the Church of Rome that seems to him only a vast conspiracy against freedom, there is progress. It may almost be said that wherever there are human beings, they are living now under more benign heavens than in any previous age, and, better still, there is a striving upward to the light everywhere. All the influences and inventions of modern times tend to multiply opportunities for men and women to live a higher life, and just as sure as day follows night, there is a good time coming,

"When sense and worth o'er all the earth
Shall bear the gree' for a' that."

Dr. Goldwin Smith was at one time counted a Radical, and we commend to him the faith that underlay the Radicalism of Burns. Even rationalists have faith in the eventual triumph of reason over passion. Why then should any man despair who knows that reason is the organ of the Holy Spirit and that His office is to reveal the Son of man to men?

G. M. GRANT.

PARIS LETTER.

It was bad enough to explode bombs in the Chamber of Deputies, but for members to indulge in a *viva* for the 1870-71 Commune—the Commune was very common in the first Revolution—passeth all understanding. The representative who thus misrepresented France, is M. Thivrier, who wears a blue smock to testify his amicable relations with the working classes, and on Sundays he is reported to wear wooden shoes, black varnished like the harness of a millionaire. Marat, also, had a weakness for such pumps; a protest against the satin slippers and *talons rouges* of Louis XV. era. Thivrier is simply a *poseur*, and in his be-

ing chucked out by the unarmed soldiers, with orders to keep him out for some three weeks, plus stopping his grog, the French do well to treat the incident with silent contempt. In politics, said Thiers, never take anything *au tragique*. The gravamen of the matter lies in the Socialist Deputies, between 50 and 60, abetting the unseemly conduct, some of whom were acting members under the Commune. The Chamber has now its group of Communists; it is to be hoped they will not wear the red Phrygian bonnet as a substitute for the old men's skull cap. French members of Parliament sit with uncovered heads, even the Israelites do so, a politeness they eschew in their synagogues. As it never rains but it pours, the next surprise was a lecture in the Sorbonne Amphitheatre by Deputy Carmille Pelletan, for the guidance of republican students through the shifting sands of politico-socialism. Pelletan is also a clever journalist and a good man at figures; he is not exactly a Communist, but he wrote one of the best histories of the Commune, to show how the soldiers mowed down the insurgents; a sort of condemnation of the army of Versailles. During the lecture, a military band played some popular airs. A few orthodox burning and shining lights of Communism were present as Committee men—and there's the rub. What next? In case of foreign complications would the Communists handicap the authorities?

In occupying Timbuctoo, the French have executed a very dashing and daring act. Public opinion is not quite at ease respecting the prudence of the step; the Government had the taking of that holy city as the objective of their Soudan policy, only the capture was premature and due to the rivalry between the marines and the regular troops. All this is of no importance now; the wine has been poured out and must be drunk. No one but must wish success to the handful of *braves* in their perilous position; they will have to sustain the whole shock of the Touaregs, the most fanatical of Mahomedan fanatics, and beside whom the A. I. Mahdi is toleration itself. Being seceders, the Sultan of Turkey has no influence over them; in their eyes he, too, smacks of the infidel. Being a nomadic sect, known as the El Sennousi, no one is aware of the extent of their numbers. They come and go like locusts. To break their back would be a great step in clearing the Soudans of the Arab slave merchants. So Western civilization ought to help the French in the great risks they must face. As to the commercial importance of Timbuctoo, that is but secondary now, and connected with the distant future. Be sure, the cheapest and most suitable European goods, no matter by what people manufactured, will infiltrate to the caravan routes, pending the gridironing of the Dark Continent by railways. It is to be hoped that neither Italy nor England will make a dash at Mecca, to out-glory France by capturing the abiding city of the Prophet.

In shaking the birch at the *lad-viceroy* of Egypt, England is admitted to have made a good score. Better still is her telling him that his presence is not actually necessary for the welfare of the Nile Valley. The incident shows that England and Turkey now run in the same harness, and that the Palmerston plan of treating Oriental questions is ever the best. France would not allow any of the rulers of her protectorates, say in Tunis, Tonkin, Annam, Cambodia, etc., to kick up their heels and salute her with