

picture is not a pleasant one to contemplate, in which some of the children are seen as following their father, and others of them as following their mother, and the acid disputes of public life are partaken of in the bosom of the family. In all probability there are few cases in which husband and wife are not agreed, and would not continue agreed upon such subjects. The more prosaic consideration of political opinions would be introduced into love making—if, as is promised, young ladies under the proposed circumstances gave more of their time to the study of politics;—and matches no doubt would be made, for the most part, among kindred spirits. And where husband and wife are agreed is it not sufficient that one of them should vote? But, if there happened to be a difference, is it not almost too much to expect from human nature that the husband, having in his hands the guidance of his household, should not endeavour to assert his authority. We are convinced at least that no one could expect of human nature that the wife holding such a power in her hands would not sharply insist upon such an assertion, and to hen-pecking perhaps more than one hon. Member might owe an ignoble return. The independent spinster, in fact, could alone be regarded as the uninfluenced female voter. Can we look upon her as a fit person to wield an influence over all-important public affairs? Let us put politeness aside for the moment, under the force of extreme pressure, and deal with the matter candidly. Who, then, is the independent spinster? The young girl between the age of 21 and another age which we will not specify, for it is not for us to discriminate in delicate matters of this kind. But the young girl—utterly inexperienced in life, and, as is certainly the custom among young girls, capable of all kinds of vagaries and sentimental notions. And when the independent spinster was no longer a young girl, what then? Here, truly, is another consideration, into whose mysteries it would not become us to enter too minutely. But is not the answer traditional? Surely the maiden aunt has been sufficiently long among us for us to understand her peculiarities. Our conclusion is, therefore, that where married women were concerned the franchise would be superfluous, or mischievous, and that where unmarried women were concerned, it would be altogether improper and out of place. We sincerely hope, then, that our legislators have been lightly airing their gallantry, and that when the crucial point of making the proposal law is arrived at they will be found in the exercise of their common-sense.

## Colonial Notes.

THE motion carried in the House of Representatives for the holding of a capital and labour congress at Chicago during the forthcoming Exhibition in that city, seems to have a good deal to recommend it. So far as New Zealand is concerned, at least, such contact with the outer world appears very desirable. Isolated as we are here, our tendency must be to become too much bound up with our own ideas, and inclined to esteem local leaders the wisest of mankind. It cannot do us any harm, therefore, to give some attention to what men elsewhere have to say. In America besides, though no doubt there is a good deal that is foolish and something that is extravagant, there is still a solid substratum of good sound sense, that must prevent things from running to extremes. On the whole, we consider the congress at Chicago, if it can be arranged for, likely to prove very useful.

A significant clause in the Treasurer's Financial Statement was that in which he referred to the exodus from the Colony. "If we cannot retain our population," he said, "we should know the reason why in order that the remedy for such a state of affairs may, if possible, be applied."—There are none so blind, however, as those who will not see—and to a principal cause of the evil complained of our legislators, like a good many others, are voluntarily blind. While the youth of the Colony, in short, are brought up under a system that encourages dependence and discourages every thought of hard work, they will wander about on leaving school expecting that light employment shall be found for them, and resolved upon living by their wits. The loss of such a population should perhaps have little terrors for us. And, notwithstanding the waste of money on the education system, we might be glad to see them go if there were any chance of supplying their room by immigrants, less lished, with a superficial shine, but more manly and more steady. While the craze lasts, nevertheless, and until eventually a rough awake comes, as come it must sooner or later, our Statesmen will not acknowledge the reason nor be bold enough to apply the remedy.

In considering the public debt of the Colony, as given in the Financial Statement, that at the net sum of £37,359,157, our thoughts turn naturally to what would be the position of the public debtor if the proposals of our socialist friends were carried out. Under those circumstances repudiation were avoided, payment

could be made in commodities only. How would the public debtor feel, for example, if it were proposed to him to take it out in frozen mutton? It is only by coming face to face with such absurdities that we can perceive what is really involved in the proposals of our Socialist friends.

There is an awful expectation for our friends the abolitionists. Mr Ballance also says in his Statement that he does not see why there should not be an increase in the revenue for the current year under the heads of customs and beer duty. The Premier, then, evidently does not expect that the closing of public-houses will lessen the drinking habits of the people, and, in fact, as we saw last week from a leader in the *Scotsman*, experience proves that it has no such effect, at least in Edinburgh. But surely toppers in Auld Beekie are not more persevering and active in the pursuit of their cups than they are elsewhere.

The statement of the Treasurer respecting the lands of the Colony is especially important. Sixteen million acres of the Crown lands, we are told, are gone, and less than three million remain for settlement. What must the condition of the country be, therefore, should the time-honoured plan of settlement be pursued to the end? Population would necessarily already have reached its highest figures. But the necessity is evident not only for a new departure with respect to the shabby remnant still remaining but also for the recovery of large areas held by the monopolists. This is simply inevitable, and the proposal made for it in the Statement appears a mere matter of course.

The moderation of the proposals for a land and income tax appears to have come as a comparative relief to the partisans of the time honoured state of affairs. They acknowledge that nothing of a bursting-up process seems to be provided for. Their professed fears are lest the proposed taxation may not yield a sufficient revenue. Burst-up or not, however, the time has come for the old monopolies to reach their end. We admit, nevertheless, that there is still a chance for them in the very means that some of their principal opponents boast of as effectively taken for their destruction. Unless there is at hand an active, stirring population to take their place, even should they lose their hold for a little, they must inevitably resume it. But, as we have said, the education system now in force renders the existence of such a population impossible. Blatant secularists in a good many instances defeat their own object. And, by the way, monopolists, who, in turn, are frequently secularists quite as blatant, in all probability perceive how the land lies and make the best of their opportunity. For example, Mr Earnshaw, after all, may be merely the cat's-paw of Mr Scobie Mackenzie.

It is characteristic of Sir George Grey to insist that every man shall have his own. Every man shall be one voter. Even the convict shall be disfranchised only for the time he is in prison. The moment he is released he shall, in the intervals perhaps of running up another score, exercise his privilege as a citizen. And may we not conclude that Sir George will be equally generous towards the fair sex? We need not go into particulars, but we know the quarters, therefore, in which fair electors will pretty numerously be found. Verily the voice of *ces demoiselles* will be as valuable as it is respectable in influencing the destinies of the country. But such must be the results of conferring the franchise as actually proposed, on every adult male or female.

Never was there a more appropriate adjournment than that of the debate on the female franchise, which occurred at Wellington, the other night. Ladies crowded their gallery, and the most intense interest prevailed, when the hour arrived for the Governor's ball, and the House was immediately adjourned. Was there not something of bathos in the transition from the discussion of woman's rights to the dancing of the polka? But gravity and frippery never came more happily into contact.

As an instance of the musical progress St Patrick's College Band is making under the instruction of Mr S. Cimino (says the Wellington *Post* of the 16th inst.) it may be mentioned that the young musicians will, at the concert at the College on Thursday next, play the selection, "Linda di Chamonix," which was made the test piece at the recent adult band contest at Fielding.

In reference to the mysterious undertaking reported by the Wellington correspondent of the *Otago Daily Times*, and to which we ourselves referred in our last issue, the Napier *Evening News* explains that the Government are charged with dismissing Protestant Inspectors and keeping on Catholics. "Some ignorant bigot," says our contemporary, "started the yarn, because there happened to be one or two Catholics in the present Ministry. As a matter of fact, two of the Inspectors retrenched were Catholics, and the majority of those who remain are, we believe, members of the Church of England