

tionary Ministry seemed to reveal a settled hostile purpose, and in the position in which Prince Bismarck has placed himself by his anti-Jesuitical policy it could not have failed to meet with a prompt, sharp, and decisive rebuke.

The Munich crisis is now over, but, in the meanwhile, there is no doubt that the tidings of it came most unseasonably to cloud the rejoicings of the Berlin Congress. In the contest between patriots and Ultramontanes, between Guelphs and Ghibelines, there might be little to alarm Germany, if it were confined within the boundaries of the Fatherland. But it divides Europe as well as Germany into two vast camps; it supplies Germany's foes and doubtful friends with desperate auxiliaries, with spies and traitors in her own camp. The ascendancy of Germany rests on her own and on the world's conceit of her strength—a strength which must be not merely preponderant, but absolutely irresistible. Strange to say, the real contest lies between the strong "Man of Blood and Iron" at Berlin, and the feeble old man at the Vatican. So long as Bismarck holds his ground firmly throughout Germany, France feels that she has no chance, Austria is content to forget that she is a Catholic power, and Russia overlooks the help that Rome could give her in taming her Poles into submission. But the Roman Catholics in Germany are fourteen to twenty-four millions. Were Guelphism and Ultramontanism to gain rapid ground among them, were they to find in Bavarian separatism a rallying point and a flag, a chink might be discovered in Germany's armor through which her enemies' sword would soon attempt to force its way. Thoughts of this nature have doubtless for some time engaged Prince Bismarck's watchful mind. If, however, in his scheme of interview between the three Emperors he was actuated by such considerations, all we can say is we question the fitness of the means to the end. As we learn from our Berlin Correspondent's forcible picture of the probable views of the Princes now assembled in that city, mere matters of international dispute might be easily put on one side or smoothed down; but the internal organization of Germany must be her own concern. Austria and Russia could not, even if they would, prevent the ripening of those germs of German disunion which war has smothered, but which peace may nurse and develop.

MISCELLANY.

THE EPICENE SEX.

THERE has always been in the world a kind of woman whom one scarcely knows how to classify as to sex; men by their instincts, women by their form, but neither men nor women as we regard either in the ideal. In early times they were divided into two classes; the Amazons who, donning helmet and cuirass, went to the wars that they might be with their lovers, or perhaps only for the masculine liking for rough work; and the tribe of ancient women, so withered and so wild, who should be women, yet whose beards forbade men so to account them, and for whom public opinion usually closed the controversy by declaring that they were witches—that is, creatures so unlike the rightful woman of nature that only the devil himself was supposed to be answerable for them. These particular manifestations have long since passed away, and we have nowadays neither Amazons learning the goose step in our barrack-yards, nor witches brewing hell-broth on Scottish moors; but we have the epicene sex all the same—women who would defy the acutest social Cuvier among us to classify them, but who are growing daily into more importance, and making continually fresh strides in their unwholesome way. . . .

The latest development of the impulses which animate the epicene sex has taken its expression in after-dinner oratory. If we were as malicious to women as those whose follies they rebuke would have the world believe, we should encourage them to fight it out with womanly modesty and the world's esteem on this line. Their worst enemies could not wish to see them inflict on themselves a greater annoyance than the obligation of getting on their legs after the cheese has been removed, to turn on a stream of verbal insipidity for a quarter of an hour at a stretch. None but men who have something to say on the subject that may be in hand, and so are glad of every opportunity, no matter how unsatisfactory, or men who are eaten up with vanity, take pleasure in speechifying after dinner. Its uselessness is apparent; its mock hilarity is

ghastly; even at political "banquets," when words are supposed to have some deep meaning, we get very little reality in it; while all the funny part of the business is of the dreariest comedy, the most distracting pretence imaginable. If anything were wanting to show how much vanity prompts a certain class of women in their ways and works, and how tremendous their passion for notoriety and personal display, it would be this assumption of the functions of the post-prandial orator. Indeed, they have taken greatly of late to public speaking all round; and some among them seem only easy when they are standing before a crowd, to be admired if they are pretty, applauded if they are pert, and, in any case, the centre of attraction for the moment. We do not look forward with pleasure to the time when ladies will rise after their champagne and port, with flushed cheeks and eyes more bright than beautiful, steadying themselves adroitly against the back of their chairs, and rolling out either those interminable periods with no nominatives and no climax under which we have all so often suffered, or spasmodically jerking forth a few unconnected sentences of which the sole merit is their brevity. In the beginning of things, when the wedge has to be introduced, only the best of its kind puts itself forward; and doubtless the ladies who have already varied the usual dull routine of after-dinner oratory by their lives or utterances have done the thing comparatively well, and avoided a break-down; but we own that we tremble at the thought of the flood of feminine eloquence which will be let loose if the fashion spreads. Fancy the heavy British matron rearing her ample shoulders above the board, as she lays down the law on the duties of men towards women—especially sons-in-law—and the advantage to all concerned if wives are liberally dealt with in the matter of housekeeping money, and let to go their own way without marital hindrance. Or think of the woman's-rights woman, with her hybrid costume and her hard face, showing society how it can be saved from destruction only by throwing the balance of power into the hands of women, and swamping that rude, rough, masculine element which has so long mismanaged matters by the nobler and brighter instincts of the oppressed sex. Or even think of the coquettish and alluring little woman getting up before a crowd of men and firing off the neatest and smartest park of verbal artillery possible, every shot of which tells and is applauded to the echo. How will men take it all? For ourselves, having too sincere a respect for women as they ought to be, and as nature meant them to be, we do not wish to see them turned into social buffoons, the mark for jeering comments and angry hisses when what they say displeases their hearers, and told to "sit down," and "shut up," with entreaties to some strong man to "take them out of that and carry them home to the nursery," by a hundred voices roughened with drink and shouting. But if women expect that hostile feelings and opinions will be tamed or altogether suppressed in their honor because they choose to thrust themselves where they have no business, they will find out their mistake, perhaps when too late. If they abandon their safe cover, and come out into the open, they must look to be hit like the rest. We cannot too often repeat that if they will mingle in the specialties of men's lives, they must put up with men's treatment, and not cry out when they are struck home. In deference to them plain-speaking has been banished from the drawing-rooms of society; but it is too much to expect men to sit under heavy boredom or fatuous gabble without wincing, and it is childish to ask us to make a free gift of our truth and time to women who outrage one and waste the other. On the other hand, the cheers that would follow if they hit the humor of the hour, or if, being specially pretty or specially smart, they afforded so much more excitement to the guests, would to our minds be just as offensive as the rougher truth, and perhaps more so. The leering approbation of men, never over-nice in thought, and now heated with wine, such as are always to be found at public dinners, is an infliction from which we should have imagined any woman with purity or self-respect would shrink with shame and dismay. But women who take to after-dinner speeches cannot be expected to be fastidious.—*Saturday Review.*

SOCIAL FINE ARTS.—A number of dancing-masters recently met at Amsterdam, to form an association for the "elevation of dancing to the rank of a fine art." How this result is to be accomplished they have not yet informed us. It is entirely within the power of an association of dancing-masters to elevate their incomes to an advanced height, for they need only adopt the tactics of the trades societies, and fix a scale of prices, below which they will refuse to instruct the legs and guide the feet of youthful dancers. Fashionable society could never tolerate a strike among the dancing-masters, with its inevitable cessation in the invention of new dances, and would accede without hesitation to any reasonable scale of prices. When, however, the dancing-masters propose to make dancing a fine art, one cannot help wondering whether they fancy that this