

only the impracticable and the absurd can have to say with regard to the objects of the society, and the methods by which it seeks to attain those objects. If, as alleged, and as seems very likely, members of the Ministerial Association sometimes feel it their duty to allude to what they may naturally enough regard as the visionary and mischievous teachings of such an organization, it would seem but fair that the representatives of the organization criticized should be heard in their own defence. Moreover, the present time is one in which—as is being constantly declared by some of the ablest clergymen in Europe and America—social problems are supreme, and should be carefully studied by those whose profession leads them to discuss the highest themes. If, as it seems reasonable to suppose, the representatives of the "Anti-Poverty" Society are in daily contact with those classes which are said to be steadily drifting beyond the reach of ordinary church influence, it is quite possible that the best informed minister might pick up some helpful fact or idea while listening to what they have to say. But, whatever may be thought best in reference to this particular case, if it be admitted that the problems which most earnestly press for solution by the philanthropists and Christian thinkers of the day are sociological rather than theological, might not local Ministerial Associations do much good by giving a considerable portion of their time to the study of such questions in their practical aspects, as they present themselves in the respective localities? The question is respectfully submitted.

WITHIN a few days from the date of this writing the result of the great contest in the United States will be known. Four years ago the Democratic party was restored to power after twenty-four consecutive years of Republican rule. The election of Mr. Cleveland marked the dying out of the old slavery and war issues, and the incoming of a new set of political questions. The one most prominently before the nation at that date was that of civil service reform. During their long lease of power the leaders of the Republican party had degraded the great army of public servants to a condition in which each felt that his means of living depended upon his contributing freely and fighting strenuously for the party. By the use of patronage and the assessment of tribute the whole civil service system was made to work with the precision and relentlessness of a machine. Thousands of the better class of Republicans, as well as large numbers of independent citizens, had become thoroughly disgusted and alarmed, and recognizing in Mr. Cleveland the champion of Civil Service Reform, gave him their votes. To this "Mugwump" vote he undoubtedly owed his election.

How President Cleveland has kept his pledges in regard to Civil Service reform can best be determined by striking a balance between the majority and minority reports of the Civil Service Commission which reported a few weeks ago. According to the one he has falsified every pledge and unblushingly prostituted the vast patronage of his high office to partisan uses. According to the other he has effected great reforms and introduced into many of the departments of the public service a new order of things, though he has not been able as yet to cleanse all the stalls of the Augean stable. It will be well remembered that during the earlier years of his administration he won golden opinions by his firmness in resisting the tremendous pressure brought to bear upon him by the leaders of his own party. During the last year or two he has given way to that pressure most disappointingly, and suffered the public service in many of its departments, at least, to lapse into the old ways. Republican officials have been dismissed by wholesale, though usually not without some show of cause, and their places given to Democrats. It is impossible to predict with any approach to accuracy to what extent the professions he now renews of good intentions in regard to the reform of the Civil Service will help Mr. Cleveland in his second candidature. It seems pretty certain that large numbers of the Independents have lost faith in him, and have returned to their party allegiance. But, on the other hand, many friends of reform, while admitting and resenting his backslidings, will still probably vote for him on the logical principle that it is better to choose the less of two evils, since to elect Mr. Harrison, which would be virtually to enthrone Mr. Blaine as Secretary of State, would make the last state of the nation, in this respect, worse than the first, and remit the Civil Service system, half-washed, to its wallowing in the mire.

BUT, however the struggle may be decided, the question of Civil Service reform will not have been, in this case, as it was four years ago, the controlling principle. The new issue of Tariff Reform has been, and is likely to be for years to come, the great question in presence of which all others are dwarfed. If Cleveland is elected, the boldness with which he threw

down the gauntlet and compelled the great national duel to be fought on a question of economics, will be lauded as the crowning proof of his political foresight. If he is defeated, his rashness in throwing all his forces into this dangerous breach will be denounced as the cause of the disaster. Nor can it be denied that Canada has a vital interest in this aspect of the struggle, since, situated as we are, our own fiscal policy must be greatly affected by that of our neighbours. Whether it will be affected for good by the triumph of the Democrats or the Republicans, is a question upon which opinion will, we suppose, be as much divided on this side the lakes as on the other. In all other respects it will be, we fancy, very much a matter of indifference to Canadians whether Cleveland or Harrison is elected. No doubt at the commencement of the campaign Canadian sympathy was largely on the side of Cleveland. But seldom has a man in high office lowered himself more rapidly in the opinion of the outside world than has he, during the campaign. The two outrageous transgressions of international courtesy—his Retaliation Message, and his treatment of Lord Sackville—have so unmistakably stamped Mr. Cleveland as a time-serving politician whose ruling passion is desire for office, that whether elected or rejected, he can never again take the high place in the world's respect which was by almost universal consent given him before the commencement of this campaign.

SINCE last issue the diplomatic incident at Washington has culminated in very decided action by the American Government. By direction of the President the Secretary of State informed the British Government that Lord Sackville was no longer acceptable as the Queen's Minister at Washington, at the same time notifying Lord Sackville of the purport of the despatch. This harsh and hasty action has naturally excited a good deal of indignation in England, and called forth some sharp criticism of American institutions and manners. Seeing that but a week had elapsed since complaint had been made to the British Government, the assumption that the latter had declined to take action in the matter was certainly unwarranted by civilized diplomatic usage. The Governments of great nations are not usually so precipitate in disciplining their agents at foreign courts for slight lapses in judgment. At the same time, since Lord Sackville unquestionably blundered and the United States Government is technically within its rights, nothing remains but to accept the rough rebuke with the best grace possible. Whether Lord Salisbury will deem it necessary to appoint at once a successor to the Minister dismissed with so scant ceremony, remains to be seen. Whether the Washington Government will presently blush at the recollection of its glaring discourtesy, will depend, we suppose, upon the gentlemanly instincts and training of the coming President and administration.

MR. DANIEL HAND, of Clinton, Conn., has given to the American Missionary Association a donation of somewhat over a million dollars, the income of which is to be used for the education of the coloured people of the South. This is said to be the largest gift ever bestowed by a single individual for the use of a benevolent society. The object is a wise as well as a noble one. The difficult questions still existing between North and South would be more effectually solved by the speedy education of the Negro than by any other means that can be devised. Never until the freed-men and their descendants are trained to think and act for themselves with ordinary intelligence will they cease to be the sport of mischief-makers, and the tools of designing politicians. This work of education is a gigantic task, but if a number of wealthy Northerners could but be induced to take hold of it in the spirit of Mr. Hand the thing would soon be done. The condition of the gift is that not more than \$100 of the income shall be used for the education of any one pupil. The design of this provision seems to be to secure that the fund shall not be lavished in securing an extended collegiate course for a few favourites, but shall be so distributed as to secure a moderate training for the largest possible number. It is to be presumed that the Association will also see to it that the aid so given shall be made a means of stimulating, not discouraging, the spirit of self-help. Mr. Hand's splendid liberality should have a salutary influence in another direction, inasmuch as, in the words of the *Christian Union*, "it hints at a spirit between North and South which, in its Christian elevation and breadth, stands in beautiful contrast with much of the current writing and talking on that subject."

THE Black Mountain Expedition (Northern India) to which we referred a few weeks since, had not at last accounts been brought to a successful issue. Fire and sword had been carried into the territory of the offending mountaineers, village after village had been burnt, but the tribes had not sent in their submission. They were proving themselves unusually stub-