

from this yielding to discontent. A man who allows his mind to dwell upon the inequitable return that he receives for his labor, instead of dwelling upon the proper performance of his work, is not likely to be a very desirable member of society. He falls behind his fellows and gives himself up to envy. Instead of reflecting that there must needs be inequalities in this world, he dreams of a state where there shall be no one more prosperous than himself, and comes to hate the present order as unjust. It is obvious that a human being-actuated by such sentiments cannot be happy and is likely to be dangerous. If the laws and institutions of society are all wrong, there can be no wrong in disregarding them. If employers have an unjust advantage of position, it is right to cheat them. Thus the moral nature is corrupted and the distinctions of right and wrong become faint and confused. The end is either in open lawlessness or in a sullen despondency, broken by acts of malignant treachery not only to those who are entitled by contract to faithful service, but also to society at large.

The influence of this tendency to yield to what is admitted to be the meanest of passions appears even in our legislatures. It is the nature of envy to pull down, not to raise up, and the measures advocated by those who claim to represent the poor, and who, unfortunately, perhaps do represent them, are often intended really to harass the rich. Nothing was more striking in the agitation of the convict-labor question than the brutal indifference, and even the malicious exultation, with which the warning that if the convicts were to be unemployed, they would have to be supported by the taxpayers of the State, was received by those who spoke for the labor unions. It was evidently felt that if the interests of these unions were advanced, it would not be a matter of regret should the wealthier classes have to pay for it. Minds narrowed by this mean and jealous habit of looking with bitterness upon the prosperity of others are incapable of entertaining any enlightened views of statecraft. Such minds cannot conceive or understand a policy that unifies the interests of all classes, and recognizes the prosperity of the whole as involving that of the parts.

While the poor are from their situation naturally more prone to yield to envy, it would be a mistake to connect this passion with poverty. There have been ages when poverty was not looked upon with contempt, and when it was thought becoming to endure hardships with fortitude; and, as we have said, the poor of the present time are comparatively well off. It is quite possible for wealthy people to envy one another upon many accounts, and much display is really made in the hope of exciting this feeling. The truth is that the prevalence of an envious spirit is a manifestation of the all-pervading materialism of the age. We are so set upon material ends that we exaggerate the importance of attaining them, and come to think little of success that does not "materialize." Now the quantity of material goods is necessarily limited, and it is at the same time

impossible that they should be equally distributed. But the immaterial—which are also the real—goods are unlimited in quantity, and can be enjoyed by every one to an extent which is principally dependent upon himself. Men do not envy one another for being honorable and generous and considerate, although they may envy the results of those virtues. And if such goods as these were held up as ideals, mean passions like envy would be expelled. But so long as men are overwhelmingly absorbed in the pursuit of what exists only in a quantity insufficient to satisfy them all, the vast majority of them will infallibly be convinced that they are not getting their fair share, and will hate their successful competitors. It is obvious that no change in human institutions, no interference with freedom of contract, no juggling with property in land, can avail to check a disposition that is necessarily engendered by competition of this kind. There must be a change of ideals before there can be a change of heart.

It is hardly to be expected that teachers of morality should escape the subtle influence of this atmosphere of materialism, but it is surprising that so many of them should fail to see that by stirring up discontent with institutions that can certainly not be overthrown without a revolution, they are destroying the very fountains of kindness. That mutual trust and regard which is of the essence of civilization, cannot exist if every man feels that his neighbor is looking with envious eyes on his possessions, and calculating how much they ought to be reduced. When such feelings are prevalent, sympathy is discouraged. The most costly benefactions are looked upon as but the giving up of plunder, and in an age distinguished above all others for the magnificence of the donations of private citizens to the public, gratitude is but slightly felt. So long as schemes for the more "equal division of unequal earnings" are held up to mankind as remedies for suffering, so long will mankind forget that most suffering is the result of sin. The human race is still so far from learning this lesson, and this lesson in all its manifold forms is so much more important than any other, that preachers and moralists may wisely postpone schemes for the reformation of society to endeavors for the reformation of individuals.

PRESIDENT GRÉVY'S RESIGNATION.

THE worst blow, probably, that has yet been inflicted on the French Republic by any one, has been inflicted by the action of all the leading Republicans in forcing President Grévy to resign by refusing to hold office under him. He has sent for everybody who was in the smallest degree likely to be able to form a Cabinet, and they have, one and all, told him that they could do nothing as long as he remained in the Presidential chair. He has accordingly been compelled to vacate it in the second year of his term, as effectually as if he had been formally impeached and found guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors. In other

words, a precedent has been established which will enable a majority in the Chamber to depose the President whenever they please, by simply refusing to form a Ministry under him. It is to be observed, too, that in the existing condition of French politics, a President who finds himself boycotted in this way has not the resource of appealing to the country by a dissolution, because the Opposition is not, as it is here and in England, loyal to the Government. A Frenchman who condemns the action of the Republicans towards the President, would, if he were called to the polls to-morrow, find that his only way of punishing them was to vote for a Monarchist, or, in other words, to send up a majority in favor of changing the form of the Government and getting rid of the Republic altogether. This, of course, a good Republican cannot do. He has no alternative but to make the best of the Republican politicians now in public life.

It is this absence of constitutional alternatives which is the curse of France to-day. No rational choice is ever offered to the Republican voters. They live between the devil and the deep sea. If they do not like the moderate Republicans, they have either to help the Monarchists to upset the Republic altogether, or put the Radicals in power and prepare for a general upturning, and possibly the return of the Commune. Against the intense personality of French politics the quiet citizen has really no protection. It is, of course, a lamentable thing that anybody as closely connected with the President as Wilson is, should be so strongly suspected of corruption and jobbery. But men who cared more for the Republic than for personalities would have labored might and main to dissociate the President wholly from the scandal, and make Wilson the scapegoat, and would have seen clearly that in insisting that the President must bear part of Wilson's burden they were covering the Republic with disgrace and weakening it both at home and abroad. The mischief is not cured by punishing Grévy for Wilson's sins. The world of course says that a system which puts in the highest place a man responsible for gross corruption in the Executive Palace, ought not to last and cannot last. In fact, the whole movement against Grévy could not serve the purposes of the Monarchists better if they themselves had contrived it, and they are, of course, vigorously supporting it.

When the Convention meets to elect Grévy's successor it will find the Republicans so divided, the future so uncertain, and the popular agitation so deep, that everything will seem possible to the Royalists. There is not now a single Republican statesman who is clearly marked out for the Presidency, as Thiers or Gambetta was, for instance, by past services, or by public confidence. There are a number of men, like Freycinet, and Ferry, and Rouvier, and Clémenceau, each of whom has a small following, but not one of whom has any chance of election, and not one whose election would restore public confidence. Among the military men, to whom France is apt to turn in troublous times, there is not one who, like poor MacMahon, even has a good

record of services in the field. All the few men who distinguished themselves in the Franco-German war are dead. The one prominent military man to-day, Boulanger, is distrusted by fully half the nation as an ambitious charlatan, and yet his chances of the Presidency, if a soldier is to be chosen, are probably as good as anybody's.

Of course the Royalists cannot desire a better state of things for their purposes. When the convention meets, they can either make a vigorous push to secure the election of one of the Orleanist princes, or, failing this, aid in putting into the Presidential chair the worst possible Republican candidate, trusting to his administration to prepare the way more effectually than ever for the restoration of the throne. Boulanger or anybody like him would play their game. What they seek to show, and they do not disguise it, is that a Republic cannot succeed in France; that the very attempt to establish it tarnishes the national fame, and degrades public morals, and makes foreign alliances impossible. Neither Russia nor any other Power will be willing to link its fortunes with a Government which runs the risk of revolution every time a high officer is caught selling contracts and decorations, or the Chambers get out of temper with the President.

SPENCER FULLERTON BAIRD.

THE death of the late Professor Baird occurred at a time when we were prevented from taking proper notice of the event. We owed a double debt to his memory, as a scientist and as a past contributor to the *Nation*. We purpose, in the present article, to repair our neglect.

Professor Baird was of Anglo-Scotch ancestry, and some of his connections settled in America at the close of the seventeenth century. The names of Potts, Spencer, and Biddle are connected alike with the annals of patriotic endeavor and business sagacity in his native State of Pennsylvania. His father, Samuel Baird, established himself in the legal profession at Reading, where the subject of these notes was born on the 3d of February, 1823. His mother, Lydia M. Biddle, from whom young Spencer inherited his genial and equable temperament, survived her husband nearly forty years. From his father he seems to have derived a love of nature and of outdoor pursuits, and this doubtless had much to do with developing that magnificent physique which enabled him in later years to carry easily an almost unparalleled burden of mental and administrative labor. His father died when Spencer was ten years old. The latter entered Dickinson College in 1836, and graduated at the age of seventeen. Like most naturalists, he early showed a strong interest in animated nature, which was shared and promoted by an elder brother, William M., who was the first to begin the collection of specimens, and in 1843 was the senior author of a joint paper in which the two young students made their debut in scientific literature. This, which described two new species of birds, was followed by a list of the birds of Carlisle, Pa., after which the activity of the elder brother was turned in other directions.

With a breadth of view unusual at that day, the mother and grandmother did not attempt to repress the development of the son's mind in the direction of scientific pursuits. At that

period it could hardly be hoped that such studies might lead the way to a career satisfactory to parents. The difference between the opportunities of that day and of the present time can hardly be realized, so great has been the change. Fortunately for science and himself, young Baird was permitted to devote the five years following his graduation to the pursuits dictated by his tastes. He formed with Audubon, in 1838, a close friendship, which doubtless had much to do with the choice of the special lines of his subsequent researches. In 1841 and 1842 he undertook long pedestrian tours through the mountains of Pennsylvania. In the latter year he read medicine at New York at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and about this time began his association with the naturalists Cassin and Lawrence, and a little later with Morris, Brewer, Agassiz, Dana, Desor, and Girard. In 1845 he was chosen to the professorship of Natural History in Dickinson College, which included in its duties the teaching of physiology and geometry, and to these chemistry was added at a later period. His special investigations were not interrupted, and his summers were devoted to long expeditions, which reached in successive years the Adirondack region, Ohio, the mountains of Virginia, Lake Champlain, and Lake Ontario, with rich results in ichthyology and ornithology. In his own collections, during this period, were developed those business-like methods of arrangement and detail for facilitating study which were subsequently adopted and extended, not only in the institutions which grew up under his supervision, but by nearly all other American scientific museums, and which form a system that for usefulness and efficiency has no parallel in any foreign museum up to the present moment.

In 1850 Professor Baird was appointed to the post of Assistant Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, then well launched on its career of scientific usefulness under the direction of Professor Joseph Henry. Although the Institution had been made the depository of all the national scientific collections, Henry foresaw, with his usual sagacity, that to provide for and maintain a great museum would swallow up the available income of the Smithsonian fund, and render it impossible to promote science in those more important directions contemplated by his wider and more comprehensive plans. Though recognizing the value and utility of a national museum separately endowed, he set his face firmly against the policy of retention and accumulation on the part of the Institution. Biological specimens, from his point of view, were so much raw material to be studied and digested, in which work, and in the publication and dissemination of the results, the Institution might properly join forces with the Government and with private individuals; its part of the labor and expense being as purely supplementary to other agencies as circumstances might permit. The policy of the Institution under Henry was to disperse as widely and freely as possible the worked-up material, and to enlist in the process of elaboration the aid and enthusiasm of every American naturalist, each in his special field.

To make this policy a success, such as it eventually became, required qualifications of no ordinary kind. Not only must the work of mediation be guided by the most advanced biological science of the time, but the individual intrusted with it must possess a spirit of impartial liberality, tempered by a sound discretion in business methods; a thorough knowledge and just estimate of men; an untiring patience to meet the peculiarities and caprices of the independent, and often one-sided, specialists whose

coöperation was essential; a geniality to enlist the willing but unscientific collaborator; and an instant detection of humbug in every guise. Providentially for the future of natural science in this country, the need and the man met in the selection of Professor Baird. In qualifications for the work he stood preëminent—head and shoulders above any man of his time, and perhaps above all other scientific men of any time. He joined to a marvellous faculty for systematizing business a capacity for steady and continuous work only limited by his waking hours. His frank, genial, and wholly unaffected manner put the scientist and the laboring man alike at ease. Always busy, he yet always seemed to have time for a friendly chat with every comer. His memory appeared an inexhaustible storehouse of facts on every subject where any desired datum lay ready to his hand. He knew every specialist in the country. Not only did he hold amicable relations with scientists actually at work, but one might think there was not a school-boy of extraordinary genius for birds'-nesting or fishing whom he could not lay his hands on.

His appreciation of the workers did not stop with the recognition of the character of their scientific results. It seemed as if in his mind he had an epitome of all the characteristics of mind and habit of each and every man. In the constant necessity of selection for this or that task or post, which the always increasing scientific activity of the time rendered more frequent from year to year, he was very rarely mistaken in his judgment. In his position he was called upon to advise in nearly all Government appointments which had a scientific bearing, direct or indirect; and the total number of selections which he determined during his career must have been many hundreds, and have included nearly every available person among the younger generation of students. The most surprising element in it all, to those cognizant of the details, was the calm impartiality which he brought to the task. No thought of self seemed to enter into his calculations. To best fit the purpose was his sole criterion, the purpose being always the promotion of science, and it was a very crooked stick indeed which was not fitted by him to some honorable service, as opportunity served. Those who felt themselves the objects of his personal regard sometimes halted for a moment in comical dismay, perceiving themselves frankly moved, like chessmen, in directions which they would not themselves have selected, and did not altogether like, almost as if they were perfect strangers; but an overwhelming sense of Baird's entire devotion to the promotion of science, his perfect unselfishness, and his incomparable good judgment, always carried the day, and the final outcome never discredited his generalship.

These characteristics would have made a great administrator anywhere, but there were other elements in the problem. It is not so hard to select deputies, aids, and workers of every kind when the work of the selector and that of the designated person form duly subordinated parts of a general scheme, or the parts are so constituted as to be capable of purely independent elaboration. But in scientific work, as every one knows, the spirit of emulation is strong; men work often with a single object in view, and the glory of its first elucidation is necessarily for one alone. Doubtless the substantial amity and concord which have prevailed among American naturalists is in part due to their scattered distribution, the vast and, until recently, virgin fields open to research, and the consciousness that there is plenty of work to occupy profitably every willing student and as many more. In scientific as in economic com-