

it not plain that there will be, some solution of the problem which shall not involve either the extirpation of one of the parties, or chronic ecclesiastical warfare and division between them? It is true that there are disagreements which only alterations of opinion can remove. A difference regarding a single rite parts one great evangelical body from others. The Baptist deduces from his premises, that immersion alone is baptism, and that baptism is the prerequisite of communion, the inference that only the immersed have a right at the Lord's table. If the Church of Rome professes to be founded on Peter, the Baptist Church may be said, without disrespect, to be founded on a syllogism. As long as both premises are conscientiously cherished, there must be this degree of isolation. The difference about the baptism of infants is another point which stands in the way of full communion, not to speak of organic union, with religious bodies which regard this practice as indispensable.

From rite we pass to polity. Here it would be a decided gain if all sects would acknowledge—what has become clear to scholars—that no existing form of polity corresponds closely to the polity of the apostolic age. The congregationalism which establishes many distinct organizations in the same town was not the system then in vogue; no more was diocesan episcopacy, either then or immediately after, whatever may be thought about the date and origin of episcopal government in its primitive form. The same may be said of the other ecclesiastical systems. Much more important—nay, of vital importance to Christian union—it is to discern that, while general principles at the basis of church organization are in the gospel teaching, there are no prescriptions, beyond these, applicable to all time. It is the great service of Richard Hooker to have demonstrated this truth. In other words, the *divine-right* theory of church polity, which has been a grand hindrance to Christian unity, must be exorcised. The Presbyterians in England were the first to assert the indispensableness of a particular form of organization. The Episcopalians followed: among them the moderate school of Hooker was ultimately overborne by the mystical school of Laud. Congregationalists have sometimes set up the same lofty claim for their system. Not content with contending that a particular polity is necessary to the *well-being* of a church, it has been often maintained to be indispensable to its *being*. It has been assumed that we must find out and take as a model the precise state of things on the last day of the last apostle's life. The controversies between Episcopalians and other evangelical bodies could be simplified, and perhaps brought nearer to an adjustment, if the distinction between the idea of a *governmental* and the idea of a *sacerdotal* episcopacy were kept in mind. This is not the place to approve or to condemn either of these theories. Enough to say that to a multitude of Christians a *governmental* episcopacy, with limited and defined powers, contains in it nothing formidable, while they recoil from the *sacerdotal* or *mystical* theory as involving the notion of a priesthood, a sacerdotal class, a close corporation,—a notion which, in their view, would rob the church at large—the Christian laity—of their reserved rights, and assimilate the gospel dispensation to the Old Testament economy. In justice to the Protestant Episcopal Church, it should be

added, however, that within its pale both theories exist side by side, their respective adherents being satisfied with episcopacy as a fact, in the absence of agreement as to its theoretical basis.

If organic unity is ever to occur, it is not likely to be through the surrender to any one church of all that is distinctive and is prized in other communions. Each sect is ready enough to swallow up all the rest. The Presbyterian will embrace you if you will only take his Westminster Confession and his synods; the Episcopalian, if you will take his prayer-book and his bishops; the Baptist only asks you to be immersed and to stop baptizing children; the Congregationalist simply demands that you will lodge all authority in the local congregation of believers, the professed Christians, or a fraction of them, in a town or village. There is little prospect of unity until the sundered communities mutually recognize their common Christianity and their equal standing as branches of the church of Christ. Plainly we can hope for no immediate visible union beyond a cordial coöperation and non-interference in Christian activity. It is a gain, however, to perceive that the present divisions of Christendom are a crying evil, and to put far from us the offensive idea that emulous sects help forward by their rivalries the cause of the gospel; that is, that Satan can be harnessed and made to do good work for Christianity.

If organic unity is ever to occur, what form will it take? It is unsafe to predict, but one may venture to think that as it was natural for the early church to follow the lines of political division, so if unity should be restored a like arrangement would emerge. Then as nations are united by various bonds, and we aspire after a "federation of mankind," so the churches of the nations might have their forms of union.

There is a powerful incentive in the direction of Christian union in the opening of the heathen world to missions. In the presence of the nations which are to be conquered to the religion of the cross the divisions of Christendom, and of Protestants in particular, present a disheartening spectacle, and are felt as a disgrace. Christ prayed for the unity of his disciples, that the world might know that the Father had sent him. The sight of discordant sects is not adapted to impress the heathen mind with this truth.

In different ways Christians of the various religious bodies, of their own motion, are uniting in distinctively religious and Christian work. Voluntary associations of this character attract to them numerous members from denominations distinct from one another. Books of devotion, like the "Imitation of Christ," find a welcome among the disciples of different creeds. If Christian people do not say the same prayers, they sing the same hymns. The centrifugal age of Protestantism is closed. The centripetal reaction has begun. Polemics may sound the old war-cries, but "the stars in their courses fight against Sisera."

George P. Fisher.

The Character of the New English House of Commons.

BY AN OLD MEMBER.

ENGLISHMEN accustomed to compare the working of their own assemblies with those of the United States often wonder whether there is the same kind of difference between one Congress and another which they observe between one Parliament and another.

Probably there is a greater difference in the English case than in the American, because the intervals between the election of one House of Commons and its successor are usually longer than the two years which separate one congressional election from the next. Yet in England we should expect to find a difference even with a two-years' period; for each House has got its own marked characteristics; is wiser or more heedless, bolder or more timid, with more rich men in it or more poor, than that which has gone before or that which follows. Edmund Burke remarked long ago that "besides the characters of the individuals that compose our body this House of Commons has a collective character of its own." We in England are now engaged in studying the character of our new master. Though we have known him scarce three months, we perceive great merits, coupled with some grave defects; and those of your readers who have occasion to watch the ways of Congresses may be interested to hear what we discover.

The present House of Commons was elected on a greatly enlarged suffrage, and after a redistribution of seats which finally extinguished the small boroughs and gave the large cities and populous mining and manufacturing county districts a representation fairly if not quite exactly proportioned to their population. These changes destroyed the chance of many men who had previously relied on their local interest or family connection and brought a new set of persons to the front. For the first time in half a century the number of members who did not sit in the previous Parliament, a number usually about a third, has exceeded half of the whole House.

The landed aristocracy, who before 1832 commanded four-fifths of the seats, and even down to 1868 had the majority, are now reduced to a shadow of their ancient strength. They are especially weak on the Liberal side. Hitherto between a half and a third of the Liberal members have belonged to what is called the Whig section of the party, whose moderate desire for progress is natural to a class of land-owners. This section is now less than a fourth of its own side. On the Tory side many scions of the great families were defeated at the polls in December last by obscure men belonging to the popular party, and in consequence the House presents an aspect quite unlike that of former Houses. The tall, handsome, well-dressed young men of society, with that air of superiority which is polish in the more genial, and turns to insolence in the less well natured, the young men whose real interest is in sport or fashionable entertainments and who look on politics as an amusement sometimes a bore, have now become a small minority of the whole; and a new element has appeared, in the labor representatives, of whom there are now about a dozen. Three or four are working-men from London and other great towns, some more are miners from Durham and Northumberland. Two or three, the most conspicuous of whom is Joseph Arch, the famous leader of the agricultural strikers, represent the newly enfranchised rural laborers of the counties. In all previous parliaments black coats (except during the heats of summer) and tall silk hats have been *de rigueur*. Now, however, you may count nearly a score of members in low-crowned felt hats, soft or hard, and gray or brown coats such as a farmer or a foreman in a

workshop might wear. In previous Houses there were scarce any doctors or university professors or journalists. The number of all three classes, but especially of the last, has increased in this one, rendering it more like a French or German or Hungarian Chamber than have been the Houses of past days.

As regards ability, the average level of this Parliament is high. Sir Erskine May, who, after sitting as clerk at the table of the House for five and thirty years, has just announced his retirement, said in 1874 that the House of that year was the stupidest he could remember. That of 1880 he thought better; this he thinks better still. No new genius has appeared, but the number of men of marked capacity is decidedly larger than before, and the gain is most notable on the Tory side, where the need for it was previously greatest. The speeches are not only better in substance and expression; they are also shorter. A tedious orator does not obtain the toleration which the last House extended to him. Cries of "Divide" or "Agreed" warn him to abridge his observations, for the present House is an active and impatient body, bent on work, and thinking so well of itself as to put a high value on its time. It has come up from the country, interested in politics, and particularly in social and industrial questions. It consists largely of young men in whom the hopeful eagerness of youth has not yet been dulled by these disappointments which make up three-fourths of the experience of an old parliamentary hand. The present members are less absorbed in social pleasures than their predecessors, and few of them have their own axes to grind. There is, of course, in every House of Commons, as in other legislatures, a certain number of persons to be found who enter it for the sake of serving their own interests as merchants, or contractors, or financiers, or promoters of joint-stock companies, persons who intrigue among their fellow-members, who try to bring secret influence to bear on the ministry of the day, who seek to gain authority in the eyes of the general public and of foreign governments by a trumpeting of their political importance. This noxious class is comparatively small when one considers what are the facilities for jobbing which the enormous powers of the House of Commons and its committees offer; and in the present Parliament it is apparently even smaller than in the last two that preceded. So far the change in the *personnel* from land-owners and plutocrats to persons belonging to the professional and working classes seems to have done no mischief. The majority in the present House is thinking less of its own concerns than of public legislation, and is eager for such legislation even to the verge of impatience and recklessness. Ideas and projects which till lately were deemed visionary are discussed seriously, and with difficulty prevented from taking effect in statutes. The majority is, in fact, what is called radical; nor is radicalism confined to the Liberal side of the House. There is a good deal of the same disposition to trust *a priori* reasonings, to bow to any popular cry, to follow an apparently philanthropic impulse, on the Tory side. That cautious, solid, unsentimental conservatism which used to characterize English politics is at a discount nowadays, and finds its exponents quite as much in the Whig section of the Liberal party as among the Tories. Old members are astonished, sometimes even shocked, at the

light-hearted energy with which this new House goes on its way, caring neither for the time-honored maxims of the Constitution nor for the rules of party discipline. The present ministry, although radical when compared to previous ministries, is not bold enough for the bulk of its supporters, and is often in danger of being defeated when it tries to restrain them. That it does maintain some sort of control is chiefly due to the immense personal influence of the Prime Minister.

The self-confidence of the new House appears in the behavior of individuals no less than of the body. The members are not shy or timid like those of former parliaments. Twenty years ago it was deemed the duty of a new member to sit silent for a session or two, and learn the temper of the House by listening to his elders, before he ventured to address it himself. But in the first weeks of this Parliament most of the speaking was done by the new-comers. They jostled the old members aside, and expressed themselves with ease and fluency on the gravest topics.

In fact the new House is courageous in every respect but one,—it is horribly afraid of its constituents. Whether because the memory of election speeches and promises is still so fresh in its mind, or because the members, relying less upon personal or family influence than in former days, feel themselves more purely delegates, there can be no doubt but that the present representatives of the people are extremely sensitive to the slightest breath of popular sentiment. Many a man will tell you that he voted for such and such a resolution or bill, not because he held it right, but because a section of his constituency desired it, or because the language he had used on the platform constrained him. It sounds absurd to say that persons who ought to know their own business best are mistaken in paying such abject deference to the wishes of their constituents; yet some who have had the amplest means of studying the English masses believe that the masses like an independent member better than a submissive member, that they value backbone in their representative, and deem him the more honest if he does not try to humor all their fancies. This is perfectly true. But the pres-

ent race of members is in a fair way to spoil the people by too much deference; and when one considers that on many subjects the opinion of a trained and able man, who has listened to debates by other able men, must be sounder than the notions of a mass of uninstructed voters, it is a misfortune that the country should lose some of the very benefits which a representative debating council was meant to secure, and that Parliament should be in danger of sitting merely to register conclusions formed by an irresponsible multitude outside.

M. P.

In Relation to the Labor Question.

IN answer to letters received and for the information of all interested, we give below a list of articles bearing upon the Labor Question which have appeared from time to time in this magazine, down to July, 1886.

The Foreign Elements in Our Population, <i>Joseph Edgar Chamberlin</i>	September, 1884
Danger Ahead, <i>Lyman Abbott</i>	November, 1885
The Strength and Weakness of Socialism, <i>Washington Gladden</i>	March, 1886
Strikes, Lockouts and Arbitration, <i>George May</i> <i>Powell</i>	April, 1886
A Letter from <i>William Morris</i>	July, 1886
The Labor Problem — By a Western Manufacturer, <i>Edward L. Day</i>	July, 1886
Coöperation — By a New York Master Printer, <i>Theodore L. De Vinne</i>	July, 1886

TOPICS OF THE TIME.

Our "Commune," <i>J. G. Holland</i>	August, 1878
The Capitalist and the Laborer, <i>J. G. H.</i>	October, 1878
Popular Despotism, <i>J. G. H.</i>	January, 1879
An Aspect of the Question, <i>J. G. H.</i>	June, 1879
The Uses and Abuses of Trades-Unions	February, 1884
Economic Mistakes of the Poor	December, 1884
"Not The American Way"	April, 1885
Mercantilism Transfigured	December, 1885
A Readjustment of the Industrial Order	May, 1886
A Word of Sympathy and Caution	June, 1886
Two Kinds of Boycotting	June, 1886
Negation not a Remedy	July, 1886
Civil Liberty and Equal Rights	July, 1886

OPEN LETTERS.

Trades-Unions, <i>J. H. Loomis</i>	February, 1884
Danger Ahead, <i>H. C. Fulton</i>	February, 1886
The Labor Question, <i>Washington Gladden</i>	June, 1886

BRIC-À-BRAC.

Uncle Esek's Wisdom.

ALL political parties are made up of foxes and geese — about five thousand geese to one fox.

THE great beauty of charity is privacy; there is a sweet force even in an anonymous penny.

I AM an uncompromising Radical up to date, but when I reach the other world I can be a Conservative, if it is the best thing to do.

MEN of great genius should not forget that their failings, or vices, are more apt to be noticed, and even admired, than their virtues.

ALL Conservatives have once been Radicals, and their virtue consists in having found out that half a loaf is better than no bread.

My friend, if you must keep a pet, let it be one of the serene kind (a rattlesnake or snapping turtle, for instance); this will exercise your caution and strengthen your genius.

I KNOW of nothing that will test a man's true inwardness better than to feel like the Devil, and be obliged to act like a saint.

MY dear boy, if you must part your hair in the middle, get it even, if you have to split a hair to do it.

INDEPENDENCE is a name for what no man possesses; nothing, in the animate or inanimate world, is more dependent than man.

IT isn't so much what a man has that makes him happy, as it is what he doesn't want.

THERE are many comfortable people in the world, but to call any man perfectly happy is an insult.

THERE is nothing so valuable, and yet so cheap, as civility; you can almost buy land with it.

THE great mass of mankind can only gaze and wonder; if they undertake to think, they grow listless, and soon tire out.

Uncle Esek.