

most efficacious means, he says, although, undoubtedly, of a rather slow effect, would be that of an appeal to moral influences, of reviving the idea of duty superior to the calculations of a sterile egotism, of reaffirming family organisation and habits, of re-attaching the people to their homes, by fortifying them against mischievous seductions. But this, he adds, would be to run counter to the policy of the day, and, hitherto, nothing better has been found to cure this evil of sterility, of which we complain, than to flatter the instincts which have contributed to create it. It is evident, then, that generations educated in secular schools are morally inferior to those who have been educated religiously—and that, as parents especially, they are much less respectable. Could our contemporary's question, in fact, receive a more significant or a more conclusive answer.

THE false pretensions of the period are in nothing BETROGRESSION, made more manifest than they are in this matter of education. By nothing is it made plainer that the world has virtually returned to where it was in times that are now condemned as comparatively benighted. When all plausible arguments brought forward against denominational schools fail this becomes evident. They tell us our schools are less efficient, but we show them that they are undeniably more so. They say our system is more costly, but we prove it to be less so. Then they exclaim—Your schools produce criminals. And what is this in fact? An adaptation of the old accusation on which the penal laws were based. Your religion produces rebels, the Catholics were told; hence it is necessary to restrain you, and, in consequence, the priest and the school master were outlawed and all the other villany likewise ensued. The principle on which we are now plundered in support of a system of which we can make no use, is the same, in short, as that on which a former generation was openly deprived of its estates and its personal effects. Another argument is to the effect that it is desirable to do away with all religious disagreements among the people and to establish one uniform rule of harmony among them—to establish, in fact, a reign of indifference as regards religion. But here again, we have the penal days returned upon us. Queen Elizabeth, for example, was exactly of such a mind. She would brook no religious variance among her people. Consequently, attendance at the parish church was made obligatory under penalty of heavy fines—not to speak of other means of a more extreme kind. But this illustration seems to us particularly appropriate, considering the fine now levied on Catholics who desire to follow the dictates of conscience. Again, Louis XIV. was bent on uniformity of religious opinion among his people. As a consequence his Majesty organised the Dragonades and revoked the Edict of Nantes. The principle of religious persecution, therefore, has been re-introduced in these enlightened times of ours, and expediency only can determine the degree in which it is to be enforced, or the cases to which it is to be applied. There is still another plea unblushingly advanced for which we seem to look in vain for a precedent, even in the times of acknowledged persecution, that is, that the minority must in all things submit to the will of the majority. But what infamy is there, in fact, that can not thus be justified? The negroes of the slave States, for example, were a minority. Therefore, according to this argument, all the horrors described in Mrs. Stowe's famous book—matters most profitable to the majority—were justified. There is no scheme of confiscation, no act of oppression, no public crime that could not be justified were such an argument admitted. *Fiat justitia ruat cælum*, so ran a motto of the ancient world. But, for our part,—"nous avons changé tout cela"—we have found a better axiom, or one, at least, more suited to the spirit, if not to the pretensions of the day. Let us do justice only to the big numbers—Providence favours the big battalions—and as for the small ones, let us make our profit of them. Let the sky keep in its place and justice take its chance. There, then, is our enlightened period before us, our *fin de siècle*, emulating the persecutions of Queen Bess or the Grand Monarque, and inventing a plea of policy that would have made the heathen world blush for shame. The arguery certainly is not promising for a new country—a new country, moreover, apparently making a new departure.

IT is an ill wind, they say, that blows nobody good. SIX OF ONE ETC. For our own part, if our attitude on the education question removes us from the ordinary sphere of politics and places us without the reach of party considerations, we have still our consolation. We do not, for example, feel any of the devouring anxiety that just now possesses the minds of the majority of our neighbours—whether they be on the one side or the other. We can, therefore, take a calm view of affairs and await developments without impatience. Not so, however, our old acquaintances of the Conservative camp, nor yet our future benefactors, as we may hope they may prove to be—who are newly come to the surface, and who, or at least some of whom, boast their proclivities to be socialistic. There is on the one side a longing to see Sir Harry Atkinson hold on, by at least the skin of his teeth—in the forlorn hope, no doubt, that something may happen before the new Parliament meets

to give him an advantage. After Sir Henry Atkinson the deluge! Though what Sir Harry has done during his long tenure of office to prevent the deluge, it would, perhaps, be difficult to say. Nay, might it not be argued that, having done nothing to prevent it, he had prepared the way for its flowing in? The potentate to whom the saying we have adapted is attributed certainly did so. Under Sir Harry's management of affairs, at any rate, the discontent arose and grew that has culminated so far in the return of the Socialist Members. On the other hand, Mr. Ballance is quite ready to accept office at once—indeed, it appears that he would prefer to do so. An opportunity would thus be given to him, he tells us in effect, to devise a policy which he might introduce on the meeting of Parliament, so that no unnecessary delay should take place in the bounding and leaping forward of the colony. And, naturally, there is a good deal of anxiety felt among Mr. Ballance's followers that he should be given his way in the matter. But a great deal is implied in the attainment of power by the new Members. We await from it, for instance, the clear demonstration that, after all, and contrary to the general opinion and experience of the world, only contradicted here and there, perhaps, by the inevitable exception that proves the rule—statesmanship is a quality easily acquired—more, that it is born with the ordinary individual and only needs that an opportunity should be given him to bring it triumphantly into play. We conclude, meantime, that such popular governments as have been hitherto established fall short in some particular or another. They, perhaps, hamper their members by insisting on something more than the sweet simplicity of complete inexperience and want of training. If, for example, the artisan, pure and simple, taken, all unprepared, from his last or his goose, takes any principal part in the French Legislature, it is to be feared that the precedent is unfortunate. The condition of the workingman, which forms the criterion of the period, at least leaves much to be desired in France. In France, moreover, under a popular form of Government the population regularly decreases, threatening the very existence of the nation. In Italy, again, a more popular form of Government has been attended by extreme destitution among the people and the depopulation of the country through emigration. Let us hope, therefore, that some element enters into the popular forms of government respectively prevailing in those countries, perhaps a wider knowledge of the world among the members and, consequently, a deeper infection with guile, that will not be found to prevail among our own Social democracy. However, as we have said, for our own part we look on with comparative indifference. For us there is not much to choose between Conservative and Socialist, and we shall watch their struggle with an equal mind, gaining, at least, all the benefit we can in an enlarged experience.

WHAT is the State? Everything we have been AN INDEFINITE told is to come to us from the State, and, being ARTICLE. desirous of knowing to whom we should be indebted for such great benefits, we have asked what is the State? and received for our answer—THE PEOPLE. We are dull enough, nevertheless, to find the answer indefinite. Is it the people forming each his own judgment for himself, forming it on sufficient grounds, and with due enlightenment, prudence, and moderation? And what guarantee can we have that this is possible? Is it the whole people, or only their majority? Are minorities, even large minorities only exceeded by a vote or two, hopelessly to be excluded, and to submit to the sentence passed on them by the equity of the period—namely that of obeying the will of the majority, let it be ever so unjust? Is it the people instructed and enlightened, and making independent use of their instruction and enlightenment? Or the people rather stupid—"mostly fools," says Carlyle—and somewhat idle, sent to school, perhaps, but not having given much attention to their books, or if bright and attentive not so instructed by what was placed before them, as to have profited much morally or intellectually, but especially morally? Is it the people in a calm and temperate frame of mind acting for themselves, or the people excited and misled by demagogues? Is it the people actuated by a noble public spirit, or the people respectively seeking their own ends? Is it the people, in fact, as they exist in theory and on paper in the study of some philosopher, or would-be philosopher, or the people as they exist in reality and in the flesh, and as we have, more or less, to do with them and to guard against them every day in the week, Sundays not excepted? Is it the people developed, as we are told they will be in the time of our grand-children of a fifth or sixth generation, or the old creatures we have known, guided by prejudice, swayed by passion, and now and then goaded and driven half mad by panic? If the former, let us consider ourselves blessed in being permitted to wait until the happy development has been fully worked out—when, for instance, the last man, according to Saint-Simon's doctrine, consumes the last drop of water left in the world, and dies a raving maniac—that we may enjoy their benefactions. But, if the latter, let us make the best of a bad bargain, deploring the plight into which a miserable fate has cast us, and expecting the worst—for bad will be our best, as