

are very grave doubts as to its long continuance, so many disturbing elements are represented in it, and so delicate is the equilibrium which must be kept between the contending factions. The new Premier is a man of great position socially and politically. He is the head of one of those historic families the heads of which, in the old times, were practically independent sovereigns, and which, having parted with their political power, still retained immense wealth and political influence. Prince Windischgrätz has immense estates in Bohemia, Hungary, Styria, and Würtemberg, and is not only a nobleman in the Austrian peerage, but is also a peer in Würtemberg, a magnate in Hungary, and a hereditary member of the Upper House of the Reichstag. He was a student at Bonn and Prague; he has been a member of the Bohemian Diet; he is the second Vice-President of the Upper House of the Reichstag, and was Chairman of the Austrian Delegation at its last session. He has the confidence of the German party, and largely of the Conservatives, but nothing is expected from him by the different groups of Extremists. He is quoted as saying with regard to electoral reform that a change of the law will be effective only if it springs from a necessity felt by the people; but he seems to think that such a necessity exists, for he has announced that the first measure to be presented to the House by the Government will be an electoral reform bill enlarging the franchise.

Questions of finance are as prominent in several countries on the Continent as in the United States. The new German military law involves an additional expenditure of about twenty-five millions annually, which must be raised by new taxes, amounting, it is said, to an increase of nearly sixteen per cent. on the present taxation. The complicated relations of the several States and the Empire necessitate a makeshift in the form of rebates to the different Federal States as compensation for their contribution to the general expense of the Government. It is proposed to raise this additional twenty-five millions by doubling the taxes on shares and bonds in some cases and tripling them in others, by heavy taxes on receipts and checks, on domestic tobacco, on wine, and on various other commodities and manufactures; the whole involving a system of inspection which even in Germany is regarded as a hardship. The desperate condition of Italian finances is indicated by the announcement that the Government is contemplating the disposal of the State railroads for about two hundred millions of dollars. If this sum could be secured, the floating debt would be cleared off, immediate difficulties would be met, and the necessity for new taxes, which the country is unable to bear, would be obviated. Such a measure, however, can only be taken in the last resort, and would be a public confession of bankruptcy. In Greece there is good hope of the settlement of the disturbed finances of the kingdom, which is to take the shape of a new issue of bonds in such a form as to command the confidence of European financiers. There has been, however, a political overturning by the election to the presidency of the Chamber of a Tricoupist over a Ministerial nominee, the result of which will probably be the formation of a Cabinet by M. Tricoupis. The plan proposed, however, for the funding of the debt is understood to have the support of both M. Tricoupis and M. Delyannis, and is therefore likely to be carried out in spite of Ministerial changes.

GENERAL NEWS.—An attempt has been made by a brother of the Sultan of Morocco to make peace between the Riff tribes and the Spanish forces at Melilla; so far, it seems to be without results, and the Spaniards, who have

now nearly twenty thousand soldiers at Melilla, with a squadron of war-ships near at hand, intend to prosecute the war actively until complete reparation is made by Morocco.—The latest news from Africa indicates that a desultory warfare is going on between the Arabs and the Europeans; the expedition of Mr. Van den Kerckhoven seems to have attacked several Arab settlements of slave-hunters and to have confiscated their slaves and ivory; the killing of Emin Pasha was one of the acts of retaliation for the deeds of this expedition; it is now said that the Arabs have banded together, and hope to drive the Europeans from Central Africa.—Jeremiah M. Rusk, ex-Secretary of Agriculture, died at Viroqua, Wis., on November 21, at the age of sixty-three.—William T. Coleman, perhaps the best-known citizen of California, and famous as the head of the noted Vigilance Committee of the "Forty-niners," died at San Francisco on November 22, at the age of sixty-nine.—Last Saturday was the anniversary in New York City of Evacuation Day—upon which day one hundred and ten years ago the British forces abandoned New York; the day was observed this year by the unveiling of a statue of Nathan Hale, the patriot; the principal addresses were made by Major-General O. O. Howard and by the Rev. Edward Everett Hale, who is a great-grandnephew of Nathan Hale.—Several blocks of buildings were destroyed by fire at Springfield, Mass., last week; the loss nearly reached \$1,000,000.—Mr. Washington Hising has been appointed postmaster of Chicago by President Cleveland.—Twelve thousand persons are reported as killed by an earthquake in Kushan, Persia, last week.



Criticism in America

The books of the season, of which a large number are reviewed in *The Outlook* this week, do not differ materially from those of other seasons for the past decade. There is as yet no sign of any real creativeness along poetic lines in this country; there is apparently very little interest in literary criticism, since only three or four men publish volumes of criticism; but there is, on the other hand, great activity in fiction and in the historical field. Perhaps the only permanent addition to American literature which this season has given us is the Lowell Correspondence; a work which brings out anew the varied opulence of Mr. Lowell's nature and the literary quality which he possessed in so rare a degree. Most of the books now coming from American presses are books of information or of entertainment, and as such they are in every way worthy and attractive. They add to the resources of life, they enlarge its vision and they broaden its sympathies. They are thoroughly wholesome, and so long as they are accurate, trustworthy, and interesting, such books should be welcomed. The frequency of their publication will become disastrous only when we mistake what are essentially books of knowledge for books of power. It is a small matter that any particular age in the life of the people is barren of creative activity, for such periods of repose between creative epochs must always be expected; but it is a public disaster when standards are lowered and inferior things are put in the place of superior things. We can well afford to wait for our next great poet, but we cannot afford to accept third-rate verse as great poetry. Our ideals are of infinitely greater importance than their illustration by individuals, and while it is inspiring to live in a time when ideals are nobly illustrated, the richness of life does not permanently suffer from the occasional lack of that inter-

pretation; it does suffer permanently, however, from any loss in the perfection of the ideal.

From this point of view Mr. Warner's discussion of the function of criticism in the current number of "Harper's Magazine" is both timely and important. The note of provincialism is still heard in this country in our sensitiveness to the criticism of our own writers and in our constant temptation to convert all our geese into swans. Patriotism does not demand of us that we should accept inferior verse as great poetry because it comes from American hands; patriotism demands of us that our general good nature and national optimism shall permit no compromise with lower standards. We are loyal to ourselves, not when we praise things because they are American, but when we insist resolutely that the best things shall be done on this continent, and that nothing save the best shall receive the highest recognition. Mr. Warner recalls the sensitiveness which was shown when Matthew Arnold discussed Emerson as coolly as he would have discussed Socrates. That very sensitiveness betrayed some uncertainty of feeling on our part. If we had been as sure of Emerson's place and work as we are of the place and work of Socrates or Milton, we should have taken the matter with absolute coolness. We shrank from the application of an entirely dispassionate judgment to a man whom we loved, and whose work is one of spiritual and intellectual inheritances. We ought to have had more confidence both in the man and his work, and we ought to have paid both man and work the tribute of that calm faith which welcomes the application of the most exacting test.

The real peril in this country is not dearth of art, but the acceptance of inferior standards. We are in danger of exalting the average man, and of rejoicing in that mediocrity which Renan was in the habit of bewailing. The essence of Philistinism is self-satisfaction, and self-satisfaction always means the acceptance of lower standards; while the essence of progress, enlightenment, and the spirit of art is that kind of dissatisfaction which does not show itself in discontent or in idle fault-finding, but in a passionate pursuit of the highest excellence. A civilization which ends in mediocrity, however much it may minister to man's comfort, will not stand justified before the world; and a political and social system which should put the average man in the place of the superior man would seriously injure the higher interests of humanity. The true American, therefore, is not he who closes his eyes to all American defects and exploits all American excellencies; who insists that the Old World has nothing to teach us; but he who demands from America the very best in life, manners, and art, and who will rest satisfied with nothing less than the best. This was the real service of Emerson to America. Our material prosperity had no illusion for him. He saw clearly that it would not count in the real progress of the world unless it were supplemented by intellectual and spiritual superiority.



The Italian Situation

The opening of the eighteenth session of the Italian Parliament on Thursday of last week was the occasion of one of those violent outbreaks which are not unknown to the legislative bodies of the Latin peoples; and it may prove to be a great crisis in the history of Italy. This outbreak was provoked by the unexpectedly damaging character of the report of the commission appointed to investigate the bank scandals. The excitement steadily deepened as the reading of the report progressed and the name of

one public man after another was included in the long condemnation of those who were concerned in one way or another with improper use of public funds or improper management of bank affairs. Deputies, Ministers, and ex-Ministers in great numbers are implicated in the scandals, among them Premier Giolitti. The latter is charged with having used the money of the Banca Romana during the last elections. He was also criticised for permitting, without protest, the nomination of a nominee for the Senate whom he knew to be a defaulter. The list of Deputies includes some of the best-known men in the Italian Parliament. At the close of the report the storm of indignation took the most violent form, and passed entirely beyond the control of the presiding officer. The Ministers fairly cowered under the insolence showered upon them, and left the Chamber amid a mob of Deputies howling and cursing them, in imminent danger of personal violence. They had no choice but to resign; they are fatally discredited.

The bank scandal dates back to February of the present year. There had been rumors of complications between the banks and certain public men prior to that time, but matters came to a focus when the question came up in the Chamber of Deputies in February in the form of an interpellation to the Premier. The Banca Romana, one of the best-known financial institutions in Italy, had issued about twelve millions of dollars in notes in excess of its legal circulation. The Italian banks are, in certain respects, dependent upon the Government, and they are, therefore, constantly subject to the temptation to placate the party in power by extending financial aid and favor to the enterprises backed by the Government, by discounting on favorable terms the bills of Deputies, and by employing in a professional capacity lawyers who happen to be Deputies and who may become Ministers, and paying very unusual rates for their services. It was charged in the Chamber of Deputies, at the time when the investigation made public last week was ordered, that a number of leading public men in different ministries and in the Chamber of Deputies had had questionable dealings with the Banca Romana, and that various public officials, including the Premier, had known the state of affairs in the bank and had concealed it. For some time the attempt to secure an investigation was defeated by obstacles interposed by the Ministers, but it was finally ordered, in response to demands which could not be evaded, and it was the reading of the report of the committee of investigation that caused the uproar in the Chamber last week, and brought about the resignation of the Ministry.

The situation is a very complicated one, and may involve consequences of great moment to Europe. The financial stress in Italy is very great, the pressure of taxation very heavy, the feeling that the country is misgoverned very widespread, and discontent universal. Many observers have for some time past predicted a revolution in the near future which should dethrone the House of Savoy and substitute a Republic. The situation is further complicated by the attitude of the Vatican, which has very little to hope from the present Government, which might gain much by any transfer of power, and which would probably sympathize with the establishment of a Republic. The difficulty with the present situation for the King lies in the fact that so many of the moderate men are discredited by their connection with the scandal, and that the Radicals—who, being outside of Government circles, are, like the Monarchists in France during the recent Panama Canal disclosures, untainted—are the enemies of the monarchy. To intrust the Government to their hands might be to invite a revolution; the Radi-