

HOME RULE.

A REPRINT

FROM

The Times

OF

RECENT ARTICLES AND LETTERS.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

LONDON.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY GEORGE EDWARD WRIGHT, AT
THE TIMES OFFICE, PRINTING-HOUSE SQUARE.

1884.

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Shortly after the close of the general election—the result of which was to show the constitution of the new House of Commons to be Liberals 333, Conservatives 251, and Irish Nationalists or Parnellites 86—rumours became prevalent that Mr. Gladstone had made up his mind to concede Home Rule to Ireland; and on the 17th December a definite statement was made publicly to this effect. Immediately the country was moved to an unusual extent, and hardly had the echoes of the electoral struggle died away when a heated contest arose on the public platforms and in the columns of *The Times* over the Irish question. It will be found convenient to pursue this remarkable demonstration of popular feeling, which extended to the three kingdoms, in chronological order—a demonstration which grew apace when it was seen that, although Mr. Gladstone's attention was fixed on the rumours in circulation, he gave no direct denial. On Dec. 23. Mr. Heneage, M.P.,

however, forwarded to *The Times* a letter he had received, dated Dec. 14, from Mr. Gladstone, which contained these words:—

“I think it probable that the bigness and urgency of the Irish question may bring it to issue quickly. . . . I fear until this subject is disposed of no real progress will be made with any others.”

It will be observed that in the reprinted correspondence there are several letters on the Irish elections and cognate topics, and these are given to illustrate the process by which the Nationalist League and its leaders secured the triumph of their nominees at the polls. The extracts are taken from *The Times* of the days given.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1885.

MR. GLADSTONE AND HOME RULE.

The National Press Agency, to which Mr. Gladstone's electoral manifesto was intrusted for publication in September, issued the following statement about the ex-Premier and Home Rule:—

Mr. Gladstone has definitely adopted the policy of Home Rule for Ireland, and there are well-founded hopes that he will win over the chief representatives of the moderate section of the party to his views. Lord Spencer is practically convinced that no other policy is possible, and his authority as the Minister who has governed Ireland during a most troublous time is unimpeachable. There are only two alternatives—coercion and conciliation. Coercion has been made well-nigh impossible by the action of the Tories, its chief champions; and in no circumstances will the Liberal party ever consent to exceptional

repressive legislation for Ireland again. Conciliation can be effectual on one condition—the support of Mr. Parnell, and this would be granted only to a measure for the establishment of a Parliament in Dublin. Mr. Gladstone is fully aware of the necessity of guarantees for the adequate protection of the minority in Ireland. It is not unlikely that Mr. Parnell would consent to a system of proportional representation; and in any case the position of the landlords would be thoroughly discussed and safeguarded by the new Act. It is not intended to exclude the Irish party from the House of Commons. They would still share in the deliberations of the British Parliament in Imperial affairs. Nor does Mr. Gladstone propose to give the Parliament at Westminster any veto on the proceedings of the Parliament at Dublin. Such a veto will be exercised by the Crown only on the advice of the Irish Ministry. It is not expected that there would be any necessity to revise the Acts of the Dublin Parliament with regard to the commercial relations between the two countries. Mr. Parnell's suggestion of a protective tariff does not meet with the approval of all his colleagues; and if it were carried out the first to suffer would be the Irish people.

Mr. Gladstone holds none of the gloomy views prevalent in some quarters about the probable action of an Irish Legislature. It is not likely that the composition of that Legislature would be at all similar to the present *personnel* of the Irish party in the House of Commons. That party has been primarily elected to annoy and harass the British Government. It represents Irish unity on one great question—the recovery of Irish legislative independence. As soon as that question is settled, the unity will vanish, and all the sectional differences of the Irish people will reappear. The forces of intelligence, the wealth, and the interests of every class of the population will assert themselves; and the members returned to the Parliament in Dublin will be vastly different in every respect from those who represent Ireland now at Westminster. The

formation of a strong opposition in the Irish Parliament will be comparatively easy; and Mr. Parnell will be entirely indisposed to take any steps in the direction of separation. The strength of the Separatists is much overrated. There is probably not more than one of Mr. Parnell's Parliamentary followers who wishes to see Ireland absolutely independent. Mr. Gladstone is sanguine that this policy of settling the Irish question once for all will commend itself to the majority of his party and to the English people when it is clearly understood that no other course can bring real peace. If he is enabled to eject the Government on this issue, he will have a large majority in the House of Commons for his Irish Bill, and he believes that the House of Lords, weighing the gravity of the situation, will not reject it. Should there be a sufficient defection of the moderate Liberals to encourage the Lords to throw out the Bill, a dissolution would be inevitable; but, except in the event of any serious explosion in Ireland that would have the effect of exasperating the popular feeling in England against the Irish, the country would in all probability endorse Mr. Gladstone's policy and give him an unmistakable mandate to carry it into law. There is reasonable expectation that both Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen will come round to Mr. Gladstone's view, and Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, in spite of their present attitude, would not consistently oppose it.

HOME RULE IN LIMERICK.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—In a letter which you did me the honour to print in *The Times* of the 9th inst., I inquired whether "the recalcitrant city of Limerick had yet been made to pay its extra police rate," and I added that "its last appearance was, after obliging the withdrawal of one of the Queen's regiments, which could not appear in its streets without outrage, to petition that it might still be made a military

centre—a petition which his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant had promised to consider.

The Times of the 16th contains an instructive piece of news from your Limerick Correspondent upon the same subject. It runs as follows:—

"Since the departure of the 1st Battalion King's Royal Rifles from Limerick for Kinsale, owing to the unpleasant relations which sprung up between the corps and certain classes of the people, the garrison has been almost denuded of infantry troops save a few in charge of the two local military barracks. The reduction of the garrison has resulted in a loss to the city of about £30,000 a year, and the Mayor recently addressed the Lord Lieutenant on the subject, stating that Limerick should not be allowed to suffer this loss because of the alleged misconduct of some of the Rifles. Lord Carnarvon promised to consider the Mayor's statement, and to-day it is reported that the 1st Battalion of the Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment, the old 109th, 800 strong, and under the command of Colonel Forbes, will move from Fermoy to Limerick about the 1st prox."

The object of my reference was to emphasize the fact that the Government offered no better security than the Opposition to justify the confidence of loyal and moderate men that it meant to vindicate the law in Ireland.

The communication from your Limerick Correspondent deserves serious attention. It illustrates in a striking manner the lesson that, at any rate, nothing can be lost by defying the law in Ireland.

Just consider the position occupied by this corporation. They refused to pay their extra police rate. I have seen no statement that they have been made to pay it. If they have been made, I shall rejoice in being corrected. I believe the extra police force has been withdrawn. If it has not been, I shall rejoice in being corrected. But, be this as it may, here is a corporation which fails to keep the peace of its own town, which thereby, in the merely natural order of things, drives away its customers. But one of the most considerable of them happens to be the Government, and the Government can be sub-

jected, under the system which prevails, to a power of recall applicable to no customer who is his own master.

It is no new thing, though happily rare, to have to move a regiment between which and the civil population a bad spirit has grown up. But, if this were the case in Limerick, the removal of one regiment and the introduction of another should have taken place as a mere matter of military routine. The circumstances look, however, as if there had been some idea on the part of the Government of letting the city feel the consequences of its disorder, and then a withdrawal from their position, under circumstances which imply either that the regiment and not the city was to blame, or else that the Government had not the courage even to let this rebellious municipality reap the fruits of its own lawlessness. No military reason has been published for the course taken, though, doubtless, considering the record of Limerick and its neighbourhood for several years past, such reasons are not far to seek. An extra police force, to be paid for by the city, might very well have accompanied the change in the garrison. No proof has been shown that the Rifles were in fault, and the presumption certainly is, in such quarters, that they were too spiritedly and steadfastly loyal for the local taste.

The reason why I call attention to this case is that it is typical, and goes far to justify, unless it can be explained (in some way that I have not yet seen), the apprehension that the Government is more likely to endeavour to outbid its opponents by unworthy concession than to challenge their support, or their hostility, as the case may be, with patriotic indifference, and go again to the country, if needful, on the question whether Ireland shall remain more than nominally a part of the United Kingdom, and whether an end shall at once be put to such a state of anarchy there as justly disgraces us in the eyes of the world. Your New York Correspondent in *The Times* to-day anticipates history. I think the moderate men in both the Parliamentary camps will do best, for the present, to stop

where they are, keep their trust suspended and their powder dry.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
AN OLD LIBERAL,

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I quote your correspondent's report from Limerick :—

"Since the departure of the 1st Battalion of King's Royal Rifles from Limerick for Kinsale . . . the garrison has almost been denuded of infantry troops save a few in charge of the two local military barracks. The reduction of the garrison has resulted in a loss to the city of about £30,000 a year, and the Mayor recently addressed the Lord Lieutenant on the subject, stating that Limerick should not be allowed to suffer this loss . . ."

When the Irish have attained their independence and ejected the British garrison, I suppose they will "address" the Government of Great Britain and urge *more Hibernico* that for each regiment withdrawn from Ireland a sum of £30,000 a year is due in perpetuity to that country, and must be paid by the British taxpayer in compensation for loss which the withdrawal of British troops may have entailed upon Limerick and other centres of Irish idleness.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,
H. MIDDLETON ROGERS.

Eusthall Elms, Tunbridge Wells.

MR. PARNELL'S DEMANDS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—It is to be feared that the English people do not clearly realize as yet the present state of the Irish question. Will you allow me to aid in placing the facts before the public in plain and simple language? First, Mr. Parnell and 86 Irish M.P.'s demand a repeal of the Union—in other words, that no law shall exist in Ireland except what has the sanction of an Irish Parliament independent of the Parliament in England; secondly, Mr. Parnell has also stated that if this demand was granted, no ob-

stacle must be placed in the onward march of Ireland in her advance in further revolutionary changes; thirdly, Mr. J. Stephens, the head of the Fenian party, stated in his manifesto the other day that if the repeal of the Union was accomplished, his party would make use of their power so gained to obtain the only thing which could satisfy any really patriotic Irishman—viz., the establishment of an Irish Republic. If we are to believe the speech in Cincinnati by Mr. Parnell, such is also his goal. In that speech he stated his conviction that no Irishman would be satisfied until "the last link" that bound Ireland to England was broken. Fourthly, at least one-third of the population of Ireland, consisting of the whole of the Protestants and all the Roman Catholics who have brains in their heads and money in their pockets, assert they will never give up their *status* of British subjects. Blood must flow, and flow freely, before these loyal subjects are compelled to live under any other sceptre than that of Queen Victoria. These being the facts, what England has to do is to make up her mind once and for all, yes or no, will she grant or will she refuse Mr. Parnell's demand? England is not a cruel nation, and a more cruel act could not be done to Ireland than to leave her an hour longer than is necessary in doubt on this question. If England with a clear conscience can haul down the English ensign in Ireland, in God's name let her do it. In that case all we loyal subjects scattered over three provinces will ask is this—Give us six months' protection to migrate. I do not know a single loyal Irish subject that has not made arrangements for this event. The loyal part of Ulster is well able to defend itself; but, on the other hand, should England come to the conclusion that for her to grant Mr. Parnell's demand would be a dark and indelible blot on her fair fame, in God's name let her say with a voice not to be misunderstood, "It never shall be." It is as clear as noonday that things cannot be allowed to remain in the present state of cruel uncertainty. I do not argue this question. I do not appeal to the leaders of the different political parties. We have not a

particle of faith in one of them. With them even this question is one of mere vote calculation on a slate. Even the leader of my own political party, Mr. Gladstone, when challenged by Mr. Parnell to speak plainly on this subject, refused. I appeal to the English people, and to them alone, for mercy's sake do not keep us any longer in doubt. For Ireland doubt means poverty for all, and starvation for the wage-earning classes.

JOHN WILSON, late Loyalist candidate for
North-West Meath.
Reform Club, Pall-mall, S. W.

The Times says:—

A profound impression was made yesterday by the circulation through channels some of which Mr. GLADSTONE peculiarly affects of an announcement that he has definitely adopted the policy of Home Rule for Ireland. Certain details were added, varying in different versions, and in the course of the day there appeared the inevitable telegram from Mr. GLADSTONE declaring that no accurate representation of his views is to be found save in his own public utterances. Every one is at liberty to form his own opinion upon glosses and embellishments all of which are repudiated, as well as upon the precise degree of Mr. GLADSTONE'S responsibility for the circulation of statements so well calculated to disturb the public mind. Painful as is the impression produced in this country, it is weak compared with the sensation made in Dublin, where, as our Correspondent informs us this morning, the intelligence was received with absolute dismay. There, as here, Mr. GLADSTONE'S adhesion to Home Rule was instinctively singled

out as the central and most probable item in the so-called revelations, and, as Home Rule was defined to mean an Irish Parliament sitting in Dublin, it scarcely needs our Correspondent's graphic sketch of the consequences of such an announcement throughout Ireland to enable us to conceive the mischief which the expectations now raised are certain to bring about. If it is not true that MR. GLADSTONE has adopted the plan of setting up an independent Irish Parliament in Dublin, he is bound to issue without delay an emphatic and unmistakable denial of what will otherwise become the current belief on both sides of the Channel. So obvious is this to every man of the most moderate political experience that his abstention from such a course may fairly be taken as sufficient corroboration of the broad statement that he is going to bid for Irish support by offering an Irish Parliament with complete control of Irish affairs. Beyond this there are no *data* to go upon, although it may be unhesitatingly assumed that all statements as to the action of prominent politicians are the merest guess-work. MR. CHAMBERLAIN yesterday said very distinctly that, so far as he is concerned, there is not a word of truth in the statements that have been made, and added that, in his opinion, as much could probably be said by those of his late colleagues whose names have been freely mentioned.

It will strike every observant person as singular that a scheme of this kind should be promulgated just now in MR. GLADSTONE'S name. No one objects more strongly and more steadily than

himself to the definite statement of his views upon public policy until he is in a position to give them effect. If he now deliberately incurs what in the circumstances is the tremendous responsibility of not disclaiming the scheme for constituting an Irish Parliament, there must be some strong reason for such an unusual declaration of his policy in Opposition. His silence must have all the effect that could follow a deliberate avowal, so that he is in the position of telling his political opponents beforehand how far he is willing to go, and thus in effect challenging them either to overbid him or to ask the decision of Parliament and the country upon an essentially different scheme. In thus placing the lead in his opponents' hand he is substantially acting upon the lines indicated by SIR CHARLES DILKE when he professed his readiness to give a general support to a Conservative Administration. If the Conservatives adhere to their avowed convictions and introduce a measure dealing with Irish local government in the same manner as with English, they will either carry it with Liberal assistance or they will fail. In the former case MR. PARNELL and his band will, it is calculated, remain in the House of Commons to cherish a hearty hostility to the Conservative party. In the latter case the way will be cleared for the introduction of MR. GLADSTONE'S scheme, and he will be able to say with some plausibility, what he cannot say at present, that nothing else will do. Should the Conservatives be weak

enough and immoral enough to sacrifice principle and endeavour to outbid MR. GLADSTONE, their position is obviously gone alike for attack and defence, and they incur the enduring odium of breaking up the Empire. The duty and interest of the Conservative party are sufficiently clear, although their situation is embarrassing. They are bound to adhere to their Imperial principles while offering the people of Ireland all the control over local affairs that is exercised by the people of other portions of the kingdom. On general grounds they are bound to settle local government for all parts of the country on broad and liberal principles, but if what is good enough for Englishmen and Scotchmen will not content Irishmen it is the clear duty of the Government to refuse absolutely to effect a disruption of the Empire upon which English and Scotch constituencies have never been directly consulted. We hear a great deal in a vague way about justice to Ireland. It cannot be too clearly pointed out that political equality absolutely exhausts every claim that can be advanced on that ground. The disruption of the Empire is not a thing that any part of it can demand as a matter of justice. It may be effected by force or conceded by folly, but it can never be advocated, except by the most unblushing sophistry, as a measure called for either legally or morally by justice.

Of course no one will admit, and least of all MR. GLADSTONE, that his proposals amount to

dismemberment of the Empire. No one would be found to vote for such a measure under such a name; and the real danger before us is that by cajolery, by sophistry, and by party management the thing will be done amid endless protestations that nobody dreams of doing it. We shall have a measure bristling with all kinds of illusory safeguards for Imperial unity, a measure defended with subtle eloquence, and looking exceedingly complete and beautiful upon paper, while in practice it will be found that its only working or workable clauses are those setting up in Ireland an authority independent of and hostile to the British Crown and Parliament. MR. GLADSTONE has protested again and again that nothing would induce him to impair the authority of the Imperial Parliament; nevertheless, if he is allowed to set up another Parliament in Dublin, the control of the House of Commons over Ireland will be gone, never to be recovered save by a sanguinary war. We are glad to note in MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S speech what seems to be a recognition of this danger when he says that "Radicals as much as Whigs are determined that the integrity of the Empire shall be a reality, and not an empty phrase." How empty the phrase would be were an Irish Parliament established in Dublin may be partly understood from the safeguards put forth as MR. GLADSTONE'S devices by the best ingenuity of his commentators, some of whose statements we print elsewhere. We are told that he is

fully aware of the necessity for adequate guarantees for the protection of minorities in Ireland. What guarantees are possible which a general election in Ireland would not scatter to the winds? By what means is a popular assembly in Dublin to be bound to all time to observe MR. GLADSTONE'S prescription as to its electoral methods and composition? If it chooses to set his plans at defiance, how is it to be coerced, except by war? The distribution of taxation is to be fairly adjusted; but suppose it is condemned next year by a vote of the Irish House of Commons, in what way is the adjustment to be maintained? Taxation implies representation; hence we are told that the Irish members are to continue to sit in the English House of Commons, only they are not to vote on English and Scotch questions. But they will vote on foreign questions; hence they may not only coerce a Ministry on domestic questions by raising a foreign debate, but we shall have the edifying spectacle of a Government in a majority on one order of the day and in a minority on the next. MR. GLADSTONE is said to hold that an Irish Parliament would be a very different body from the Irish representatives in the English one. There might be something in the view if disruption were made thorough and complete and its advantages fairly divided. In that case the different elements in Ireland would fight out their quarrels fairly. But so long as British troops represent the Imperial connexion, so long will there be the same kind of union

that now exists to oppose this country. The troops will have to support the laws made by the Irish majority, otherwise what becomes of Irish independence? Hence what rag of Imperial unity remains will be simply a device for putting Imperial forces at the disposal of a party hostile to the Empire. Americans see clearly enough in what direction we are drifting, as is shown by a remarkable letter from a New York correspondent. Loyal Irishmen, too, perceive the horrors of the situation, as may be seen from MR. WILSON'S letter. Englishmen, we trust, will perceive before it is too late that both for Ireland and England it would be better to cut the connexion absolutely and make provision for dealing with Ireland as an open foe than to put weapons in the hands of traitors, by the farce of pretending to maintain Imperial unity without power to enforce a single law not approved by a Parliament sitting in College Green and paid by the sworn foes of England all over the world.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19.

THE HOME RULE QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—It is obviously premature to pronounce any opinion upon the purposes of Mr. Gladstone; they are not yet stated. Nor would it be becoming in me as member of a party to make any declarations on the part of others until the

party has discussed and decided—or at least until its leader has definitely stated his views. The one point on which I wish to say a few words is a comparatively narrow one. Some days ago I made use of an observation which has been commented upon, and I am anxious to explain the reasons which induced me to make it. I expressed an opinion in favour of a settlement of the relations of England and Ireland on the model of Canada and the other great colonies. As every person familiar with the history of the Home Rule question will know, this is a plan essentially different from that put forward by Mr. Butt. His proposal was that there should be local Parliaments for the three countries and an Imperial Parliament for discussing and settling the affairs of the Empire. The peoples of the three countries would then have a system of double representation—that is to say, the English would be represented in an English Parliament dealing purely with English affairs, and also in an Imperial Parliament dealing with the affairs of the Empire; and so also with the peoples of Ireland and Scotland. There are many arguments in favour of such a settlement, and it is not one I would finally condemn. It certainly would be the fairest settlement if Ireland is to contribute a quota to the expenses of the Empire. To tax Ireland for Imperial purposes and give Ireland no voice in Imperial affairs would be taxation without representation in a very aggravated form, and would be calculated to make the Empire odious instead of dear to the Irish people.

Why I put forward the model of Canada as affording perhaps a more satisfactory solution of the question is that I think you have many objections to overcome to the plan of Mr. Butt which would not be raised to the Canadian plan. First you have to convince the peoples of England and Scotland that they require Home Rule for England and Scotland and a purely English Parliament for England and a purely Scotch Parliament for Scotland. There have been sporadic cries in favour of Home Rule for Scotland, but they cannot be regarded as a serious factor in the

present situation. Clearly, then, there is no such loud and unanimous demand for Home Rule in England and Scotland with separate local Parliaments as to make the plan of Mr. Butt have a good chance of general acceptance. Then there are some objections both from the English and the Irish standpoint to Irish representation in an Imperial Parliament. Taking the English standpoint first, the Imperial Parliament would have Imperial affairs—that is to say, foreign relations—alone to consider. If the system of self-government given to Ireland were deemed by the Irish people insufficient, it is probable that the Irish members would act in the new Imperial Parliament as they do in the present. Imperial questions would be looked at by them, not from the Imperial standpoint, but as affording weapons to be employed between the two English parties for purely Irish purposes. You might then have what you have now—a distracting element in your Imperial counsels, judging things, not on their intrinsic and Imperial merits, but on their bearing to Irish National aspirations. The objections from the Irish standpoint appear to me equally strong. A good deal has been said of the loss to Irishmen of their share in the glories and the greatness and the privileges of the Empire. In my poor judgment this is all mere words. The glories and the greatness of the Empire would have one meaning to Irishmen; that meaning would be the burdens of the Empire. The burdens of the Empire, again, mean a share in the payment of the taxation of the Empire, and most intelligent Home Rulers regard the question of England and Ireland as being a financial as well as a national question. We start from the proposition that Ireland is a poor country, whose poverty has been enormously aggravated by many centuries of unwise government; and to give Home Rule to Ireland accompanied by large fiscal burdens would, therefore, be to mock the Irish people with a legislative whited sepulchre. The share in the privileges of the Empire at most means the chance of a certain number of brilliant and capable Irishmen, like Lord Dufferin and Sir

John Hennessy being appointed to great positions in the Empire. But Ireland cannot afford to be taxed and distracted by Imperial questions for the sake of a certain number of individuals among her own sons. Besides, I do not see why Home Rule should close English employment to Irishmen of capacity. It is to be hoped that most of them would find in a self-governed Ireland sufficient occupation for their political talents. But those who chose to emigrate would find in England the same acceptance which that country is always ready to give to those who are willing to serve her with ability.

One or two words finally with regard to points which have been raised within the last few days. Protection is demanded for the minority in Ireland. This may mean either of two things. It may mean protection for the whole of the minority of their religious freedom as Protestants. In that case protection is demanded for a considerable section of the population. Or it may mean protection for the property of the landlords. But the landlords are not the entire loyal minority; they are a very small minority of the minority. The majority of the loyal minority are tenants who have the same rights as their Catholic fellow-countrymen to get their land from their landlords, Catholic or Protestant, at a fair valuation. The protection of the entire minority of the Protestants in their religious freedom then is one thing; and the protection of the minority of the minority who form the landlord class in their rights of property is quite another. So far as the protection of the religious liberty of the Protestant minority is concerned, does it not seem a little grotesque to ask for such a guarantee at a moment when a member of that Protestant minority is the most powerful leader that ever an Irish movement had? Nor, as you are aware, is Mr. Parnell the only member of the Protestant minority who has been elected as a member of the new Irish party. Mr. Abraham, the member for Limerick, is a Protestant; so is Mr. Jordan, the member for county Clare; so is Dr. Tanner, member for county Cork; so is Mr. Douglas Pyne,

member for county Waterford. If any sane man still think that the Protestant minority in Ireland require protection for their religious liberty I am sure no Irish Catholic Nationalist would have the least objection to give it. But let it be also remembered that there is a minority in England and Scotland as well as in Ireland. The Irish and Catholic minority in England and Scotland have far more real cause to dread curtailment of their religious liberty than the Irish Protestant in Ireland. In the 86 members of the Irish party there are five members of the Protestant minority, in the 567 members for England, Scotland, and Wales there is but one Catholic—Mr. Charles Russell. I do not count, for obvious reasons, my own return for a constituency, Irish and Catholic, in Liverpool. In England the Catholics fought the last election in defence of the right to choose their school and the principle that the choice of the school should be as free as the choice of the Church, and in Scotland there was scarcely a candidate who was not asked to pledge himself to vote for the inspection of convents—an interference with the rights of religious liberty as mean and odious as can well be imagined. There is much to be said in favour of special representation for minorities; but it would assuredly be both illogical and unjust to have a special representation for the Protestant minority in Ireland and none for the Catholic minority in England. I repeat we have no objection to any guarantees for the religious rights of the Protestant minority in Ireland; but we do not think we would be justified in leaving our fellow-countrymen and co-religionists without any protection of a similar kind in this country.

As to guarantees for the rights of the landlords that, as I have pointed out, is an entirely different question. On this point the Irish party are bound to consider not merely the rights of the Catholic majority but also of the Protestants who form the majority of the minority. It would be as unjust to the Protestant as to the Catholic farmer that he should be saddled with a bad bargain; that he

should be compelled to give to the landlord one penny more than the economic value of his land; and that he should by being compelled to pay a fancy and artificial price to his landlord be burdened all his life with a load too heavy to bear. The property of the landlords can reasonably claim protection; and no reasonable Irish leader has ever suggested anything else. There are many ways in which that could be carried out, into which I will not go at the end of an already long letter.

Permit me to conclude with two observations. It will be far better that the settlement of this question should be postponed than that any half-hearted or incomplete scheme should be proposed. Both countries long for the close of this prolonged, bitter, and disastrous struggle; and the end can only come by a large statesmanlike and final measure of self-government. The second proposition springs from this—first, that no settlement ought to be entertained either by English or Irish statesmanship which does not make Irishmen masters of all the affairs within the shores of Ireland. Such a measure of self-government, in my opinion, instead of leading to the disintegration and dismemberment will lead to the strengthening and the consolidation of the Empire.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

London.

T. P. O'CONNOR.

LOYALISTS VERSUS NATIONALISTS.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—As an Irish proprietor will you allow me to protest against the names given to the two sets of Irish members of Parliament—they are called Loyalists and Nationalists; the terms Communist and anti-Communist would be much more accurate. The only difference between Irish Communism and Communism in other countries is that there is little property in Ireland except land; and what little capital of other kinds there is has already begun to take flight. When the election returns were published and the prospect of some sort of local government being established

in Dublin became a subject for argument, nearly all Irish shares fell with a rapidity seldom equalled.

It is certain that if every man's property (including that of the poorest labourer) in Ireland were valued, and that voting were taken by property, out of every £100 £99 10s. would be for maintaining the Union with Great Britain; and it is equally plain that any one of the 18 anti-Communist members could buy out the entire 85 Communist members. And it is certain that if any sort of Home Rule were granted, with precautions on paper for the protection of property, the real struggle would soon begin with much greater advantage on the Communist side than they have at present.

It must be borne in mind that the Parliament of Great Britain took upon themselves to sell property to the value of 55 millions through the Landed Estates Court, on what was called a Parliamentary and indefeasible title—Will they now allow that to be confiscated? Surely before they grant Home Rule they should give the deluded purchasers the option of taking back their purchase-money. And why should there be a local government in Dublin? That anything of the kind must eventually lead to separation is a fact no one doubts; and why separation? Nearly every Irish inhabitant was born in the Union; I was for one, and paid my taxes to the United Empire for over 40 years; and what right has the Government of that Empire to throw off their responsibility to me, and place my life and property at the mercy of the Communists on the plea that Ireland is a separate country? It was separate to a certain extent in the short period which elapsed from 1782 to 1800, and its Home Rule culminated in the rebellion of '98 and the massacre of the Protestants. When the English came to Ireland in the reign of Henry II. there were five separate kingdoms as there are now four separate provinces, one of which, Ulster, has much more connexion with Scotland than it has with the rest of Ireland, and would certainly decline to allow its hard-working and wealthy inhabitants

to be overwhelmed by the Fenians of the south. Can it be possible that the British Government will consent to abandon a province containing 1,692,498 out of 4,982,376 of the inhabitants of Ireland, and in which all the wealth and intelligence, and a large majority of the population are in favour of the Union. Your obedient servant,

AN IRISH ANTI-COMMUNIST.

MR. PARNELL'S TERMS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—The name of Mr. Parnell is at present on every lip. His future line of action is closely criticized, and various conjectures are afloat as to what terms he will propose and accept when he and his followers meet in Parliament during the coming session. It is perfectly useless any longer for the two English political parties to blind themselves to the fact that Mr. Parnell will rule the roost. The Conservative party, every one acknowledges, cannot exist without an alliance of some sort. The Liberals are only just on an equality, as regards numerical strength, with the Conservatives and Nationalists combined. Even then there is a numerous class, called nowadays "Moderate Liberals," who could not be depended on under exceptional circumstances to vote with the extreme Liberal party. This being so, Parliamentary progress will be reduced to a perfect state of collapse, and the benefits of public legislation will be brought to a perfect standstill. It is all very well for people to view complacently the probability of a general election taking place within the next six months and of that election being succeeded by another appeal to the country shortly afterwards. This state of things cannot go on. Whenever another election takes place it will be followed by Mr. Parnell coming into the House of Commons with a still greater following than he has at present, and many of the Irish Conservative seats will be captured by his nominees. What, then, is best to be done? May I, Sir, very humbly offer a suggestion? Let Lord Salisbury and Mr. Gladstone bury the tomahawk for a short season: let them

meet together, attended by their most trusted Ministers and ex-Ministers; let them invite Mr. Parnell to come to Downing-street, accompanied by those members of his party whom he may select, and let some scheme be formulated for the government of Ireland by Irishmen. At the same time I must remark that one of the gravest doubts entertained by many of what is called the upper class in Ireland is that, should an Irish Parliament again assemble in College-green, Dublin, they would be excluded altogether from the affairs of the nation, and that gentlemen representing extreme opinions would be returned as representatives *en masse*. It is, Sir, I think, rather premature to take for granted that such would be the case. My opinion is that a large number of men of wealth, position, and intelligence would be selected by the people when they found that matters had settled down and that their aspirations had been fulfilled. Why could not a number of Irish gentlemen not members of the House of Commons be requested by Lord Salisbury and Mr. Gladstone to assist in the conference with Mr. Parnell? I can readily name several well-known Irishmen—men of the greatest integrity and ability. Their counsels would have great weight and their suggestions would be of immense value at the present crisis when associated with the views of Mr. Parnell and his followers. Surely the time has come for such a meeting as I have suggested. I think that Irishmen in general would be pleased to see gentlemen of the following representative class brought into the settlement of so great a question as the present Irish difficulty:—His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Dublin; Dr. Croke, Archbishop of Cashel; Most Rev. Dr. Butler, Bishop of Limerick; Lord Monteagle, Mr. Kavanagh, ex-M.P., Mr. Edward W. O'Brien (son of Mr. Smith O'Brien), Mr. Richard O'Shaughnessy, ex-M.P., the Marquis of Waterford, the Duke of Abercorn, Lord Milltown, Mr. Richard Bagwell of Marlfield, Mr. Penrose Fitzgerald, M.P., Lord Dunraven, Mr. William Shaw, ex-M.P. Many

other names will be equally well remembered ; and in the formation of such a conference all parties and shades of opinion ought to be faithfully represented, otherwise the meeting would be only a farce. If this proposition which I have suggested can be carried out, I am certain that Mr. Parnell would only too readily hail the opportunity of arriving at the settlement of a question which has vexed the greatest statesmen, and which has kept two countries so long apart in feeling and sentiment, instead of being, as all would wish to see, two nations bound together by the closest ties of sympathy and good will.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

DANIEL FITZGERALD GABBETT,
ex-M.P. (Limerick).

New Athenæum Club, S.W.

DO IRISHMEN WANT HOME RULE? TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Is Ireland to have Home Rule, and, if so, under what restrictions, must be the two questions that are before the minds of every one at this juncture. And the present moment, while there is a pause, and while each party is arming itself for the fray of next February, may be a convenient time for discussing those questions. You, Sir, have commenced.

It is a little curious, and it shows the rapidity with which events have moved, that an opinion, for giving in to which, under the pressure of an election contest no longer ago than 1880, a candidate was looked upon as little better than a traitor to his country, should now have come to be held by many members of the Liberal party, certainly by Mr. Herbert Gladstone, possibly by Mr. Gladstone himself. To my mind the whole matter depends upon a true answer to the question, Do the Irish nation want it? If they do, it seems to me there is something monstrous, something entirely opposed to Liberal principles, in the refusal of it.

At the same time, I agree fully that it is not sufficient

to say "The Irish nation have already given you an answer to the question in the affirmative by returning 85 out of her 103 representatives pledged to ask for Home Rule in the next session." Your correspondent "M.P." has already disposed of Mr. Herbert Gladstone's "five-sixths of the Irish people," and the two other letters which you publish in *The Times* of to-day are enough, even if there was no other evidence forthcoming, to show that it is at least not certain whether the Irish peasant gave his vote to Mr. Parnell without fear or favour. And that presents us with another question, which has not yet, I maintain, received a satisfactory answer—Does the Irish nation love Mr. Parnell, or does it only submit itself in hate and fear to the organization he has set up? Of this, at any rate, I am assured—that many of Mr. Parnell's recognized lieutenants, if not Mr. Parnell himself, have in their speeches made the grossest misstatements as to the aims and objects of English Liberals in their conduct with regard to Irish affairs. They have stated that all the remedial legislation for Ireland to which Mr. Gladstone has devoted himself from 1868 down to the present time has been dictated, not by the sentiment of justice, but by fear. I remember well, in a memorable debate upon the Closure Rules in the House of Commons in 1882, Mr. Bright turning to the benches where the Irish members sat and denouncing them in no measured language as the foes and not the friends of Ireland, and such, I confess, has been my feeling then and since.

Again, I do not think sufficient pains have been taken by counter-argument and instruction to enlighten the Irish nation and to prove to them that, whatever has been the history of the past—and there are no right-thinking Englishmen of whatever party who do not deplore it—now, at any rate, the English nation is actuated in its relations to Ireland simply and solely by a desire to redress their wrongs, if wrongs remain, and to bind them to us by no other than the same chains of brotherly love

and affection which unite us to Scotland and Wales. Something has no doubt been done in this election by the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Society, but nothing as yet at all equal to the exertions that have been put forth upon the other side. Surely there can be found Irishmen of influence and education patriotic enough to devote their time and energies to the honest instruction of their distracted and unhappy countrymen.

You will see, Sir, that what I, as an English Liberal, plead for is delay until we are fully assured as to the real wishes of the Irish nation. I say that Ireland has not yet spoken with a voice in which we can repose implicit confidence. The hands, indeed, are the hands of Ireland, but the voice is the voice of Mr. Parnell. Should it, however, still be that Ireland, speaking in tones which we cannot fail to recognize as her own, demands a home Parliament, then I agree that it cannot be denied to her. We who believe in government by the people cannot deny the right of a nation to self-government. The American War of Independence in the last century and the war in the Transvaal more recently should be lessons to us how dangerous it is to disregard or to misread the wishes of a people. But under what restrictions should Home Rule be granted, if granted it be? While we admit the right of a nation to govern itself, it is our bounden duty to take care that the rights of the minority shall be respected.

1. First and foremost, the supremacy of the Crown and of the Imperial Parliament must be maintained. This, I see, is a proviso in Mr. Herbert Gladstone's letter, and would embrace, I presume, as of course, the right of veto upon any legislation passed by the Irish House of Parliament.

2. It must be clearly understood that Irish Catholics shall not be at liberty to reverse the position of the past and legislate against the Protestants of Ulster.

3. There must be some guarantee that the lives and liberties of the landlords are secured; that they are not,

as I believe Mr. Parnell once promised, "wiped off the face of the earth."

These two last points, which were clearly laid down by Lord Hartington in one of his speeches during the recent election, are perhaps included in my first, for any unfair legislation directed against Protestants and landlords would be vetoed by the Crown; but it would be none the less necessary to have a clear understanding beforehand upon them.

4. The control of foreign affairs would, of course, be retained by the English Government; and, if we may trust the report of an interview recently held with Mr. O'Connor, Mr. Parnell at present confines his demands to such self-government as is exercised by one of our self-governing colonies.

5. I do not, I confess, lay stress upon that which has been made much of in some quarters—the control of the police. Apart from agrarian crimes, I believe the Irish peasant to be as law-abiding as the English, and less addicted to crimes of violence. Retention in our hands of the control of the police would be to give the Irish the form of self-government without the substance. Might they not justly say "This is but sham self-government, when we have placed within our midst a body of trained and armed men under the control of another Government than our own? What is this but an army put there to overawe us and compel submission?" How would trust and confidence be expressed in such a measure?

One word in conclusion. Surely Mr. Parnell is right in this if in nothing else—that it must be the Liberal party who should have the carriage of any measure giving self-government to Ireland. Their record with regard to Ireland for the last 17 years at least is clean. During that time they have striven, and striven honestly, to redress the grievances of Ireland, and to bring her willingly into the bonds of a real and sympathetic union with England. "Justice to Ireland" has been written in letters of gold upon their banner. Mr. Parnell's words, if he be rightly

reported, are an unconscious—nay, an unwilling—testimony to their rectitude and honesty of purpose. Can we say as much for the Conservatives? And what has been the history of their relations towards Ireland, whether for the last 17 or for the last 70 years? Time, Sir, and a regard for your space forbid me to enter upon that sad and dismal tale.

“ Non ragioniam di lor ma guarda e passa.”

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Temple, HUGH F. BOYD.

THE IRISH DEMAND—ALL OR NOTHING.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—By your insertion of my letter on the above subject in *The Times* of the 8th inst. I trust that the cause of the Loyalists of Ireland (loyalty to Great Britain as an Imperial nation and Power) has been in some way assisted. Writing or talk about any subject can do no good, unless it tell of facts and appeal to common sense. Our case is very urgent. All may not now see it so, but never before in the history of countries has any country spoken with so clear a voice as Ireland through these elections. There can be no mistake whatever. To go into the cause of why and how it has spoken may be of interest to some, but cannot recall the voice distinctly spoken—a demand for nationality, “Ireland a nation.”

It may be a matter of opinion whether it were wise or not to have attempted to oppose Nationalist candidates under present existing circumstances, the facts of a reign of terror and tyranny being dominant, more or less, through every (I say every advisedly) class in the land. As one individual, I am confident it was unwise. Here the Loyalists have realized what seems before us, as it appears, for the future. They propose petitions to the British Parliament and the Queen, so as to attempt to show that the voice spoken has not spoken truly. The result of such petitions must be even more disastrous than that at the elections. Why? Plain reasoning answers it. The country is over-

powered by an unnatural and lawless tyranny; every man is afraid of his neighbour. Mr. Parnell, his ruling and policy, is the law of Ireland. If from many causes people abstained from or feared to speak under the secrecy of the ballot, will they now dare to come forward and put their names in black and white to petitions? No. The fact then remains—the country has spoken; nothing will alter that.

Now what follows? Either, little by little, to give in and give in—as has been the policy hitherto, until Mr. Parnell has triumphed, as under this policy he eventually must—and Ireland is a separate nation, or once and for all plant down the foot firmly and say an emphatic No. Could we possibly have the power to cause the British public to foresee what must be the result of this policy of give in, I cannot but believe that they would distinctly give forth to their legislators the order, “Say no at once.” All then would be plain sailing; what was before us could be clearly known; no separation, no wrecking, no whirlpool of perdition. Past policy in Ireland has been shilly-shally delay, then giving in. Now there is no policy, but a helpless, insane drift along the flood of a befooled and blinded mob. Would to God the people of England would see our case as we Loyalists see it! If they see not now, before the next step, which seems inevitably before them, be taken, they may see too late that it were wisest to have given all or nothing. Ireland wants, nay, demands, but one thing; she has called unmistakably for it—separation. British statesmen may give sop after sop to the wolf that pursues them, but sops will not satisfy; he asks not for such. The wolf seeks the life's blood of his prey, and for that he will fight to the death.

In appealing to the British public through that all powerful and honest medium, the Press, led by you, Sir, in your invaluable columns, we, the Loyalists of Ireland, whose voice will not now be heard in England's Imperial Parliament, appeal with arguments *ad misericordiam*

and *ad hominem*. For the first we have but to pray for help and pity as your fellow-countrymen, "grievously tormented." For the second we have to warn you—beware! What will follow if you cast us off? One country, one colony, after another will leave you, slowly, perhaps, and by degrees, but surely, until England, once Imperial England, stands alone, a little island, left, like many an Imperial Power that died before her, "as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city."

I apologize, Sir, for the length of my letter, but the cause I advocate is one of intense and vital importance to many
Dublin.

AN IRISH ELECTOR.

The Times, in its Leader, says:—

All other political topics are at present overshadowed by the Irish question in its latest form. Public opinion, not only in this country and in Ireland, but also on the Continent, has, with singular unanimity, accepted as correct the broad statement that Mr. GLADSTONE has determined to bid for power by offering the Irish Nationalists an independent Irish Parliament. Considering how recently he was avowing his unalterable fidelity to Imperial unity and pleading for support on the ground of his superiority in this respect to his opponents, such an instinctive and universal acceptance of what ought to have been an incredible rumour is a very curious revelation of what the world really thinks of Mr. GLADSTONE. There is no longer any room even to pretend to doubt that the world is right. However inaccurate or incomplete may be current versions of his views or schemes as a whole, it is quite certain that he has deliberately adopted

the policy of setting up an Irish Parliament in Dublin, with complete control over Irish affairs. He is understood to have laid this policy before HER MAJESTY, who has communicated it to her responsible advisers. It is by that act lifted out of the category of pious opinions or vague aspirations, and has become the serious programme of a man seeking to regain supreme power over the destinies of the British Empire. This is all that we really need to know about Mr. GLADSTONE'S scheme. An Irish Parliament controlling the whole administration of Ireland means the destruction of Imperial unity. It does not matter a single straw what assurances, safeguards, limitations, or guarantees Mr. GLADSTONE may exercise his ingenuity in devising. The foundation is cut from beneath them all before they are enacted. To set up an independent Irish Parliament and then ordain that on some of the questions which most keenly excite the passions of men it is to be governed by the wishes of Englishmen is to enact a contradiction in terms. If the Irish Parliament is really independent, no power on earth can hinder it from acting upon Irish ideas, and no provisions to the contrary can be worth the paper they are written on. If it is not independent, then nothing will have been done to remove Irish discontent, though much will have been done to add to the embarrassments of England. Political imbecility can go no further than to suppose that the Irish people can be equipped with a Parliament of their own admittedly supreme in all domestic concerns, can be permitted to retain a

hundred representatives in the English House of Commons, and yet can be constrained by paper stipulations to travel in an orbit prescribed for them by English statesmen.

Thus, Home Rule as conceived by MR. GLADSTONE raises at once the broad issue whether the Empire is or is not to be dismembered. It is high time that that issue were fairly faced by the leading men of all parties. In presence of a question of this magnitude and of such vital importance to the whole future of the nation, all ordinary party ties and personal associations sink into absolute insignificance. In ordinary circumstances, as we admitted on Wednesday, LORD HARTINGTON's close association with MR. GLADSTONE might excuse a good deal of reluctance to speak his mind. But, as we now stand, the country has an indefeasible right to learn from the foremost representative of Moderate Liberalism whether he intends to stand up for the unity of the Empire or to join in bartering it for office. LORD SPENCER, again, is peculiarly bound to let his voice be heard in a manner about which there shall be no possibility of mistake. He has had much and recent experience of Irish administration and is known to be in favour of broad and liberal measures of local government. His countrymen and his party have a right to know what he thinks of a policy which would hand over Ireland to the control of a party itself controlled and subsidized by Irishmen abroad. It is stated that MR. GOSCHEN would be offered the Chancellorship of the Exchequer were MR. GLADSTONE to come into power. The temptation is

scientifically adapted to the desires of a statesman anxious to regain his place in the Liberal party. But MR. GOSCHEN's position in the country is chiefly dependent on admiration for the courage with which he sacrificed that place to a conscientious scruple, and it is impossible that one whose fear of revolutionary change led him to refuse a vote to English artisans and peasants could look with a shadow of approval upon a proposal to hand over a portion of the Empire to its avowed enemies. The leaders of the Radical party have already, although in guarded language, intimated their continued adhesion to a scheme of Irish local government which MR. GLADSTONE's Cabinet rejected a few months ago. Their scheme was open to the objection that it paved the way for possible change of a yet more revolutionary kind, but there is a considerable gulf between their national council and an Irish Parliament. Their present attitude and the rejection of their earlier scheme by the Cabinet add, if addition be possible, to the obligation now resting upon Moderate Liberals to declare their intentions. The conscience of the country is already deeply shocked by the spectacle of MR. GLADSTONE's sudden conversion to a disruption of the Empire, which he has loudly pledged himself to oppose. The shock will be deeper and more painful still if the Moderate Liberals betray any hesitation in rejecting in Opposition a scheme infinitely more mischievous than that to which only a few months ago they refused their assent when in power. SIR

CHARLES DILKE said last night that the Radicals will be true to their principles whoever is in power. The country awaits from the Moderate Liberals, as persons even more immediately responsible than SIR CHARLES DILKE, a similar declaration accompanied by an unequivocal explanation of what their principles are.

The mere suspense of the present situation is productive of the most mischievous consequences in Ireland. Our Dublin Correspondent has adduced ample evidence on that score, and the letters that reach us from loyal Irishmen are filled with pathetic appeals for some intimation as to what this country will do. It needs, indeed, very little acquaintance with the condition of Ireland, and with the ordinary springs of human conduct, to see how loyalty must be weakened, how waverers must be driven over to the enemy, how the agents of authority must be deterred from energetic action, and how the horrible uncertainty whether a few months may not see the country plunged into disorder, must paralyze Irish commerce and industry. MR. T. P. O'CONNOR, in a communication which we publish to-day, endeavours to assure us that the rights of minorities would in any case be respected, but the exceptions which he himself has the candour to make are quite sufficient to justify the worst fears of all who have anything to lose. Some of his criticisms on MR. GLADSTONE'S scheme are instructive as showing how far it is from possessing the finality that would be its only justification. His own view is that nothing short of the establishment of Ireland

on the same footing as Canada will meet the necessities of the case, and we agree with him so far as to hold that if this country ever decides to set up an Irish Parliament it is bound to go on to complete separation. We cannot make Ireland like Canada, first, because Canadians are our friends, while the majority of Irishmen are our enemies; and, second, because Canada is three thousand miles away and Ireland is at our doors. With Ireland as an independent State we can always reckon. Instead of garrisoning the island we should have to garrison St. George's Channel. But with Ireland joined to us in name yet utterly beyond our control in fact, and paralyzing every movement of our Legislature and Executive by a compact body of aliens in our House of Commons, we should have no means of dealing. More than this, it has always to be remembered that with an independent Parliament and an English garrison to maintain the order and defence of the country as well as to collect Imperial taxes, the disloyal majority gains from our presence a factitious power and importance. MR. GLADSTONE has done much to give MR. PARNELL the importance he now possesses, and his Home Rule scheme would add to the power of the Nationalist leader. But complete separation would reduce MR. PARNELL to the comparative insignificance of the nominal leader but the actual tool of the worst elements of the Irish nationality at home and abroad.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 21.

THE IRISH LOYAL AND PATRIOTIC UNION.

The Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union this day issued an analysis of Irish election returns, 1885, with the following explanatory note :—

“ There are in all 103 members returned for Ireland by 101 constituencies. At the general election there were only 78 of these constituencies contested. . . . It should be noted that the case of North Louth is not included in the numbers given—78—this constituency being regarded as a noncontested one. It was deemed undesirable to run a Unionist candidate in this instance, owing to the split between the Callanites and the Parnellites.

The Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union contributed to contests in 48 cases in the three southern provinces. In some cases there were spoiled votes. These have been allowed for as far as it was possible to do so. The totals, however, could not be materially affected by any such element. It will be observed that the total electorate of the contested constituencies amounted to 585,715. Out of this number 295,269 voted for the Separatist candidates, 145,085 for the Unionists, and that the enormous number of 145,361 absented themselves. The Unionist votes added to the absentees leave only a majority of 4,823 for Mr. Parnell's nominees ; or in other words the Separatist candidates only succeeded in polling the small number of 2,412 votes over the half of the electorate.

The Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union have no intention whatever of promulgating any scheme of Home Rule or moving at all in that direction. The association is at the present time being reformed, and in the future its operations will be continued on a far larger scale. Hitherto nothing but electioneering work has been done by the union, and Ulster has been outside the scope of its operations, but in the future the association will be the centre of all loyalist efforts in Ireland. and

will operate in the four provinces. The platform will be so broad that men of all creeds and parties can join, and a stronger effort than ever will be put forth to maintain the Union in its integrity. Among the objects to be immediately dealt with will be the establishment of central offices in Dublin and London, and the organization in all its details of the entire Unionist forces. A guarantee fund has been opened, and already the proposal for such future action has received a large measure of support. The undertaking promises to be most successful, as the approaching crisis has drawn together men of all parties, who, while being prepared to take up a reasonable position towards any constitutional changes which do not disintegrate the Empire, will maintain a determined and united front in opposing measures which can only lead up to total separation.

THE IRISH QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—In my poor opinion, and in that I am sure of every man possessed of common sense who takes a real interest in the well-doing of Ireland, the sending out the programme for Home Rule in that unhappy country with a complexion of an authority at once to be equivocally disclaimed is one of the most deplorable of all political artifices which this nation has ever known.

It clearly was of the nature of a party pilot balloon, set afloat on the political atmosphere to test the currents which some such measure would have to encounter ; whence, by whom this strange dangerous movement has originated may yet be made clear. Its effect may well be to paralyze still further the arm of the law in its defence of the lives of those who are doomed to murder on agrarian grounds.

Is there any one member of any existing party who can really doubt that the power which has given Mr

Parnell his Parliamentary force is simply derived from the fact that he is regarded as the pioneer of the party which is to give the land where it is now rented? Conceive for one moment this so-called Home Rule in force on the lines which have been so prominently proclaimed and but equivocally disclaimed; the action of the magistrates and police to be governed by this new authority; what would be the result? It must follow that boycotting and moonlight raids and murder must be met with decisive action, or, failing this, that the actors in this direction must be tempted to ordinary loyalty to the law of property by some ultra measures, which would go to confiscate that property to gain their temporary abstinence from outrage.

Is it likely—nay, is it possible—that an executive which has gained its power by the support of lawlessness would go to work to destroy the scaffolding by which it was raised? Is it not most probable that, failing to do this, the powers which have gone to raise this party to the position of rulers, once convinced that they have made a rod for themselves, will now become more than ever lawless, and with some reason on their side, for who was it who taught them the lesson that, by defiance of law, they could become owners where they are renters, or at best rent on their own terms? S. G. OSBORNE.

THE IRISH ELECTIONS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Now that the elections are over it may be interesting for one who took an active part in three contested Irish elections to give some particulars of the working of the new Franchise Act.

In each case the fight was between a Loyalist and a Parnellite. The Loyalist candidates only appeared at the last moment. There was almost no time for electioneering on either side. The Loyalists issued addresses and circulated anti-Parnellite literature, but did not attempt a

public meeting. Only one Parnellite published an address, very short, simply proclaiming his fidelity to the Irish leader. The Nationalists held a few meetings, chiefly at the Roman Catholic chapels. The speeches were entirely devoted to personal abuse of the Loyalist candidates and of landlords generally, with a lament that the voting is no longer open, for then, "We would know our friends"—*i.e.*, whom to boycott. An Irish Parliament was scarcely mentioned, and when it was it was spoken of as the place where landlordism would be finally abolished and the land made free of rent. With such apparently imperfect preparation, with the great mass of the electors utterly ignorant of the difficulties or probable results of Irish self-government, it might be thought many electors would be absent from the poll. Not so. No regiment ever obeyed the orders of its colonel with more unquestioning obedience than did the Catholic voters the orders of the priests and National League officials united for the nonce. The organization was perfect. In one booth, where there were still over 100 voters unpolled, the League agent threw down his register and said, "We have polled our last man." To the Loyalist agents the number of well-known Loyalists who were absent was most disappointing. The excuse they have since given is that if they had voted at all everyone would know it was against the Parnellite and they would be marked down for National League vengeance. It was not only outside the booth by bringing up voters and frightening others away that the National League power was displayed, but inside the booth itself. In the three elections referred to three-fourths of those on the register came to the poll. Of these one-fourth had not sufficient intelligence to mark the ballot papers, although the Loyalists had distributed sample ballot papers wholesale and expended nearly all their energies in showing illiterate voters how to record their votes. In each booth one of the officials of the local National League, acting as polling agent for the Parnellite candidate, took up his position beside the presiding officer; and when that officer, having taken the voter's declaration

that he could not read, asked him for whom he voted, the Leaguer, with his register and pencil in his hand, would show the voter he was waiting intently to hear and record his answer. With the terrors of boycotting before their eyes, it was little wonder that the unfortunate illiterates almost without exception voted for the Nationalist. The Loyalist agents saw many votes given in this way for the Separatists by men who had not only promised not to vote against them, but who would if they could sweep Parnellism into the sea. In fact, judging by these three elections, the Ballot Act gives no security whatever to one-fourth of the electors, and the votes are cast simply through fear. If intimidation of this sort is to be met the illiterate voter must be done away with, not necessarily by being disfranchised, but by some method being devised by which he can record his vote in secret. The simplest plan, perhaps, would be to have the candidates' names printed in different colours, and if a man has not sufficient intelligence to distinguish between, say, blue and red, and place a mark against the one he prefers, he should be considered unfit for the exercise of political power.

Parnell's great majority in Ireland might induce Englishmen to suppose that the one grand aspiration of the Irish masses is to have Ireland a nation. Electioneering in Ireland leaves one no doubt that the "solid phalanx" of which we hear so much is not the offspring of a pure and lofty, though mistaken, sense of patriotism, but simply the product of two of the most potent influences to which human nature is subject—namely, greed and fear—greed, to become the possessors of property now held by others; and fear of the National League in this world and of condemnation wrought by the priests in the next.

Calmly considered the Irish elections prove unmistakably and beyond all manner of doubt the form of Government most suited to the Irish people. It is not a Constitutional Monarchy nor yet a Republic for which they yearn, but for the despotic rule of a dictator. It matters

not whether he be, like Parnell, an alien in race and religion, provided he be firm, relentless, unapproachable.

Yours, &c.

LOYALIST POLLING AGENT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—As I see that a section of the English Press is now advocating the handing over of the Loyal minority in Ireland to the tender mercy of the Nationalist majority, I will, with your permission, give an explanation of how that majority was obtained.

During the late elections I acted (as a volunteer) as sub-agent for two of the Loyalist candidates, so can speak with authority on the subject. For several Sundays previous to the days of polling the Roman Catholic clergy gave directions to the unfortunate voters as to how they were to exercise the franchise, and used every description of clerical intimidation to coerce them to vote for the Nationalist candidate. In one case the curate of the parish used the following expression:—"Let me see will one single member of my congregation dare vote for the 'Orange Catholic' candidate; these Orange Catholics are the curse of our country." Nice language to use on the steps of the altar in a chapel?

An Orange Catholic is supposed to mean a loyal independent Catholic who uses the intelligence nature gives him to think for himself and refuses to obey the dictates of the priests in political matters.

On the day of polling the Roman Catholic priest and curates remained outside the polling booth and drove the unfortunate voters to the poll like a flock of sheep, and all voters whom the Nationalists were doubtful as to how they would record their votes under the ballot were ordered to plead inability to read or write on entering the booth, so they then put their marks to the declaration of inability to read, and their voting papers were signed in presence of Land League agents.

This is freedom of election under the ballot. As I signed the usual declaration of secrecy, my lips are closed

as to the working of the machinery of the elections inside the booth. Yet I may say without violation of secrecy that when the voter enters the booth he is confronted (or, at least, was in the two polling booths I attended) by the president of the local National Land League, who acted as sub-agent for the Nationalist candidate, and his two poll clerks, also officers of the local League; so the unfortunate voters were thus completely at the mercy of the League.

During the polling I saw several men plead ignorance, and sign the declaration of inability to read; their papers were then signed by the returning officer for them, in presence of the president of the League; yet I myself had repeatedly seen these men write, and have in my possession legal documents signed by them and their signatures duly attested by myself or my brother. These men dare not vote any way their conscience directed them or they would be utterly ruined by the League.

Until the law of intimidation at elections is so amended as to disqualify the candidate and seat his opponent should the clergy in any way interfere in the election, it is useless to imagine a loyal man can be returned to Parliament in Ireland, as the Roman Catholic priests are disloyal to a man and are well paid for supporting the Nationalists who are making a living by trading on the prejudices and patriotism of the unfortunate peasants.

Amend the law and disqualify the candidate who uses or allows the clergy to act as his agents either directly or indirectly, and you will find that when left to their own free will two-thirds of the electors will poll for Loyalist candidates, which they dare not do at present.

J. P.

IRISH HOME RULE AND THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

If we assume, simply as an hypothesis, that Mr. Gladstone is preparing a scheme of government for Ireland which is intended to satisfy Mr. Parnell's demand for Home Rule, and also that, so far as Mr. Gladstone himself is concerned, he will endeavour to get it adopted by the newly-elected Parliament, possibly in its first session,

several grave questions arise besides those now agitating the country. Does the British Constitution admit of this unspeakably important measure becoming law in this particular way? It is quite evident that the great mass of Englishmen believe that it does. Consciously or unconsciously, they agree with De Tocqueville that there is no such thing as the British Constitution. There is nothing to separate laws essential to the continuity and stability of the national existence from ordinary laws demanded by the mere growth of the nation, and nothing to prescribe a carefully guarded procedure in altering the first class of laws. Everything which is legal in England is also constitutional. There can, however, be no more striking example of the extraordinary consequences to which this state of our institutions leads than is given by the conduct and the intentions which we hypothetically attribute to Mr. Gladstone.

When a new and inexperienced electorate is choosing a new Parliament the least which it can expect from the leaders of party is, one would suppose, that they should inform it what are the vitally important subjects on which it is to legislate. That this is a conclusion of common sense is shown by the fact that the English party leaders did make this declaration only a few weeks ago. Mr. Gladstone went to Scotland and, with the greatest clearness and emphasis, laid down that the matters with which the new Parliament would be concerned were registration, land transfer, the procedure of Parliament, and local government. Just before the electoral contest began Lord Salisbury had placed before the country a list of subjects for legislation which was practically the same as Mr. Gladstone's. It was plain, therefore, that the new House of Commons would have a

"mandate" to deal with registration, land transfer, local government, and Parliamentary procedure. From the disestablishment of Established Churches it was, on the other hand, to stand aloof. Lord Salisbury protested against disestablishment as bad in itself. Mr. Gladstone excluded it from his programme as in the highest degree inopportune. There were few men, he thought, who would live to see it a question urgently demanding solution. The heads of legislation in the Parliament about to sit were, therefore, as distinctly marked out as if, under an American State Constitution, one particular Legislature had, by the proper number of votes, passed resolutions that certain subjects of great importance should be dealt with by the next succeeding Legislature, and had taken measures to warn the electors that their duties would be more than usually serious on account of the gravity of the questions with which the legislators named by them would have to deal.

The new Parliament has, therefore, been chosen to reform the registration law, to amend the procedure of the House of Commons, to simplify the transfer of land, and to establish a general system of local government. It has not been chosen to disestablish churches. But what is the relation of Irish Home Rule to this programme? The only difficulty in answering the question arises from an apparent virtual unanimity in England, Scotland, and Wales that Home Rule for Ireland was not to be thought of. If only a week or two ago Mr. Gladstone had been charged with having a plan of Home Rule in his mind it would have been regarded as a calumnious charge, as an incredible invention of party malice. It may, indeed, be that, if all Mr. Gladstone's speeches were narrowly examined, subtle reservations and allusions at the time obscure might be discovered which implied a hope that Mr. Parnell might be somehow satisfied

But, considering the virtual dictatorship always exercised by the leader of the most powerful party in England, it is essential that he should be judged not by what he says, but by the impression his words make. If such a leader, particularly when he is an acknowledged master of oral speech, is misunderstood by the vast audiences he addresses, it is not their fault; it is his. We are governed by language; no quality is of much use in an English statesman if he has not the gift of speech; but it will be a terrible addition to this infirmity of our form of government if the words of a great Parliamentary orator are capable of being understood, like an oracle, in more senses than one. Now, the impression left by Mr. Gladstone on the mind of the whole country was that he considered Home Rule the evil and abominable thing. He seriously and sternly rebuked his political opponents for so much as accepting the English votes disposed of by Mr. Parnell. If all the while he really thought that there were "guarantees" on Mr. Parnell's part which would remove his misgivings, no language could be so unfortunate as that which he used; it was, in fact, universally and thoroughly misunderstood.

We are forced, however, to assume that some form of Home Rule for Ireland will be brought before Parliament at an early date, not as a mere topic of academical debate, but as a measure to be carried through the House of Commons and, if possible, through the House of Lords. Let us look at the results as illustrative of the British Constitution. The subjects put distinctly before the mind of the electors as those which their representatives about to be chosen would have to deal with will be indefinitely deferred. A change of such prodigious and far-reaching importance as any sort of Home Rule for Ireland will brook no

competition. There will probably be nothing else talked about or thought about for many years to come; and registration, Parliamentary procedure, land transfer, and local government will wait long before their turn for consideration arrives. These will be the practical consequences of abandoning what we have all supposed to be both the Liberal and the Conservative programme. But they will be less remarkable than the constitutional paradox which will be involved. The one subject on which nobody worth taking into account suffered his mind to dwell during the election—the one piece of legislative work of which no notice was given to anybody—will be the very undertaking to which the House of Commons will have to address itself almost immediately after its meeting, and which Parliament may not be able to settle for years. No words can be too strong for its enormous difficulty and no idea more futile than that any man can settle it in his closet on paper. Let anybody who doubts this turn over in his mind what are, after all, minor details of the subject. How is the change to affect the financial obligations of the country? Is the National Debt to be apportioned between England and Ireland, and, if so, what sort of security have the creditors whose interest is to come from Irish taxation? How, again, are laws to be enforced in Ireland other than those made by the Irish Parliament? If some sort of Court is devised with the power of annulling laws made by the Irish Legislature, does anybody suppose that the servants of the Irish Executive will cease to enforce the commands of the Irish legislative power? Lord Hartington complained, with much reason, of attempts to force on the Liberal party projects which had never been considered or discussed. Yet not a single one of Mr. Chamberlain's suggestions had a tithe of the difficulties with which every clause of

a Bill establishing a Parliament in Ireland will bristle.

A single illustration may be given of the light in which the method of legislation with which we are threatened is likely to strike communities with political institutions resembling our own. Not many years ago it was thought desirable to amend the Constitution of the American State of New York. A longer period of residence, coupled with payment of taxes, had been required in the case of a negro than in that of a white man. The difference was intelligible so long as the childhood or youth of most negroes had been passed in Southern slavery, but the necessity for it ceased with the general emancipation of coloured men. This was the procedure followed, under the Constitution, by the New York Legislature. Both Houses passed resolutions in favour of the change and entered them on their minutes with the "yeas" and "nays." The matter was then referred to the electors at the next general election, and for three months previously the resolutions were published in the *Gazette*. The change was then agreed to by both branches of the new Legislature, and, finally, it was submitted to the whole electorate and ratified by a majority of the electors. It would seem, however, that in England there is nothing to prevent a measure involving the whole future fortunes of an ancient and famous country from being conceived in December and passed, without notice to the electors, in the following July.

The Times this day writes:—

The appeal which we made on Saturday to the representatives and leaders of Moderate Liberalism has not waited long for a response. LORD

HARTINGTON has addressed a letter to the chairman of his election committee in Rossendale, in which he emphatically and categorically denies the reports which have lately been circulated in regard to his connexion with or approval of a scheme of Irish policy which is stated to have been under the consideration of the leaders of the Liberal party. "No proposals," says LORD HARTINGTON, "on the policy to be adopted by the Liberal party in reference to the demand of a large number of Irish members for the legislative independence of Ireland have been communicated to me, and I see no reason to depart in any degree from the declarations which I have made or the opinions which I have expressed in my speeches during the late election in Lancashire and elsewhere on the policy announced by MR. PARNELL as the leader of the Irish Parliamentary party." If this letter stood alone, it would be significant enough; but its significance is materially enhanced by the circumstance that LORD HARTINGTON came to London on Saturday, presumably for the purpose of conferring with MR. GOSCHEN, who visited him at Devonshire House, and that his letter seems to have been written with the concurrence and approval of the latter. It is clear, therefore, that LORD HARTINGTON has not been privy to the schemes attributed to MR. GLADSTONE, and, what is more, that he does not approve of them. MR. GOSCHEN's disapproval might fairly have been taken for granted; the only legitimate room for doubt was as to how soon or in what way he might think it in-

cumbent upon him to express his opinion publicly. This uncertainty is now to a great extent removed; we may assume that MR. GOSCHEN concurs with LORD HARTINGTON, and LORD HARTINGTON's language is precise and unequivocal. He has given no assent to schemes which point to the establishment of an Irish Parliament, he has not been consulted on them, and if he were he would reply in the language which he used at Belfast in November. "I am firmly convinced that the people of the United Kingdom will never assent to the practical separation of the two Governments of England and Ireland; they will not tolerate the formation of an independent Government which may be hostile, which may be unfriendly, which may adopt opposite colonial, fiscal, or even foreign policies with regard to Imperial matters." Even with regard to any proposals that might be made in the direction of local self-government for Ireland LORD HARTINGTON declared that it would be necessary to have guarantees sufficient to prevent any measure of self-government amounting to the separation of the two kingdoms, and to be satisfied of the sufficiency of those guarantees. In his substantive proposals LORD HARTINGTON declined to commit himself to anything more than such measures as he thought the Liberal party would be prepared to recommend for the purpose of laying the foundation of local self-government in Ireland on lines more or less identical with similar legislation to be proposed for England and Scotland; and he added that it would, in his

judgment, be necessary that control should be given to some State authority to prevent the local authorities which may be created from abusing their power. As LORD HARTINGTON is a statesman who says what he means, we have no hesitation in regarding his letter as an emphatic repudiation of the schemes for the establishment of an Irish Parliament attributed to MR. GLADSTONE, and invested, more or less, with his authority.

MR. GLADSTONE, it is true, has put forth an oracular disclaimer. We are informed that if at any time he should have any plan or intention to announce on the question of Irish Government, it will be done publicly on his own responsibility ; his political friends are further assured that he remembers his obligations to them, and that they may safely understand that he is bound to none of the ideas announced in his name. It looks, therefore, as if the ideas announced in MR. GLADSTONE'S name are not only without legitimate paternity, but are doomed to the fate of the deserted foundling. If MR. GLADSTONE is not bound by them, certainly no one else is. Every statesman whose name has been in any way connected with them has disclaimed the imputation. LORD HARTINGTON has not been consulted on them, and if he were he has told us what he would say to them. MR. GOSCHEN will have none of them ; MR. CHAMBERLAIN and SIR CHARLES DILKE have expressed their disapproval of them in language as clear and precise as could be expected of politicians in their position. Certainly if MR. GLADSTONE

himself, or any person acting on his behalf, desired to test public opinion or to ascertain the sentiments of the Liberal party and its leaders on ideas which he may have entertained though he now declines to be bound by them, he can be in no sort of doubt as to the nature of the response he has elicited. These unfathered ideas are repudiated with remarkable unanimity by every Liberal politician of note in the country. In these circumstances, we can hardly regret their promulgation. It has helped to preserve us from the danger, on which our correspondent "S." dwells, of "Government by minority." It has awakened public opinion and compelled it to take a definite shape. Too many weak-kneed politicians were beginning to shape their lips for the pronunciation of that fatal "After all" which, according to MR. GOSCHEN, is too often the prelude of a disastrous and ignominious surrender. There is still good reason to believe that if MR. GLADSTONE could have had his way the surrender to MR. PARNELL would sooner or later have been made. Had the Liberal party been ready to follow its leader at all hazards and to all lengths we should probably have found that not only was MR. GLADSTONE bound to the ideas announced in his name, but that his followers were bound also. In that case we should soon have been face to face with that grave constitutional question of the competence of a House of Commons to decide upon a question not only not considered by the electors, but deliberately and ostentatiously withdrawn

from their consideration, on which a high constitutional authority addresses us some weighty observations this morning. We trust now that a danger which, under a more rigid Constitution, would have been averted by constitutional safeguards specially provided for the purpose, will in our own case be averted by the steadfastness of the great bulk of the Liberal party and the good sense of the country at large. MR. GLADSTONE'S disclaimer makes it difficult to determine how much of the scheme attributed to him has received his sanction or even undergone his serious consideration. He declines to be bound by any part of it; but these words in the mouth of so subtle a master of language do not amount to a repudiation of any part of it. We can only say that LORD HARTINGTON is hardly the man to travel specially to London and to indite a letter which in the circumstances is little short of a direct rebuff to his leader, unless he had satisfied himself that the pilot balloon of last week had been inflated at Hawarden and launched with MR. GLADSTONE'S cognizance. LORD HARTINGTON'S letter, in fact, gives the measure of MR. GLADSTONE'S disclaimer; and a comparison of the two suggests some curious and not unfruitful speculations as to the probable effects of last week's episode on the internal economy of the Liberal party.

It may be that we shall now hear little more of the preposterous scheme, now acknowledged by nobody, for snatching a majority of the House of Commons in favour of an

Irish Parliament. We are informed that it is MR. GLADSTONE'S wish that the Tories should take the matter up and legislate upon it in a liberal spirit. It is added that if the Government bring in a satisfactory Bill MR. GLADSTONE will be prepared to give it his cordial support. As this statement rests on the same authority as the ideas announced last week in MR. GLADSTONE'S name, and as MR. GLADSTONE has declared that he will henceforth hold himself excused from replying to any further inquiries on the matter, we have no means of ascertaining whether his intentions or wishes are correctly represented. But, on the assumption that they are, it is obvious that the Liberal party will be precluded by the action of its leader from any direct attempt to dislodge the Government until their intentions are made known. In that case, Liberal politicians will perhaps be justified in confining themselves to such negative and general statements on the subject of Irish legislation as LORD HARTINGTON has just made public. On the other hand, if the Liberals are looking forward to an immediate resumption of office, they ought to be prepared with a policy, and after what has happened they should lose no time in explaining its nature and scope. It may be assumed moreover, that the present Government will be prepared, if and when the occasion arises, to propose a measure for the re-construction of local government on more or less identical lines in all the three kingdoms. Such a measure cannot with safety be delayed, and the Government will

doubtless be fortified in their intention to produce it forthwith by the reception which public opinion has accorded to the alternative, anonymous, and now disavowed scheme for the establishment of an Irish Parliament. "That way madness lies" must be the spontaneous reflection of any English party which allows itself to dally with any proposals which tend, directly or indirectly, to the dismemberment of the Empire. There is difficulty and danger enough in the establishment of local self-government in Ireland. "The extension," said LORD HARTINGTON in the speech we have already quoted, "of Irish management over Irish affairs must be a work of time; it must be a growth from small beginnings; it must be a superstructure raised on a sound foundation." It will not be raised on a sound foundation if it proceeds on the assumption that the demands of MR. PARNELL represent the wishes of five-sixths, or of anything like five-sixths, of the Irish people. We print to-day an analysis drawn up by the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union of the votes recorded, as well as of the very numerous and significant abstentions at the recent elections. Of the value and import of the Nationalist votes recorded, the letters which we have printed and still continue to print from all parts of Ireland describing the intimidation practised by the Nationalist agents will enable our readers to judge. The provision made by the law for illiterate voters has enabled MR. PARNELL'S agents entirely to destroy the secrecy of the ballot, and

the value of an election conducted under the eye of the priest and the Nationalist agent when the protection of the ballot is annihilated must be regarded as less than nothing, so far as the spontaneous and independent expression of opinion is concerned. If these things are done in the green tree what will be done in the dry? What would become of Ireland, and what would be the fate of the loyal minority, if all the agencies of law and order were placed in the hands of the determined enemies of England? In this connexion the extract from a letter of MR. GOLDWIN SMITH which MR. ROUNDELL sends us this morning is deserving of very serious consideration, and we commend it to the attention of the Government which will have to prepare a measure of local government for Ireland. "It is curious," writes MR. GOLDWIN SMITH, "that, just when disunionists are proposing to make Ireland happy with Home Rule, the Legislature of Massachusetts finds itself obliged to take the police out of the hands of the city of Boston on account of the growth of the Irish element, and the consequent disorder and corruption."

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22.

HOME RULE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—In the month of October last you were good enough to publish in the columns of *The Times* four letters of mine, under the signature of "Unionist," referring to the Irish question. The

last of these was written on the eve of the general election. During its turmoil and excitement the Irish question was for a time comparatively forgotten; but it has now come to the front with startling reality, and within the last three days has assumed so critical an aspect, that many would be disposed to think that the word "Unionist" subscribed to these letters had already become an obsolete designation. I cannot think so—at least as yet.

Mr. Gladstone, in his election addresses, pressed for a great and overwhelming Liberal majority, in order that, as, with considerable *naïveté*, he put it, he might not be exposed to the temptation of improperly yielding to the demands of Mr. Parnell and the Irish National party. Many of us hoped and most of us anticipated that he would obtain that commanding majority. He has, however, failed in obtaining it, and his only mode of obtaining a new lease of office is by gaining the support of Mr. Parnell and his 85 followers.

Has he, then, succumbed to a temptation which he described as likely to make a public man swerve from his duty to his country? If the reports of the last two days, only ambiguously contradicted by Mr. Gladstone himself, be true, he has certainly done so. If he is prepared, as is alleged, to support the demand for an independent Parliament in Ireland, then I aver, no matter by what guarantees or securities he may guard the proposal, he has abandoned that which he always pledged himself to maintain—the integrity of the Empire and the supremacy of the Crown. Mr. Parnell will gladly accept his offer of an independent Parliament in Ireland, intrusted with the control of the legislative and executive functions of government in Ireland, and will cheerfully give any securities or guarantees which may be demanded, knowing that they will prove wholly in-

operative to prevent him from obtaining that which he has always stated to be his aim and end, the complete independence of Ireland and her absolute separation from British connexion.

Let us see what would be the immediate and obvious effects of the handing over to an Irish Parliament and an Irish Minister the control of the Dublin police, of the constabulary, of the judicial and magisterial functionaries—in short, of giving them the appointment "of every official in Ireland, from the judge down to the hangman." The first effect would be the total confiscation of the interest of all the landlords in Ireland and the transfer of the property from the owner to the occupier. This would be accomplished, not by any formal Act of confiscation, which might be guarded against by Mr. Gladstone's proposed veto, but by simply letting things alone and refusing to give the aid of police or constabulary in executing the decrees of the law for the recovery of rent. By this simple expedient, which could not be prevented by any guarantee or security, the prophecy of Mr. Davitt and others that landlordism would cease within ten years would be fulfilled within that period, and, by the simple refusal of the Irish Executive to afford any assistance to the landlord in the recovery of his rent, the payment of rent would at once entirely cease, as it has already to a great extent done, and without the stroke of a pen or the magic of an Act of Parliament the landlord would find himself completely despoiled of the remnant of his property.

Lord Kimberley, I remember, in his speech in the House of Lords defending the operation of the Irish Land Act, stated that but for the intervention of the Government the landlord would have lost his entire property, and claimed credit for having secured to him a clear and undoubted title to the judicial rents settled by law. In all the discus-

sions upon the Land Act it was confidently stated that the title of the landlord to the judicial rent never could be disputed. At the moment of the constitution of an independent Parliament this remnant of the landlord's interest would disappear.

Is or is not the good faith of the British nation pledged to prevent such a confiscation? The Duke of Devonshire and other great English proprietors who have vast estates in England may bear with tolerable composure the disappearance of their Irish rental; but what shall we say to those honest and frugal men who, relying upon the titles guaranteed by Incumbered and Landed Estates Courts to be absolute and indefeasible, have invested the savings of their life in the purchase of Irish land? Will a British public allow this property to be taken from them without any protection or any compensation? I need not state the misery which such a revolution would produce; "the banishment of the proprietors of land without money enough to pay their railway fare to another country," as one of the agitators put it; the closing up of those houses throughout the country where this class used to reside and diffuse around them the blessings of civilization—a process, I may mention, which is already largely going on, for I could point out one county in Ireland in which 28 houses occupied by thriving proprietors are closed up and abandoned; the miseries of widows and children depending for their existence upon jointures and charges upon land. But it does not stop here; and let the English commercial public mark this—if rents are not paid, mortgages must fall with them, and the insurance societies and other bodies in England who have invested millions upon the security of Irish mortgages will find that the security has entirely disappeared. Now this is no imaginary danger. We read every-

day of organized resistance to the payment of rent, and successful, because of the very imperfect manner in which the Executive Government aid the ministers of the law, and the growing disinclination of the police to place themselves in opposition to those who they have reason to believe will soon become their masters. Some of the other inevitable consequences of the transfer to an Irish Parliament of the functions of government I shall, with your permission, deal with in another letter. But for the present I ask, Are the British people prepared to follow Mr. Gladstone in case he brings forward his proposal to establish an independent Parliament? I believe when the question is properly considered they never will.

Mr. Herbert Gladstone, who, I suppose, may be imagined faintly to shadow forth the parental ideas, in a recent letter asks why, if five-sixths of the Irish people are united in demanding an independent Parliament, should they not have it? I answer, as indeed Mr. Chamberlain has already done, because the safety of the commonwealth forbids it. Mr. Herbert Gladstone may remember the principle on which the Romans maintained their supremacy—*ne quid detrimenti res publica capiat*—and, reading Mr. Chamberlain's admirable speech in *The Times* of yesterday, I cannot believe that he and that wing of the party will ever follow Mr. Gladstone in case he proposes to establish an independent Parliament in Ireland, and their strong sense will tell them that any safeguards for the integrity of the Empire and the supremacy of the Crown by which such a proposal may be fenced around will be illusory and worthless. Mr. Bright, that great tribune of the people, who, strong though his opinions are, always loves to walk in the old lines of the Constitution, expressed his opinion in no measured terms of Mr. Parnell and his associates. and with manly inde-

pendence refused to withdraw a syllable of it. He is not, I think, likely to concur in a proposal to make Mr. Parnell the master of Ireland. Mr. Goschen, Mr. Trevelyan, Mr. Forster, and that school of Liberals will, I believe, withhold their assent. Mr. Trevelyan took an opportunity of condemning Mr. Childers's rash proposal to give the control of the police to local bodies. Lord Hartington, who stood by Mr. Bright on the occasion to which I have referred, has over and over again expressed the same sentiments; but I fear we cannot rely on the vigour of his fibre.

Will, then, this proposal find any favour with the Conservative side of the House? I firmly believe that Lord Salisbury will resist such a proposal to the death. However some of his subordinates may have coquetted with the Parnellites, I believe him to be totally free from all complicity with such a design. He has shown himself to be a statesman of great and solid powers; he has done much to restore England to her proper position in the estimation of foreign nations, a position which she had lost by the feebleness and vacillation of the last five years of disastrous foreign policy. He never will stain his noble name and lineage by consenting to traffic in the dismemberment of the British Empire for the sake of place or power. I think at the proper time he will use language similar to that by which the great Sir Robert Peel in the days of O'Connell and his repealers electrified the House of Commons by the words, "I, Sir, will never parley with treason."

Let Mr. Gladstone pause and well consider before he embarks on a voyage to this new and untried land in an attempt to resuscitate the institution of an Irish Parliament, which was at all times a mockery and delusion. Those who are curious about its history and desire to understand this question will find it profitable to read a little

book by Mr. Macneill on the subject, published by Cassell and Company, and to be found upon the railway stands, to which Mr. Gladstone himself refers as a safe guide. They will then find upon what a sea of troubles Mr. Gladstone invites us to embark.

Let the Irish loyalist take heart. The democracy of England will be found to be true, when the time arrives, to the traditions of the British Empire; and even the Scotch will not be found to follow him in a proposal to place the lives and properties of their own race and kindred, who occupy, within sight of the Scottish shore, the prosperous regions of Antrim, Down, and Derry, at the mercy of a Celtic Parliament sitting in Dublin. I still hope, notwithstanding all these dangers, to live and die a

Dublin.

UNIONIST.

A BITTER TYRANNY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I have often wondered whether the English people are aware under what a bitter tyranny the poorer and more defenceless classes of the Irish people suffer now that English law is virtually superseded in Ireland. The following extract from a letter, written by a clergyman in one of the most peaceable counties in Ireland, will teach somewhat:—

"I believe there are far more outrages committed than are heard of. I know several cases myself in this locality that have occurred, and nothing is done about it, the victims being afraid to say anything, and doing all they can to hush the matter up for fear of the police taking it up and forcing them to appear."

The disloyal, or rather anti-loyal, organization is perfect, as was shown at the late elections. Now what the English people ought to understand is this—Home Rule (to talk of Grattan's Parliament is a farce) means handing over the lives and properties of all loyal men to the

originators of this system. Modified Home Rule means handing over the entire property of the country, whether lands or railways, to the same parties, who have no stake whatever in the country, with hardly an exception, and who for their own private purposes would fleece to the bone any unfortunate owner who might remain.

I am, Sir, your faithful servant,

LIFFORD.

THE FATE OF THE LOYALISTS.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—One very grave danger which will without doubt quickly follow upon the granting of Home Rule to Ireland seems as yet to have escaped notice.

If the management of the police be handed over to the Irish Parliament, as seems to be Mr. Gladstone's intention, the whole male population from 16 years old to 60 will take up arms. First harmless rifle clubs will be formed in the towns, then the organization will extend to the counties; in the police they will have admirable drill instructors ready to their hands, as well as the nucleus of a formidable force. Money and arms will come pouring in from America, and the magnificent organization of the Land League will distribute the sinews of war. The people will drill after mass on Sundays and in the long summer evenings, for the Irish love soldiering and military parade; and then, with England's first difficulty, comes Ireland's opportunity. American sympathizers will flock from across the sea in thousands, and it is no exaggeration to say that after two years of Home Rule Mr. Parnell will be in a position to place 150,000 armed and more or less disciplined men in the field.

Mr. Gladstone will then experience another, though haply not his last, conversion—he will find that the "voice of the Irish people seriously demands separation," that "they are fighting, and rightly fighting, for freedom," and that he would incur the penalty of "blood-guiltiness" if he were to deny them so reasonable a demand.

Then Mr. Parnell, having gained the object for which he

took off his coat, may put it on again, and allow the patriots who now mutilate cows and torture feeble folk to exterminate with all the horrors of '98 the few scattered Loyalists of the South, and if they can the stubborn remnant of Ulster.

This is no exaggerated picture. Mr. Parnell is a cool and far-seeing politician. No man knows better than he the worthlessness of any guarantee which may be extracted from an Irish Parliament for the protection of minorities who at the best would only be allowed to sit spectators of their own helplessness in an Assembly largely composed of men of the same stamp as the late Mr. James Carey, of Dublin. Have they not already elected for a southern county the man who hung out the black flag when the Prince of Wales passed through his town, and many others whose hatred of England is undying and notorious, but who will not hesitate (so elastic are their consciences) to take the oath of allegiance to the monarch whose authority they have sworn to do their utmost to destroy? And these are the men whose guarantee we are invited to accept.

Even now (I speak from personal knowledge) the condition of the South and West at least is most lamentable. Neither life nor property is secure. Scores of outrages occur which the people are afraid to report, and which never find their way into print. Employment has ceased, capital has been driven away, and the labourers are starving, for all credit has vanished. The magistracy are disheartened, the police discouraged and in doubt; even justice is too weak to hold the balance evenly, for the nocturnal fire-raiser, Parliamentary or agrarian, has flung his blunderbuss into the scale. No trade flourishes save that of the publican and the agitator; for the latter, we may be sure, from the leader, with his handsome subsidy, to the village tyrant, the secretary of the local Land League, with his fingers in the till, takes good care that he at least receives his tribute, whoever starves.

"Protection of the minority!" Why, is not the first article in the Parnellite litany, "Let all landlords" (him-

self, of course excepted) "be wiped off the face of the earth?" Who then will protect them when the police are handed over to their spoilers? Little protection as they receive now, they will have less then. There will be free trade in blood. The only prospect of the unhappy minority will be sanguinary civil war or ruthless massacre.

Upon Mr. Gladstone's head already lies the blood of many brave men slain in bootless quarrels; but if he be permitted to carry out his present purpose he will have to wade into power through the blood of many helpless women and innocent babes.

Of a truth it would seem that it is the purpose of God to destroy this nation, and that he has already driven our rulers mad.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
S. T. HEARD.

Junior United Service Club, London, S.W.

The Times of this day, in its first Leader, says:—

The tension of the last few days has been considerably relaxed by the evidence laid before the public that MR. GLADSTONE'S followers are by no means disposed to give him unqualified support in his desperate attempt to secure the Irish vote in the House of Commons. The essential perils of the situation remain unchanged, together with all the aggravations which the knowledge of MR. GLADSTONE'S conversion to Home Rule is so well calculated to produce. No serious politician can conceal from himself that a new factor has been introduced into the problem by the definite committal to the principle of Irish legislative independence of the most influential personality in the political world. Nevertheless, the attitude taken up by MR. CHAMBERLAIN, SIR CHARLES DILKE, and

LORD HARRINGTON, together with the violent recoil of public opinion from the scheme propounded in MR. GLADSTONE'S name, has had the effect of calming the minds of men. There is a general feeling that a breathing time is assured to us, and that the country will have more ample opportunity than was at first apprehended of discussing the question of Home Rule in all its bearings. MR. JOHN MORLEY, who spoke at Newcastle last night, apparently does not see any ground for extending the smallest toleration to the Conservative Government, much less for giving it the gratification of a vote of confidence. Probably he will find a good many to think with him on this latter point, but there are few who share his amiable incredulity concerning MR. GLADSTONE'S share in bringing about recent disclosures of his intentions. He thinks MR. GLADSTONE the last man in the world to set kites flying through the air. The metaphor is MR. MORLEY'S, but that MR. GLADSTONE desired the world to believe, and that the world does believe accordingly, in his conversion to the principle of an independent Irish Parliament does not admit of any reasonable doubt. The belief is not very flattering to himself in the circumstances, because it either implies that he has cast aside the opinions he avowed during the election campaign or that his declarations were not spoken in their natural sense. The belief is exceedingly mischievous in Ireland, and also adds very greatly to the difficulties of the Parliamentary situation. Thus alike on personal and patriotic grounds MR.

GLADSTONE is interested in dispelling it, as he easily could by a word. But he has not done so. His disclaimers are carefully limited so as to leave the common belief untouched, and have consequently had the effect of confirming it.

Although occupying a more advanced position than his Radical colleagues, MR. MORLEY is very far from treating the Irish question with what he himself aptly describes as "shrill levity." He is under no illusions as to the tremendous risks involved in any concession of legislative independence, but he has pondered so long upon the evils of the existing state of affairs and the difficulties inherent in all the more moderate methods of dealing with them that he seems upon the whole disposed, in desperation rather than in hope, to try what MR. GLADSTONE'S remedy would do. There are situations in which the homely wisdom that bids us bear the ills we have rather than fly to others that we know not of is liable to be forgotten. It is not wonderful if politicians, anxiously surveying the political horizon and seeing no gleam of light anywhere, should forget to direct an equally minute and painstaking scrutiny upon the consequences of some act that seems to promise at least a possibility of relief. We do not deny the difficulties that beset ordinary methods of treatment. It is too true that the most liberal measures of local government and the most absolute political equality are very likely to be received in the same spirit of sullen and implacable hostility that so many other remedial measures have called

forth. It is evident enough that reform of Parliamentary procedure, however wise and thorough, cannot avail to neutralize the presence of eighty members of the House of Commons avowedly bent on making business impossible. It must be admitted that with a whole population terrorized into passive resistance to payment of the most moderate rents our continued government of Ireland cannot but be attended with a vast amount of civil wrong and of personal violence. All this and more may be urged by those who desire to expose the full difficulty and danger of the existing situation, and although some deduction must be made for errors and weaknesses arising from our system of party government, it must be said that the chance of reforming that system is too remote to justify any very lively hope of substantial amelioration. But when all has been said and admitted to the full there remains the question whether in our present abyss we may not find an even lower deep, and whether the concession of an independent Irish Parliament on anything resembling the lines to which MR. GLADSTONE does not disclaim his committal would not be a sure and certain way of plunging us into that deep at once.

One obvious truth enforced by the very recital of existing difficulties is too commonly overlooked or obscured by the use of vaguely optimistic language. It is that what we have to deal with in Ireland is not discontent springing out of tangible grievances, but hatred using grievances,

tangible, sentimental, and imaginary as excuses for revolt against English law. For the last fifteen or twenty years justice to Ireland has been the phrase oftenest in the mouths of our politicians. English prejudices and economic laws have alike been set aside in order to deal with Irish grievances in the way desired by Irishmen. One remedial measure has followed another, but far from furthering the hoped for reconciliation each new concession has brought forth a new and more intolerable set of demands, urged with growing virulence and backed with increasing violence. The grievance of a Protestant Establishment was removed, and the important letter of "A TRAVELLER" in our columns to-day, giving the text of an amazing episcopal manifesto he read on the door of Kilkenny Cathedral, shows that religious intolerance burns with a fiercer flame than ever; while the records of the election show that never before were the Roman Catholic clergy from the highest to the lowest so thoroughly enlisted on the side of sedition. The power of the landlords was abated, and rents reduced from 25 to 30 per cent.; but the payment of the reduced rents is refused with more determination and ferocity than original demands called forth. Now, in order to entertain the faintest shadow of a hope that the last and greatest of concessions would bring peace we must ignore all this painful experience and assume that the hatred of England which it indicates will suddenly be appeased by the very course of conduct which has hitherto inflamed Irish

hostility. It is not resentment for this or that grievance with which we have to do, for in that case each honest attempt to lessen the grievances would have brought about an amelioration of general conditions. We are confronted with a hatred of English law, of English control, and of English ways, a hatred which grows with each concession we grant and each humiliation inflicted upon us. It is a tremendous and unwarrantable assumption that this hatred is suddenly to be converted into affection by the acquisition of hitherto unequalled facilities for its gratification. The advocates of an independent Irish Parliament ask us in effect to stake upon this assumption the integrity, the honour, and the very safety of the Empire. Had they even devised a scheme by which Irishmen should no longer be brought into contact with English law and English modes of action, they might with more plausibility ask us to run these enormous risks. But it is actually contemplated to retain Imperial control, to collect Imperial taxes, to fetter the new and independent Parliament with conditions embodying the very ideas against which Irishmen rebel, and, while thus providing grounds for quarrels exactly similar to those of the past, not only to give Irishmen redoubled power to fight them at home, but to leave them with every facility they now enjoy for paralyzing the Executive and demoralizing the Legislature of this country. If we are going to stake the Empire on the hazard of the die, let us at least take care that the die is not loaded.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23.

MR. GLADSTONE AND HOME RULE.

Mr. Forster writes from the Osborne Hotel, Torquay, Dec. 21 :—

"To prevent misconception, I wish to say that I do not believe that in Home Rule or in any form of Irish Parliament we should find a deliverance from the Irish difficulty, and I also think that they would be fraught with danger to Great Britain as well as to Ireland itself."

In conversation Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, M.P., late Chief Secretary for Ireland, who was passing through London, said he agreed with Mr. John Morley that in the present emergency, one of the most serious that the country had ever had to face, the difficulties to be encountered should be confronted with union, loyalty, and confidence. He held strong opinions on the subject of Ireland, and he was conversant with the views of several members of the late Government, under which circumstances he did not feel justified in making a public utterance at present. He doubted whether any detailed scheme had been formulated by the ex-Premier, as had been stated. It was not at all improbable that Mr. Gladstone had recently devoted much attention to the Irish problem, and had to some extent shaped his future policy in regard to that part of the United Kingdom. It was patent that the Irish question must be dealt with at an early date, and a party leader of Mr. Gladstone's position was bound to face the situation. But the drawing up of a detailed scheme which should be a basis for legislation was a very different matter, and Mr. Gladstone was not likely to undertake such a task before consulting with his co-workers, and no such consultation had come to his (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman's) knowledge. "On one point," he continued, "I may state my views with tolerable clearness. In my opinion, the best plan of dealing with the Irish question would be for the leaders

of the two great political parties to confer together for the purpose of ascertaining whether some *modus vivendi* could not be arrived at by which the matter would be raised out of the area of party strife." Mr. Campbell-Bannerman went on to state that this policy of co-operation would meet with the approval of several of his colleagues in the late Government; indeed, he believed it was heartily desired by those looked upon as the leaders of the party. As matters stood at present, the Liberals would not take the initiative in introducing a measure for remedying the existing state of things. The Government were committed to take the subject up, and it was for them to take the first step. He sincerely hoped, however, that their proposals would be such as could be accepted by the Liberals, so that there could be co-operation.

MR. GLADSTONE'S ATTITUDE.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—As you appear to express some doubt to-day as to Mr. Gladstone's sense of duty and patriotism in the event of Lord Salisbury being willing to take up the Irish question and deal with it in a liberal and satisfactory manner, perhaps the following letter, written by him on the 14th of December, and received by me next day, may be of interest at the present time. I will only express my entire concurrence with the spirit of the letter and a hope that Lord Salisbury may be found equal to the occasion, in order that this grave question may be settled by the patriotism and statesmanship of the leaders of the two great constitutional parties in the State, whatever may be the advantage or disadvantage to either political party from the action of their leaders in this matter.

I remain, yours faithfully,

EDWARD HENEAGE.

Hainton-hall.

"Hawarden Castle, Chester, Dec. 14.

"Dear Mr. Heneage,—I thank you and Lincolnshire

for your exertions in a good cause which has been crowned with much, though not with all, success. I think it probable that the bigness and urgency of the Irish question may bring it to issue quickly. Most thankful shall I be if this Government will undertake to deal with it; and being thus a full or fair half of the House, they may relieve us from the constitutional difficulty of being ruled by a minority. If they will bring in a safe and adequate measure they will have my support.

"I fear until this subject is disposed of no real progress will be made with any others.

"Most faithfully yours,
"W. E. GLAISTONE."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—The communication which Mr. Gladstone has vouchsafed to make to the public relating to Irish affairs, which are so largely and seriously occupying every man's mind at this moment, are designated by yourself as oracular, probably the most fitting term to apply to them. My motive, however, for writing to you is to point out to your readers that, supposing the general impression as to this communication to be a correct one, this would not be the first time that he has acted in very grave circumstances without consulting his colleagues. He actually dissolved Parliament without that preliminary in 1874, and, to the astonishment of everyone, proceeded to an open-air meeting, presumably of his own calling, at Blackheath, where he begged the support of those whom he addressed, on the promise that if returned to office he would abolish the income-tax. He then hawked his proposition to the whole country, exhibiting for the first time in our history a Prime Minister descending to the level of an ordinary platform agitator. I need not remind you of the results of this conduct to the Liberal party, but I may say that from that time he was distrusted by many of the old Liberals besides myself, and that we thought him thereby unfitted to be, or, at all events, a dangerous man to whom to intrust the destinies of our country. What has since occurred seems to have justified our anticipations and enhanced our deep regrets

that a man so wonderfully endowed by ability and attainments to enable him to confer the greatest benefits upon his country should have so entirely failed to conciliate its confidence.

Your obedient servant,

AN OLD LIBERAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—All those who feel admiration for the splendid services rendered by Mr. Gladstone to his party and to the country will experience a sensation of relief if in due course a full and categorical disclaimer is forthcoming of his rumoured project for the solution of the Irish difficulty. But, however that may be, we are confronted on the threshold with the question, Is it desirable that Mr. Gladstone should return to office? Are his the hands to which the solution of this grave problem can safely be intrusted?

The cause of half our troubles in Ireland has been the widespread feeling among the Irish that there is no finality, that concessions always follow upon agitation, that English statesmen will sooner or later yield to pressure. Our legislation for Ireland runs upon an inclined plane. We pass a Land Purchase or a Labourers Bill upon the principle that one-half or three-fourths of the purchase-money shall be advanced on loan by the State at a certain percentage for a limited number of years. The Bill has no sooner become an Act than agitation begins afresh for the advance of the whole of the money at a lower percentage over an extended term of years. And so it is in other phases of the Irish question. First Griffith's valuation, then judicial rent, then prairie rent. First Home Rule, next an independent Parliament, then separation. In other words, in the eyes of the Irish people "force is the true and only remedy."

The fear of this disastrous sliding scale of weakness is the cause of the deep mistrust which Mr. Gladstone's reported proposals have evoked. It is felt that he is peculiarly responsible for the attitude of Irish opinion. It was he who, on a memorable occasion, connected the disesta-

blishment of the Irish Church, an act of political justice, with the Clerkenwell outrage. And throughout the troubled times of the late Parliament it was the feeling of the Nationalist members that, whatever other Ministers might say, the last word had not been said, the last hope of concession was not to be abandoned, so long as Mr. Gladstone had not spoken.

But, if these things are so, it would seem to follow that the statesman who, however unintentionally, gave a new impulse to outrage and to the appeal to agitation—the statesman whose name is identified in Ireland with the policy of endless concession—that such a one, even in the eyes of his best friends and in his own best interests, can scarcely be intrusted with the arbitrament of a grave Imperial question which, unless we are prepared to depart from long-established constitutional usage, must be settled, firmly and deliberately, upon the lines of the application to Ireland of even-handed justice, equal laws, and like institutions.

A LIBERAL.

A SERMON AT HAWARDEN.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—A paragraph has gone the round of the papers declaring it to be “a significant circumstance, as indicating the feeling at Hawarden Castle on Home Rule for Ireland,” that I “preached on the subject in Hawarden Church” on Sunday week. In ordinary circumstances I should not think it necessary to contradict so trivial an error. But a certain portion of the public mind is at this moment in so excited and credulous a mood that you will perhaps allow me to say that I have never preached a sermon on Home Rule in Hawarden Church or elsewhere. I did preach in the parish church of Hawarden on the morning of the Sunday before last on the invitation of the rector of the parish, and towards the end of my sermon I made some observations, which appeared to me to be germane to the subject of my discourse, on the temper of mind in which the consideration of such a burning question as that

of Ireland ought, in my humble judgment, to be approached, But I did not presume to offer any suggestion as to any particular method of solving the problem; and when I spoke I knew no more than the rest of the public of “the feeling at Hawarden Castle on Home Rule for Ireland.” I have, moreover, a shrewd suspicion that, whatever the feeling at Hawarden Castle may be on the Irish question beyond Mr. Gladstone’s public utterances, it is still a secret in Mr. Gladstone’s breast. My own views on the subject are of no consequence to any one, but, whatever they may be, the pulpit of a parish church is the last place in which I should think it right to air them.

I remain yours faithfully, MALCOLM MACCOLL.
1, New Burlington-street, W., Dec. 11.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24.

MR. BRIGHT ON HOME RULE.

A correspondent sent *The Times* the following extract from a speech delivered by Mr. Bright some time ago, reprinted from the *Leisure Hour* of 1875:—

“To look at it only for a moment raises wonder that any man, or number of men, should imagine or think seriously of such a scheme. How many Home Rulers—how many men of that faith—are there in Ireland? Certainly not more than a million. If I give you four millions of the disaffected Home Rulers, Repealers, Irish Republicans, or other antagonists of Great Britain—and this is more than you can fairly claim—they will give you only one million of men, and of these not one half have any knowledge of political and public affairs. And yet you propose, in order to allay the discontent of this part of your population, not only to make a revolution in Ireland, but to do the same in England, Wales, and Scotland. In Great Britain nobody wants two new Parliaments of Lords and Commons; nobody wants a third Imperial Parliament; and yet you propose with a childish sympathy and enthusiasm to force upon England, Wales, and Scotland these additional representative and legislative bodies, in order, apparently, to justify or balance the creation and establishment of like arrangements in Ireland. Surely so absurd and monstrous a proposition was never before heard of! You propose that twenty millions in Great

Britain shall, in a manner, turn everything to which they are accustomed, and with which in the main they are satisfied, upside down in the hopeless attempt thereby to allay the discontent of a portion of the people of Ireland, the said portion of your people never having been able to make a clear statement of its grievances, and being, as you must feel, totally unable to agree in any remedy for them."

IRISH LOYALISTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Many thanks for your insertion of my letter of December 17. In it, I believe, were expressed the thoughts and feelings of Irish loyalists. Your kindness and the awfully critical state in which we are at present move me to ask you to allow me once more to say a few words. As you to-day point out, all experience proves that the conciliation of the haters of England in Ireland is an impossibility—nay, that every measure understood by them to have that object in view has but added fuel to the fire of hatred. Into the hand stretched out to pet they have invariably sunk their teeth. Dismissing, then, the idea of attempting to conciliate as worse than useless, the question arises, What should be done at the present time? The answer to this question is to my mind clear and decided. Give to Ireland any amount of local and municipal government which may appear to your own mind as just and expedient. Treat Ireland as you will treat England and Scotland. No doubt the local taxation will be greatly increased, but that for a time we must bear, hoping that experience will ultimately work a cure. On the other hand, refuse with a clear and decided negative anything and everything resembling an Irish Parliament having authority over the whole country. Such a gift would but increase our trouble. Better by far cut the cable at once. It may be said "By this policy the discontent will not be removed." Perfectly true; neither would it if you granted Mr. Parnell's demand. But the sole object should be to do what is just. As to the spectre of 86 Irish members using their power to paralyze

the House of Commons, I can only reply by a laugh. If 584 men cannot control 86, all that can be said is that an empire founded by many generations of men of invincible pluck has suddenly been dissolved by its rulers becoming a shivering set of cowards. Old enough to recollect the sudden collapse of the O'Connell attempt when met in a manly manner by Sir R. Peel, I can but express my conviction that if Mr. Parnell is met in a similar manner when he demands what is unjust and unwise the country will be amazed at the rapidity of his decline and fall.

Reform Club, Pall-mall, Dec. 22. JOHN WILSON.

MR. GLADSTONE AND THE LIBERAL PARTY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—At this supreme crisis in public affairs it may be that you, who watch events from the centre of the nation's political life, will not be indifferent to the manifestation of opinion among active politicians in these northern parts of England. I address you as one who has been a steady follower of Mr. Gladstone ever since he became the acknowledged leader of the Liberal party, and who, during that extended period, has done some hard work in his own district towards supplying the force required for enabling Mr. Gladstone to carry out his successive designs. I have a very strong opinion respecting a plan for the establishment of an Irish Parliament and an Irish Nationalist Government, published a few days since and imputed to Mr. Gladstone, and I find that intelligent Liberals of all classes in these districts share that opinion. We regard the proposal as being tantamount to an entire surrender to Mr. Parnell of that which Englishmen are most concerned to uphold and defend. We can see no good reason why the fatal sacrifice should be made, while considerations, the most vital to the honour, power, and safety to the country seem to forbid it; and we feel bound to condemn the project and to declare that we, as Liberals, will have no hand in the transaction. But the authorship of the scheme has

been disavowed by Mr. Gladstone, we are told, and why should people continue to be disquieted about it? For the reasons that Mr. Gladstone's first disclaimer was vague, and even the second was not such as to preclude him from propounding an exactly similar plan in Parliament anon. Mr. Herbert Gladstone, who sometimes speaks as if he felt that the public looked for signs in his utterances of what his father might presently spring upon the country, has, with innate modesty, given his decision in favour of granting Home Rule to Ireland. Some of us who have trusted Mr. Gladstone formerly, begin to be afraid that his eagerness to overthrow and to supplant Lord Salisbury may overbear his better impulses, and may, if not effectively checked by timely protests and warnings from his own political friends, carry him far on the perilous path of bidding for the Irish vote. Lord Hartington's letter is a most pregnant admonition, and must have had a powerfully salutary effect; but it will be all the more influential if it be backed up by the remonstrance of representative Liberals and humbler members of the party from all parts of the Kingdom. What right has Mr. Gladstone to expect the Liberals of England and Scotland to follow him in the pursuit of such an aim as he is supposed to cherish? Was Irish separation one of the items of that programme of measures for the new Parliament drafted by Mr. Gladstone himself, to which the Liberal party was strictly forbidden to add one jot or tittle, on pain of the dissolution of the Liberal party? Certainly not; and we are inclined to insist that this political preacher shall stick to his own text. Men take sides in politics, and are Liberals or Conservatives with the intent to promote legislation and government based on certain distinctive principles, which they believe to be sound and for the welfare of their country. But disruption of the empire, and the setting up of a rival authority to that of Queen and Parliament in any part of the United Kingdom has never been one of the ends of party combination and operation which either British Liberals or Conservatives have set before themselves. It is immoral for leaders of parties to require of their supporters acceptance of proposals such as these. No exigency of party can be pleaded as a justification by a leader who makes so outrageous a demand. I know that things have come to an awkward pass in our British

political system; but surely we have not reached that last extremity when an Englishman must choose between being a traitor to his country or disloyal to the man who leads his party in Parliament. If it be so, however, some of us will be obliged to incur the reproach of having deserted our leader, as the only way of escaping the greater infamy of having betrayed England into the hands of her most deadly foes. There are but two motives conceivable which could actuate a statesman who should venture to ask his party to suffer itself to be his instrument in destroying the union of Ireland with Great Britain. One is the wish to satisfy and placate the Irish. How vain that wish is 18 years of futile effort and of dismal experience ought to have taught us. The malecontent Irish and their leaders have proved themselves to be alike insatiable and implacable. The other possible motive of a party leader in taking the course indicated is the desire to strengthen his party and by attaching the Irish vote to make it a majority of the House of Commons. Nobody supposes that this result could be attained, at least not so as to last, by the most extreme concessions. The Liberal party might be lifted into office, but a few weeks of ignominious subjection to Mr. Parnell would be all that would be gained, and at what a cost of incalculable injury to the nation! Whatever Mr. Gladstone may think, tens of thousands of working members of the Liberal party recoil from the thought of purchasing the temporary ascendancy of the party in Parliament at such a price. If, at any period, the Liberal party could afford to display a manly and dignified independence of the Irish faction, it is now—when scarcely a single member of the 335 Liberal members in the House of Commons just elected is beholden to the Irish vote for his return.

I am, Sir, yours &c.,

A LANCASHIRE LIBERAL.

MR. GLADSTONE'S SCHEME.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—The publication of proposals attributed to Mr. Gladstone may not have been authorised by him, but they at least fall within the limits of the general statement of policy which he made in Mid Lothian last month. It is therefore at least possible that they may be in substance what he intends next month to submit to Parliament. The time is very short for making up our

minds on so momentous a change in the Constitution. I would therefore desire to offer a few considerations on its policy and effect.

In the same Mid Lothian speech Mr. Gladstone declared that the system of home government to be granted to Ireland must be also granted to Scotland if Scotsmen should desire it, but he added that he had no idea whether they did or not. I shall not venture to answer for Scotland, but at least there is no doubt that some Scotsmen would make the demand. But could the principle admit of the line being drawn at Scotland? There are the Highland counties, as different in all respects from Lowland Scotland as Ireland from England, and which have just marked their difference and their demand for distinct legislation by the election of crofter members. There is Wales, which Mr. Gladstone has himself recognized as entitled to different Church government from England. There may be the miners of North England, who may not long consent to have their progress in reform arrested by the Conservatism of the southern counties. Shall we diminish friction and obstruction by adopting a principle which so many may claim title to? But if these are thought only speculative applications of the principle of separate government, we cannot say the same of Ulster. What right shall we have (save the right of the Austrians over Modena) to force the Protestant Loyalists of North Ireland to be detached from Britain and to be subject to the rule of the Catholic Nationalists of South Ireland?

So much for principle; now let us glance at practice. Ireland is to have the regulation of her own affairs in Dublin, and the Church is the first of her affairs. If she is to be forbidden to establish the Roman Catholic Church, English tyranny survives. If she is to be allowed to do it, she must tithe Protestants, and who is to collect the tithe? The Irish police, or the English soldiers? She is to be allowed the control of her taxation. Is she to contribute nothing towards the Imperial expenses, including the

Army; or, if she is, who is to fix the amount, and who is to levy it, if her home Parliament objects? Will she pay her own police to exact an English tax? Are English troops to levy the taxes, or to fight the Irish police? Is it not obvious that by setting up an independent authority in Dublin we settle no difficulty, but only raise fresh ones on every conceivable question and in a violently intensified form?

If, indeed, Ireland must be governed always in the same way as she has been governed hitherto, I should say let us face every difficulty, let us agree to total separation even, rather than continue such injustice. If when we offer what we call remedial measures we are still to frame and administer them, as even Liberal Governments have recently done, by Englishmen and Scotsmen only; if we are to declare that everything we grant is final, till threat of civil war (or of loss of place) makes us grant more; if we are to reject in the Imperial Parliament every measure of home reform for Ireland brought in and supported by the Irish members, however reasonable and just it may be—then I for one could be no party to the maintenance of a connexion involving denial of the right of freemen. Nor can we wonder that, thus contemned at Westminster, Irishmen demand a Parliament in Dublin. But surely this stereotyped system of the past may be abandoned for the future. Scotland is contented with the Union, because England has always allowed her representatives to frame, to amend, and to administer her own laws, though sitting in the Imperial Parliament. May we not adopt the same system in the Imperial Parliament in regard to the affairs and the legislation of Ireland, and try its effect before proceeding to the tremendous experiment of federation or of separation?

I am, your obedient servant,

J. BOYD KINNEAR

Kinloch, Fifeshire.

FEELING IN ULSTER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—As a loyalist, resident 27 years in Ireland. I wish

to express the gratitude which I am convinced my fellow loyalists in Ireland, and particularly in Ulster, feel towards your Dublin Correspondent for the ability with which he has represented the feelings of the minority regarding the recent movement apparently in the direction of some description of Home Rule. The English people must clearly understand that no practicable guarantee can possibly be given to the Protestants of Ireland that they and their religious rights will remain unmolested. What would such a guarantee mean? It would mean that the Irish priesthood will suddenly change their line of action and display an amount of toleration which has been singularly absent of late years. It must be evident to everyone acquainted, as I am, with the country that the cry of "Down with the landlords" is really "Down with the Protestants." Mr. T. P. O'Connor, in *The Times* of Saturday, does not, of course, admit this; but the very manner in which he treats the point shows the working of his mind as he wrote his very plausible letter. The fact of the matter is that each day makes it more clear that it is not with Mr. Parnell and his party but with the Irish priesthood that whoever wishes to approach the Home Rule question must treat. The priesthood are the real rulers of Ireland at present, inasmuch as they hold the purse strings, and can tighten or relax them as they desire.

Yours obediently,
A NORTHERN LOYALIST.

Londonderry.

HOME RULE AND CRIMINALS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—As it is quite clear that Mr. Gladstone is ready to take a very long step towards Irish independence, I should be glad to be allowed to point out one result which has not yet been noticed. The management of the police and the prisons and the practical administration of criminal justice must of course be subject to the Irish executive power. A judicious economy in some matters may perhaps

recommend itself to the Irish Government and plausible theories may be found which would support them in disposing of their criminals in a manner more convenient to them than by keeping them in prison. They will probably therefore find means direct or indirect of causing them to leave Ireland and devote their criminal energies to England, which will afford them of course a much more fruitful field of exertion.

This is not merely a theoretical possibility. It is a statement of a natural tendency which under the circumstances would prevail. Five and twenty years ago when the Irish penal system was much discussed, much of the success claimed for it was said by experts to be in reality largely due to the pressure of the Irish police measures forcing the criminals out of the country. A very large part of the crime in the Channel Islands is due to the citizens whom France "spares" to them, and the Channel Islands themselves retain a law of banishment, which means simply sending the offender over to England.

Possibly an Irish Legislature might legalize banishment, or might be free with tickets of leave conditional on removal from the country, and even paupers might by a beneficent Government be sent away to a richer land, for practically it would be difficult to prevent it.

The result of these measures may be gathered from the statistics which show what an enormous proportion of our crime is even now due to the Irish residents among us, who are also good enough to control our elections for us. The Irish-born population of England and Wales numbers 562,374, and forms 2.16 per cent. of the whole; but the committals of Irish-born persons numbered 20,232 in 1883-4, and formed 11.39 per cent. of the whole, and if the Irish of the second generation are included this proportion would of course be vastly increased. In some statistical observations you published some years back I find this remark:—

"From whatever cause it may arise, it is quite clear that the proportion of criminals furnished by Ireland to the United Kingdom is excessive, for whereas the popula-

tion of England, Wales, and Ireland together is about 28,000,000, of which about 6,000,000 are Irish, the offenders who pass through the prisons in these countries number about 176,000 in the year, of whom 50,000 or 28·4 per cent. are Irish, besides those of Irish extraction, and unfortunately two-fifths of these have selected England and Wales for their depredations."

I find it also stated that "the Irish female furnishes no less than one-fifth of the whole female prison population of England and Wales."

On the whole therefore we may look out for a considerable increase of charge for police, prisons, and poor-houses and of the unmeasured cost of undetected crime as a consequence of Home Rule in Ireland; and as among the advantages we must enjoy if Mr. Gladstone must, as he seems to think, be by some means placed again triumphant in power, I need not say that of course the Invincibles and dynamitards who have contributed so efficiently (like the Clerkenwell explosion) to bring this measure within the range of practical politics, may expect to be speedily restored to the society from which, for the satisfaction of English ideas, they are at present excluded.

Your obedient servant,

A STUDENT OF CRIME.

THE IRISH CONSTABULARY.

Our readers must have noticed that in almost every notice of Mr. Gladstone's alleged scheme of local self-government for Ireland the question what would become of the Irish police came in for a large share of notice. The Nationalists declared that Home Rule without full command of the constabulary would be the merest farce, while their opponents unhesitatingly averred that to give to the Home Rulers command of the constabulary would be tantamount to total separation of the two kingdoms. In fact, there are a large number of persons who think that the satisfactory settlement of the command of the Royal Irish Constabulary is the main difficulty in any Home Rule scheme. Notwithstanding all that has been

said and written about this very important factor in the Home Rule question, little or nothing is known of its constitution, strength, training, &c. Englishmen or Scotchmen can form no accurate idea of what the Irish Constabulary are like, having no force in England or Scotland even remotely resembling the Irish force. To give a slight idea of what the Irish police force is like, I must warn the reader to put out of his head all preconceived notions of what is usually understood by police. Let him first imagine a well-drilled, well-armed, military force, and he will have some slight notion of what that force is like which has been so much spoken of. I cannot better explain the constitution of the Royal Irish Constabulary than by taking up its various constituent parts, its functions, training, and general appearance, and explaining these parts as fully as possible. And, in the first place, its constitution. The Royal Irish Constabulary were first embodied about the year 1823. They were then a rather despised, ill-paid, ill-managed body of men, without efficiency, discipline, zeal, or *esprit de corps*. Year by year they grew better; their physique and social position, so to speak, improved; so far they had done nothing to attract notice, but they were steadily gaining the confidence of the law-abiding population. In 1848 came the Young Ireland rebellion. This, needless to say, was easily crushed, and it was here that the constabulary first attracted more than usual notice. Their behaviour was everywhere spoken of in the highest terms, and they were prominently brought under notice when Her present Most Gracious Majesty reviewed an immense body of them in the year 1852 in the Phoenix Park.

Their splendid behaviour in the Fenian rebellion of 1867 is too recent to need comment. This, and their well-known conduct and tried loyalty during previous agitations, obtained for them in 1872 the title of Royal Irish Constabulary. Let us now look to the present strength, component parts, and general management of this force. It numbers at present about 11,000 men and about 300 officers. At

the head of this vast body is the Inspector-General, which important position is at present well filled by an officer of great administrative capacity, Mr. Andrew Reed. Next comes his deputy, then four assistant inspectors-general, who exercise from Dublin Castle complete control over the force throughout the country, through the county officers known as county and district inspectors. The county inspector is in charge of a county, having under him from four to ten officers and from 200 to 700 or 800 men. The district inspector has a district or portion of the county under him, for the peace of which he is absolutely responsible. The districts vary in size from 10 to 30 and sometimes 40 square miles, and the number of men in each from 50 to 200. Next in authority to the district inspector is the head constable, then the sergeant, acting sergeant, and, finally, constables. There is no rank in any English county police force corresponding to that of county or district inspector; in fact, these correspond to military rather than to police officers. To procure the appointment of district inspector, one must first get a nomination from the Chief Secretary for Ireland to compete with several others for a vacancy. The examination, which is somewhat similar to the Army entrance examination, is conducted by the Civil Service Commissioners. The successful candidate or candidates are sent to the depôt as cadets for instruction in drill, musketry, equitation, finance, and police duties, and after about six months are sent out to take charge of districts. The constables are appointed on passing a simple literary examination and being recommended by the district inspector. They also spend about six months in the depôt, learning drill, police duties, &c., and doing guards, pickets, patrols, and similar duties. Their dress consists of a spiked helmet, as in the Line, a dark-green cloth tunic and black trousers, and their arms are a short Snider, sword bayonet, and a truncheon; the ammunition used is ball cartridge and buckshot. The age for admission as officers is from 19 to 26, and for men from 17½ to 27. The uniform of the officers corresponds almost entirely

with that of the Rifle Brigade—viz., a black cloth tunic, with pouch belt, a patrol jacket and a shell jacket, helmet and forage, and army regulation sword. The relative ranks of the various grades are—inspector-general, general; deputy, lieutenant-general; assistants, majors-general; county inspectors, colonels; and district inspectors, majors, captains, and lieutenants, according as they belong to first, second, or third class. The pay and allowances of officers varies from £250 a year to about £1,500, and of men from £54 12s. to £104, with sundry allowances. The duties of the Royal Irish Constabulary in large towns, such as Belfast and Cork (Dublin has a police force of its own), are like those of any other police force—viz., beat duty, taking statistics, &c., though in Belfast at party celebrations they have frequently to charge mobs at the point of the bayonet and sometimes even fire on them. In small county districts the duty is mostly patrolling and protection. For instance, a caretaker is put into an evicted farm, he must have a couple of armed constabulary men always with him for protection; similarly if he is a bailiff, agent, or obnoxious landlord, or if he has paid rent contrary to the orders of the local branch of the National League. If a process-server wants to serve processes or a sheriff to seize goods under a warrant, or an agent to collect rent, each must have a force of armed constabulary men, numbering from 20 to 100, to protect him. These latter duties during the Land League times became almost intolerable, the police being in many cases refused food, lodging, or conveyances—in fact, they were totally boycotted and their life made a misery. In appearance, the Irish police are exceptionally tall and well made; though the *minimum* standard is 5ft. 8in., the average height is about 5ft. 11in. From all the drilling they get they are better set up than most soldiers, as they usually serve from 25 to 35 years. After 30 years they can retire on full pay. Their loyalty has been put to many tests and has never yet been found wanting. Overtures have been made to them in vain. They have been abused and cajoled with similar results; in a word, the Royal Irish

Constabulary has ever proved to be a *blê noir* to the disloyal, and, no doubt, always will; hence the frantic efforts to get the control of them. Any person intimately acquainted with Ireland and the feeling of the people therein knows well what the result would be were such a splendid, well-drilled, and well-disciplined armed force handed over to the Nationalists. I do not think even a stranger can have very much difficulty in forming a pretty accurate opinion on the matter after perusing the foregoing.

The Times this day says:—

It is gratifying, though not in any degree surprising, to find that in the present crisis of our domestic affairs the common sense and sound judgment of Englishmen are asserting themselves with increasing distinctness day by day. Various influences conspire to warp the judgment of the country and to obscure issues in themselves clear as the sun at noonday. Party passion has recently run high, and rival leaders have for years past vied with one another in putting out of sight the unwelcome facts which underlie the whole Irish question. MR. GLADSTONE, whose defects have conspired with his virtues to make him the most influential politician of the day, has used his authority and position to tempt the nation to Imperial suicide. The patent evils of the actual situation and the irreconcilable hostility of the Nationalist party have disposed many to terminate a suspense they are not strong enough to endure by plunging headlong into the worst of possible calamities, as men "eager to anticipate their grave" have been

known to leap from the deck of a leaking ship. Long experience of the soundness of constitutional maxims as applied to the most orderly, law-abiding, sober, and self-restrained population on the face of the earth has led many to make the mistake of ascribing to an administrative system the virtues of the people among whom it flourishes, and has incapacitated them for understanding that unlimited extension of freedom may be ruin for a populace destitute of self-control and rebels against laws which legislatures did not enact and cannot repeal. But, notwithstanding these elements of danger, every day adds to the evidence that the people of this country, as they apprehend with growing clearness the scope of the insidious propositions recently sprung upon them, are returning with growing firmness the only answer which their long history can justify or by which their future can be assured. For the great majority of the nation an independent Parliament in Dublin is a novel idea. The phrase may be old and familiar, but there has been no occasion to inquire exactly what it means, or to imagine even generally the state of things it would produce. Even now comparatively few have any definite idea of the changes it would involve in finance, in legislation, in commerce, or in war, while the thinkers must be rare indeed who have succeeded in forming a mental image of the totality of phenomena with which it would confront us. We are glad to be assured by the voluminous correspondence addressed to us that the grave dangers which these articles

expose are being clearly discerned by men of all parties who have courage and ability to think for themselves. We entertain a confident expectation that, when the real bearings of the question are fairly brought home to the mind of the country, its verdict upon an independent Irish Parliament will be one of unequivocal and unflinching condemnation.

We hear so much about the desperate nature of our present difficulties that it seems necessary to ask what, after all, is the actual balance of effective forces for and against the integrity and tranquillity of the Empire. MR. PARNELL, with his eighty-five followers in the House of Commons, is powerful, but why? Simply and entirely because English parties have never yet had occasion to deal with so large and compact a body, and have never practised that suppression of differences comparatively trivial and even contemptible which would instantly reduce MR. PARNELL to insignificance. Is it contended that such suppression is impossible? We reply that we much mistake our countrymen if they do not very shortly insist that it shall be effected, and return a set of representatives capable of effecting it in case the present ones fail. But if they are right who suppose this country ready to sacrifice its dearest interests to the sublime satisfaction of seeing a few score of politicians carry on the game of beggar my neighbour, why, in the name of common sense, should they dream of adding to MR. PARNELL'S already overwhelming power that which

he would derive from absolute control of all the resources of Ireland? We give elsewhere an account of the Irish Constabulary, which a few trifling changes would convert into an army. Is the paralysis of the House of Commons likely to be relieved by giving MR. PARNELL the command of such a force and enabling him to pass every man in Ireland through a course of military instruction? MR. JOHN MORLEY holds that if the Irish party refuse to work any scheme of administration, there is an end of it. That depends on the degree in which the Irish party control the ultimate sanction of law. We print elsewhere MR. BRIGHT'S estimate of the outside strength of the Home Rule party. It is a very liberal one, far more liberal than could be admitted for a moment, except for the purpose he had in view, and although it is ten years old, no subsequent changes can have exhausted its ample margin. It gives to all the antagonists of Great Britain put together one million of men of whom "not one half have any knowledge of political and public affairs." It is to these—ignorant, poor, and incapable—that we are told the many millions of Englishmen and Scotchmen must helplessly succumb. The whole strength of the Separatists, whether in the Legislature or the field, depends absolutely upon our own reluctance, under the most extreme provocation, to admit that the methods which prove adequate for the government of Englishmen are not always and necessarily adequate for the government of Irishmen. So long as we retain the legislative control of Ireland and command of the

forces which make it efficacious in the last resort we have a limit beyond which MR. PARNELL and his party cannot pass. At any moment this country can terminate the whole situation which terrifies some people so much by excluding the Irish members from the House of Commons and proclaiming martial law in Ireland. In three months the island would be cleared of the hired ruffians who now terrorize and mislead the population, and the establishment, amid a general sigh of relief, of any orderly administration we might choose to appoint would be secured. Industry would revive, confidence would return, and the present ruinous dissipation of wealth would cease as by magic.

This will appear to some a very dreadful thing to contemplate, and we need hardly say that we are not advocating any such course. But there are much greater calamities than the interposition of a beneficent despotism to save a nation from its worst enemies. The point at present, however, is that when the worst comes to the worst, and the choice lies between ruining England or governing Ireland as a Crown colony, we can always, as things now stand, choose the latter course. It measures and provides an antidote for the last and the worst evil that MR. PARNELL with all his following and all his machinations can bring to pass. But if we once set up an Irish Parliament in Dublin which shall be more than a farce after the pattern of its predecessor, then there is no longer

any limit to the evils we may have to endure. That consideration alone ought to dispose of all the counsels of despair and give the *coup de grâce* to MR. GLADSTONE'S adumbrated proposals. Our correspondents, "A LANCASHIRE LIBERAL" and "AN OLD RADICAL," discuss these proposals to-day with a refreshing frankness which will find an echo in many quarters where devotion to MR. GLADSTONE was once almost the whole duty of political man. The motives which alone can explain his deliberate and ingenious attempt to embarrass, or, perhaps, ensnare, the Government are now pretty generally understood and judged as they deserve. LORD SALISBURY, we doubt not, will understand that, while he is expected to give to Ireland such extension of local government as England and Scotland demand, with such precautions as the existence of avowed treason requires, he is not expected or in any way bound to deal with Separatist demands which have never yet been formulated, and of which he can have no official knowledge. If the treatment which satisfies England and Scotland does not suit MR. PARNELL, it is for him to say what he wants, not for the Imperial Government to grope in the dark for the means of satisfying him. The Irish nettle is a troublesome weed to a timid husbandman, but no one has ever dared to grasp it boldly without reaping an ample reward for his courage.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25.

IRISH FREEDOM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—There are no *Irish* affairs. There is no *English* Parliament. Trade, revenue, agriculture, army and navy, public policy, population of the two islands, like their geography, are so interwoven that they cannot be separately administered. An Irish Parliament would not be in session for a week without encroaching upon an Imperial interest; a Parliament at Westminster would immediately touch some Irish question. The 30 or more seats for English constituencies that are said to be influenced by Irish votes are an argument for union, not for separation. A country where free institutions prevail, free trade, free worship, free Press, free speech (very free), trial by jury, &c., with a Parliamentary representation much in excess of its rights, persists in describing itself as down-trodden and oppressed, because an efficient police is maintained to control disorder, and because an education vote is not made over to the Roman Catholic Church to administer at discretion, with power to grant valid degrees. It is proposed to remedy the grievance of special legislation by making it much more special, through the machinery of a Parliament exactly like Grattan's, only different in every particular. "Repeal" has been on the bills for 50 years, and as long as it draws gate-money it will probably continue to be advertised. I do not say that patriots are only influenced by perquisites; many combine enthusiasm with error; but repeal would seriously injure Ireland, and would be the cause of continued embarrassment to England, until another Union. In Mr. Gladstone's public position, his ambiguous attitude (if it is ambiguous) is a crime that qualifies him for a long term of political penal servitude on the silent system; it is not a time for a statesman of influence to blow the coals of sedition, even by a side-wind.

Pakenham Hall,

Yours-

LONGFORD.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—In my last letter I pointed out that the first and immediate effect of the establishment of an independent Parliament in Ireland would be the confiscation of the interests of the landlord. This has been the avowed object of the Land League agitation; it has been largely successful, but this would crown its efforts. If such a Parliament be granted, it will be the first time when a responsible Government conferred privileges upon one class of the community for the avowed object of enabling them to spoliage and plunder a minority. They will doubtless now be heard to declare that they will never push their power to that extreme point. I have no faith in their moderation, and the tenure of an estate depending on the forbearance of a National Parliament would be a very frail one indeed.

The next effect of the creation of such a Parliament would be the immediate release from custody of all those "innocent" persons who during the last five years have been condemned to penal servitude for conspiracy to murder, shooting with intent to murder, and other charges of the same character. The vehement and reiterated assertion of Mr. Parnell and his associates has been, and is, that these persons have been unjustly condemned, to the knowledge of Lord Spencer himself and of those associated with him in the government of Ireland. This assertion has been over and over again made and refuted in the House of Commons, and upon the last occasion on which that matter was before the House a pledge was given by the present Government that all those cases should be carefully re-

considered. I am forced to come to the conclusion that the evidence in those cases must have been overwhelmingly clear, for I have not found mention of a single instance in which Lord Carnarvon has found himself able to overrule the decision of his predecessor. The first act, therefore, which would be demanded from Mr. Parnell as Prime Minister in the Irish Parliament, a demand with which he could not for a moment hesitate to comply, would be that the prison doors should be thrown open and all those "innocent" persons let loose upon the country. What a glorious day for Ireland this would be! What triumphal processions to greet and congratulate those victims of British tyranny and injustice who had so long languished in British prisons! We can well imagine the dismay which would reign among the prosecutors, witnesses, and all others who had aided in their conviction, and the triumph with which their associates would welcome their return to the scenes where these tragedies were enacted. No guarantee or security to be invented even by the fertile brain of Mr. Gladstone himself could interfere with the exercise of such a prerogative. Not only so, but all those who fled the country to escape from justice as soon as they became alarmed when they saw that their conviction might be possible, by reason of the passing of the Crimes Act, would at once return to this country to encounter, not an arrest or imprisonment, but an ovation. Sheridan, the pacificator of the West, whose services were tendered by Mr. Parnell to Mr. Gladstone by one of the conditions of that now famous treaty, would now reappear in his proper person, no longer in a priestly disguise, accompanied by Tynan, Number One, and all that band of associates, who on their landing would find the police had become

their very humble and obedient servants. Mr. Patrick Egan, the treasurer of the League, would no doubt reappear upon the scene, and, having regard to his financial abilities, would probably be designated as the first Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer. James Stephens, who approached nearer to overthrowing British rule in Ireland than any other man, would leave the slums of Paris to take his proper place among the founders of the Irish Republic then virtually established. O'Donovan Rossa, who, we remember, was once returned for Tipperary, could now doubtless have his choice of any Irish constituency, and I should like to see any member of the Irish Parliament who dared to raise a technical objection to his capacity for a seat in the Irish Legislature. Then what hosts of Irish-Americans would throng to this then favoured land, bringing with them their bowie knives and revolvers, and turn this country into a veritable pandemonium! All this would be the immediate result of the creation of this Parliament, even before it had time to place a single Act upon the new Irish Statute Book.

It is said that the rights of the minority might be guarded by securing to them an adequate representation by nomination or otherwise in this new Barebones Parliament; but, as the minority cannot be said to number more than one-third, I should be glad to know what advantage it would be to them to be in a minority of one to two, especially when there is not even a murmur or a hint of the creation of a second Chamber.

It is said, also, that England's interests would be sufficiently protected by keeping still in Ireland her own Army and Navy, but they would be of no use except to prevent the landing of a hostile force, and in the time of peace the military would necessarily be subject to the command of the civil

magistrate. The Duke of Wellington threw out in the House of Lords a Bill for the abolition of the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland by declaring that he would never consent to place Her Majesty's troops under the command of the Lord Mayor of Dublin.

I think it unnecessary to enter into a consideration of other securities and guarantees which might be suggested. All would break down, for there would be no sanction to enforce them except the *ultima ratio Regum*, and in the meantime Ireland would not have been unprepared for such an emergency. Her well-trained, well-armed and disciplined Militia would be at the beck of her Executive Government. Tens of thousands of Volunteers, following the example of those of 1782, would be found in arms, aided where necessary by thousands of Irish-Americans, and he would be indeed a daring English Minister who, in order to enforce the performance of a security or guarantee, would face such a conflict.

I need scarcely mention the other consequences, public, personal, and private, which would immediately follow this fatal movement. All those faithful servants of the Crown who have for years devoted themselves to the public service in the Castle, in the Poor Law, Board of Works, Education, and other great departments, and who in consequence of that faithful and loyal discharge have incurred the hostility of the Nationalists, would find this country too hot to hold them, and would be obliged to make way for those of a more congenial type.

I cannot bring myself to believe the report in the Press that Mr. Gladstone, in his character of a Privy Councillor, submitted to Her Majesty, uninvited, a scheme for the dismemberment of the Empire: but I am confident that the British

public will never lend an ear to such a proposal.

UNIONIST.

BRINGING MR. PARNELL TO BOOK.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—The political world is all agog on the Irish question, and not unnaturally so. The difficulties which it presents are, indeed, formidable. We seem to be between Scylla and Charybdis—Scylla representing metaphorically the alternative of depriving Ireland of all representative government and of reverting to a Cromwellian régime; Charybdis representing the other alternative of embarking on the most momentous constitutional change which this century has witnessed.

We are, in short, in an *impasse*; and there are only three men who can extricate us from it. These are the recognized leaders of the three political parties. Is there no chance of joint action on the part of these three leaders? Lord Salisbury is in possession (as it were), so it would rest with him to make the first move. Let him invite Mr. Gladstone to Downing-street, and extend a similar invitation to Mr. Parnell. Let Mr. Parnell be challenged by the leaders of the two great constitutional parties to show his hand in their presence. Let him, on the one hand, state his *minimum*; let them, on the other, state their *maximum*.

The suggestion may be thought a chimerical one; but I venture to urge certain considerations in support of it.

1. We have the recent and excellent precedent of the preliminary arrangements about the Seats Bill, which showed that when the leaders of both sides met in conclave their views may be harmonized by a mutual "give and take."

2. We should bring Mr. Parnell to book. We should be able to ascertain whether he desired a reasonable settlement. Without some open and above-board understanding with Mr. Parnell, all the Queen's Ministers and all the

Queen's ex-Ministers might lay their heads together unavailingly. If he declined to state his terms, or if he made impossible demands, and thus to all appearances preferred agitation to a settlement, we should, at any rate, know where we stood. A refusal on his part to come to terms would place him out of court; and we should then have to deal with the Irish difficulty as best we could without reckoning with our principal host. We could not be in a worse position; and we might, and probably should, be in a better one.

3. Though the Liberal party would not and could not, in ordinary times, constitutionally acquiesce in the continuance in power of a Conservative Government numbering only 250 followers in a House of 670 members, that party would, we may well believe, be ready to rise to the occasion and to place national necessity above political expediency.

4. It may be very tempting to Lord Salisbury and his party to unfurl the flag on which is inscribed—the Empire is in danger; but may not patriotism, of which the Conservatives boast a monopoly, weigh with them even at the sacrifice of some transitory party gain?

5. The public mind is not unnaturally staggered for the moment. The Conservative instincts of the country have come to the surface. Anything which savoured of a great constitutional change would come better from a Conservative Government than from a Liberal Government. Emanating from that source, it would excite far less apprehension, especially among the Peers, who have to be reckoned with.

6. There is one argument the force of which I do not question. The argument to which I refer is this—Constitutional changes must, previously to their adoption, be submitted deliberately and expressly to the judgment of the electors. The Irish question, in the acute form which it is now assuming, was not before the country at the general election; therefore, there must be an appeal to the country upon it. But this argument would lose much of

its force if there were an agreement between both parties, and if a reasonable settlement were proposed, not by one party, but by all parties. The country could hardly complain if all its representatives were in the main agreed.

A few words on the general question. It is urged that any really wide extension of local government for Ireland means Home Rule or a Federal Parliament, and that Home Rule or a Federal Parliament is alike impracticable and dangerous. I pray that minds may not come to this conclusion too precipitately.

Nothing is impracticable. Necessity in the science of politics is the mother of invention, as in other branches of science.

The establishment of a Federal Parliament on the lines laid down 15 years ago by Mr. Butt need not be dangerous. We have precedents for it in the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. What other nations have done without impairing the powers of the central authority may surely be done by us.

People talk of the disruption of the Imperial unity and the danger to the integrity of the Empire. But is there real union now between Great Britain and Ireland? Is the Empire now an integral whole?

Be this as it may, I only ask that our politicians and that our guides of public opinion, like yourself, Sir, will not dismiss the question of Home Rule or a Federal Parliament as an unholy idea, as the production of disordered minds and rebellious spirits, as the delusion of wild dreamers. Let the consideration of it be rather approached as a possible alternative which, were it to emanate on the joint responsibility of our leaders, may, at any rate, admit of being tried as a tentative measure. If the attempt were made, and if it were found that Irishmen were incapable of governing themselves, and unable to protect life and property, as also to insure fulfilment of contracts, it would not be more difficult then to resort to the alternative of reducing Ireland to a Crown Colony than it now is, and we should, at any rate, take, if necessary, that

hateful task in hand with clearer consciences. We should have exhausted the resources of civilization for governing Ireland by constitutional means. But, until we have reached that stage of exhaustion, do not let us assume that we must put our hand to the coercion plough, which would be an unspeakable reflection on our governing capacities and be even a disgrace to civilization.

But it may be said that there is a third course open to us. We can go on as we have done for the last half-century. We may continue to fondle Ireland with one hand and coerce her with the other. But has this policy been attended with such success as to encourage us to pursue it? Have not measures of conciliation failed to conciliate? Have not measures of coercion failed to crush disaffection? We have surely had enough of half measures. Before we give up the settlement of the Irish question as hopeless, let us try the effect of a whole measure.

I apologize for the length of my letter, more especially as I am not an active participator in politics, but only a
London. SPECTATOR.

THE HAWARDEN SERMON.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—The inflamed imaginations of some critics seem to have discovered in my disclaimer of having preached on Home Rule at Hawarden a fresh proof of my having done so. If the matter concerned myself alone I should deem it impertinent to address you on so insignificant a subject. But graver issues are at stake, and therefore I ask your permission to state:—

1. That, as far as I know, Mr. Gladstone was not aware that I was going to preach.

2. That I had no conversation whatever with him and did not hear him express any opinion on the subject of Ireland before I preached.

3. That my sermon, which I am afraid lasted 35 minutes, contained no political allusion of any sort for the first 30 minutes.

4. That the subject of my sermon was "Wasted Opportunities," and that it occurred to me just as I was about to conclude (for my sermon was not written) to make a passing allusion to the present occasion as one which might be utilized or wasted in dealing with the Irish question. I took the liberty of inculcating freedom from passion, from selfish motives, from political and national prejudices, coupled with a due regard to the melancholy history of our connexion with Ireland, as the proper frame of mind in which to approach the consideration of a crisis which may prove to be a turning-point in the history of England. I neither said nor implied anything about Home Rule or any other plan of Irish government.

If ever there was an occasion in the history of our country when there ought to be a truce to party passions and recriminations, surely the present is such an occasion. I regret, therefore, to see so many pens engaged in the work of widening differences and adding bitterness to a controversy which every patriot should do his best to soothe. Lord Salisbury has already shown, on more than one occasion, that he can prefer the claims of duty to the allurements of a party triumph, and he cannot feel grateful to those who seek to persuade him that an agreement between Mr. Gladstone and himself on the Irish question is impossible.

I remain yours faithfully,

MALCOLM MACCOELL.

1, New Burlington-street, W.

AN HISTORICAL PARALLEL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—That history repeats itself is a saying true indeed in many places, but nowhere so true as in Ireland. Now that the restoration of Grattan's Parliament is demanded, it is instructive to look back and see what actually occurred in the time of that Parliament. On February 19, 1798, the Earl of Clare, then Lord Chancellor of Ireland, speaking in the Irish House of Lords, uttered words in every way as true and appropriate to the agitation of Mr. Parnell as

they were to the disturbances to which he at that time referred. They may at least prove to what extent a return to the days of Grattan's Parliament would be likely to act as a means of pacifying this ever distracted country:— "Whom are we to conciliate? To what frenzy has this union carried the greater part of the lower order?" "By their unrelenting barbarity they have spread universal horror and dismay through the country. Every witness who has dared to appear against them has been written down in the book of death. Magistrates have been murdered; even in the courts of justice jurymen have been threatened with the fate of those witnesses and magistrates, and desired to look to them as their own lot should they dare to punish a member of the union." "Public justice has been eluded, insulted, and trampled upon, and a power established paramount to the law." "There is not so volatile or credulous a people on the earth; they are ready to be dupes of any projector if he will only profess goodwill towards them." "A complete revolution and confiscation of property, and the establishment of a republic upon French principles, are the real objects of this conspiracy, and not an amelioration of the present Constitution." Fifty years of concessions to Ireland have since elapsed. In what respect are the words I have quoted, which were spoken in 1798 less applicable to 1885?

Your obedient servant,

ROBERT STAPLES, Jun.

Dunmore, Queen's County.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26.

THE PARNELLITE COVENANT AND THE
CONSTITUTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Will you allow me to submit in *The Times* a question of constitutional law?

Each of the Parnellite members has bound himself by the following covenant:—

"I pledge myself that in the event of my election to

Parliament I will sit, act, and vote with the Irish Parliamentary party; and if at a meeting of the party convened upon due notice specially to consider the question, it be determined, by a resolution supported by a majority of the entire Parliamentary party, that I have not fulfilled the above pledge, I hereby undertake forthwith to resign my seat."

By our constitutional law every member of Parliament serves, not for a party, but for the whole realm. He is bound to give his vote and to advise his Sovereign, without fear or favour, after a conscientious consideration of all the reasons for or against a proposed measure. No preconceived judgment, no personal obligation, no interest are allowed to avail against the sacred duty on the part of a member to give his vote freely and independently according to his conscience and after having heard the arguments advanced on either side. If any member has undertaken previous obligations inconsistent with the discharge of this duty and the free exercise of his judgment and discretion, he has disabled himself, and is *in foro conscientia*, and, I submit, by the law of Parliament, incapacitated from voting.

It is for the purpose of keeping clearly before the mind of every member that he is bound to vote free and discharged from prior obligations and previous engagements that our constitutional law has declared that he is not a delegate of the constituency or locality which elected him, but a representative of the whole nation. Our ancestors were afraid that local patriotism, affection to his electors, or personal obligations previously incurred might influence a member and warp his judgment. To avoid this evil they took from their members the petty burden of a mandatory, and imposed upon them that of a representative; and declared that members were not bound to consult, or to follow the wishes of their constituents—nay, that they were on the contrary bound to vote against their express wishes if they honestly believed that those wishes were opposed to the interests of the Empire. Had the wise men who built up our Parliamentary law been able to conceive that a time would come when a cabal within the walls

of Parliament would bind itself to vote on all occasions as a secret and unrecognized committee of its numbers should dictate, they would doubtless have laid down a hard-and-fast rule on the subject. Happily, we can deduce from the spirit of their declarations respecting the duty of a member of Parliament a law sufficient to guide their descendants in every emergency; and the enunciation and execution of this law may be safely, as it must be, left to the discretion of the House.

An illustration is oftentimes more decisive than an argument. There have been other interests more powerful and more numerous represented in Parliament than that of Home Rule—for instance, the landed, the railway, and the legal. A hundred and twenty railway directors have at the same time occupied seats in Parliament. Let us suppose that these directors bound themselves by a covenant to vote on every occasion, not according to their conscience, as they were already bound to do, but according to the view of a majority of themselves as to what the railway interest required. What would be thought of such a combination? Would it not be justly said that such a body were not representatives of the nation, but a band of conspirators who made up an *imperium in imperio*, and whose existence as such was dangerous to the interests of the State? And could it not with the same justice be urged that the members of such an association, by undertaking obligations inconsistent with their duties as representatives of the whole kingdom, had disabled themselves from taking part in the deliberations of the great council of the nation? I submit—

1. That by the law of Parliament a member who has pledged himself to vote on any particular matter as another or others shall dictate is incapable of voting on that matter.
2. That by the same law a member who has pledged himself to vote on all occasions as another or others shall dictate is incapable of voting on any occasion.
3. That an agreement by a body of members to vote as others or a majority of themselves shall dictate is contrary to the very nature of Parliaments. For the essence of Parliaments is that every member shall determine according to his conscience and belief after a careful weighing and consideration of the arguments advanced for and against.
4. That such an agreement among members is dangerous to the unity of Parliament. For if the English, the Scotch, and the Welsh members were so unpatriotic as to follow

the example set by the Parnellite members, it is evident that there would be at once not one but four separate Parliaments, each governed, not by the constitutional laws of the whole, but by a pact made by and between themselves.

5. That such an agreement is dangerous to the unity of legislation. For, supposing this example followed, there would be four separate bodies, each clamouring for legislation suited in their opinion to the varying circumstances of their industries, climate, and national character.

6. That such an agreement is dangerous to the unity of the Empire. For with four bodies exaggerating every difference of industries, climate, and national character, and no longer governed by a common constitutional law, the end would soon appear in disruption and federalization.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,
LINCOLN'S INN.

HOME RULE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Now that public attention has been turned forcibly to the Home Rule question, owing to the undue prominence given to that matter by Mr. Gladstone's hazy propositions and still hazier contradictions, it may be worth while pointing out the true constitutional view of the situation. Any person advocating the constitution of an independent Parliament in Ireland virtually proposes the repeal of the Union. Now, as that Union was agreed to by the Parliaments of the two countries, England and Ireland (whether rightly or wrongly, wisely or unwisely, I will not say), the question of its repeal does not depend on the opinion of a majority of either Irish representatives, or English or Scotch representatives, but solely rests with the majority of the United Parliament composed of English, Scotch, and Irish representatives. Again, what constitutional right has any Minister or ex-Minister to propose the repeal of the Union before it has been constitutionally demanded by the leader of whatever party may be in favour of such repeal—in this instance Mr. Parnell. It is for him to make his demand, and for the leaders of

the other parties in the State to consider if such demand is practicable, constitutional, and not dangerous to the welfare of the Empire, and then to lay it before the electorate of the United Kingdoms. This is the only proper and constitutional course; any other premature negotiation is unconstitutional and is merely a party tactic to gain office and place. Now, to consider what the nature of the force is that puts forward the demand for repeal of the Union. Mr. Parnell is the leader of 86 "machines," as one of his lieutenants calls them, elected mostly by voters who have just received the franchise, a large number of whom are illiterate, as is proved by their statements at the polls, and nearly all driven to the poll by their priesthood, and supervised at the poll by the National League organization, of which Mr. Parnell is the head, and which, as Englishmen and Scotchmen are aware, possesses at present the power of social life and death over the majority of the inhabitants of the country. I use the phrase social death, as boycotting has that effect, and it is well known that if boycotting is not altogether efficacious other and more active measures are adopted. This system, therefore, of electing representatives cannot be considered as likely to give a true index of the feeling or opinion of the people, while the enormous number of abstentions in three provinces of 167,368 indicates the terror which pervades those who were likely to be known as anti-Parnellites, and who were therefore not courageous enough to go to the poll. It is also right to point out the number, either Liberal or Tory, that voted against repeal of the Union and separation from England (which is the ultimate aim of the Irish-American organization called the National League)—viz., upwards of 145,685. Including Ulster absentees, the number of voters who either voted against Parnellism, or from fear of boycotting abstained altogether, is 290,446, or only 4,823 less than half the electorate of Ireland.

Again, examine the relative position of the Separatist and Unionist vote. In the West and extreme South, the poorest and most backward parts of Ireland, the ordinary centres of anarchy and rebellion, the vote goes solid for

the Separatist. In the North, where trade and commerce flourish, the vote is exactly the opposite, although Liberals and Conservatives most foolishly fought out suicidal conflicts in Ulster. Surely these facts show that even in the few years that have elapsed since the Union, notwithstanding all the disadvantages Ireland has been placed under as a party battlefield and experimental ground for embryonic statesmen, the Union has been cemented in thought and deed. One vote I believe, representing, I suppose, a fraction of the population, carried the Act of Union; now half the population declares itself opposed to separation or repeal of that Union, and that half constituted of the most active, commercial, and educated portion of the population. It would be as legitimate and as wise to give repeal of the Union to Ireland on the demand of the 86 Parnellites as it would be to repeal the vaccination laws for the entire kingdom because the Liberal majority in Scotland were all anti-vaccinationists.

The duty of the Imperial Parliament is, to my mind, perfectly clear and perfectly practicable, and will be effective if performed bravely, conscientiously, and patiently. Eighty-six Parnellites demand repeal of the Union while secretly determined to obtain separation. They cannot stop short even if repeal is granted, not even if they wished it, and for two reasons—first, the agitation trade would fail and the supplies run short, or else the physical force party would take up the running and oust the more moderate of the present Parnellites. This demand is put forward by them as representatives of a portion, say, half, of the Irish people newly enfranchised. The other half of the population, on the other hand, say we will not have repeal of the Union, but we desire full control of local affairs. I noticed that this proposal existed in all the addresses of candidates in the North and other parts of Ireland. Therefore, the matter stands thus—all Ireland is prepared for local county or decentralized government. I understand from the speeches of public men that both sides are agreed on the introduction of some

measure of this kind, suitable to England, Ireland, and Scotland. This is the mandate from Ireland to the Imperial Parliament, and this only. Any wide and legitimate measure will be accepted by the people of Ireland, though naturally not acceptable to the Parnellites, for the same reason that repeal of the Union would only be a half-way house with them. They must keep agitation up whatever concession is made, and agitation will last as long as concession after concession is extracted and extractable from Mr. Gladstone. By the word concession I do not infer that the concession is legitimate, but it is always obtainable by agitation from the statesman I allude to if sufficiently violent and prolonged.

Now that Irish representation is on the same footing as English and Scotch, similar laws must be passed and equal concessions made to all three countries. The three provinces—Munster, Leinster, and Connaught—have now in their 86 members perfect power to make themselves heard on all Irish questions, and can at the same time use their power of representation on Imperial matters. If they abuse their constitutional right by obstruction they can be stopped in the same way that the Liberal majority of Wales and Scotland would have to be checked by the majority of the whole House. I cannot see why Englishmen should rush panic-stricken into unconstitutional and most dangerous courses because 86 members from Ireland holding peculiar views have been returned to the Imperial Parliament.

The United States had a question to deal with similar in many respects to the one now about to be forced on this Empire. They utilized the sword as their method of settlement. If the people of the United Kingdoms will look on this question now dispassionately without alarm, and with the intention of dealing with Ireland on the same terms as with Scotland or England, the result will, in the long run, be satisfactory and no recourse to the sword will be necessary. If, on the other hand, spasmodic and improper so-called remedies are applied, unholy alliances formed, and patriotic statesmanship subordinated to party

tactics, the civil war that ensued between the Northern and Southern States will have its counterpart in Ireland. It must be remembered that in the case of the United States the whole of the Southern States desired to secede, while in the case of Ireland it is only a portion of the population of Ireland and only a fraction of the population of the United Kingdom. Any Parliament in Ireland will be nothing but a Land League organization, and as that organization has already nearly ruined our wretched country, it is easy to realize what the effect would be if that terrorist conspiracy were turned into a Legislative and administrative Assembly. The sudden and heavy fall in all Irish securities on the announcement of Mr. Gladstone's propositions indicates the views held by the commercial body of the danger to Ireland's prosperity once a Land League Parliament were established in Dublin; while the unmistakable voice of the Parnellite Press discloses the spirit in which even the concession of an independent Parliament would be received.

As an Irishman and an Imperialist, I maintain that in the disintegration of the Empire, which the establishment of an Irish Parliament would necessarily involve, there are two grave and immediate dangers—(1) the cession of my country to a band of Irish-Americans, actuated by greed and hatred of the Empire. This means ruin, social and financial, to Ireland. (2) Ireland occupied by enemies of England and Scotland would be a vantage ground from which would be commenced the final destruction of the Empire itself. In the address from the Throne to the Irish Houses of Parliament in 1799, when the Union was proposed, these words were used, but only lately have they been acted upon:—"A Union between Great Britain and Ireland to be established by mutual consent of both Houses, founded on equal and liberal principles, on the similarity of laws, Constitution, and government on a sense of mutual interests and affection." We have now equal laws, similarity of Constitution and government, and our interests are

mutual. To gain the "affection" will take more time; Scotland for over 100 years rebelled and fought against her Union with England. Years also will pass before Ireland fully learns the value of the two partners Providence has given her. Her middle class, her business men, all who have her true interest at heart, recognize the value of that Union. The statesman who attempts in the face of this to rend this great contract between two nations—a contract necessary to their preservation and mutual existence, and full of jeopardy to their vitality if tampered with—will, indeed, merit the reproach and disasters that history and the future will reserve for him. Let him pause in his attempt to gain place and power at the expense of honour and patriotism, and read the most solemn words ever used in an Act of Parliament or national compact. I quote the eighth article of the Act of Union:—"These articles are hereby ratified, confirmed, and approved, and are hereby declared to be the articles of the Union of Great Britain and Ireland, and the same shall be in force and have effect for ever from the first day of January which shall be in the year of Our Lord eighteen hundred and one (1801)."

Yours faithfully,

CASTLETOWN.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 23.

WHAT THE PARNELLITES WOULD
ACCEPT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—During the last Parliament I voted frequently with the Irish members against the Government. I did so because I was opposed to exceptional measures of coer-

cion and believed that the remedy for Irish wrongs consisted in allowing Ireland to manage her own affairs, subject to full guarantees being given for the maintenance of the integrity of the empire. In this view it would appear that I was only in advance by a year or two of the opinions of many Liberals and Radicals and of some Conservatives.

Owing to the course of action which I pursued, I was thrown into personal and friendly relations with many of the Irish Parliamentary party, which relations I have maintained, and I think that I am able to form a pretty accurate estimate of their views.

First, however, I will say, with your permission, a word respecting Irish opinion, and the position, so far as I can judge it, of the Irish political leaders. Among those of them opposed to the present state of things the majority are not Separatists, some because they are in favour of the union of the British Isles, others because they are aware that separation is practically impossible. Those who aspire to separation are an infinitesimal minority, and they subordinate their opinions to those of their colleagues.

Throughout Ireland a passionate desire for Home Rule is entertained by all, with the exception of the landlords, the officials, and the Orangemen. A good many of the landlords, however, are disposed to rally to it, while the area over which the Orangemen hold sway is growing smaller and smaller every year. Many of the Presbyterians of Ulster have already thrown in their lot with the Home Rulers. There is now but one single northern Irish county left which does not return a Parnellite—viz., Antrim. In four Ulster counties—Monaghan, Cavan, Donegal, and Fermanagh—no one but Parnellites have been chosen. In Tyrone they have three seats out of four, and only lost the fourth by a narrow majority, which they believe they will be able to reverse with another year's registration. In Down, Armagh, and Londonderry they have carried a seat, while in the borough of Derry and the Western Division of Belfast they only lost

by the narrow majority of nine and 37. Elsewhere, outside the Universities, they have been invariably triumphant.

This desire for Home Rule is irrespective of any wish to alter the land system, although this wish is an important factor in Irish feeling. Agriculture is almost the only industry in Ireland, and one reason why the landlords are disliked is that, with some few exceptions, they have set themselves in antagonism to the aspirations of the nation for Home Rule. The Land Act has dissatisfied and disappointed every one, for, while the landlords declare that their property has been confiscated, the farmers cry out that their property—*i.e.*, their improvements, have been handed over to be rented for the landlords' benefit, in the teeth of the Healy clause. It is hopeless to suppose that an Imperial Parliament, composed of a majority of gentlemen who know very little about the real merits of the case, can settle this great question, at which it has been tinkering for generations, and I, as an Englishman, object to have my time taken up in discussing it any more, and trying to accommodate the differences between Irish renters and Irish rentees. Mr. Chamberlain has rightly objected to the Imperial Exchequer being saddled with purchase-money to be paid to the landlords, and I think our duty to them would be performed if we were to insist, in any settlement of the Irish question, that they shall be entitled to call on the Irish Treasury for a fair price for their estates whenever they want to sell them, due regard being had to the tenant's statutablely recognized ownership of his improvements. Thus the landlords, if they object to live in an island the inhabitants of which enjoy the advantage of self-government, would be able to leave it, with the equivalent for their land in their pockets in the form of hard cash. With their departure the police difficulty would disappear, and with it the necessity of England paying £1,500,000 per annum for the Royal Irish Constabulary, although the

Irish insist that they only require a force of one-fourth this size, and are willing to pay for it themselves.

Speaking generally, and if the land system were satisfactorily settled, it may be said that the Irish are not Radicals in one sense of the word. Their habit of thought is Conservative. They are, like the French, somewhat too much inclined to look to State interference in everything. Their tendency is, as M. Guizot said of the French, to fall into a division between administrators and administered. Their hostility to law is not to law abstractedly, but to the law as representing what they regard as an alien ascendancy. I am inclined to think that had they a Parliament of their own they would surprise us by their Conservative legislation.

Apart from the Nationalists, which form the great bulk of the nation, are the Fenians. They are, comparatively speaking, few in number. Their strength consists in their being able to tell the Irish that Home Rule never will be granted, and that Ireland must either separate from us or be ruled by us in local as well as in Imperial affairs.

That the Nationalists have, to a certain extent, acted with the Fenians is true. But could they do otherwise? They have had to fight against a common opponent. Between a Nationalist and a Fenian there is as much difference as between the most moderate Whig squire who sat in the last Parliament on the Liberal benches and me. Yet we both voted frequently together against the Conservatives. The Nationalists are the Girondins, the Fenians are the Jacobins. Like the Girondins, they make common cause with the Jacobins against a common enemy. To continue the simile, if we, like Louis XVI., insist that Girondins and Jacobins are one, and refuse to make terms with the former, we shall soon be confronted with the latter. Mr. Parnell and his political friends have substituted constitutional agitation for lawless and revolutionary agitation. He has only succeeded in this by persuading his countrymen that his action will result in

success. If it be doomed to failure, the Fenians will once more gain the upper hand in Ireland.

It has been more than once suggested in *The Times* that the Irish Parliamentary party should state precisely what they want. They want a Parliament. How possibly can they be expected to say officially to what limitations and to what restrictions they would submit for the sake of a definite settlement before some responsible English statesman, with a strong following at his back, is prepared to give them a Parliament? They would, indeed, be fools were they to make such a tactical blunder. In any negotiation of which I have ever read, bases are agreed on before either party—and certainly before the weaker party—specifies details.

I think, however, I am not far wrong in saying that the following scheme would be accepted :—

1. Representation in the Imperial Parliament upon Imperial matters alone.—This would require an hard and fast definition as to what is Imperial and what is local, together with, as in the United States, some legal tribunal of appeal.

The Army, the Navy, the protection of the British Isles, and the commercial and political relations with foreign nations would be regarded as Imperial matters, and probably there would be no insuperable difficulty—if it were deemed expedient—in arranging a Customs Union, such as that of the German Zollverein before the German Empire came into existence, leaving it to the Irish to foster their industries, if they please, by means of bounties. There would be an Imperial Budget, which would be submitted each year to the Imperial Parliament, with the Irish sitting in it. Each country would contribute its quota according to population and property. If more were required, the proportions would be maintained. Each island would raise its quota as it best pleased.

2. The government of Ireland.—A Viceroy, a Privy Council, a Representative Assembly, Ministers.

(1) The Viceroy.—A member of the Royal Family, with a salary of £25,000 per annum.

(2) Privy Council.—The present Privy Council consists of about 50 individuals, all of them anti-Nationalist, and some of them virulently so. The Council would have to be reorganized. This might be done by nominating 100 new Councillors, men of moderate views, but who would frankly accept the arrangement, and endeavour to give practical effect to it. The Council would gradually be increased by the admission of the Irish Ministers.

(3) House of Representatives.—Its members would be elected, as with us, according to population. As a concession, however, it would be agreed that one-fourth of the members might be nominated, either during two Parliaments or for five years.

(4) Ministers.—They would be selected from the Parliamentary majority, as with us. The Viceroy would call upon the leader of the majority to form a Cabinet. He would, however, retain the constitutional right of the Queen to dissolve.

3. The veto.—This would be reserved to the Viceroy, with the consent of his Privy Council. Of one thing I am absolutely certain. It is that no arrangement is possible which would give the veto to the Imperial Parliament. The Irish object to this, because they consider that it would convert their Assembly into a mere debating society. We—although we seem just now enamoured with it—should soon find that all legislation in England would soon be brought again to a standstill, as we should be perpetually debating Irish Bills. The Irish would also object to the Queen exercising the veto by the advice of her Council, for practically this would mean the veto of those representing the majority in the English Parliament. The Privy Council is, unfortunately, historically odious in Ireland. But were it recast it is probable that the Irish would not object to the veto which I have suggested.

4. Protection of minorities.—They would already be protected by the veto, by the nominated members, and by the Orangemen, who would return a considerable contingent; but the Irish would go even further than this.

(1) No contract existing or entered into could be set aside by Irish legislation. In the event of any one feeling himself aggrieved in this matter he might appeal to the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords.

(2) Any landlord would have the right to insist upon his land being bought by the Irish State on an estimate of its value by the land Judges, due consideration being taken of tenants' improvements.

5. The Army in Ireland and the fortresses would be under the orders of the Imperial Ministry, much as is the case in the United States.

I am far from saying that the Irish, if left to draw up the settlement, would insert these conditions. Many of them savour of tutelage and distrust. But I am pretty certain that, although in discussion they might claim more, they would, if they could not get more, accept this scheme with an honest intention to make it workable. Less they would not accept, and for a very good reason. If their leaders are to be responsible for the peace, tranquillity, and prosperity of Ireland, they must have full powers to act, and the scheme of government must in the main be acceptable to the majority of the governed.

At present we have arrived at a Parliamentary deadlock. No measure dealing with Ireland can pass in the existing House of Commons without the aid of the Irish contingent. If a Coalition Government were to succeed in passing, either in this Parliament or in a subsequent Parliament, a half-hearted measure, the Irish would decline to accept it. They would simply refuse to act on it, and thus confusion would become worse confounded. Experience has proved that any proposal not to count on the Irish vote is outside the area of practical politics. Experience has also shown that the rival political parties will not subordinate their differences to any anti-Irish policy. Such schemes are like the kiss of peace of the French Assembly during the first Revolution. They sound all very well, but last about half-an-hour.

We have, then, to decide whether we will try the experi-

ment of federalization, under the restrictions for the unity of the Empire and the protection of the minority in Ireland such as I have roughly indicated; or whether we will embark in a career of what practically amounts to war between the two islands.

Many Conservatives are excellent citizens. Others are party men. The latter would probably not object to the latter alternative. It would unquestionably have the effect of the French wars of the days of George III. They, I fully admit, would be better able to carry out a system of repression than the Radicals. They therefore would in the main hold office. Domestic reforms would be neglected, the Radical chariot would stand still. You, Sir, I apprehend, are not a Radical, and though you may not be influenced by this arrest of the chariot, you would not regret the *propter hoc*. But it ought to lead any Radical to pause and reflect.

I did not show myself a fanatical worshipper of Mr. Gladstone during the last Parliament; in fact, I must have voted against him as often as I voted for him. In my address to my constituents I said that I should raise my voice against any Administration, no matter what it be called, that lags on the path of progress or that falls into error. My constituents have been good enough to leave it to me to decide what is lagging and what is error. If the Conservatives will at once bring in a Bill dealing with Ireland in the manner that I have indicated they shall have my vote, as far as that Bill is concerned. But I gather that they have determined to oppose a *non possumus* to all such demands and not to go beyond including Ireland in any general scheme for local government in both islands.

I turn, therefore, to Mr. Gladstone. His public utterances lead me to believe that he is prepared to sacrifice his well-earned ease, and to endeavour to settle the question in a manner satisfactory to us and to the Irish. His experience is vast, his patriotism is undoubted,

his tactical skill is unrivalled. I would suggest, therefore, that we should give him full powers to treat for us with the Irish, and that we should support him in any arrangement which meets with his sanction. The Irish have always had a sneaking affection for him; they will recognize that he has to count with English public opinion, and they will concede far more to him than to any other negotiator that we might select. I have seen that Lord Hartington and Mr. Forster have pronounced against Home Rule, and that the former is confederating with Mr. Goschen. Lord Hartington generally pronounces against a measure as a preliminary to accepting it; I do not, therefore, ascribe much importance to his declaration. Mr. Forster during the last Parliament distinguished himself by uttering, in season and out of season, gibes and sarcasms against his former colleagues. Mr. Goschen, a man of great ability and honesty, could not find one English Liberal constituency to return him, and sits in Parliament by the good favour of the Edinburgh Conservatives. With all respect, therefore, to these two gentlemen I hardly think that the Liberals will accept a policy from them. If we are to judge by what happened in the last Parliament, they have no followers. When they spoke every one said "Let us hear what they have to say," and the next morning leading articles assured us that what they had said was most important. I never perceived that they turned a single vote. We have got beyond the days of "caves." The caves of to-day may be regarded as important in drawing-rooms. In the country and in the House of Commons they are powerless. Let, then, Mr. Gladstone boldly declare himself for a well-considered measure of Home Rule. Let us vote on this as soon as Parliament comes together. If it be defeated we shall see how the Conservatives are able to carry on the Government with their 250 supporters, or how any Liberals who may succeed them will carry on the Government with the 250 Conservatives and the Irish against them. If it be carried then either a Home Rule measure will pass in the House of Commons or the Ministry will, relying on

their plea that the country has not been consulted—dissolve. There can be no sort of objection to the latter course, because it is more than doubtful whether a House of Commons divided as is the present one can do the country any good.

Your obedient servant,

H. LABOUCHERE.

10, Queen Anne's-gate,

The first leader of *The Times* this day says:—

The lull which has fallen upon politics during the Christmas holidays may allow the masses of the English people as well as party politicians to appreciate the vast importance of the issues raised by the announcement, imperfectly repudiated, of Mr. GLADSTONE'S willingness to concede to Ireland a Parliament for what is called the management of her own affairs. We trust that the articles which we have printed under the title "What Home Rule Means" have helped to call attention to some of the less obvious consequences of a concession which until the result of the last general election was disclosed every statesman of experience and authority in the State, whether Conservative or Liberal, had declared to be impracticable, or practicable only under conditions at once disastrous and disgraceful. It is not a light thing to propose, on a sudden, to break up the Constitution of the United Kingdom, and to throw the fragments, in BURKE'S picturesque phrase, "into the kettle of the magicians" in the fond hope that a new and vigorous organism may be produced by so tremendous an act of faith. Yet

we are asked to believe that the change will be scarcely perceptible, and that the success of the incantation is assured. It is useful, at all events, to insist on the fact that Home Rule is not merely concerned with the management of Irish affairs, but must profoundly modify, in whatever form the experiment may be tried, the whole of our political system. It is prudent to consider, before we are led into any discussion of the details of a Home Rule measure, how far any guarantees, such as most Englishmen would declare to be indispensable, can be relied upon to secure their objects. It is proper to remind politicians who talk of the matter as one to be settled by considerations of expediency and by computations of voting power that the honour as well as the interests of the Empire are at stake. But most of all it is necessary to ask whether the vast majority of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom are to be coerced and cowed by a minority numbering at the outside three-quarters of a million of adult males, and represented by 86 members in a House of Commons of 670.

If intelligent and self-respecting men have considered these questions and answered them for themselves, without waiting to square their opinions by the erratic movements of party leaders in search of a majority, we have no fear of the result. MR. LABOUCHERE'S letter, which we publish elsewhere, will perhaps enable some who have been doubting to make up their minds. It is impossible to question MR. LABOUCHERE'S good faith; if his candour sometimes appears to verge upon

cynicism, it is at all events genuine. As he reminds us frankly, he has acted and associated in Parliament with MR. PARNELL'S party, and he has had, doubtless, excellent opportunities of discovering what their views are. His opinions about the state of Ireland and the tendencies of an independent Irish Government have no special weight; but when he tells us what is the *minimum* that the Parnellites will accept in the shape of a Home Rule measure he speaks, probably, by the book. As he desires to cement an alliance between the Liberals and the Irish party, he can have no interest in exaggerating the claims of the latter, but rather the contrary. Yet the proposals which, according to MR. LABOUCHERE, the Parnellites would not offer, but would accept "if they could not get more," embrace powers hardly distinguishable from complete independence. Under MR. LABOUCHERE'S scheme, every single one of the dangers which have been pointed out as likely to arise from Home Rule in Ireland would have free scope for development. The checks, the limitations, and the guarantees suggested are manifestly illusory, and intended only to blind English public opinion to the real significance of the surrender until it was too late to repair the error. The Irish members, in the first place, are to retain their seats in the Imperial Parliament, with power to make and unmake Ministries, as at present, by their votes on any motion relating to foreign or colonial affairs. They would thus be able to bring pressure to bear on the Imperial Government and to pre-

vent the enforcement of any restrictions against the local management of Irish concerns. The distinction between Imperial and local business would, it is admitted, require the subjection of both to a Supreme Court—a momentous and far-reaching change. But it is not disguised that Ireland would not be satisfied with any restraints on the right to levy taxes, subject only to the contribution of her quota to the Imperial expenditure. She might, indeed, consent to enter a Zollverein, but in that case she would secure protection for native industries by a bounty system. Taxation, however, would be an instrument sufficient to affect the possession of property and to accomplish the extermination of obnoxious classes. This power, with all the rest, it is proposed to intrust to an Irish Government, having a Prince of the blood royal as its nominal head, but acting on the advice of a Ministry selected from the majority in a single representative Chamber. Practically such an arrangement would place the liberties, the fortunes, and the lives of all Irishmen in the hands of MR. PARNELL and his well-organized Caucus, and that is a consequence which hitherto Englishmen, even those professing indifference to the glories of Empire, have not ventured to face. But then there are the safeguards which, MR. LABOUCHERE tells us, the Irish party might be induced to grant. For a few years they might be content to have the representative Chamber leavened with a certain proportion of members nominated by the Crown. A veto on legislation would be reserved, nominally

to the Viceroy, but really to the Privy Council, which as at present composed, of Judges and other eminent officials, is declared to be "historically odious" to the Irish people, and is to be transformed by the immediate addition of 100 members "of moderate views." As MR. LABOUCHERE believes in the Conservative instincts of the Irish democracy, he may, and probably does, mean by men "of moderate views" such popular politicians as MR. HEALY and MR. O'BRIEN. The admission of a succession of Irish Ministers would further qualify the composition of this body, which would have the control of dangerous legislation in its hands; for MR. LABOUCHERE assures us that the Irish members will enter into no arrangement reserving a veto to the Imperial Parliament. Furthermore, we are told, a clause would be accepted saving existing contracts from legislative interference, and a breach of this might be brought, it is suggested, before "the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords." It would be as impossible for the House of Lords to enforce its decision in such a case, against the will of the Irish Executive and Legislature, as for the Supreme Court of the United States to execute an order in this country. Nor would it be less difficult for the Imperial Government to exact payment of the quota should it, as is most probable, fall into arrear. The provision that any owner of land may insist on being bought out by "the Irish State" is a practical absurdity. Where is the money to come from? Can anybody imagine that Ireland, where MR. PARNELL's partial success has produced wide-

spread commercial ruin, will leap to a high level of credit and be able to borrow freely from capitalists, when a party deeply tainted with Communistic ideas are placed in possession of power?

If MR. LABOUCHERE is justified, as no doubt he is, in affirming that the plan he sketches is what the Parnellites mean when they demand Home Rule, the prevalent feeling of distrust and repulsion will be strengthened by a study of its drift. The flimsy paper securities which are offered must not be allowed to conceal from us the substance of the design. We can afford to dismiss the historical argument to which some Irishmen ingenuously cling, because nothing could be more remote from "GRATTAN'S Parliament" than the Constitution propounded by MR. LABOUCHERE. It is, above all things, necessary to avoid a confused discussion on the details of fancy projects and imaginary guarantees. The burden of proof rests with the advocates of a revolution of which, it seems, they do not apprehend the scope and import. They have to show, what no one has as yet attempted to show by any respectable processes of reasoning, that the concession of legislative independence to Ireland under any limitation whatever is consistent with the honour and the safety of the Empire. When that has been done it will be time to discuss the *minimum* of Parnellite demands, or the possibility of negotiating on that basis with the representatives of the majority of the Irish population. MR. LABOUCHERE has scarcely realized the vast change that has taken place since 1880 when he proposes that the

country "should give MR. GLADSTONE full powers "to treat for us with the Irish, and that we "should support him in any arrangement "which meets with his sanction." Even in the last Parliament the confidence reposed in MR. GLADSTONE by the Liberal majority had been repeatedly and rudely shaken, and doubts of his unvarying and unimpeachable wisdom were growing. The character of the new House of Commons is still an enigma, but it is certain, at all events, that it has not been elected under any peculiar enthusiasm for MR. GLADSTONE'S policy, and that it is not bound to follow him with absolute obedience. The freedom of members has been enlarged by the surprise that has been sprung upon the country; and until the constituencies are again consulted, which MR. LABOUCHERE appears to think desirable as well as probable, Liberals will do well to act for themselves in dealing with a question not hitherto deemed to be a doubtful one. It is highly advisable that Liberal members should communicate their views to the leaders of their party, as MR. CRAIGSELLAR has done, so that, while officious and intrusive inquirers are reasonably repelled, there may be no doubt as to the dominant opinion. As MR. SEDLEY TAYLOR tells us, the strongest Liberals are not prepared in this matter to turn round in obedience to any chief, however honoured and powerful, and it is for the good of the party as well as of the country that the truth should be made plain, even to unwilling minds, before further mischief is done.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL ON THE IRISH QUESTION.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I wish it were possible to believe that the people of this country are in the least degree prepared for the crisis which is upon us. They have, indeed, been awakened, and with a start. Some of them are angry; many are alarmed; almost all are perplexed. That we are called upon very suddenly to take up new duties and to face new dangers all men can see. But what, even in substance, these duties are, and wherein mainly these dangers lie, can hardly be taken in as yet.

Let it be clearly understood, then, in the first place, that the immediate demand made upon us now is that we should frame a new Constitution for these kingdoms. Moreover, this demand is made on pain of death to a Constitution which has been growing for a thousand years.

Perhaps there may be some who would undertake this work with a light heart. But if so, these are just the men who know least about it, and who are most incompetent to conduct it. Probably there is no kind of work for which the people of this country are less naturally adapted, or for which by education and habit they are less prepared. Great Britain has been the august mother of many Constitutions; but she has made or invented none. Her children have derived them from her with the life she gave. Perhaps it would be too much to say that her own Constitution, like the Christian Church, has risen without the sound of hammer, but it certainly has risen without formal plan or the help of self-conscious architects.

There have been in its history eventful moments, great deeds and statutes, great charters and declarations and claims of right. All and each of these have marked time in the course of centuries. But every one of them has had the essential character of a recording, and not of a creative act. They were all simply declaratory of that which long had been, and the only novelty about them was the embodiment in words of ancient and hereditary conceptions.

Very different is the demand now made upon us. Not to record, not to sanction, but, on the contrary, to abandon and reverse some of the most fundamental of these conceptions, is that which we are now asked to do. A curious combination of circumstances lends itself to the cloaking and concealment of this demand. It has been found that, in England at least, a chaos has come about among local authorities in the raising and expenditure of rates. Reform in this matter seems to be a necessity, and, like other political necessities, has become a cry. In the eager competition of politics, this cry has been seized upon, under the ambitious title of "Local Government," as a party banner. Beneath the cover of it schemes have been devised which simple and ingenuous men have not suspected. Perhaps in some cases the authors of these schemes have not always seen how much was really involved. In other cases, however, the vision has been clear enough. What is aimed at is, that those supreme powers over men and property, and capital and industry, which an Imperial Parliament can never be persuaded to exert, except under great Imperial traditions of justice and of law, should be devolved upon, or delegated to, little local bodies, with no such traditions to restrain them, and with brand new social theories to animate and incite them. Without any adequate con-

ception apparently of what they are about—without one single clear idea concerning the limitations under which alone such powers can be devolved by any civilized society upon fractions of its own body—politicians have been shouting and competing for the honour of setting up in every locality some authority, which, if care be not taken, may turn out in too many cases to be the authority of Mr. Forster's "village tyrant."

In the midst of this vague movement respecting England, originating in a real want, but seized upon as a means of attaining very different ends, comes the Irish demand for Home Rule. What more easy than to jumble up the two? If there are to be local Parliaments in every county in England and in Scotland, with some indefinite power of "governing" everybody and everything, what can be more easy than to promise and proclaim that a similar Parliament should be set up in Dublin, with at least equal powers over a people which claims a separate nationality? What more easy than for men to lull themselves and others into sleep on all that this involves, by declaring loudly that they are nevertheless determined to maintain the unity of the Empire and the supreme authority of the Imperial Parliament?

I trust we shall all remember that in themselves these are phrases and nothing more. They may mean something, but they may also mean nothing at all; and they are most likely to mean nothing, when men are evidently using them as an excuse for retreat. They are like the lights and fires which an army sometimes flourishes in the night when the camp is to be found empty in the morning.

There is no more striking proof of the unpreparedness of the public mind on the whole of this subject than the innocence with which we see the

question asked, Why should we not let the Irish manage their own affairs? *O sancta simplicitas!* The assumption that we can solve as easily as a child's puzzle one of the most difficult, intricate, and complicated problems that can arise in the science of human government, is an assumption indicative of that profound ignorance which does not see even the first conditions of the problem. To perambulate the marches of local authority—to draw the line between that which is, and that which is not, of Imperial interest in a society which is to be one Government over its own people, and in the face of the world—this is a work requiring the very highest skill and the very deepest insight. Hitherto none of us have been called to deal with it or even to think of it. Is it possible that men's thoughts have become so loose and slovenly on the functions of government that foreign affairs are roughly assumed to be all that is of Imperial interest? Is it possible that our notions of empire are so degenerate that we do not think if an essential part of it that all the subjects of the Crown should live under equal laws, and be assured of the primary conditions of human freedom? Do not let us be led astray by false analogies. Our relations with our colonies have nothing to do with it. Those of them to whom self-government has been committed are virtually independent States. Nothing but bonds of sentiment unite us, together with some, I hope, growing feelings of a common interest. These, in time, may produce a Federal Constitution of some sort. But the inexorable conditions of physical geography, as well as social and economic differences of condition, forbid that in the strictest and fullest sense we can ever form with them one government. The same inexorable conditions of physical geography are reversed in the case of Ireland, and

absolutely demand there a kind and a measure of connexion which is impossible farther off. The United States alone, of all the nations of the earth, must in this matter be our great exemplar. Let us consider for a moment some of the differences between that case and the case of Home Rule in Ireland.

In the first place, the several States of the American Union came together originally in self-defence. They fought together against a common enemy. They gained by confederation a common victory. In the heat of one great struggle and of one prevailing aspiration they were drawn together, and then amid the shocks of war they were battered and welded into one great community. Yet what did they find? The very first thing they found, when they had time to think, was that their confederation was wanting in some most essential elements of a real union. It had not occurred to them from the beginning that it was at all necessary to record in words the fundamental conceptions of their very blood and birth—the rights of freedom in person, in opinions, in religion, and in property. But gradually it dawned upon them that this, and nothing short of this, was an absolute necessity. And so, under the counsel and deliberations of some of the best and wisest men who have been born to our race, they framed a Constitution, which, with amendments from time to time, did set forth these fundamental rights; did strictly limit each and every State in dealing with affairs which might have been called its own; did also limit the whole Union in the same matters; and which, finally, did place all the individual rights of freemen under the protection of purely judicial bodies, with powers of absolute restraint upon the wayward action and the possible tyrannies of popular assemblies. In all these con-

ditions there is, alas, an absolute contrast between the union of the American States and everything that is happening, or that has hitherto been proposed, in respect to Home Rule in Ireland. In the first place, the initial force is not towards, but away from, union. It is centrifugal and not centripetal. This alone makes an enormous difference. The spirit in which all human institutions are conceived at first, and in which they are worked from inside, makes the whole difference between success and failure. If the spirit be one not of attraction but of repulsion, it is more than questionable whether any mere machinery will keep nations or States together. But again, look at the sort of machinery which, so far as we know, has as yet been contemplated. Supposing the lines to be well and firmly drawn between affairs which are Irish only and affairs which concern the honour and interests of the Empire, who is to enforce respect to those lines? Who is to keep the marches? There is to be a veto, it is said, or assent is to be required to Irish Acts, given by an Imperial Cabinet or by an Imperial Parliament.

Does any man imagine that it will be possible to keep this question of assent or of veto out of the region of party politics at Westminster? And if not, then how much of the time of Parliament would continue to be occupied by Irish affairs? Would not one or other of two things inevitably happen; either that we should wash our hands of all responsibility and give our assent as a matter of course to everything done, however unwise and however unjust, or else that we should keep our responsibility at the cost of continual strain and of increasing exasperation?

And then, have we considered what sort of measures we should assuredly have either to assent to or resist? Protective duties and a hostile tariff

have been announced already. One eminent Liberal is said to have threatened retaliatory duties on our side as inevitable in such a case. This is a concession to fair trade which curiously illustrates the reaction on our own politics which will certainly arise.

Then, again, there is the whole question of religion. For my own part I think we have sinned in this matter. Both as regards the priesthood and as regards denominational education, we have forgotten that Ireland is what is called a "Catholic" people. Our voluntarism and our ultra-Protestantism have combined to force upon them what passes for Liberalism in these matters. One of the first things an Irish Parliament will do will be to reverse all this. Are we to veto or assent? And if we do assent, will not this action on our part powerfully affect kindred questions on this side of St. George's Channel?

But again—on questions lying deeper still—on the fundamental principles of all civilized societies, questions affecting the freedom of industry, the security of property and of personal liberty in every form, are we prepared to take even that share of responsibility which is implied in a formal assent to all that may be done in Ireland? Is there no share of our own honour involved? Are we to confess that what the British Constitution has hitherto guaranteed to all its people we are henceforth unable or unwilling to maintain? And then let us ask further, are we to make this confession, not only with respect to Ireland, but with respect to Great Britain also? Are Irish members, besides being supreme over their own affairs, to be allowed to hold the balance over ours too? If not, then we must have a new Constitution, framed for the Parliament at Westminster, as well as for the Parliament in Dublin. The line of division between that which is Imperial and that which is not

Imperial must be drawn again, so as to exclude here that which is included across the water. Who is sufficient for these things? Is there any party to which we can, with the least confidence, commit a task so entirely novel, so absolutely without precedent or preparation in any part of our national history? Nay, it may well be asked whether in the very nature of things such a problem is not insoluble, and whether the only possible result of attempting such impossible combinations would not be an infinite preference on both sides in favour of total separation?

On the other hand, under the conditions and principles of the American Union, all or most of these dangers were avoided. Are we prepared to adopt them, as near as may be?

Of one thing the Irish may be sure, and that is, that the estrangement is all on their side. There is nobody of the least consequence on this side of the Channel who does not desire above all things in domestic politics to see them prosperous and contented, sharing in the glories and in the duties of an Empire which so many Irishmen have nobly served in Parliament, and in the field, and in the walks of literature and of science.

Your obedient servant,

ARGYLL.

LIBERAL MINISTERS ON HOME RULERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—The authorized or unauthorized Home Rule programme of Mr. Gladstone virtually proposes to hand over the government of Ireland to her present Nationalist representatives. Before the Legislature is asked to commit to the care of these gentlemen the lives and properties of the landed, manufacturing, and other loyal classes of the country, it would be well to recall attention to the character and policy of those who are, under this scheme.

to become the rulers of Ireland. They are now what they were before the Land League changed its name, before the Liberal Government left office. Time has not changed the men nor improved their policy. The judgments I ask your permission to quote are as true now as when they were deliberately expressed by responsible Ministers of the Crown. They are not the less true because in Ireland murder and violence are no longer of everyday occurrence. As Mr. Parnell pointed out to his followers, "recourse to such measures of procedure is entirely unnecessary and absolutely prejudicial where there is a suitable organization among the tenants themselves." The National League by boycotting secures all that the Land League could accomplish by murder.

Mr. Gladstone says:—"With fatal and painful precision the steps of crime dogged the steps of the Land League."

Lord Hartington declares that "the Liberal Government were absolutely convinced that the leaders of the Land League and the organization were directly connected with the system which led to intimidation and violence."

Sir W. Harcourt says:—"The police of the Land League do not attack landlords alone. They spare neither age nor sex."

Mr. Trevelyan, speaking of the Land League, now the National League, organ, published by Messrs. Parnell, O'Brien, and M'Carthy, says of the articles in that newspaper:—"They are as dangerous as the pistol and the sword gun."

Mr. Bright describes the agency of the Land League agitators as "an agency of outrage and murder."

Mr. Chamberlain declares that "Mr. Parnell and those who follow him have never concealed that their chief object is not the removal of grievances in Ireland, but the separation of Ireland from England. What is it," he goes on to say, "which enables every one of you to feel that your homes are protected from violence and that the persons and lives of those who are dear to you are safe from

outrage? It is the sense that behind the law there is all the force of a mighty empire, all the power that the strongest Government can wield."

Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, with reference to the No Rent Manifesto, says:—"Personally, I know of nothing more scandalous, nothing more audacious, than the issue of the No Rent Manifesto. A more audacious or gigantic act of robbery was never perpetrated by the leaders of any agitation."

Mr. Goschen's opinion is "that this country would indeed deserve to be looked upon with reproach and contempt if the Government were to ask the active leaders of the Home Rule party to be responsible for the peace of Ireland."

Referring to the same leaders, Mr. Gladstone says:—"For nearly the first time in the history of Christendom a body, a small body, of men has arisen who are not ashamed to preach in Ireland the doctrines of public plunder. I make that charge advisedly in the situation which I hold, and I shall ask you to judge with me whether it is not wrong from me by demonstrative evidence. . . . If you go forth upon a mission to demoralize a people by teaching them to make the properties of their neighbours the objects of their covetous desires, it does not require superhuman gifts to find a certain number of followers and adherents for a doctrine such as that. . . . Mr. Parnell has never uttered one word of disapproval or misgiving about the assassination literature of America, maintained by a knot of Irishmen who are not ashamed to point out how the ships of Her Majesty's Navy ought to be blown into the air, and how gentlemen that they are pleased to select ought to be made the object of the knife of the assassin. You know that there have been some attempts of that kind made in this country. You have heard of the explosion of dynamite in Salford. Mr. Parnell said that occurrence appeared to him to bear the character of a practical joke." These are the charges which Mr. Gladstone, as Prime Minister, deliberately

makes against "the man who has made himself the head of the most violent party in Ireland, and has offered the greatest temptations to the Irish people."

In the same speech he said, and his words might well be applied to the conflict which Home Rule is certain to provoke, "If there is still to be a conflict in Ireland between law on the one side and sheer lawlessness on the other; if the first conditions of political society are to be set at naught, then I say, without hesitation, the resources of civilization against its enemies are not yet exhausted."

English and Scotch Radicals do not realize what the mere discussion of Home Rule as a question of practical politics means to the loyal minority in Ireland. Their ordinary rights as citizens of a free country have almost disappeared in the south and west. There they eke out a precarious existence under the unwritten law of the National League. Where British law still nominally prevails life and property are held by British citizens at the will of the local magnates, who are the deputies of Mr. Parnell. What will the condition of these loyal citizens be when the leaders of the National League have become the Executive Government of Ireland?

In 1833 Lord Macaulay, then member for Leeds, said in the House of Commons that "every argument which has been urged for the purpose of showing that Great Britain and Ireland ought to have two distinct Parliaments may be urged with far greater force for the purpose of showing that the north and the south of Ireland ought to have two distinct Parliaments. The House of Commons of the United Kingdom, it has been said, is chiefly elected by Protestants, and, therefore, cannot be trusted to legislate for Catholic Ireland. If this be so, how can an Irish House of Commons, chiefly elected by Catholics, be trusted to legislate for Protestant Ulster?" The gospel of public plunder had not then been preached, and every reason then given for having a Parliament in Dublin is at

the present time a still stronger reason for having another Parliament in Belfast.

What securities are now offered to the Loyalists, whose lives and fortunes are to be intrusted to the tender mercies of a Government composed of such Ministers as Messrs. Parnell, O'Brien, Healy, and O'Kelly, when these leaders have exchanged the salaries provided by the assassination societies of America for the salaries of Irish Ministers? Knowing their own purposes and the masters whom they serve, they prudently refuse to give any guarantees. But what reliance could be placed on the guarantees of men who have risen to power by appealing to avarice and greed, the lowest and basest passions of their countrymen? How are such guarantees if given to be enforced? By the fleets and armies of England. When insecurity and oppression have driven capital from the country, when trade has become paralyzed, when resistance has become a duty, England will be compelled to interpose to protect the lives and properties of the law-abiding and industrious classes, whose only crime is their unswerving loyalty to the British Throne. "Force is no remedy," it is true, for the grievances of those who compel the Executive to use it. It is, however, a rather important remedy for him whose life and property are threatened by an organized mob.

The leaders of former agitations in Ireland, however misguided, or even criminal, were, for the most part, disinterested, patriotic, honest, and unselfish. The leaders of the National League are what Liberal Ministers have described them to be. Their new gospel has been for them a great financial success. Dr. Johnson's definition ill describes their patriotism. Their violent teaching, their half-forgotten offences, their salaries and testimonial funds but prove the success of their appeal to the greed of their followers.

"How safe is treason and how sacred ill
"When none can sin against the people's will!"

Your obedient servant,

Reform Club, S.W.

AN IRISHMAN.

HOME RULE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I have just seen in *The Times* of the 24th inst. a letter from a correspondent about the Irish police, in which he fully points out what a fine army of 11,000 men the Irish policemen would be found by the new Irish Parliament, ready to act under their control at once. But he omitted to point out another very important feature—viz., how easily this force could be trebled. The police are generally scattered in what are called small barracks, most of which are fortified against musketry attacks. These barracks generally hold five men—viz., a sergeant and four privates, but they are capable of holding 10 men when required. Thus, if it were wished to increase the force, all that the new Irish Executive need do would be to send circulars, say, on Monday, to all the sergeants to order their three junior men to go to the central depôt of the county and recruit seven men from the neighbourhood. This could be done the following Saturday, and in three weeks they would be clothed, armed, and partially drilled, and the Irish Parliament would find themselves provided with 33,000 infantry, a sufficient body of horse police for scouts, and all that would then be required would be a few cannon, which could be smuggled in from America. When this was complete, the connexion between England and Ireland would be a matter of the past.

The kingdom of England was formed out of the Heptarchy in the year 800 A.D., Ireland got rid of her five kings in 1100 A.D., and the two countries came under one rule. If, after the lapse of 780 years, England now elects to break up the Empire and sink into a third-rate Power, the mode of procedure is plain. She should say to Mr. Parnell, "Pay us your share of the National Debt, and let commissioners be appointed by some foreign potentate to value the property of every loyal subject who wishes to leave Ireland. Let this be paid for, and the Irish in England be sent back to Ireland on similar terms, and

then let the countries part in peace." But if this is not carried out, the British Government should at once disfranchise any county or borough that returned a member pledged to Home Rule. The scheme is long enough before the public to show the folly of it, but the mischief of keeping the question in abeyance is incalculable. The proposed compromise about local government in counties means nothing; it will satisfy nobody. If greater powers are given to boards of guardians and the fiscal functions of the grand juries transferred to them, without a check in the shape of a strong local government board nominated by the Government, property would soon be taxed down to zero. This danger cannot be guarded against until a large number of tenants (who constitute the boards of guardians) have become owners under the Purchase Act. When the Land Act was brought in, if the present Purchase Act had come in with it, much would have been done, and if the emigration clauses had not been mutilated, the state of affairs would now be very different in Ireland; but the emigration was stopped in deference to Mr. Parnell and his friends, whose strength lies in keeping a mass of distressed people in the country. We were told that "when the tenants got fixity of tenure and compulsory valuation they would commence to improve at such a rapid rate that the labourers who begged for emigration would be at once employed at home;" but now what do we see as the result? Irish farming has so deteriorated that Irish labour wages have been reduced considerably, and labourers find a difficulty in getting employment even at the reduced rate.

It might be well now to consider the advisability of retracing our steps—first, bringing in a Bill to emigrate those who cannot find remunerative employment in Ireland; secondly, enlarging and making compulsory the present Purchase Act, and thus taking out of the agitation camp the labourers and farmers who constitute the voting and fighting power of Ireland.

Your obedient servant,

December 26.

ANTI-COMMUNIST.

A SCOTTISH VIEW.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—The demand made in the name of the people of Ireland for separation from Great Britain recalls the somewhat similar demand made a quarter of a century ago by the Southern States of the American Union. These States already enjoyed an amount of legislative and administrative independence which few statesmen in the country, Mr. Gladstone, perhaps, excepted, are prepared to concede to Ireland. But it was not sufficient for them, and their organization enabled them to support their demand for entire separation by one of the most bloody and costly wars the world has ever seen; and that, notwithstanding the prodigious disadvantage under which they laboured in being surrounded by an immense population alien in race and sympathies, with cruel wrongs to avenge, and a hope of liberty only through the downfall of the secession power.

The demand of the South was effectually resisted after a tremendous struggle. The causes of its defeat were the intrinsic superiority in power and resources of the North, and the unhesitating conviction entertained in the North that separation would extend such evils on the American people that no sacrifice would be too great to prevent it. In this country there was for a time a certain amount of sympathy with the Southern demand. It seemed to many of us that the American people, having claimed the right to sever themselves from the mother country, and having organized themselves as a number of independent commonwealths bound together federally at their own will, there was no right in one set of them to compel the other to remain members of the confederation longer than they pleased. There is now a very general feeling that the North was in the right, that to prevent secession was fully justified as an act of self-preservation, and that its success would have done grievous injury to the great mass of the people of the Union.

Ireland is too near Great Britain to exist as an

independent State without serious perils to the larger interests of the British people. It never has existed as an independent State. Before its conquest by England it was only a "geographical expression," and the nearest approach it ever made to independence under Grattan's Parliament proved intolerable, and led to the Union which it is now proposed to break up. Apart from its unfortunate nearness, the long and close connexion which has existed between the two countries has given the British people such a material interest in the good government of Ireland as makes it impossible for us to leave it to itself. An enormous amount of British capital has been embarked in Ireland in the purchase of land, in loans to Irishmen, and in industrial and commercial enterprises; and there has been a prodigious exchange of populations. All this has taken place on the faith of a united kingdom and a common government. It is difficult to foresee all the fatal consequences of a separation, but not difficult to see that there would be incalculable mischief.

But leaving our own interests, let us look at what would happen among the Irish themselves. We know that, instead of being a united homogeneous people, they cherish the most deadly antipathies against each other, and give vent to these in spite of all the restraints which the union with Great Britain imposes on them, not merely at public meetings or civic or Parliamentary elections, but by armed rioting and private assassination. Bitter as the hatred is which Irish orators express with reference to Britain, it is mostly against their own countrymen that the weapons of the National League, the Fenians, and the Moonlighters are directed. Even a marriage between members of the opposed factions is denounced by superior ministers of religion as a heinous crime, worthy of temporal and eternal punishment. Nor is the dispute between one set of Irishmen and another a contest merely for political power and supremacy. It is for the transfer of property also, if indeed that is not the prevailing motive. Remove the controlling hand of the Imperial power and

Ireland will present a spectacle of internecine strife that will sicken the world.

But it will be said that no one on this side the Channel contemplates a complete separation. Local self-government is what is thought of for parishes and cities and counties, and ultimately for the whole island. Whether Ireland and Irishmen are fit for self-government, or whether they can be trusted with it without the utmost danger to British interests, are at all events propositions worthy of being considered, but some other conclusions are beyond question.

All experience forbids the slightest hope that any such moderate amount of local self-government as would satisfy England and Scotland will satisfy Ireland, or rather Irish agitators. Each concession, therefore, will be made not merely an advanced platform from which to demand more, but a machinery by which these demands may be enforced. Instead of depriving agitators of the pretext of a grievance, concession will in future, as in the past, seem a premium on agitation, a symptom of weakness on our side, and an encouraging diminution of the distance yet to be traversed in attaining complete independence.

Any considerable amount of self-government must mean as you and some of your correspondents have already suggested, the control of the police, the appointment of magistrates and judges, the imposition and the spending of taxes, interference with property, with industry, and with contracts, and the power to coerce individuals and to trample on minorities. Shall we deliberately intrust even a moderate measure of such self-government to men of the Parnell and Healy and Redmond type, or to the sort of men whom Mr. Parnell has forced on the Irish electors as their so-called representatives?

Unless Ireland is to be separated altogether from the United Kingdom she must contribute something to the payment of the National Debt and the support of the Imperial army and navy and civil government. Can any one believe for a moment that if the Parnellites had the

government of Ireland a penny would ever find its way thence into the Imperial exchequer?

We have a large army in Ireland. Is it to remain there? If so, is it to be used in support of the independent local government, or is it to serve the will of the Imperial Government? To put the matter in a concrete form, is it to obey Mr. Parnell and his possibly more advanced successors, or is it to be in perpetual collision with them? Or are we to withdraw the army and leave Ireland to protect as well as to govern itself, or to be garrisoned by American filibusters, or, for that matter, by the troops of any other nation which might happen to be in actual or threatened hostilities with us?

All this, which is beginning to be seen more or less clearly by many people, points to the conclusion that concession of more power to Irish agitators and their dupes can have but one end, a repetition of the American experience, and that sooner or later we shall have for our own preservation to fight to the death to prevent Ireland becoming or remaining an independent State. Horrible as the alternative is, if such a war is ever to come, we cannot avoid seeing that the sooner it comes the better. We must not let Irish agitators choose their own time for it, which will certainly be a time most disadvantageous for us, nor must we be left for years perhaps in the position that all Imperial Government and all negotiations with foreign Powers are to be carried on under the paralyzing conviction that we have an enemy on our flanks.

The experiment of concession has not been left untried. Mr. Gladstone disestablished the Irish Church, he transferred half the value of the land to the existing tenants, and he allowed one valuable colleague to leave his Government and another to be murdered before he would consent to the legislation which ultimately even to him appeared needful for the protection of life and property. Whether he courted defeat last summer rather than face the duty of re-imposing that needful legislation we need not here inquire. Have these conces-

sions rendered Ireland one whit more happy, more peaceful, more loyal, more law-abiding, more prosperous, or less scornfully ungrateful to these who made them? Is it possible that Mr. Gladstone can cherish the belief that further and further concessions will have a better effect? He may hope to use this Irish question as a means of recovering his political ascendancy and of humiliating the party now in office, and he may, with that wonderful power with which his friends credit him, be able to persuade himself that his personal ambition coincides with the good of the country, but will the Liberal party consent blindly to follow him, or will they examine for themselves the shadows of the abyss into which he would lead them?

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

A SCOTCH LIBERAL OF FORTY YEARS'
STANDING.

Edinburgh,

A SUGGESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Your correspondent "Spectator" pleads moderately and wisely for a conference among heads of parties. It is in that direction probably that the best hope for the Empire is to be found in dealing with a question of which Mr. John Morley says, in weighty words, that it is the most serious which has come before this country for 200 years. There never was a time in which it was more necessary to be cautious. Before it is assumed that Mr. Parnell ought to be consulted I wish to ask whether Mr. Parnell has indeed the right to speak for Ireland? He can speak for his nominees in Parliament, who have to all appearance been freely elected by the Irish people; but the champions of Ireland are lightly changed, and each leader of faction seems in his turn to speak for the whole nation. By all means let Mr. Parnell be consulted, but do not let Englishmen suppose that by doing so they have got to the bottom of the Irish difficulty. Before we try the immense experiment of an Irish Parliament—an experiment which,

once tried, can only be reversed by civil war or British conquest—would it not be worth while to consult more than one Irishman, though that Irishman be Mr. Parnell? So vast a question cannot be settled by three gentlemen meeting in Downing-street. Nor could the present Parliament, elected on other issues, deal adequately with the question of Irish constitution. Nor is it certain that if the attempt were made its conclusions would be accepted by the Irish nation.

Is it chimerical to suggest that a kind of Constituent Assembly could be elected in Ireland to agree upon a model of constitution, which should afterwards be submitted to the next Parliament of the United Kingdom, itself elected upon the Irish question? It is useless to make proposals to Ireland; the thing has been tried often enough, and has always resulted in failure. Let Ireland, not Mr. Parnell, be invited to make proposals to England; such proposals would be drawn with the moderation which comes from responsibility. They would be cautious, for their framers would know that they were dealing with a powerful nation, but they would be hopeful, because, whatever her mistakes and crimes in dealing with Ireland, England has always desired to act justly.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

ANGLUS.

THE FRENCH LANDING.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—It may perhaps interest some of your readers to learn that when the French landed in Ireland in 1798 Consols went down to 47½. Your obedient servant,
London, T. W. N.

SIR THOMAS BRASSEY'S VIEWS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—My position on Irish questions having been misrepresented in certain notices in the Press, I ask the pri-

privilege of inserting in *The Times* the enclosed letter to the president of the Hastings Liberal Association.

Yours faithfully, THOMAS BRASSEY.

Normanhurst Court, Battle, Dec. 26.

“Normanhurst Court, Battle, Dec. 26.

“Dear Mr. Reville,—As the subject of Home Rule for Ireland has recently come to the front, my constituents may wish to be in possession of my views. I am opposed to a separate Parliament for Ireland. If it could be done without injustice to loyal men, I would gladly give a large measure of local government to Ireland, but the Irish representation in the House of Commons is not of a character to inspire confidence. We must begin with smaller measures of local self-government for counties, and in all the governing bodies in Ireland there should be more of popular election and less of nomination by the Castle. In the present state of feeling, the constabulary must remain under the control of the United Parliament.

“Believe me, yours very truly,

“ (Signed)

“ T. BRASSEY.

“ W. F. Reville, Esq.”

The Times says :—

To-day MR. GLADSTONE completes his seventy-sixth year. The anniversary will not fail to kindle in the minds of his followers emotions of gratitude for a long and illustrious career of public service. But it is idle to attempt to disguise the fact that the vigour of MR. GLADSTONE'S powers, which seems to bid defiance to old age, can no longer be regarded in its results as a subject of unalloyed congratulation by the Liberal party. No man, marvellous and exceptional though his vitality may be, can promise, when he has entered on his seventy-seventh year, more than a strictly limited performance of the duties of Parliamentary leadership. This, however, is the least cogent of the reasons which are compelling the

Liberals of the United Kingdom, still bound together by the bonds of party discipline and tradition, to reconsider their relations to MR. GLADSTONE. We cannot doubt that MR. GLADSTONE himself will perceive and appreciate the effect of the change wrought by a step now clearly shown to be miscalculated and mischievous. He has raised, however, with every evidence of deliberation, a question which it must be left to others to answer. We do not care to lay stress upon the obvious criticism that all the arguments which MR. GLADSTONE urged when he retired from his position as leader of the Liberal party in 1874 have been strengthened by the lapse of more than eleven years and by the peculiar circumstances of the present time. It is more important to note that the avowed object for the sake of which MR. GLADSTONE faced the toils of another electioneering campaign, after his defeat and resignation last summer—the necessity of preserving intact that “great instrument,” the unity of the Liberal party—is likely to be imperilled rather than promoted by his retention of the leadership. For our own part, we have never been able to look upon the breaking up of the Liberal organization as a disaster, so long as it has covered deep-seated differences on matters of principle; but those to whom the appeal was addressed as well as its author must be presumed to set a high value on the avoidance of open schism. How, then, does the case stand with the Liberal party and its leader? MR. GLADSTONE has permitted a policy to be given to the world

in his name, which, though describing it as "un-authentic," he has been careful not to repudiate. By that announcement, as the DUKE of ARGYLL says, the country "has been awakened, and with a start." Every one of MR. GLADSTONE'S colleagues in the late Cabinet and every conspicuous member of the Liberal party have united, with the single exception of MR. JOHN MORLEY, in declining any share of responsibility for the policy now associated, in the popular view, with MR. GLADSTONE'S name. It is evident from the replies which a news agency has extorted from a considerable proportion of the Liberal representatives in the new Parliament that the proposal to establish a Legislature in Dublin for the management of Irish affairs, with an Irish Administration controlling the police and answerable for peace, order, and liberty, finds favour only with a few extreme and a few obscure men. SIR THOMAS BRASSEY'S letter to the President of the Hastings Liberal Association shows into what attitude the most faithful of MR. GLADSTONE'S adherents have been forced by the shock of the new departure.

It is certain that if MR. GLADSTONE perseveres in his attempt to carry the Liberal party with him in the promotion of objects hitherto denounced by every Liberal statesman, he will provoke a revolt which will not only have able and resolute leaders, but a strong following. If, on the other hand, he recedes, his moral authority will be fatally weakened for every purpose, but especially for dealing with the demands of the Parnellites. It is noteworthy that MR.

RICHARD CHAMBERLAIN has pronounced distinctly against an Irish Legislature, which tends to confirm the inferences drawn from the language previously used by his brother and by SIR CHARLES DILKE. But whatever may be the Radical tactics—and MR. MORLEY, though he has received MR. GLADSTONE'S offers with no enthusiasm, has to be reckoned with—there is we feel assured, an enormously preponderant body of English opinion, Liberal as well as Conservative, which will be influenced by the appeal to reason and fact set forth, with admirable clearness and cogency, in the DUKE of ARGYLL'S letter. As has been pointed out in our columns, the policy which the Liberal party are called upon to fight for and to which the country is asked to give its sanction is nothing less than a sweeping revolution. We are called upon, as the DUKE says, "to frame a new Constitution for these kingdoms," and in doing so to supplant a system, the growth of centuries of gradual and natural development, by a manufactured and mechanical construction in estimating the working of which we can only proceed by guess-work. Nothing of the kind was ever attempted before by the most adventurous of statesmen. Speculative schemes of Home Rule involve the creation of an Imperial Parliament and subordinate local legislatures, the delimitation of their respective spheres, the institution of a supreme tribunal to enforce those limits, and the provision of guarantees for the rights of menaced minorities. These are projects which find a parallel in the *Oceania*

of HARRINGTON and the pedantries of the "Rota Club," but have nothing in common with the practical genius of English statesmanship, even in a revolutionary period, still less with the political system under which we have seen, for many generations, "Freedom slowly broaden down "from precedent to precedent." The task we are invited to undertake, with a light heart, is intricate and almost endless; and there is not the smallest ground, apart from a feigned optimism akin to despair, for the belief that the elaborate structure of shams would purchase us a year's release from the pressure of Irish anxieties. It is a signal proof of the levity with which the advocates of Home Rule projects have taken in hand a subject the difficulty of which might baffle the profoundest constructive statesmanship, that, while promising the extinction of Irish troubles and the liberation of the Imperial Parliament from its most oppressive cares, they contemplate the continued presence and the active interference of Irish representatives at Westminster.

It is to be hoped that, after the DUKE of ARGYLL's exposure of the hollow and misleading nature of some of the phrases which are most freely employed in this controversy, politicians will have the good sense either to speak out plainly or to hold their tongues, at the risk of being somewhat severely judged. Those who are inclined to make concessions to the Parnellite demand, which has been formulated often and distinctly enough, must not expect to retain the confidence of Englishmen by declaring that they are resolved to maintain the

"unity of the Empire" and "the supreme authority of the Imperial Parliament." As the DUKE says, "These are phrases, and nothing more; they may mean something, but they may also mean nothing at all; and they are most likely to mean nothing when men are evidently using them as an excuse for retreat." Another valuable contribution of the DUKE's to the interests of honest and straightforward discussion is his demonstration of the futility of the analogies drawn from American and colonial experience by the apologists of Home Rule. One point of distinction is sufficient to show how vast is the difference. In Ireland, unlike the United States or our own self-governing colonies, "the initial force is not towards, but away from, union; it is centrifugal, and not centripetal." When this is the case, it is beating the air to discuss limitations and guarantees. The simple fact that under any of the forms of Home Rule which the Parnellites would consent to take even as the "basis of negotiation" the administrative authority would be vested in an Irish Government overrides any pledges, capable of being enforced, in theory by some tribunal, for the security of the persons and the property of the minority. Without a single confiscatory statute or a legal judgment against any individual, proprietary rights can be extinguished, and offenders against the "unwritten law" subjected to the most cruel punishment by the mere abstinence of the local government from interference. The police and the tri-

bonals of the League will settle the matter, if they are allowed to work their will, and that they would be allowed to work their will who can doubt, when we see that the dominant power in the Irish Legislature and the control of the Irish Administration would assuredly pass into the hands of MR. PARNELL and his party? The methods by which MR. PARNELL and his party would secure the support of the masses as long as any victims remained who were worth despoiling are not matter of guess work. "AN IRISHMAN" opportunely reminds Englishmen and Scotchmen, in a letter we print elsewhere, of the opinions expressed by MR. GLADSTONE and his colleagues in the late Ministry about the public conduct of MR. PARNELL and his associates. It was MR. GLADSTONE himself who denounced the Parnellites as men "not ashamed to preach in Ireland the doctrines of public plunder," and it is to those very men that the preservation of order, the protection of life and property, and the enforcement of civil rights are to be intrusted, according to the policy with which MR. GLADSTONE has permitted himself to be identified.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30.

LORD COWPER ON HOME RULE.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I trust you will allow me space for a few lines on one portion of the great question of Irish Home Rule, which is now being discussed throughout the whole of the United Kingdom. It is that portion of the question which naturally comes first. Is Home Rule for its own sake really desired by anybody? I submit that we have no evidence of this being the case.

We, whose opinion is to the contrary, are surely justified in holding it until it is disproved by some stronger testimony than the knowledge of the real feelings of the Irish members which Mr. Labouchere has managed to pick up.

According to the idea prevalent among those who have studied the speeches and the actions of Mr. Parnell and his colleagues, they either want separation, or, if in their own hearts they recognize that this is impossible, they are at all events determined to continue their efforts indefinitely in that direction. By doing so they retain their own position, keep up the supplies, and have constant opportunities of mortifying and insulting that country which is the object of their most bitter detestation.

This being on the face of it their motive and their object, it is, I say, for the English advocates of Irish Home Rule to give us some reason for believing that any measure of Home Rule, consistent with the preservation of the unity of the Empire, would detach a single member of the Parnellite party. They must either prove this, or they must prove that there is some intermediate party between the Parnellites and the Loyalists who would be conciliated by the concession and drawn towards the latter. That no such party exists now is made clear by our remembering that it did once exist but was altogether unable to maintain itself, and this not from want of an efficient leader: for there are few men of greater ability than Mr. Shaw, and yet he utterly failed to keep a Home Rule party together, or to kindle for more than a moment the smallest enthusiasm on the subject. From mere want of a following he has long since had to retire into private life.

Let us turn to the means by which the leaders of the only Irish party which now exists have obtained their influence over the people. I have been

looking carefully over the letters and papers accumulated during my residence in Ireland, and not once do I find the question of Home Rule as much as mentioned. The whole agitation turned simply and solely upon the question of rent. And, indeed, it does not require to have resided in the country or to have had a share in the Government to know this. It must have been evident to all men that not only Mr. Shaw but Mr. Butt before him failed altogether to get hold of the people of Ireland, and that Mr. Parnell would have failed likewise had he not hit upon the expedient of appealing to their pockets. The farmers of Ireland, who comprise the bulk of the population, had been utterly indifferent to the cry of Home Rule; but, as was very natural, they responded to a man to the suggestion that they should keep the whole or a great part of their rent for themselves instead of paying it to their landlords. While I was in Ireland the question of the day was agrarian not political, and I believe it to be so still, for I gather from your Dublin Correspondent, and still more from private sources, that we are on the eve of a more formidable strike against rent than we have yet seen.

My Whig principles have always made me favourable to the policy of redressing grievances concurrently with carrying out the law, and for this reason I cordially supported the Land Act. It set our consciences free and enabled us without compunction to strain the existing law to the utmost, and, when that failed, to apply to Parliament for fresh powers to stop the outrages which arose from the enforcement of contracts.

Our concession in 1881 was founded upon sound principles, and was in the right direction. The concession now proposed is altogether beside the mark, except as leading to results which very few of us would regard with favour. If, as I believe,

the one wish of the people of Ireland is to pay no rent, or not more than is convenient, it would be mere mockery to offer them a Parliament at College-green except as a step towards this. Do we offer it for this purpose, or do we leave the people out of our reckoning and propose it for the sake of conciliating their leader? Let us always remember that these leaders have hitherto shown themselves to be utterly irreconcilable.

I do not for one moment admit that, even if it can be made clear that Home Rule is really wanted by the Irish, it can be granted without interfering with Imperial interests. But it is sufficient at this moment to maintain that until we see plainly that it is wanted we need not even argue the case; and I again challenge the English advocates of this measure to prove to me that any single Irishman really wants it for its own sake.

I deliberately confine myself to this the preliminary portion of the question, but before concluding I have a piece of advice to give to the Irish landlords. To my astonishment I find that their present difficulties about their rent are comparatively unknown in England. My experience is that they can raise their voices loudly enough when they choose. Let them make the real state of the case known now as forcibly as they did in 1880.

I remain, Sir, yours faithfully,
Panshanger, Hertford, _____
COWPEE.

MR. LABOUCHERE'S PROPOSALS.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—If "one Parliament" be raised to dogma, and the only reply to those who, while preferring abstractedly one Parliament for the United Kingdom, think that under the existing circumstances abstract theory ought to give way to practical exigencies, is anathema, it is very evident that you are perfectly right in holding that it is

idle in any one to attempt to suggest methods by means of which English aspirations for unity of empire and Irish aspirations to conjoin with this local independence can be solved. Even in this case, however, I think that you will regard it as reasonable that the Irish demands should be fairly stated, and that judgment should not go by default.

Among those who are prepared to grant Home Rule to Ireland there seems a strong feeling that if Ireland has a legislative assembly the presence of Irish representatives in the Imperial Legislature would be a disturbing influence, and certainly there are numerous objections which present themselves to the mind against it; notably, the practical one that, if the Liberals were in a majority with the Irish, and the Conservatives without them, it is not easy to see whether Her Majesty's advisers ought to be Liberals or Conservatives. Nothing, however, is more easy than to deal with this. The reply is that the Irish have no wish to sit in an Imperial Parliament, provided that they be not called upon to pay Imperial taxes. Place their island in the same relation to us as the Dominion and they will be perfectly satisfied. It will, perhaps, be said that it would be unfair to cast upon us a burden which ought to be borne by both islands. But it is very doubtful whether we should lose by the transaction. Owing to Irish spirits coming over here and the duty upon them being in reality paid by the English consumer, and tea and other such taxed articles paying duty at English ports and being consumed in Ireland, it is by no means easy—notwithstanding that there have been several Parliamentary returns dealing with the subject—to estimate the proportion of taxes respectively paid by Great Britain and by Ireland which find their way into the Imperial Exchequer. It may, however, be estimated that the Irish proportion is nearly, if not quite, balanced by the cost of civil government in that country; at most the former exceeds the latter by about £500,000. I do not think that the Irish would object to contribute this amount each year

without representation, leaving us to spend it as we please in the defence of the empire, and in maintaining our commercial and political relations with foreign countries. There is, therefore, no reason why the Irish should sit in the Imperial Parliament, if we prefer that they should not. So far as they are concerned, the difficulties inherent in their presence can be got over by assent to their absence. A leading Radical writes thus to me:—

“If we are to alter the Constitution, we ought to do it once and for all, and thoroughly. We ought to have six legislatures—1. Imperial, dealing with Army, Navy, war, foreign relations, and any other matters which it is deemed desirable to reserve to it. 2. English; 3. Welsh; 4. Scotch; 5. Irish, with the exception of Ulster; 6. Ulster. If Mr. Gladstone would propose this, I would go with him heart and soul.”

This suggestion is a large one, and should it meet with approval it would hardly find opponents among the Irish, while it would meet with favour among many Radicals on this side of the Irish Channel, for among its advantages may be noted that it would relieve us in domestic matters from the interference of hereditary legislators.

No scheme of government involving checks and balances is workable unless all unite in an endeavour to make it so. If we really are of opinion that the Irish are so constituted by nature that they will subordinate the tranquillity and well-being of their country to an insane desire to make all civil government impossible, and will permanently and persistently cut off their nose to spite our face, we ought to have the courage of our opinions; tell them that they are neither fit to govern themselves nor to have part with us in governing the empire, and establish in Ireland English rule. Cromwell had a plan; Mr. Gladstone has a plan. Between the two there is no medium. If Mr. Gladstone's plan is open to dangers and difficulties, so too is that of Cromwell; either of them, however, is more practical than to concede what is not enough to satisfy, and to allow representative government to be brought into discredit by still maintaining it and yet ignoring its legitimate outcome.

Talking the other day with one of the ablest of the Irish Parliamentary party, he said to me this ;—

“ It is extraordinary how little the English understand their own strength. If we had Home Rule, and if we were to attempt separation, you, with the command of the army, with your fleet, with the possession of the fortresses and harbours, and with the Orangemen on your side, could crush us in a week. We know this if you do not, and even if we desired separation—which we do not—we should never attempt so losing a game. You would, and legitimately, treat us as the North did the South in the United States without having to engage in a war in order to effect it. You would suspend our constitution and rule us by military law for Heaven only knows how long. Your newspapers take us for fools and their own people for men without any backbone.”

Your obedient servant,

H. LABOUCHERE.

No. 10, Queen Anne's-gate, St. James's-park.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—The question of a separate legislature for Ireland is at last being properly threshed out; and I have not much fear as to the result. As to Mr. Labouchere's plan, I shall only say that I think it quite unworkable. Those who want to understand why are referred to the 17th chapter of John Stuart Mill's "Representative Government." Mr. Labouchere's scheme is one of federation, and it will be observed that the conditions of success laid down by Mill are not at all fulfilled. That great writer does not mention Ireland, but it can scarcely be doubted that he had her case in his mind.

I cannot pretend to vie with Mr. Labouchere in knowledge of the Parnellite party, but may claim to have more practical acquaintance both with Irish landlords and Irish tenants. He says a good many landlords are disposed to rally to Home Rule; I live in Ireland, and have not met any of them.

That the tenant-farmers are animated by a passionate desire for Home Rule is very doubtful. They have a great deal of national sentiment—a noble and desirable thing in

itself, but still a sentiment. What they really and practically want is to get the land. That bribe is daily held out to them, and they would be more than human if they altogether refused to hear the voice of the charmer.

The landlords know right well that if legislative power and the control of the police are localized in Ireland they will have no real guarantee for their properties. And they have special reasons for fearing Mr. Labouchere, even when he offers them the gift of purchase by the Irish State. A newspaper for which he is responsible has advised that they should be left to rot. That paragraph has been reprinted in Ireland and sent about as a circular, and it describes with more accuracy than elegance what their condition would be if left to the tender mercies of an Irish Parliament. It has already been pointed out in your leading article that the money to buy out the landlords could not be procured upon Irish credit.

That legislative independence would be ruinous to Ireland is my firm conviction. That it would also be a terrible danger to England is no less true, though it may be less obvious. You may create an Irish State at your doors, but it will be a hostile one. The condition of Ireland is the long result of time, and a chronic malady cannot be cured by one hazardous operation. County government is still unreformed. It is only too true that there is not between the populations of the two islands that mutual sympathy which Mill thought necessary for a successful federation. Where are "the sympathies of race, language, and religion" of which he spoke? It is perhaps barely conceivable that England may abandon her friends in Ireland, but she will not thereby convert those who have not been her friends.

Plutus is a very timorous person. Some of the best Irish securities have already suffered much from the rumours which fill the air. If those rumours are not disproved by the event, English credit cannot hope to escape. Her worst enemies—and no great nation is without many

—will always be at work on the western side of St. George's Channel. Your obedient servant,
Clonmel. R. BAGWELL.

THE IRISH PROBLEM.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Surely there can be but few persons who are content to let the present state of things between this country and Ireland endure indefinitely. What condition can be more miserable than the present for either the stronger or the weaker partner?

What are the terms of the problem to be solved? On the one hand self-government for Ireland; on the other the protection of landed property against confiscation and the safeguarding of a part of Ulster. Is such a problem insoluble? I venture to think not. It is true that as regards the confiscation of property the appeal which the Irish leaders have so long made to the reckless passions of the people is at last bearing its natural fruit. That appeal, so diligently made, has been as faithfully answered; and the great difficulty that now stands in the way of Home Rule is the conviction so strongly borne in upon many Englishmen, who wish to deal uprightly in this matter, that in the Irish mind at present there is but faint regard for the rights of those whose interests are opposed to their own. I fear that even a Land Act was a heavy price to pay for establishing such a belief. Strange it is how the chickens always at last come home to roost; how honesty and scrupulous regard for the rights of others always in the end vindicate themselves as the true guides.

But though the land agitation—in the spirit in which it was conducted—and Mr. Gladstone's "generous" solution of it have done much to make the granting of Home Rule difficult, still the tangle may be disentangled. Where the land question is now, purchase is the only solution, and that purchase should be carried out by the Irish themselves. Let an Irish Parliament be elected for this special purpose, without other governing powers

Let it raise a loan—the rents being the security—and buy out those landlords who do not care to embark in the new state of things. As soon as these and other financial arrangements have been made, let the great experiment try itself. If the Irish believe that they can find greater happiness under their own arrangements, why should we stand in their way? So long as we throw the full responsibility on themselves, so long as we refuse to enter into entangling arrangements, and take care to leave no matter about which our interference can be invoked, insisting upon clear accounts being made between us from the moment of starting, we can confidently let matters shape themselves, leaving to the Irish to choose a future of friendship or of enmity between us. When we have done right for right's sake, we may face all futures with a light heart. My own belief is that we shall separate only to combine. In a few years the two nations will be knit more closely together than they ever yet have been, and some of the unreal ties which are snapped to-day will bind us with a new and persistent force in the future.

As regards Ulster, let the different parts of it decide for themselves whether they will join the rest of Ireland, or be autonomous, or remain in their present condition. The same feeling of justice which makes us tread long-lived prepossessions under our feet and break with an old past for the sake of satisfying the national sentiment of Ireland should also make us refuse under any circumstances or any pressure to cast off a part of the country that elects to stay with us. Peace grows as often out of disunion as union. It has followed from the separation of Belgium and Holland, and it will follow from the separation of a part of Ulster from the rest of Ireland, at all events for a season, until the time comes when the grass has grown over old graves and the passions buried in them.

I am, very faithfully,

AUBERON HERBERT.

Ashley Arnewood Farm, Lymington.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Mr. Gladstone has done much for the Catholics of Ireland, for which they promised peace and gratitude, but have repaid with threats and defiance. Would it be too much for the Protestants to ask him for the one little boon of an explicit assurance whether or not we are to be deprived of the protection of the Imperial Parliament?

The present condition of things is simply disastrous, and is one from the effects of which, if continued much longer, neither a British nor a Home Rule Legislature will be able to raise the country during this generation. The smallest trades are languishing; many people to my knowledge, and this in Ulster, are delaying the ordinary and necessary repairs to their houses; and the well-to-do Protestant farmers are stopping their improvements, with the result that farm labourers are receiving the lowest wages for 20 years.

There is an old Scotch saying to the effect that "It is better to have the finger off than aye wagging." Let us know the worst, and I, for one—whose family were "planted" here in 1641, not as owners but as occupiers, which for the most part we have continued, preferring that our cadets should be found in the pages of the public services of Great Britain, the Colonies, and America, than the heads of the family in "Burke's Landed Gentry,"—and many like me will subject ourselves to the lesser evil of sacrificing much that our industry has created, so that we may leave the country rather than submit ourselves to the degradation of being ruled by a party whose methods are organized falsehood, intimidation, and the deprivation of personal liberty. The remaining alternative of the sword is in many men's mouths and hearts, but not in mine. Your obedient servant,

AN ULSTER PLANTATION LIBERAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—The loyal inhabitants of Ireland owe you a deep

debt of gratitude for the ability with which the subject of Home Rule has been discussed in *The Times*. Will you allow me to point out one of the political difficulties, hitherto unnoticed, with which English statesmen in favour of such legislation will, when they enter upon the subject, find themselves confronted.

Here, in Ulster, we have somewhere about half a million of Presbyterians, the descendants of Scotch settlers, who look upon Home Rule as Rome Rule, and will resist it to the uttermost. So soon as the question comes on for discussion in Parliament, doubtless, deputations will be sent to the mother Churches in Scotland, which may be expected to raise such a united voice in favour of their children as will tell powerfully upon the Scotch vote. Scotland is Liberal in politics and will in general support a Liberal Minister, but over and above this, by far, is she Presbyterian, and may be depended upon to aid to the utmost her offspring in Ireland, with whom, through her Churches, she keeps up constant intercourse.

Your obedient servant,

AN ULSTER PRESBYTERIAN.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—In your interesting article showing what Home Rule means I have seen no reference to recruiting for the British Army. A short Act passed by an Irish Parliament, forbidding all recruiting, would soon render British troops foreign legionaries, and insure their dismissal from the country, while an Irish Parliament would increase the police force, and undoubtedly would use it as the nucleus of a military force of their own.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

AN ANGLO-IRISHMAN.

THE FINANCIAL ASPECT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—As it is desirable that the Home Rule question

should be discussed in all its aspects, I trust you will kindly allow me space to direct attention to the financial aspect—a most complicated and important one, which hitherto, for manifest reasons, has barely been touched.

As regards finance, the union of the two countries has become real and complete. When the union was effected in 1800, complete financial union was not at the time practicable, but in 1816 the Exchequers of the two countries were united, and the debts of the two countries were amalgamated.

In 1825 the commercial union of the two countries took place, and cross-Channel duties were abolished. In 1858 the last of the differential duties between Great Britain and Ireland (that on spirits) was removed; and for nearly 30 years the financial union has been complete; there has been no difference whatever between Imperial taxation in the two countries except the "land tax" and the "assessed taxes," from which Ireland is exempted. With these exceptions there is no difference between the taxation of the two countries, the people residing in Galway and in Donegal being taxed in the same way as those residing in Cornwall or Perthshire, the people in Dublin and Belfast in the same way as those in Glasgow and Liverpool.

The establishment of this principle of equalized individual taxation between the two countries was long striven for by the greatest financial Ministers of the day (Mr. Gladstone included). Its advantages are numerous and evident. It is the fairest and the most equitable, for it adjusts itself according to the circumstances and number of the people in either country. It facilitates commerce between the countries by abolishing all customs, examinations, or restrictions between them. It does away with the necessity for the extra cost of numerous separate public establishments, such as a mint, an excise or revenue department, a post-office establishment. It secures a unity of administration, which is of the utmost value for the smooth and economical working of public affairs. A

single army is maintained as well as a single navy, and certain other departments of Imperial administration.

The one matter to be had regard to is that in the public expenditure a fair proportionate share of the revenue shall be spent in each country; and if the annual appropriation accounts are examined it will be found that this is very fairly done, if anything, Ireland being treated rather advantageously.

This system of complete financial union, which has been laboriously and slowly, but at last most thoroughly, constructed, and which works smoothly, harmoniously, equitably, and satisfactorily, must now all be revolutionized and pulled to pieces, if Ireland is to be given the management of all her own affairs.

Vague, hazy, and indistinct as are the proposed schemes for the settlement of the Irish question, two may be taken as sufficiently distinct for the purpose of present argument. The first is the restoration of Grattan's Parliament, with, as Mr. Parnell called it, "its important privileges and wide and far-reaching constitution." The second is the creation of an Irish Parliament in Dublin for the management of purely Irish affairs; Imperial affairs to be conducted as at present by the Imperial Parliament.

I will briefly examine the financial relationship of the two countries under each of these two schemes.

To take the first, the restoration of Grattan's Parliament. Now, what was the financial relationship of the two countries under that Parliament? Practically it was one of separation. The Irish Parliament fixed all Irish taxes; commerce was under its control; and it levied what duties it thought right on imports; it borrowed money as required, and Ireland had her own debt. As regards Imperial expenditure, its contributions consisted of a number, fixed by itself from time to time, of men for the British Army. It had for years borne the burden of pensions for English placemen or favourites, in some cases too disgraceful to be even put on the English pension list, but otherwise it con-

tributed nothing to the maintenance of the Crown, to the expense of foreign embassies, or colonial expenses.

What would be the financial relations now if we reverted to that state of things? Practically, that the Exchequers of the two countries would be completely separated. Separate customs departments would have to be created, with all their cost and restrictive inconveniences; separate excise departments; separate post-offices; separate armies (for the Irish Parliament had its Mutiny Act). But it would be impossible to go back to exactly the previous state of affairs, for there would be this additional matter, that Ireland would have to contribute a certain sum annually in payment of her portion of the National Debt (what portion would have to be decided).

So much, then, roughly, for the financial arrangements necessary in the case of the restoration to Ireland of Grattan's Parliament. What would they be if the other scheme were adopted, that of giving Ireland a local Parliament in Dublin to deal with purely Irish affairs, while the Imperial Parliament should continue as at present to deal with Imperial affairs?

I make the calculation from the figures given in the "Finance Accounts of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland for 1884-85 (Parliamentary paper No. 282 of 1885)." Part of the Imperial burden is the National Debt, and naturally therefore Ireland must bear her proper share of it.

The permanent charge of the National Debt is returned (p. 42) as £28,884,000, to which must be added an annual charge of £200,000 "interest and principal of Exchequer Bonds (Suez)" — a total of £29,084,000.

The Civil List (as the tie of the Crown is to remain) must also be considered an Imperial charge. That was £409,000 (p. 42) in 1884-85, to which must be added a sum of £156,000 annuities to the Royal Family, and £204,000, pensions and annuities on the Consolidated Fund. These items amount to £29,853,000.

The cost of the Army and Navy, of course, must be considered Imperial burdens. The expenditure for 1884-5, it is true, was exceptionally heavy, but the charge must always be high. The amounts are as follow (p. 80) :—

Cost of Army	£18,840,000
Cost of Navy	11,568,000
	£30,408,000

This, however, by no means completes the items of national expenditure which may fairly be considered Imperial, for we must include certain grants that come under the head of Civil Service. (See p. 80.)

Class I.—Royal palaces	£38,000
Houses of Parliament, say one-third of present cost, as a division between Imperial and local	12,000
Class II.—House of Commons office (ditto)	17,000
Foreign Office	72,000
Colonial Office	40,000
Mint	69,000
National Debt Office	15,000
Class V.—Foreign and colonial services	£91,000
Class VI.—Superannuations, &c.	433,000
	£1,423,000

The total Imperial expenditure in 1884-5 therefore was :—

Consolidated Fund	£29,853,000
Army and Navy	30,408,000
Civil Service	1,423,000
	£61,684,000

or, say, in round numbers, £60,000,000.

This, then, is the sum which would have to be raised for Imperial affairs, and in the raising of which Ireland would have to take her share. I have purposely omitted the Irish police charges.

Now, it is to be remarked that there is no choice between the system of equal taxation of the people in the two countries and the system of a fixed proportional contribution by the two countries. Special Imperial taxes in both countries for Imperial purposes are not possible, consistent with the requirement that the Irish Par-

liament shall have control of all Irish affairs, for taxation is a most important Irish affair.

If Home Rule is conceded, the present system of equalized taxation must be abandoned. The only remaining system is that of a proportionate contribution. That is unavoidable.

Here at once is a subject for endless discussion, for perpetual recrimination, for everlasting demands for alterations—What would be Ireland's proportionate share? When the Act of Union was passed in 1800 the two countries "united as to future expenses on a strict measure of relative ability." And the measure or proportion then decided was "15 parts for Great Britain and two for Ireland," an arrangement which lasted until the amalgamation of Exchequers and debts in 1816. This would make Ireland's contribution to the £60,000,000 a little over £7,000,000.

If this estimate is objected to, some other must be made, but there would be great difficulty in arriving at any satisfactory proportion, for the means do not at present exist of apportioning the proper share of contribution by Ireland any more than they do for apportioning what Lancashire would have to contribute if it was given Home Rule.

And when this difficulty is surmounted, what guarantee would be available that Ireland would contribute the specified sum? And if she did not, what means could be resorted to to oblige her to do so?

One other matter must also be borne in mind. Ireland owes a not inconsiderable sum to the Treasury for loans advanced for local purposes, for the Land Act, for land improvements, &c. These would have to be repaid. Looking at it as a whole, the position of Ireland would not be a very favourable one financially. There would be, first, the large contribution which she would have to make to the Imperial expenditure, and she would then have to provide for all these other items which do not come under that head. Education (from University down

to primary), administration of justice, police—though this is doubtful—prisons, reformatories, industrial schools, lunatics, public works, science and art, lighthouses, piers and harbours, drainage, Customs and Revenue Departments, &c., and the Irish Civil Service and Ministers. She would, moreover, be in an almost hopeless position for obtaining loans for public works or other efforts to develop her resources. If capital is being withdrawn from Ireland now, while the Imperial Government still exists there, how improbable is it that capital would be attracted to Ireland when Imperial authority would be little more than a shadow.

The position of Great Britain would also be unfavourably affected. There would be the tremendous *bouleversement* caused by the breaking up of almost the whole system of Imperial taxation and finance. Several Departments which are now Imperial, such as the Post Office, Revenue Departments, &c., would have to be remodelled. There would be the constant doubt as to Ireland's share being forthcoming, with consequent confusion of Imperial finance; there would be the increased Customs establishments required to prevent the smuggling of Irish spirits into Great Britain.

The truth is that the more the details of the subject are investigated, the more impracticable does any scheme of a separate Parliament for Ireland become.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
HENRY JEPHSON.

The Times this day in its leading article says:—
LORD COWPER asks to-day the most opportune and pertinent question whether Irishmen really desire Home Rule. Notwithstanding the electoral results which have carried Mr. GLADSTONE off his feet, few people who have thought the matter out at all would admit that there is any evidence of a genuine demand by the majority of the people of

Ireland for a Parliament sitting in Dublin. MR. PARNELL has swept into his net the discontented and disaffected of every sort and degree, he has terrorized indefinite numbers who would be on the side of law were law made respectable, and yet he has barely obtained the votes of a clear majority of the Irish people. Had the social conditions been normal, and had the question whether or not an Irish Parliament, with its necessary consequences, should be demanded been fairly placed before a free electorate, there is every reason to suppose that the result would have been widely different. But LORD COWPER goes much further than this. Speaking with exceptional knowledge of Irish affairs and Irish feeling, he challenges proof that there is any serious demand even by a considerable minority of the Irish people for Home Rule. The Irish difficulty as he knew it was agrarian, and he sees no reason whatever for doubting that it is agrarian still. MR. BUTT and MR. SHAW alike failed to stir up the Irish people on political grounds, and MR. PARNELL'S superior success has been purchased by a systematic appeal to their cupidity. He has been able to point to large practical gains as the result of reposing confidence in his management, and the reward promised for continued obedience is not any splendid political regeneration, but simply the abolition of such rents as the tenant-farmers are still expected to pay. It is true that MR. PARNELL has declared that he would never have taken his coat off for any smaller enterprise than the complete emancipation of Ireland from English rule.

but it must not be forgotten that he had to consider his subscribers across the Atlantic no less than his followers in Ireland. The sinews of war have always been largely furnished by Irishmen in America, who have nothing to gain from abolition of Irish rents, but are glad to contribute dollars for the injury of England. MR. PARNELL'S heroics were part of the consideration for their valuable assistance. Moreover, the Irish politicians and the Irish people are, as LORD COWPER points out, two very different things. The people want money in their pockets, the politicians, who also want money in their pockets, have no way of maintaining the supply except by providing a new grievance as fast as the old ones disappear. When no more rents are paid, their importance is at an end, unless they can invent some good enduring sort of cry. Home Rule is such a cry so long as we refuse to concede it, but if we did concede it, they would at once be driven by the law of their being to adopt another.

In these circumstances it is necessary, as LORD COWPER points out, that we should very clearly make up our minds whether our object is to conciliate the Irish people or the Irish agitators. The former prize Home Rule, if at all, only as a means of abolishing rents, the latter prize it only as a source of political power. It is very doubtful whether MR. PARNELL himself would not be dreadfully disconcerted by any scheme of Home Rule shutting him out of the House of Commons, while any scheme leaving him in it would only compel him and his followers to devise some other method

of attracting dollars from America. If it is the Irish people whom we seek to please, then any Home Rule scheme that does not lead to the abolition of rent is an offer of a stone instead of bread, while any such scheme which does include or lead to the abolition of rent is a mere superfluity, since rent can be very effectually abolished without it. We need hardly repeat, what is now pretty clear to everybody, that if an Irish Parliament were once established in Dublin, all securities and guarantees for the protection of property according to English ideas would be the mere shams. An Irish Parliament is worse than useless in Irish eyes except as a method of governing Ireland according to Irish ideas. Whatever else may be doubtful, this at least is certain, that the leading Irish idea at the present time is to transfer the land from the landlords to the tenants. Hence the concession of an Irish Parliament would unmistakably mean the concurrence of this country in an act of general spoliation; and if that is what we intend, we may as well carry out our intentions in a straightforward way, without burdening ourselves and Ireland with political difficulties of the most formidable kind having no necessary connexion with the proposed end. If that is not what we intend, Home Rule is mockery alike of the Irish and of ourselves. Probably very few people have any adequate notion of the extent to which the abolition of rent has already been carried. LORD COWPER is astonished that the Irish landlords do not make known their real position, and although they have some reason to feel scintical about the

practical utility of such a course, they are certainly bound both on private and public grounds to publish the truth. At present we hear of many scattered cases of conspiracy among the tenants of particular estates to pay no rent. A prominent Irish landlord is mentioned whose usual receipts at the September audit from a certain estate were, taking good years with bad, £5,000, and who has received this autumn just eleven pounds. But the public should not be left to draw inferences from isolated cases. They ought to be put in possession of the most ample statistics that can be collected, and so not only enabled but compelled to face the real nature of the Home Rule demand and the results that follow even the partial government of Ireland according to Irish ideas.

How people can blind themselves with a few fine phrases is very strikingly shown in a letter which we publish to-day from Mr. AUBERON HERBERT. He proposes that an Irish Parliament should be chosen for the single purpose of raising a loan on the security of Irish land for the equitable purchase of Irish estates from their present owners. It would be interesting to hear from Mr. HERBERT the name of a single human being besides himself whom such an assembly would satisfy, and whether he himself would like to invest any considerable portion of his fortune in the loan he proposes. This great experiment being tried, he would let the Irish go their own way, comforting ourselves with the reflection that when we have "done right for right's sake"—an odd way of describing the deliberate

abandonment of every principle of government in which we believe—we may face the future with a light heart. One had need to have a good deal of lightness elsewhere than in his heart to accept such a method as this of dealing with a serious question, yet Mr. HERBERT, after all, only states in its naked absurdity an idea which floats vaguely in the minds of some other theorists. Such people may peruse with advantage the examination of the financial aspects of Home Rule which Mr. HENRY JEPHSON contributes to our columns to-day. Mr. CHILDERS has begun what we hope will be a successful election contest in Edinburgh, and his financial ability could hardly be turned to a better use than examining the difficulties in which any conceivable form of legislative independence for Ireland would involve a Chancellor of the Exchequer. An Edinburgh audience is very competent to follow him in such an examination, and it will certainly be expected of him that he shall define a political attitude which his precipitate surrender on the question of the Irish police has laid open to some suspicion. Mr. LABOUCHERE has a short and easy method of getting over financial and political difficulties at once. He says that the Irish people have no wish to send representatives to the House of Commons if they are excused from contributing to Imperial taxation. It is apparently contemplated that Imperial taxation shall continue to be spent in Ireland and for Irish account. In that case Mr. LABOUCHERE makes, on behalf of his Irish clients, the handsome offer that they will forego the

pleasure of hampering the Imperial Legislature in consideration of a subsidy which Mr. JEPHSON estimates at seven millions per annum. The creation of half a dozen Parliaments for the United Kingdom five of which could claim for their constituencies the same right of exemption from Imperial taxation on condition of sending no representatives to the sixth is the scheme of some eminent Radical quoted with approval by Mr. LABOUCHERE. If it is seriously put forth, it has been answered in anticipation by the DUKE of ARGYLL. The Cabinet which is to meet on Saturday to consider a situation very greatly altered since its last meeting will, at all events, have the advantage of a great variety of suggestions, though hardly of a kind to help it greatly in dealing with practical difficulties. The wild schemes to which we have adverted give increased cogency to the considerations set forth by competent observers of Irish affairs, such as LORD COWPER and Mr. BAGWELL, and cannot but help to open the eyes of the nation to the tremendous perils into which some of its light-hearted advisers are ready to plunge it in pursuit of a phantom.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31.

HOME RULE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—The daring proposal of the Nationalists that they should have the control of the Royal Irish Constabulary reminds one of *Æsop's* fable of the wolves and the sheep. The sheep agreed to the proposal of the wolves that they should give up their dogs. The treaty was soon broken, and the

wolves, falling upon the sheep, who were destitute of their faithful guardians, the dogs, worried and devoured them without control. Such would be the undoubted fate of the Irish loyalists if this proposal were adopted.

In justice to the Nationalists themselves, I do not think they had the hardihood originally to demand this concession, as they must have known that no person who knew anything of the condition of Ireland would for a moment entertain it. But as soon as Mr. Childers frightened us out of our propriety by this startling suggestion Mr. Parnell was quick enough to take it up and make it part of his programme.

I hope that this utterance on the part of Mr. Childers was only a thoughtless one and that he will take an opportunity of assuring the people of Edinburgh that he is not prepared to surrender the throats of the Presbyterian flock in the north of Ireland to the Nationalist wolves. I think, if I recollect rightly, that Mr. Childers paid a flying visit to Ireland and was in this country at the time of the murder of Lord Mountmorres. I am sorry that he learned so little from his visit. And if he consults his late colleagues, Lord Spencer, Mr. Forster, or Mr. Trevelyan, they will convince him of the grievous error into which he has fallen and of the mischief which it has already done in this country, paralyzing the arm of the law by the mere apprehension of the possibility of such a calamity falling upon this distracted country.

I cannot but think that, in consequence of the events of the last three weeks, and the flood of light which has been cast upon the subject by the articles in *The Times* showing "what Home Rule means," Mr. Parnell, at the very moment when he thought himself near attaining his aim, is really further from it than ever. The English

people are now beginning to understand not merely the danger to us Irish loyalists, but to themselves and to the Empire of which they are justly proud. And I believe the loyal unions which have been formed could not employ their funds better than by diffusing broadcast the sound information on this subject which is to be found concentrated in *The Times*, and in having meetings and addresses upon the subject throughout England. Let but the new House of Commons, by an overwhelming majority, pass a resolution that they will never suffer the union between the two countries to be impaired, and that they will sustain and support Her Majesty's Government in any steps which they may find it necessary to take for the purpose of suppressing the National League or any other association which may be formed for the like treasonable object, prohibiting and dispersing its meetings, and breaking up those illegal assemblies called courts, whose existence is now tolerated—let this be done, and the entire movement will, at the first show of firmness, entirely collapse.

The Government of the United States would not tolerate an agitation for promoting the secession of the Southern States, which was prevented by the expenditure of so much blood and treasure. Why should England suffer such treasonable projects to be openly carried on in her midst and to be subsidized by money contributed by her avowed enemies? I believe that if England took up such a position it would not be necessary to resort to the extreme measure of governing Ireland as a Crown colony, though that alternative would always remain as a *dernier ressort*.

With respect to Mr. Parnell and his band of 85 confederates, it will be strange indeed if the House of Commons will find itself at a loss to assert its authority over such a band. Some of

your correspondents allege that a grave breach of constitutional law has been committed by this attempt to establish an *imperium in imperio*, that the pledge given by those members servilely to obey the dictates of another member is inconsistent with the position of a member of a deliberative assembly, and that such persons might properly be prevented by a vote of the House from taking any part in its proceedings. On this, of course, I am not able to form any judgment; but it deserves the consideration of those authorities upon constitutional law who are to be found in both Houses of Parliament.

Mr. Gladstone has frequently spoken of an "equitable settlement of the question pending between England and Ireland." That question is whether England is to govern Ireland or not, and to that question the true Englishman can only return one answer.

Let not any statesman suppose that by making any further concessions, if such were possible, to the demands of Irish agitators we approach nearer to the satisfactory solution of this question; nay, we are further from it by every sign of weakness which we exhibit. It must be faced at once with firmness, determination, and that calm sense of power under which, on all critical occasions, the great English people act. Those who read the *Freeman* and *United Ireland* will not fail to observe that our enemies, flushed with the anticipation of approaching victory consequent upon the supposed accession to their ranks of so powerful an ally as Mr. Gladstone, are sorely pressing the little garrisons in Ireland, calling upon them by alternate threats and blandishments to betray their trust and surrender the fortress, warning them that if they do not surrender they must expect no quarter. I believe the loyal men of Ireland, Catholic as well as Protestant, will not be

influenced by such threats or promises, but will manfully stand together to maintain the union with England and to fight to the last for their lives and their liberties.

Opinions may differ as to whether it was the duty of England to succour the garrisons in the Soudan and to bring timely relief to Gordon; but there can be no second opinion about her duty towards us, surrounded by enemies more relentless than the Mahdi and his Arabs.

Dublin.

UNIONIST.

IRISH PARLIAMENTARY RIGHTS.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—As the question touching an Irish Parliament at the present moment attracts the attention of all civilized nations, perhaps you will be good enough to find room in *The Times* for this letter.

The real question at issue is whether or not Ireland is entitled to her own Parliament, and, if she is entitled to self-government, what practical results will ensue?

In approaching and dealing with this most momentous question we must eschew and discard all prejudice, and discuss the subject in a just, reasonable, and constitutional manner.

The right to an Irish Parliament—the right to be taxed only by their own representatives—the right to have the laws by which they are governed made by their own representatives—was a right inherent in the people of Ireland. It was a common law right, part and parcel of the inheritance of the English people. This right manifested itself in Ireland almost as soon as it did itself in England.

The Parliament in its origin was limited to the English pale, and it increased or diminished as the English power was extended or contracted. The Irish who became subjects participated in the right, showing that it was an essential portion of English freedom—inherent in the natural frame of English policy.

In the reign of James I. English power extended all

over Ireland. The remnants of the Irish nation were admitted to the fellowship of allegiance, duties, and franchise. All Ireland thus had her rightful Parliament, and continued to have it from 1612 to 1800.

The Irish Parliament was thus founded on constitutional principles, sanctioned by long usage, sustained by analogy to the English form of government, and fortified by the experience of the colonies and dependencies of England.

A local Parliament is the inherent and indefeasible right of subjects of the Crown of England, wherever they are located in sufficient numbers to exercise that right.

By the final adjustment of 1782 Ireland's conditions of her future connexion with England were defined. Her legislative independence was formally recognized and established for ever. England declared perpetual her exclusive right of making her own laws, of interpreting her own laws, and of administering her own laws. She had the exclusive dominion over her own taxation, debt, and revenue. Ireland had, in practical effect, all these rights, which she was entitled to and which she had enjoyed for centuries.

By the ratification of this final adjustment of 1782, England preserved the most precious gem of the British Crown, and Ireland believed she had secured for ever her independence.

While Ireland enjoyed her own Parliament, peace and prosperity reigned throughout the country. Prosperity was apparent in every department and in every branch—commerce was fostered and increased, agriculture was encouraged and enriched, manufactures were promoted and extended, the labouring man became a farmer, the farmer rose to the position of a gentleman, towns grew into cities, the population accumulated, and peace, happiness, and prosperity gladdened the land at every side.

During the 14 years which succeeded Ireland's legislative independence, no country on the face of the earth made such rapid progress in improvement of every kind as Ireland did. Then there came the Union—that enactment

which stands out in its native deformity, the mere creature of fraud, bribery, terror, and corruption, and to which I attribute all the evils of Ireland. The annihilation of trade and commerce, the destitution, the misery, the starvation, the scaffold, all were occasioned by the Union.

The leading feature in the Union was the daring profligacy of the bribery and corruption by which it was carried. Lord Castlereagh declared in the House of Commons that he would carry the Union though it might cost more than half a million in mere bribes. The Parliamentary papers published since the Union show that no less than £1,275,000 was paid in the actual purchase-money for close and rotten boroughs. And it is calculated that over and above the borough purchase-money no less than £1,500,000 was paid in bribes.

The solemn words of Lord Plunket, delivered in the House of Commons against the Union, are:—

“Yourselves you may extinguish, but the Parliament you cannot extinguish. It is enthroned in the hearts of the people—it is established in the sanctuary of the Constitution, it is immortal as the island it protects! As well might the frantic maniac hope that the act which destroys his miserable body may extinguish his immortal soul. Do not dare to lay your hands upon the Constitution—it is above your power.”

William Saurin, Attorney-General for Ireland, said:—“You may make the Union binding in law but you cannot make it obligatory in conscience—it will be obeyed as long as England is strong, but resistance to it will be in the abstract a duty, and the exhibition of that resistance will be a mere question of prudence.” Lord Chief Justice Burke said:—“That the basest corruption and artifice were exerted to promote it; that all the worst passions of the human heart were entered into the service, and all the most depraved ingenuity of the human intellect was tortured to devise new contrivances of fraud.” But now the Irish leader and his colleagues are determined by peaceable, legal, and constitutional means, without infringing any law of man or contravening any law of God, in the abhorrence and determination of never shedding one drop of blood, to demand for Ireland her just right—her own Parliament. The immortal soul of the Irish Constitution still lives, glorious and perpetual—it is not dead, it only sleeps, to be aroused into active existence once again, in

more than pristine majesty, and in more than by-gone utility.

Your obedient servant,
M. D. KAVANAGH, LL.D., of the Middle
Temple, Barrister-at-law.

COUNTY BOARDS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—As an Irishman, and an earnest student of Irish politics for many years, I trust you will pardon my addressing you.

On all sides one is told that the prospects of Ireland are gloomier than they have ever been before, and that the Irish problem of to-day presents unparalleled difficulties.

Such statements are exaggerations; the condition of this country has been much more serious and disheartening at many previous periods of her history—in the era which preceded Catholic emancipation; during the Repeal agitation of 1843; in the troublous times of the young Ireland movement of 1848; in the Fenian scare of 1867; and in the later and equally terrible years of 1881, 1882, and 1883, Ireland was torn and threatened with dangers far greater than any which now menace her. Unlike previous agitations, Ireland's present grievances savour more of sentiment than reality; for the political convulsions which she has from time to time experienced have been productive of many substantial reforms; and if she had now secured to her people a greater share in the assessment and disbursement of the taxes of the country, and the religious and educational requirements of the Roman Catholic population fairly recognized, there would be little left for professional agitators to work upon.

The greatest and most pressing evil from which the country suffered for years was removed by the Land Act of 1881. The injustice of which Irish tenants had been the victims through rack-renting and the confiscation of their improvements, had graded them, Catholic and Protestant alike, to the verge of revolution; but that burden has also been lifted. True it is, that for the moment they

are labouring under the same disadvantages with the agricultural classes of England and Scotland, caused by the continued depression in the prices of farm produce, but they have in the Land Act of 1881 a measure of security against capricious disturbance, and an independent tribunal established for the adjustment of rent, and the settlement of all disputes between landlord and tenant; and this in itself, must, in time, go far to restore a feeling of contentment in the country.

Now in this state of things it is really difficult to comprehend why a section of the English Press takes such a pessimist view of the situation, and in a spirit akin to panic proceeds to suggest, as the only remedy, that England should almost abandon any further attempt to legislate for Ireland—cast her adrift, and relegate her to the ruin and distraction which a separate Parliament would inevitably entail upon her. Already the bare suggestion of such a policy is bearing its fruits in rowdyism and disturbance between Catholics and Orangemen in the north, while throughout the country the value of bank stock and first class railway securities is daily falling—capital is flying from us and the confidence so necessary to the development of business enterprise is everywhere shaken.

Surely it will not be said in this year of grace England is not equal to the emergency, and that the Imperial Legislature in its wisdom cannot devise a scheme to meet the exigencies of the crisis (if, indeed, it can be called a crisis). Why speak and write of a separate Parliament for Ireland when everything that fair and honest politicians could demand can be effectually conceded through the medium of enlarged County Board government? If more be demanded, most assuredly it will not be asked in the true interests of Ireland, but for the ulterior purpose of being used against England.

Let us hope, therefore, that the English Government, avoiding rash and hasty legislation, will provide for Ireland such a full and comprehensive measure of County Board control as may, after careful inquiry, be found to be just and adequate, and that our statesmen may not be betrayed through the desire to secure the fruits of power in England into the adoption of any scheme that would, in the most remote degree, tend to the disruption of the integrity of the two countries whose interests are so identical and inseparable.

" If warning be needed, should not the bloody experience of the past three years be sufficient to convince any impartial, honest Englishman what the fate of the loyal law-abiding fellow-subject of Ireland would surely be if consigned to the mercy of a Parliament composed of men, who never raised their voice against crime and outrage when it was rampant in their midst, and whose continued boast has been hatred of England, her Queen, her laws, and her Constitution ?

I remain yours truly,
AN ULS'TERMAN.

MR. PARNELL'S ASPIRATIONS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Mr. Labouchere, M.P., must be of an extremely trustful disposition if he takes his friend of the " Irish Parliamentary party " as a guide in a question concerning the safety of England. As well might an American Unionist have accepted Mr. Jefferson Davis, or a Swiss Republican have confided in a leader of the Sonderbund or Ultramontane League, as a reliable guide.

For years past—ever since, and even before, the establishment of the Parnellite League—I have had good opportunities, by personal contact, of learning what the real objects of its leaders are. Let Mr. Labouchere, however, only ponder upon what Mr. Parnell publicly said in two speeches made before Irish volunteers in America. " O that I could carry these arms for Ireland. (Great applause.) Well, it may come to that some day or other." And, again, " None of us, whether we are in America or in Ireland, or wherever we may be, will be satisfied until we have destroyed the last link which keeps Ireland bound to England."

Now, will Mr. Labouchere say, whether he considers Mr. Parnell a mere humbug? If not, is it not egregious fooling to tell Englishmen that the best thing to be done is to practically place government powers in the hands of a party led by such a sworn enemy of this country?

Yours truly,
ONE WHO REMEMBERS THE SWISS
SONDERBUND.

A LESSON FROM THE HISTORY OF IRELAND. TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—The present aspect of affairs in Ireland reminds

me of some previous events in her history which should teach England how she should act now.

In the 12th century Ireland was a prey to incessant civil wars, which resulted in her conquest by Henry II. in 1172. During the wars of the Roses, England not being able to give much attention to Irish affairs, her government was at last almost confined to the walls of Dublin, but no Irish Government arose; incessant private wars prevailed till the Tudors ascended the throne and Ireland was conquered for the second time.

The contest between Charles I. and the Parliament again weakened English authority in Ireland, and again there was confusion and civil war until Ireland was conquered for the third time by Cromwell.

England, hampered by foreign wars in the last century gave real power to the Irish Parliament, which resulted in the rebellion of 1798, and Ireland was conquered for the fourth time.

Thus on four distinct occasions in her history Ireland has been found incapable of governing herself.

Is the experiment to be repeated, and are we now entering on a fifth epoch of decay of English authority to be followed by Irish civil war and a fifth conquest?

How is this to be averted? As an answer I adopt the opinion given in Mr. John Wilson's letter which appeared in *The Times* of the 24th—viz., that if Parnell's demand is met in the same manner as O'Connell's was by Sir Robert Peel it will result in a similar collapse.

Faithfully yours,
COURTOWN.

MR. TREVELYAN ON IRELAND.

Last evening Mr. G. O. Trevelyan, M.P., attended a dinner given by the Warwickshire tenantry of Mr. R. N. Philips to their landlord, at the village of Snitterfield, near Stratford-on-Avon.

The toast of " The Houses of Parliament " having been proposed,

Mr. TREVELYAN on rising to respond was received with

loud cheers. After some introductory remarks, he said :— A member of Parliament of 20 years' standing must have learnt his trade very badly if at ordinary times he finds it difficult to respond to the toast of the Houses of Parliament. But these are no ordinary times. We have a new Parliament, and it is a Parliament composed like none that has ever been seen before ; and it is on the threshold of a series of events of which, little as we know of them, we know at any rate this—that they will be graver than any which have happened in our time so near our own doors. (Cheers.) At such a time, if a man talks at all, he has no right to talk in commonplaces. It is very easy to make out a speech by insisting in general terms on the duty of doing justice to Ireland and at the same time on the necessity of preserving the Union ; but the time has come when any one who has had experience in Irish affairs ought to give the result of that experience in the clearest and most definite words, so that, if people do not agree with him, at any rate, they may know what he means. (Cheers.) Now, there is one point which, in the coming controversies, public men ought to fix quite clearly in their minds, and that is that, as far as law and order and the peace of the country are concerned, there is no half-way house between entire separation and absolute Imperial control. In Lord Spencer's time, when the tribunals and the police were in the hands of the central Government, and when that Government was to the utmost of its ability energetic, industrious, firm, and absolutely indifferent to any consideration of acquiring Parliamentary support by relaxing, or appearing to relax, the administration of the law, the peace of the country was preserved, and men were able to go about their business in security ; but it was very uphill work, and it was all the Government could do to hold its own against disorder. Every Minister of the law, from the judge to the constable, did his duty with the full sense that he was serving masters who wished him to do his duty, and who would protect him in doing it. But even so it was not a very easy matter. There was one district in the West of Ireland where, in the course of a short time.

there were no less than eight frightful and violent murders in the immediate vicinity of a single town ; and in 1881 and 1882, if the constabulary had been at the disposal of a popularly elected local body, instead of a strong central Government, nothing could have preserved that district from disasters as serious as any that have been recorded in Irish history. Unless we intend to keep the care of law and order, in all its departments, in the hands of the central Government, we had much better go in at once for repealing the Union. (Cheers.) I can understand granting independence to Ireland as an act of grace, and hoping that good would come from it, however little I might myself share that hope. But to keep up the name and outward semblance of a Union, and at the same time to put into the hands of the enemies of that Union full licence to keep Ireland in disorder, is a policy which I do not think will commend itself to those who best know the country. (Cheers.) And then there is another proposal which I see mentioned in a good many newspapers with favour, but which I cannot think those writers who advocate it have thoroughly thought out. It is proposed to give Ireland a Parliament of its own for Irish legislation, but to admit Irish representatives to the Imperial Parliament to discuss and vote upon Imperial matters. On Imperial matters, including, I suppose, the selection of the political party which is to govern the Empire, all members, Irish, Scotch, and English, are to have an equal voice ; but on Irish matters the Imperial Parliament, or the Imperial Government, are to have some sort of veto, in order to prevent the Irish from doing gross or violent injustice among themselves. But what will that veto be worth ? (Cheers.) Does any one who has known the House of Commons during the last few years imagine that the Irish members are so dull and so wanting in ingenuity that they are unable to use Imperial questions for the purpose of serving their own ends ? (Cheers.) If ever there was an Imperial question it was the question of Egypt ; and it is notorious that time after time the Irish members voted with every vote of censure on the Egyptian policy of the late Government, whatever it might be, in order to punish Lord Spencer and his colleagues for the policy which they were pursuing in Ireland. However anxious we may be to divide the domestic functions of Parliament from its Imperial functions, I will venture to say that the Irish members will not only be absolute masters of their own Parliament in Dublin, but they would be our masters at Westminster as well. (Cheers.) But, while we are very

clear in saying what we will not give to Irish demands, at the same time we should be very clear in saying what we will give. And in using the word "give," I do not mean that we should give, or, what is still worse, give under the specious name of lending, great masses of money of the British taxpayer. I will never willingly countenance the policy, so very bad for both countries, of an eleemosynary treatment of Irish finance. People who ought to know better have lately been talking a good deal about Britain being a rich county and Ireland a poor one. I do not know what class of British taxpayers is rich. The working classes have trouble enough to keep themselves. Business men are not rich just now. The farmers are not rich. I am quite sure the landlords are not rich. Strong or weak, I hope and trust the Liberal party in this Parliament will be strong enough to prevent the policy of attracting Irish political support by taxing and bleeding their own constituents. (Cheers.) But, on the other hand, I would go far—as far, I think, as any man who has hitherto spoken on the matter—in the direction of allowing Ireland to spend her share of the public funds according to Irish ideas. And this I would do not only as a matter of justice, and, as I think, plain justice, to Ireland, but likewise I would do it in the interests of the British taxpayer. No one but an Irish Secretary can tell the additional inroads which are made every year, and every month of the year, on the national exchequer by Irish demands; and yet this perpetual pouring out of public money gives no real and permanent satisfaction in Ireland because that money is not expended according to Irish notions and under Irish control. But all this would be remedied by the adoption of a sound and simple system. To begin with, I would allot to Ireland its quota of the money which is paid from the Exchequer for national education, and the disposal of this money should be in the hands of a freely elected body. (Cheers.) In the hands of the same body I would place the charge of the higher and the middle class education of the country. All public money, all payments from the Exchequer, on behalf of education, should be placed in the hands of this body. Whatever more was wanted should be raised by internal Irish taxation, which this elective body might levy at its will; the State interfering only as far as to see that the system of taxation was fair and just to all classes. (Cheers.) If the board was too extravagant its constituents would soon bring it to reason. Whatever the limits were within which it was to act, they should be laid down

once for all beforehand, and there should be little or no interference subsequently. I would have no *ex officio* Government members. In the matter of making Irish education really Irish, just as in the maintenance of law and order to which I previously referred, there is no half-way house between doing the thing thoroughly and doing it not at all. That is the principle on which I would act with regard to education. (Cheers.) And in the same way with regard to Government loans and grants to public bodies or to individuals; with regard to bridges, and roads, and asylums; with regard even (so far do I go in this matter) to the administration of the poor rates and the system of poor relief, I would give the whole control over to elective bodies, in order that Ireland may learn by her own experience, and at her own cost, how to manage her own local business; and I cannot help thinking that some Irish ideas will be very different at the end of ten or 12 years from what they are at the present moment. But what we give we should give generously, promptly, comprehensively; and what we refuse we should refuse firmly and finally. (Cheers.) We are, as I said before, on the very threshold of great events. If there is any playing with the Irish question, any thought of getting or retaining office, or of any other consideration whatever except the welfare and safety of the Empire, those events are likely to be much more disastrous than the public appears to be aware (cheers); and in response to this toast I can only pray that the wisdom, the self-control, and the patriotism of Parliament may be worthy of what I believe to be the brave, just, and honest intentions of the great majority of our countrymen. (Cheers.)

FRIDAY, JANUARY 1, 1886.

HOME RULE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—As an English Conservative, and one with well-known national sympathies, I make no apology for asking a hearing in the great Irish debate you have opened in *The Times*.

Six months ago, when Lord Salisbury came into office, I was full of hope that the chance alliance of his party in Parliament with the Irish members would open the road for him to a final agreement with them on the question of

Home Rule. The Irish, as Mr. Labouchere has well remarked, are a Conservative people, and it has only been the accident of their misfortunes which has ever thrown them on the Liberal side. On all essential points they are with us rather than with them. They respect tradition in history and authority in religion, and possess that devout frame of mind which is our distinguishing feature as contrasted with the Radicals. It would therefore have been natural and comparatively easy for Lord Salisbury to come to terms with Ireland. He does not want to impose secular education on them. He cares little for free trade, and, so long as the Imperial Union was preserved intact and the rights of property and the Protestant religion faithfully guaranteed, he might have been willing to restore to Ireland her national Parliament and her national Administration. I do not say that he was so willing, but the arrangement could have been come to, and I deeply regret that the issue of the elections should have taken the possibility wholly out of his hands.

The danger now is that, the more generous move having fallen to Mr. Gladstone and having failed, through the natural distrust inspired by him on Imperial matters, a coalition will be made with the aristocratic Whigs to suppress Irish Nationalism once more by force. I cannot refrain from lamenting this and adding my voice to those who plead still for negotiation and for making on no party lines one more serious effort to regain Ireland's friendship. Like Mr. Labouchere, though to a less extent than he, I have at various times enjoyed the advantage of discussing their views with prominent members of the Irish party, and I agree with him in all his main contentions—namely, that the object of the Irish leaders is peace with England, not war; that separation from the Crown does not enter into even their remote plans; and that they would be willing to give guarantees of compensation for English landlords and of liberty for the Protestant religion. With regard to the first, I refuse, with the examples of Canada, Hungary, and especially of Austrian

Poland before me, to believe in the doctrine of Ireland's irreconcilable hatred. She hates us now justly because we still hold her in subjection, and until the stigma of conquest has been removed and her self-respect restored with her self-government she will continue to hate us, but not longer. Austrian Poland is now, after 30 years of home rule, enthusiastically loyal to the Austrian Crown. Again, with regard to separation, the Irish leaders perfectly understand the advantage Ireland enjoys by her connexion with the naval strength of England. Her people are not a maritime race, and once in possession at home are exceedingly little likely to desire foreign interference. England, too, is the market of their produce; and nations do not permanently sacrifice their interests to fancies of revenge. All history proves this. Ireland would as surely gravitate back to friendship with England as a stone thrown into the air would return again to the earth. I do not, however, think that the Irish nation cares anything at present for a continued representation in the Imperial Parliament. Nor do I myself see the advantage of it to either country. Ireland for many years to come will have enough to do in managing her home affairs to willingly leave us the unthankful task of arranging a foreign policy for the Empire, of waging our wars abroad in our own way. She would, on the contrary, only be too glad not to share the responsibility and cost where she would get no share of the profit, and I think she would do wisely. Hers would be a Conservative, home-abiding, agricultural existence; ours a pushing, adventurous, commercial one. So, too, with regard to the danger of anarchy, I am perhaps an optimist when I believe that nations, attaining their liberty even under the most adverse conditions of social disunion, always manage to arrive at a *modus vivendi* for their factions. Greece, 50 years ago, started in national life merely as an agglomeration of illiterate peasants, robber chieftains, and island pirates. Now she is the first commercial Power of the Levant. And Ireland, with a far better start, may be trusted too to work out one

way or other her destiny for good. Moreover, the present moment seems to me an admirably favourable one, when she has to her hand a leader of real power, courage, and the gift of command. I cannot believe that Mr. Parnell, intrusted with the reins of Government as Prime Minister at Dublin, would be found wanting either in the will or the ability to maintain order. The talk of confiscation, anarchy, and civil war would, without doubt, resolve itself on trial into a very tolerable state of government; and it is absurd to suppose that he more than any other ruler would tolerate disturbance. Men do not care to have the furniture of their own houses broken; and so it would be with Ireland when she became mistress in her own house.

Lastly, what is the alternative? The Duke of Argyll, in his letter of last Tuesday, talks of a breach in the Constitution if we re-establish an Irish Parliament at Dublin. As a Constitutionalist, I ask him, in return, would there be no breach of the Constitution if, as we should have to do, we took away from Ireland her Parliamentary representation, her right of *habeas corpus*, and her free Press? There is no middle course now between Home Rule and martial law, between Mr. Parnell Prime Minister at Dublin and Mr. Parnell a traitor in the Tower. And how long would the country support a policy of blood and iron? Would even the Whigs go through with it for two sessions? I say no. One party or other would rebel, and we should in the end be forced to give in shame what we could now give in honour.

Let us, then, count the cost before we rush into this adventure. The future of the Conservative party, as I understand it, lies, not in championing every selfish interest of the few rich (and fear for their property is at the bottom of all this trouble), but in appealing to the better instincts of the poor, who are now our masters, and encouraging them to see in freedom and justice and constitutional right parts of that great moral law which rules the world.

Your obedient servant,

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT.

10, James-street, Buckingham-gate, Dec. 31.

THE ORANGE SOCIETY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—As the silence of Irish Loyalists at the present time may be misunderstood, perhaps you will oblige me with space in *The Times* for a word of explanation. We have not as yet held meetings to express our views upon the startling Home Rule scheme recently disclosed to the public for the simple reason that we find it difficult to believe that such a scheme could be seriously entertained by any responsible statesman. Irish Loyalists know the Home Rule agitation to be promoted by men implacably hostile to the Empire, and that nothing can ever satisfy those men but the "last link" separation they have consistently declared themselves bent upon. Knowing all this, Irish Loyalists find it difficult to believe that any statesman who is not a traitor to his Sovereign could propose to purchase a short tenure of power by playing into the hands of the avowed enemies of the Queen and of the British name. Irish Loyalists to the number of a million and a half are determined to stand by the Union, and if it be repealed, or (so far as their rights and liberties are concerned) as good as repealed, they are determined, God helping them, to defend their rights and liberties in another way. The democratic clubs in London propose to demonstrate in favour of legislative independence for Ireland about the time of the opening of Parliament. As the president of a great democratic club, 20,000 strong, organized for the preservation of popular rights and liberties, I hope a meeting for the preservation of the Union—the bulwark of Irish popular liberties—will be held at the same time in London.

I am, Sir, your faithful servant,

R. R. KANE, LL.D., Grand Master of the Orangemen of Belfast.

DO THE IRISH REALLY DESIRE HOME RULE?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Earl Cowper asks the above question in a letter on the Home Rule problem which appears in *The Times* of to-day. You appear to endorse the reasoning by which the late Irish Viceroy finds a negative answer to his own

query. From whence the facts or the information which support or justify such a conclusion? Let me suppose that in the recent appeal to the constituencies of Great Britain there had been no more definite party programme put before the electors than "Tory or Liberal," "Salisbury or Gladstone." Allow me to further imagine the results to be the return of 447 Liberals and 120 Tories. Would Earl Cowper contend, in the face of such figures, that the voters of England, Scotland, and Wales "did not really desire Mr. Gladstone?" With figures equally as emphatic before him—for it is in this proportion that the Home Rule and Unionist members now stand in Ireland—he declares the Irish people do not want what they have elected so overwhelming a majority of their representatives to demand.

Had the land reform programme of the Land League remained before the Irish electors up to and during the general election, there would be good grounds for your contention that the tenant-farmers voted more for the abolition of rent than for that of Dublin Castle. It is well known, however, that shortly after the dissolution of the late Parliament Mr. Parnell put his "one-plank platform" of national self-government before the country, declaring he would stand or fall in the reformed Parliament on this single issue. The addresses of the Unionist candidates who polled their thirties, seventies, and hundreds of votes against the thousands given to the Home Rulers attest the true character of the issue which was put before the electors. In every single instance the voters were appealed to in the interests of the Act of Union and against separation, with 85 Home Rulers and 18 Unionists as an answer from the constituencies. Even from Ulster, the stronghold of Unionism, a majority has been returned in favour of Home Rule.

Lord Cowper once boasted of having "driven discontent under the surface" here in Ireland. It will require something more than his lordship's *ipse dixit* to treat the above facts of the recent elections in this country in a similar manner.

But an explanation has been vouchsafed in *The Times* by defeated Unionists of the great success of the followers of Mr. Parnell. "The terrorism of the National League and the intimidation of the priests" did it all. This somewhat contradicts Lord Cowper's theory about "no-rent" being responsible for the Nationalist successes. Is not all this puerile or ridiculous? In reading the letters which have recently been published by you against the concession of a Home Rule constitution one is forcibly reminded of Sydney Smith's saying—"When Ireland is mentioned, Englishmen take leave of their senses."

Dublin, Dec. 30.

Yours, &c.

MICHAEL DAVITT.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 2.

LORD WAVENEY ON IRELAND.

I.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—This paper was prepared some weeks before the general election, in order to make clear to English electors some ordinary facts of Irish civil life. This delay has been confirmed by its teachings the forecast of evil that might be anticipated from the extension of the Irish vote as a perturbing force into English constituencies. Mr. Gladstone has well said, "What we want in this country is the voice of Ireland from Ireland, the voice of England, Scotland, and Wales from England, Scotland, and Wales. This is not the voice which from some of the counties of England has been so returned. Lancashire has returned her voice; she has spoken; but if you listen to her accents you will find that they are tinged strongly with the Irish brogue."

They are the echoes of Mr. Parnell's decrees, and it is certain that they who are so prompt to act a slavish part are fitting instruments to enslave others. Thus much of the lesser evil of corruption of political thought and action among the English electorate. It will be to the operation of the *plébiscite* in Ireland that scrutiny and condemnation must be directed. For it is not the least of the abuse of

terms employed by the Nationalist factions to style the operation by which 85 Nationalists were returned by the name of "election." It was such an election as in the contests for the Presidency of the United States is swelled by the aggregation of votes gathered upon steamers or at the bars of drinking saloons; and more foul with the stain of personal interest. It is probable that at many of the county elections in Ireland the numbers of Unionists and Nationalists of reasonable education and responsibility might be equal, but behind the front rank of Nationalists were massed all that the idleness, the greed, and the fanaticism of a reckless people could concentrate.

It will be remembered that when Lord Hartington visited Belfast, and delivered the wisest of advice to the largest gathering of representative Liberals that has for 40 years been assembled in Ulster—450 men, delegations of the agricultural, the territorial, the commercial and manufacturing classes—the feeling of that great meeting adopted his policy, and confirmed it by their own utterances of good will to their Irish brethren, but absolute and invincible opposition to the doctrine of Home Rule. Ireland is now being moulded anew under a fixed law of right that hereafter, for the first time since the dead tranquillity of 1848, peace may settle down on this troubled land.

It now appears from authentic publication of the poll, under the heads of Separatist, Unionist, and Absentees, the Separatist candidates polled 295,269, the Unionist 145,085, and the amount of absentees was 145,361. The Separatists had, therefore, a bare majority of 4,823 on the entire constituency. The disturbing element of religious strife has been eliminated from the list of Ireland's wrongs. But second only to this cleaving mischief has come the war of classes and of races, in all the provinces save Ulster alone. In Ulster the population is mainly homogeneous in its groups; landlord and tenant are of the same blood, extraction, and ethnic descent. And, again, the colonization or plantation of Ulster was of a purely civil character,

akin to that of Texas by the United States. The evils of conquest and its unappeasable hatred were avoided. The wars of Elizabeth and of James had left a clear field over which the English and Scottish settlers poured their masses unopposed. Even the grant made to the military debenturers partook of the nature of appropriation by civil process rather than by the armed hand. Thus no tradition was left to rankle in the memories of a dispossessed people inhabiting their ancient possessions as the permitted serfs of the conquerors, and hence a cause fertile of strife has been avoided.

And to this cause must be attributed the significant fact that in the proposed expatriation of the Irishry beyond the Shannon under a geographical distribution of counties no provision was made for immigrants from Down and Antrim. But the crisis that has been preparing since 1829 is now ushered in.

Justice, full and ample, has been impressed on all the great departments of civil and of religious life, and so complete has been the adoption of this principle that under its potent action the residue and resources of the disestablished Church have been credited to national needs as they arose.

Ireland has no burden to bear additional to, or in excess of, those of her sister kingdoms; and in the matter of financial self-government Ireland has a firmer grasp through the county council in administrative matters, the grand jury, than the county ratepayers of neighbouring England and Scotland, and is far more effectively and economically served in county finance and works.

This statement is startling, but true. The system of the grand jury has been the object of special attack. Under the grand jury the intervention of the cesspayer is continuous on the roads, which comprise the chief and varying expenditure of the county. A county is divided into baronies and half-baronies, and at the respective petty sessions the cesspayers are "associated" with the magistrates for fiscal purposes. The cesspayers are taken

under statute in a fixed proportion from the highest rated, care being taken that no cesspayer serves twice running. Twice in each year presentment sessions are held before magistrates and cesspayers to determine what roads or other public works are required. The Court deliberates and votes conjointly. If the project be approved plans are ordered from the county surveyor and tenders advertised for. The amount of the tender accepted and a description of the work is then inserted in the general schedule of applications to be considered at the next assizes of the baronial committee, consisting of two members of the grand jury; and, on reference, by the grand jury at large. The court is open and any cesspayer is heard in traverse if he claims his right. If the grand jury press the presentment, notwithstanding any objection, it may be traversed before the Judge both at the assize then holden and at a future stage. The cesspayers, therefore, have six opportunities of objecting to an outlay which might be considered unnecessary. Why, then, is the grand jury system obnoxious? Because the system has been promoted to the purposes of individuals, and the members of the grand jury are by selection of the sheriff and not by election. Now, having been a grand juror for 40 years, I have constantly had occasion to regret the voluntary absence of the associated cesspayers, careless of their own interests. I hold that in all financial boards selection of *ex officio* members should be combined with election of members, and I know that the public interests are as well served by members of boards selected as magistrates as by their colleagues who owe their appointment to public opinion of their qualifications.

Having disposed of this preliminary proof of the exaggerations and fallacies which are tendered to English and Scotch constituencies, it may be anticipated that heroic remedies, such as generate fresh evils by ill-constructed and ill-regulated machinery, are not suitable or not available.

It requires a large acquaintance with the springs of

action in Ireland to discern that many novelties are mischievous, and many impracticable.

The wise and continuous application of ancient rule with modern adaptation is sufficient, when duly administered, for national needs.

The Lord Lieutenant, the county lieutenant, and local magistracy, the municipal bodies of cities and chartered towns represent a hierarchy of administration in combination with the electoral boards of town commissions and Poor Law guardians adequate to the administrative regulation of the country.

Moreover, a renewed force of organization would be found in improved relations of the county lieutenants with the magistracy and associated cesspayers. At present the duties of the county lieutenants are limited to the appointment of a magistracy, who, too often, are solely desirous of the affix of J.P., on personal and political grounds. The magistracy, moreover, has been partially displaced from the confidence of Government by the appointment of resident magistrates, a necessity in some cases of the civil condition of the country. In respect of the judicial system under which the functions of resident magistrates are exercised, it has been proved that where the system of divisional magistrates has come in aid of the ordinary resident magistrate, condensing and confirming uniform action over a wide surface, the extension of area under the control of a superior officer has given larger facilities for repression and detection of crime, and such is the successful adaptation after 200 years of the military police system of the 17th century, introduced under the Commonwealth.

Let us now consider the incentives to outrage in the name of liberty; and, first, the open tolerance of seditious talk in the House of Commons, seldom rebuked and but once rebated by an exercise of authority, has aided to demoralize the public conscience of these provinces till the minds of their youth and rising manhood are widely saturated with a hatred of England, not the less malignant

and enduring for being utterly unreasoned. Change has succeeded change, till the tumultuary scramble of the Fenians tossed the great cause of Irish freedom to and fro. Behind each puppet that controls masses that yell for slaughter and spoliation stands an agitator, lay or clerical, prompting to acts of horror and of shame, seldom warning or scathing with stern rebuke the counsels of infamy.

In Ireland, again, during the last three years the worst features of the French Republic during the period between the Convention and the Consulate have been reproduced, short only of public massacre on the scale of 1793. In its degree, however, the policy of 1883 claims kindred with 1793. Every engine by which national discord may be developed and intensified and driven into full outburst of murderous heat has been in movement during these three years throughout Ireland, Ulster alone barely excepted. The borders of Aceldama have been enlarged by the murder of the helpless and the humble. One incident of disintegration was wanting. The landlords of Ireland did not seek in emigration the security which at such a price is too dearly bought. They remained where their lot was cast, as became their responsible position.

Your faithful servant,

WAVENEY.

The Castle, Ballymena, County Antrim

THE LAND QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—The letter of Earl Cowper, and the prominent notice which you have justly given to it in your leading article of to-day, will direct public attention to the fact that the demand for Home Rule derives its whole strength from the desire of the many who have not purchased land in Ireland to receive further "generous" or "remedial" treatment at the sole expense of the few who have been so foolish as to rely upon English law and to invest their savings in the purchase of Irish land. I therefore venture to point out to Englishmen who desire to deal with this question in a spirit of justice and impartiality that the

receipt of rent is not the only matter, perhaps not the most important matter, which is now at stake, and for which the landowners of Ireland claim the support of every honest Englishman irrespective of party.

During the last hundred years three-fourths of the land of Ireland has changed ownership upon actual purchase, or has been assigned as security for money advanced on mortgage, and to every purchaser has been given, by the most solemn assurances of English law, the right to farm and occupy his own land, and it is to the recent confiscation of that right we owe all the trouble in which the United Kingdom is now involved. I do not wish to reopen the general question of the policy, or of the success, of Mr. Gladstone's Land Acts, and I might even admit that, if a landowner insists upon letting his land to a tenant, it may be necessary that the amount of rent shall be fixed by Commissioners or by some similar public tribunal. But I do assert that it is unjust and unnecessary to compel a landowner to create or to continue a tenancy, and to deprive him of the right of resuming the possession and occupation of his own land. This may not be a question of importance to a few peers and a few other gentlemen who have purchased or inherited estates of exceptional size, but to the great bulk of landowners whose estates are not too large for personal control and supervision, it is of the utmost importance; and to the general public in England, who desire to see peace and prosperity established in Ireland, it is a question deserving of most careful thought and attention. Both political parties have introduced measures intended to facilitate the purchase of land by persons who should thus become occupying proprietors, but they have rendered those measures abortive by placing an absolute power of veto upon purchase in the hands of those men who happened to be in the temporary occupation of the land at the moment of the passing of the Land Act of 1881; and, while professing a desire to see the land owned by those who cultivate it they have passed the most stringent laws to

prevent those who do own the land from becoming the cultivators of it, and thus they have perpetuated all the evils attendant upon the worst form of land tenure, and at the same time have inflicted the most cruel injustice upon the owners of moderate-sized estates, who could tide over the present crisis, and who could become prosperous and loyal citizens if they were allowed to farm their own lands, but are now being forced into poverty, foreclosure, and ruin because they are compelled to accept a promise of a payment of some reduced rent and to expend more than the amount of that rent in the costs of legal process, and in putting in motion a law which is almost in abeyance. Many of your correspondents have proved how enormous would be the sum required for buying out the landlords, and how impossible it would be to raise that sum upon Irish credit; but a very small sum should be required to relieve the tenants from a bargain which they assert is so bad that they cannot live by it, and a new guarantee for future peace and loyalty would be established upon every farm in the three southern provinces which might be restored into the actual occupation of its lawful owner. The agrarian war in Ireland will continue to rage, either with or without Home Rule, until Parliament can make up its mind to restore to every owner of land the absolute and inalienable right to occupy his own land subject only to the distinct condition that land so restored or resumed may be the subject of free sale, but may never again be the subject of any contract of tenancy within the scope and meaning of the recent Land Acts.

Many landowners are willing to sell their land at a fair price, and purchasers would be ready and anxious to buy if they could enter into the peaceable possession of their purchase, and politicians of all shades express a desire to bring about this happy result; but it never can be attained so long as Parliament adheres to the fatal worship of the idol which it set up in 1881—the so-called present tenant. As one of those foolish persons who have purchased Irish land, I beg to thank you for the impartial treatment which

this question is receiving in the columns of *The Times*, and I venture to express a hope that it may soon be raised above the selfish arena of party strife.

I remain, Sir, faithfully yours,

CLONCURRY.

Lyons, county Kildare, Dec. 30.

HOME RULE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I am sure that England, though less than Ireland, owes you a deep debt of gratitude for the part you have taken in exposing the manifold mischief to both countries that is involved in the demand for legislative independence for Ireland. That is an aspect of the question on which you and your correspondents have not left much to be said. Thanks to you, if England grants the Parnellite demands she will do so now with her eyes open. But the amount of interest displayed makes me wonder how the Parnellite demands have been taken so very much *au sérieux*. Does any one stop to inquire why should the Nationalist demands be conceded, or why should they be made? Have the Nationalists advanced any business-like reason? Do they say, "The press of business, English, Irish, Scotch, colonial, and foreign, has become so great that the Imperial Parliament has not time to devote the proper attention to Irish business?" Do they tabulate a series of Irish measures which have been shelved year after year? Had they been able to do this, their action in pressing for a local administration of local affairs would have been deserving of respect. But the fact that the time of the Imperial Parliament has been for several years taken up with the discussion of Irish affairs, very many of them of ludicrous insignificance, cuts that ground from under the Nationalists' feet. And, to give them but their due, the present movement in Ireland is not pressed on the people by their leaders on any such considerations. They simply say to England, "We hate you, and we will cut all connexion with you; and this is the reason

for our demand for Home Rule." Now, if all Ireland said this it would, of course, be sad enough. But surely the answer of England and Scotland should be this, "We are profoundly sorry to hear you say so; we are unconscious of provoking any such feeling, and we will do nothing to justify it; but be well assured that under no circumstances will we place in your hands that potent weapon to exercise this hate which you demand."

But the Nationalist demand is very far from being that of all Ireland, not considering the large loyal minority. What single intelligible reason could any one of the peasant voters who returned the 86 Parnellite members give for hating England? To pretend that they do so, and that the movement for separation is spontaneous and genuine, is an utter falsehood and sham. There is no reality in the whole thing, except on the side of the allied leaders, Mr. Parnell and his inner council and the Roman Catholic priests. These are in earnest, and it is not difficult to see the reason why. The first because the agitation for separation is at present pecuniarily advantageous, to some of them to a very large extent, to others to the extent of a good coat and good dinner at all events; and if the agitation succeeds, the prospect of large pecuniary advantages for all of them is brilliant indeed.

The Roman Catholic bishops and priests also are in earnest. Their reason is not that of their allies, though perhaps future pecuniary considerations of a valuable nature are not quite beneath their notice. But the one object of their hearts' desire is the extirpation of "heresy." They met a grievous disappointment in their expectations of the result of disestablishment and disendowment. They confidently looked for the speedy weakening, disruption, and disappearance of the Church of Ireland. But instead of that they find the laity taking an intelligent interest in her doctrines and discipline, supporting her aims and needs with head and purse, and building, rebuilding, and beautifying her churches and cathedrals. The end so longed for seemed, after all, as

far off as ever. But if they can compass the extirpation of the landed gentry, they know that the extirpation of the Church of Ireland, that form of "heresy" which they most hate because they most fear, must follow. Hence, they, too, are in earnest for separation.

Now, I simply ask whether the respective aims of Parnellite and priest are such that English statesmen and an English Parliament should feel themselves in any way bound to concede Home Rule? It is almost an insult to ask the question. No one who has not lived long in Ireland and mixed much with the various classes of society can thoroughly know what a sham, what an imposture, what an empty bubble, this Home Rule agitation is. You have to touch it with but one resolute finger of England and it will burst into nothingness. It is a well got up bogey which will fall to pieces at one resolute grasp. But bogeys when taken *au sérieux* have before now frightened people into fits.

As I have the misfortune to be an Irish landlord I withhold my name.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant, F. T.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—A short time ago you did me the honour of allowing me to put a plain question as to how it was possible to transact the business of the country in the old way of government by party if there was a Parliament in Ireland with the right reserved for the Irish members to sit and vote at Westminster upon so-called Imperial questions. To that question no answer has been, or can be, given; but, inasmuch as Mr. Labouchere has with (in his case) amusing simplicity put forward the same scheme without apparently an idea of the fatal difficulty involved, I will, with your permission, ask that question once more, and ask it directly of him.

Let me state the difficulty as it might arise out of the actual politics of the day. On Monday a Liberal Government, representing the present majority in Great Britain, passes with a majority of 50 a measure for establishing

gratuitous elementary education. On Tuesday the Conservatives in the Imperial Parliament, desiring to defeat this measure, propose a vote of censure on some point of foreign policy, and with the aid of the Irish members, acting under English Roman Catholic inspiration, succeed in carrying it by a majority also of about 50. Is it too much to say that on that Tuesday our Constitution would descend into a grave of our own deliberate digging?

Nor will it avail Mr. Labouchere to argue that the same thing can happen now. It cannot, for the simple reason that the Irish members would be compelled to vote on the Monday against the Bill affecting, as of course it would, Ireland, and thus the decision of Parliament would represent the majority of all the people affected by it, and—whether right or wrong in itself—would preserve that unity which is a necessary condition of all government whatsoever. For mere factious obstruction or intrigue a remedy must, of course, be found apart from mere regulations and institutions, but in the proposed scheme the very regulations and institutions themselves would do the worst work of disloyalty without the help of faction at all. But may I go on to show why, as a mere matter of historical experience, such an arrangement is impossible—an arrangement be it remembered which has never existed or been suggested in any country at any time, and that for a reason which is seen to be decisive as soon as mentioned? History knows of two possible forms of union between different States—first, the federative, or union upon equal terms of approximately equal States, such as the Achaean League, Switzerland, the United States, and (for the present) the Austrian Empire; second, the Imperial, in which one State gathers round itself allies, colonies, subjects, over all of whom it possesses an absolute and unmistakable predominance in resources, population, and the like. To this class belong the peoples that have played the greatest and most attractive part in history—namely, Athens, Rome, England (Great Britain and Ireland), and (for the present) the German Empire. Now, it is a *sine qua non* to

the existence of these Empires that the ruling power of the central State should also be the ruling power of the Empire. Pericles and the Athenian Assembly, the Cæsars and the Roman Senate, Chatham and the English Parliament, can tolerate no divided authority, they must be supreme at home as well as abroad, must, in short, be "all in all or not at all." So long as party government lasts, and Mr. Labouchere postulates for party spirit a power of tyrannical self-assertion which does not look as though he thought it would efface itself for the good of the country, we must have some plain and simple arrangement for securing that both foreign and domestic affairs shall be administered by one leader rather than another. If government by party ever ceases, or if again the colonies become both able and willing to enter into a federation on equal terms, then the other kind of union would become possible, and English home affairs would be managed as those of New York are now. But somehow or other that looks a long way off, and for the present Mr. Labouchere's plan would make the English Empire look for all the world like a bewildered hen perpetually clucking to one forlorn and tiresome chick.

But it is said that the present state of things calls for some immediate remedy of the heroic type. I am not so sure of that. Firmness, patience, and, above all, time are precisely the remedies that work wonders upon such a state of things as the late Irish elections have revealed, and a good number of quiet people are coming to the conclusion that the bare discussion of the question upon the assumption that Home Rule is possible has created quite as much mischief as will tax the resources of common-sense statesmanship to grapple with and undo. And to me at least it seems clear that what England wants somebody to say for her is somewhat as follows:—

We remind you, our Irish neighbours, that we are both of us for the first time a democracy, and that we are hoping under this completed form of popular government to bind together in mutual respect and good will the

peoples of both countries. We offer you a full share in the government, the prosperity, and the future of the greatest Empire the world has seen. Whatever alterations in your local politics you desire we will endeavour to grant, and in particular we will at any cost (for it would be cheaper in the long run) do away with the relations of landlord and tenant as they exist at present, which are a fruitful source of disorder and crime. We see no reason why in a few years Irish members should not have the same sort of control in Ireland as the Scotch have, and the same sort of influence in Imperial affairs as the Scotch might have if they had not to come to England for all their leading representatives. More than this you yourselves know well we cannot grant without endangering the vast fabric of an Empire of which you form but a small part, though it owes much to your valour and genius. Upon your own heads rest the fatal consequences if you persist in clamouring for an impossible and undesirable concession, and so compel, not a sect or class or party, but a whole Empire to lay upon you in control and repression the hand which you refused to grasp when offered in friendship and esteem.

I remain your obedient servant,

Islip,

T. W. FOWLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—It is astonishing to those who, like myself, are able to learn on the spot the feelings and wishes of Ireland that there should be so much misconception as to the objects with which either Home Rule or a "National Parliament" is demanded.

In the first place, the well-educated, the professional, and the moneyed classes are dead against either in any form proposed by the Parliamentary party. In the second place, there are very few who, like the late Mr. Smyth, ask for it from sentimental motives. The greater part simply see in one or the other a means of becoming rich at somebody else's expense. Through a Nationalist Parliament,

from which most of those having much to lose would be probably excluded, the farmer sees a means of paying no rent, and, he hopes, no taxes; the labourer, of living better; and the ambitious, of taking the place of those who are now above them. If the landlord can be compensated out of the pocket of the British taxpayer, or by refusing to pay his English creditors, so much the better. If not, let him go where he lists. But it never occurs to the Irishman that he ought to lose anything by separation that he at present has. England is to continue to afford him all the advantages he derives from his connexion with her, and his independence is not to entail on him any fresh liabilities, which he would repudiate immediately. In short, he is promised every earthly blessing from his temporal advisor, and every heavenly blessing from his spiritual, if he supports the party of revolution, and he thinks he may get them.

You may say these are the dreams of children. Very likely. At this moment especially, the majority of Irishmen seem to have lost all power of reasoning, and to think anything they clamour for they may get, however opposed to experience or common sense. I deny the accuracy of Mr. Labouchere's statement that "the desire for Home Rule is irrespective of any wish to alter the land system." If Mr. Parnell stated this himself the support he receives from the Irish farmer would be at once withdrawn. It is possible the Irish-American, whose principal object is to weaken the power of England, may say this. Remember, it is not the Irish farmer who pays, but the American democrat; and between him and the Irish farmer there is considerable difference of view. It is also not correct to say that the Irish farmer has any fear of his improvements being handed over to the landlord. Mr. Labouchere has studied Ireland not in Ireland, but in the House of Commons. The Irish tenant has become in every respect virtual owner of his holding. The real dissatisfaction with the Land Act of 1881 is with the small farmer, the most numerous class of farmers, who has found out what he did

not expect, that he can no longer get assistance from his landlord, that any outlay on his part is stopped, and that helpless and poor, but with a smaller rent to pay, the small farmer must struggle on alone in the face of adverse times and in complete ignorance how to meet them. He expected, somehow or other, "to be made a man of" by the Land Act, and he is worse off than ever.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
AN IRISH HIGH SHERIFF.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—The strongest possible feeling for the ultimate welfare of the loyal Irish people urges me to submit to you the following scheme in substitution for the proposal to establish a local Parliament in Ireland—a proposal fraught with danger, the consequences of which no one can foresee. I leave the details for the consideration of the Government and their experts.

The scheme divides itself naturally into four heads, viz. :—

1. The abolition of the Lord Lieutenantcy and the present régime at Dublin Castle.
2. The establishment of a Royal residence in Ireland, where a member of the Royal Family shall reside during a certain period of the year.
3. The adoption of a comprehensive local government scheme for the United Kingdom, under which each of its three kingdoms shall be treated with equal justice.
4. The Parliamentary administration of each of the three kingdoms to be placed in the hands of a responsible Secretary of State conversant with its national peculiarities, law, and institutions.

Some persons, I am aware, will contend that it is impossible to surrender the police into the guardianship of the local authorities in Ireland. If this be true, then I maintain the same power over the police in England and Scotland should be vested in the central authority, as it is deemed necessary to vest in the central authority over the police in Ireland.

But whatever plan in this respect be adopted for England and Scotland, should, in equity and reason, be adopted for Ireland.

The foregoing scheme, founded on such principles and carried out in a bold, firm, and statesmanlike manner, would deal out eternal justice to the Emerald Isle; and out of its fabric should raise once more a robust, vigorous, and united Empire.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
OLD PALMERSTONIAN.

A PRESBYTERIAN PROTEST.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—With the arguments of Mr. Labouchere I have no wish to deal, but his statement that "many Presbyterians of Ulster have already thrown in their lot with the Home Rulers" I most indignantly deny, and I defy Mr. Labouchere to name a dozen prominent Presbyterians in Ulster that have supported the movement.

No body of men in Ireland are more thoroughly or more conscientiously opposed to Home Rule than Irish Presbyterians, and to say that they could be in favour of a Parliament in Dublin having full control in all legislative and administrative measures they look on as saying that they are in favour of an act that would still more thoroughly destroy the credit of their country, ruin its commerce, and leave it a prey to men whose expressed idea of liberty is to punish every man that will not in all things act as the National League ordains. To say that Irish Presbyterians support such views is a libel on the sturdy common sense and commercial intelligence that have hitherto characterized them, and which is not yet extinct.

I am, Sir,
AN IRISH PRESBYTERIAN.

The Times this day writes as follows :—

The Cabinet meets to-day for the first of the series of Councils in which the policy of the Government will be settled and the measures for the

Parliamentary session will be considered and prepared. We are now little more than a week from the meeting of the new Parliament. The House of Commons will assemble on Tuesday, January 12, when a Speaker will be chosen and the members will be sworn in. It is now understood that, as soon as these formalities are completed, the QUEEN'S Speech will be delivered, and the regular business of the session will begin. Ministers have, therefore, a good deal on hand. If they are wise, they will lose no time in putting a plain interpretation on their oracular announcement as to their intention of taking the earliest opportunity of ascertaining whether they have the confidence of the House of Commons. The best way to do this would be to produce their measures and expound their policy, taking the confidence of the House for granted until the contrary is proved. Unless they are prepared to take this course their position is already almost untenable. A vote of confidence would hardly strengthen it. The support of Moderate Liberals is only to be had, if at all, in return for an acceptable definition of policy; and, in default of Liberal support, a vote of confidence could only be carried by the aid of the Parnellite vote. The Government, therefore, cannot escape the necessity of defining their policy forthwith. Their position is in any case precarious; no one can pretend to think a Ministry strong which can only exist by the intestine divisions of its adversaries. But a Ministry, however weak, is compelled, by the very fact of its existence, to discharge the paramount duty of carrying on the

government of the country to the best of its ability and power. It is only waste of time to seek a vote of confidence which can have no prospective validity. A House of Commons which accords its confidence to-day may withdraw it to-morrow, and a Ministry which respects itself need not fear to challenge the respect of the House of Commons by its policy and its measures. By them it must stand or fall. It is not bound to submit to a series of petty slights and party humiliations. The remedy for this would be to throw upon its opponents the responsibility of taking its place. But it is bound manfully to do its duty by the country so long as it remains in office, and in the meanwhile to leave the question of confidence to decide itself by events.

Ireland must necessarily be the first question to engage the attention of the Cabinet. The present condition of the country must claim precedence in the deliberations of an executive Government responsible for the maintenance of law and order. Whatever measures the Government may have in contemplation for the reform of local government in Ireland, their primary and indefeasible duty is to see that the authority of the law is upheld. At present in many parts of the country the law of the land is practically in abeyance. The authority of the National League has taken its place as completely as the authority of the Land League took its place a few years ago. It is not to be forgotten that both LORD SALISBURY and the CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER declared in the autumn that the Government would not shrink from such measures

as might be necessary to put an end to this state of things. It is time to call upon them to consider how their pledges can be fulfilled. We have in the present condition of Ireland a foretaste of what Home Rule would be. As the country is not prepared to grant Home Rule in due course of law it certainly will not tolerate Home Rule in defiance of the law. This is in the main, and in the first place, a question for the Executive rather than for the Legislature. But there is no doubt that the Government will further have to consider the measures of legislation for Ireland which they will be prepared to recommend to Parliament. The first move in this matter rests with them, and it depends on their statesmanship to make it a decisive move. The country at large has shown no disposition to follow MR. GLADSTONE'S tentative lead in the direction of an Irish Parliament. On the other hand, it is recognized by all parties that a serious attempt must be made to reconstruct the system of local government in Ireland on substantially the same lines as the legislation contemplated for England and Scotland, and on the general basis of local control for local affairs. It is announced that the Government have in preparation a measure of this character, and MR. GLADSTONE himself has promised his support to any measure of the kind which is at once adequate and safe. We are very much afraid that MR. GLADSTONE'S criterion of adequacy would be hard to reconcile with any criterion of safety which Parliament and the country would accept, but at any rate it is mani-

fest that, in present circumstances, the production of a strong and statesmanlike measure would at once place the Government in the best position possible. It will be argued, of course, by politicians of the type of MR. LABOUCHERE, that no measure which stops short of an Irish Parliament will satisfy MR. PARNELL and his followers. This is true, but not to the point. MR. PARNELL has told us the only thing that will satisfy him. "None of us," he has said, "will be satisfied until we have destroyed the last link which keeps Ireland bound to England." We cannot satisfy MR. PARNELL, therefore, by any measure which even MR. LABOUCHERE would accept. If we attempt to satisfy him, we shall put weapons into his hands which, as he has frankly warned us, he will forthwith turn against ourselves. But can we satisfy the Irish people without satisfying MR. PARNELL? Certainly we cannot expect Irish discontent and Irish disaffection to subside all at once. Their removal must in any case be a work of time, probably of a long time. But, as SIR JAMES CAIRD says in the letter we print this morning, "what Ireland has a right to is justice, fairness, and a sympathy which would in time weld her with the United Kingdom." Beyond this we cannot go either in our own interest or in that of Ireland herself. If the wishes of Ireland as interpreted and formulated by MR. PARNELL are to be the measure of our concessions to Ireland, we must abandon every thought of guarantees, securities, or limitations. They will not be given by MR. PARNELL, and they will not be

respected if they are given. What MR. PARNELL wants is separation. He has told us so himself. He has also told us that that is what the Irish people want, and some democratic theorists are ready to believe him. If we are to give the Irish people what they are alleged to want simply because they want it—and this seems to be the democratic theory—we cannot stop short of separation. If we are to stop short of separation—as every Englishman, Radical or Tory, agrees that we are—we must strive to do what is just and right without listening to the demands of MR. PARNELL and his 85 followers.

We are the more entitled to do this because, as has been shown over and over again by ourselves and by correspondents whose letters we have printed and continue to print from day to day, a very considerable minority of the Irish people are opposed to MR. PARNELL, while even of his actual supporters many are the victims of intimidation and many more have no real sympathy with the demand for separation. In this connexion we would invite attention to the brief but trenchant letter addressed to us by MR. GOLDWIN SMITH. "The Irish, most of them at least," says MR. GOLDWIN SMITH, "were not even voting on the political question. They were voting simply for freedom from Imperial restraint in completing the spoliation of the landlords." If this be so, the demand for separation would at once be met and paralyzed by a measure for the purchase of the landlords' interests. The letter of SIR JAMES CAIRD clearly expounds the grave

economical objections to such a measure, which would impoverish England without benefiting Ireland; but it is evident that, grave as those objections are, they are less weighty than the objections to be urged against any measures which would lead, directly or indirectly, to separation. Those objections are fully recognized at present by all parties in this country. But they are still liable to be sapped by that fatal argument, so destructive to all political steadfastness, that "something must be done." At such a juncture it is much more important to determine clearly what must not be done than what must be done. The United Kingdom must not be dismembered. The DUKE of ARGYLL has sufficiently exposed the weakness of the argument drawn from federalism on which some democratic opportunists are far too prone to rely. Federal government is essentially a weak government; but, weak as it is, it has never been successfully established—save in the case of Austria-Hungary, whose federal experience is not yet twenty years old—except on the basis of a strong centripetal tendency. A centrifugal tendency is fatal to it; it must end in separation or conquest. The North conquered the South, and the Federal Government was restored. Even the strong but temporary centripetal tendency of the United Netherlands was not able to maintain the union of Holland and Belgium after the Spanish pressure had subsided and the separatist tendencies of race and religion had had time to assert themselves. External pressure or common interests recognized on both sides are the only bonds strong enough to keep a

federal Government together. These conditions are wanting in the case of England and Ireland. Their national interests are not really at variance, but the national sentiment of Ireland is turned against England by what Mr. GOLDWIN SMITH rightly calls "the pressure of a terrorist organization wielded by a dictator and aided by foreign money." It is this pressure which would be perpetuated and installed in the seat of power and authority by the establishment of a Parliament in Ireland, and Mr. PARNELL has told us plainly to what use it would be turned. It is for the people of England to ponder these things while there is yet time. The argument based on the supposed wishes of Ireland is so plausible and so consonant to democratic sentiment that if it is pressed with sufficient importunity it may end in convincing people against their will. But if it is worth anything at all, it leads direct to separation. This is at least an intelligible policy, though, as all acknowledge, an inadmissible one. It is not even open to consideration. The only policy worthy of a people whose political sagacity has hitherto been unrivalled in the world is fearlessly to do what is just and right, and to maintain with unflinching determination the unity and integrity of the United Kingdom.

MONDAY, JANUARY 4.

SIR JAMES STEPHEN ON THE IRISH QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—You have on various occasions allowed

me to express in *The Times* my views on public questions in which I took a special interest, and I venture to hope that you will allow me to do so upon the questions which are being so ardently discussed about Ireland. Some excuse may, perhaps, be required for the addition of one more to the many able letters and articles which have already been published on the subject, and some of which so fully express my own views; but the subject is one of such unspeakable importance that I think every one should speak upon it who can make himself heard, and whose words are likely to carry any weight with any one. If more special and personal excuses for addressing you are required you will, perhaps, allow me to say that I have, from choice, passed the last eleven summers in Ireland, have made myself a second home there, and experienced to the full the charm which used to make English settlers in old days *ipsis Hibernis Hiberniores*. Whatever associations others may have with Ireland and Irishmen, I have none but those which spring out of the recollection of many of the happiest days of my life. Coming among the people for three or four months annually, not as a landowner, but merely as a resident, who comes to spend a certain amount of money and give a certain amount of employment, I have never had the shade of a quarrel with any one in the country, and have had ample opportunities of seeing all the bright side of the Irish character. The interest which I take in the people and in the country increases the shame and horror with which, as an Englishman before everything else in the world, I am filled by the scheme now said to be entertained of the establishment of an independent Irish Parliament, mainly for the sake of certain English party objects. I am not, and I never have been, a party politician. My present

position, I am happy to say, excludes me from party politics. I have not a word to say about Mr. Gladstone's intentions or about his or Lord Salisbury's relations, real or supposed, with Mr. Parnell, or upon the question which attracts many persons so much—Who is to blame for the present state of affairs? I confine myself to the vital questions, What course, with reference to Home Rule in Ireland, is best for the United Kingdom and the British Empire? What does that course involve? How can it be carried out? The answer to these questions appears to me to be clear enough if the questions themselves are only properly stated and understood, and faced courageously, and, above all, calmly and without the use of exaggerated or irritating language.

The total number of possible courses is not great, and is, I think, as follows:—

1. The establishment of Ireland as an independent nation, like the United States.
2. The establishment of an independent Parliament in Ireland, with power to legislate for exclusively Irish questions, but controlled by guarantees from interfering in Imperial questions and from exceeding certain bounds in the matters on which it is to legislate.
3. The establishment of some kind of local government for Ireland other than, and not called, a Parliament, but possessing many of the attributes of a Parliament.
4. Doing nothing at all.
5. Re-enacting the Crimes Act and taking up Lord Spencer's work at the point at which he dropped it.

I think this list exhausts all possible policies with respect to Ireland, unless we add the abolition or suspension of representative government in Ireland and of trial by jury, and the institution of a system like that of a Crown colony or an

Indian province. Of the first, second, and third of these policies, the second only is at present put forward with any considerable show of argument; the third is obviously only a weaker form of the second, and would in practice lead to it; but the second is, I think, and will immediately try to show, only a weaker form of the first, and will lead to it inevitably. I will, therefore, begin to consider the first course.

The objections to conceding to Ireland absolute independence are so great that, though no doubt the Irish leaders wish for it, no English politician of any weight or importance will, in the present state of things, venture to say he is in favour of it. The objections to it are these:—If Ireland were an independent nation it would first be torn in pieces by a bloody civil war, and upon the close of that war would become a hostile nation within 60 miles of England and disposed to do all possible harm to us. We must have a fleet in St. George's Channel as well as in the English Channel. We must either give up the British Empire, or else provide out of Great Britain alone an army sufficient to keep Ireland in check, on the one side, and on the other to discharge all the duties all over the world of which, I think, at least a third is now discharged by our Irish countrymen. We should lose a large part of our military resources by losing our most productive recruiting ground. What course Ireland itself would take as an independent nation it is, of course, impossible to say, but that there would be a civil war between North and South who can doubt? Whatever people in England may think, the old feud of religion and race is only in abeyance and forcibly kept down in Ulster. Ulster would no more be submissive to a Parliament at Dublin than Munster and Connaught are to the Parliament at West-

minster, and the question could be settled by force of arms only. Some persons suppose that the minority would prevail over the majority. I think it probable that numbers and help from American sympathizers would carry the day, but I have my doubts whether a peaceful Parliamentary democracy would be the ultimate result. I should expect that the experience which Irishmen would have had of the British Parliament would give them no great respect for our practice, and that some Saviour of Society, some uncrowned King surrounded by an army well paid and disciplined, would be found the best instrument for carrying out the mandate of the people to achieve Irish unity, to wipe out the last traces of English tyranny by the confiscation of rents, and to prevent the intrusion of English commerce by prohibitive protective duties.

The effect of the concession of independence to Ireland on India and the colonies has been often pointed out in a way which admits of no reply, but one circumstance which has not, perhaps, been sufficiently attended to shows how immediately and of necessity what may be represented as a mere sentimental grievance, a question of reputation, would in truth become urgent and practical. Ireland becoming an independent nation, Irishmen would become foreigners, domiciled, perhaps, in Great Britain, the colonies, or India, but still foreigners, and as such excluded from English careers and professions. How would any class of Irish people in any part of the world like this? To begin at the top, how would any of the following persons like to have to choose between ceasing to be Englishmen and ceasing to be Irishmen—Lord Dufferin, Lord Halsbury, Lord Fitzgerald, Lord Wolseley, Mr. Justice Mathew, Mr. Charles Russell, or Mr. Macnaghten? These, you may say,

are exceptional cases. They are exceptions which prove a rule of which the application would be terribly wide. But if distinguished Irishmen did not like to lose their character as Englishmen, how would Englishmen like the presence in the midst of them of large masses of disaffected foreigners? The Irish Minister or Ambassador at London and the Irish Consul at Liverpool would each listen to all the grievances of countrymen, counted by the hundred thousand, who would require protection for a variety of Irish ideas (as to house-rent and the Roman Catholic religion, for instance) which do not accord with English ideas on such subjects, and each would well know that the degree to which he perplexed, annoyed, embarrassed, and threatened England would determine the success of his career in Ireland, and his reputation there and in the United States. English and Irish, and still more Welsh and Irish, navvies, quarrymen, and miners have their differences which now and then produce disturbances. How would it be then? Riots which now end at the worst in a trial at the assizes would become the subject of diplomatic representations, and be so many steps towards war at the first opportunity. It is in the colonies, however, that the most awkward questions would arise. Would the masses of American and Australian Irishmen consent either to be foreigners in Australia and Canada or to be foreigners in Ireland? Would they not be apt to say, "Canada, New South Wales, and Victoria are no more British than they are Irish colonies. How can we solve the question to which nation we belong except by cutting the connexion between England and the colonies? We cannot consent to be foreigners domiciled in a British colony and owing allegiance in some sense to the British Crown." The independence of the colonies is so natural an inference

from the independence of Ireland that to concede the one would not only be a long step towards the concession of the other, but would inevitably raise the question of such a concession in every colony in North America, South Africa, and Australia. On what terms, again, is the separation to be made? How much of the national debt is Ireland to take to, and how will the creditors like the security? This is only one of many financial questions which such a dissolution of partnership would raise. Each nation has its own way of stating the accounts between the two, and the results brought out are by no means the same. One of your correspondents (Mr. Jephson) has shown this so fully and ably that I need only refer to his letter.

But it will be said, and that with perfect truth, no one proposes such a thing as the independence of Ireland. The most violent of English Radicals always make such a proposal subject to the provision of ample guarantees for the preservation of the unity of the British Empire and the maintenance of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament in all except Irish questions.

Whether this is looked at upon general or upon special grounds, the proposal appears to be equally monstrous and fundamentally absurd. First, in general, guarantees are a mere mockery in cases in which the object in view requires the co-operation in good faith of two or more parties to an agreement. All cases in which guarantees are of use are cases in which a particular definite evil is to be guarded against, which can be effectually remedied if it happens. This might be illustrated from every relation of life, public and private. In the case of marriage it is possible to have effectual guarantees against the effects of the husband's extravagance upon the wife's property. It is impossible to take any guarantee against the

destruction of the wife's happiness by the husband's profligacy or unkindness. The only security against the misery of an unhappy marriage is not to marry a man likely to make a bad husband. In business, a bank manager may be made to give security to whatever amount you please against any form of actual plunder. If, for instance, he absconds with £20,000 his sureties can be made to pay that sum; but no security can be given, or could be asked without absurdity, for good judgment, zeal for his employer's interests, the higher forms of honesty, strict honour and truthfulness, and the other moral and intellectual qualities which such a position requires. If he fails in these, the only possible remedy is not to engage, or to discharge, him.

In political affairs it is just the same. Securities that some definite thing shall be done, as, for instance, that France shall pay six milliards to Germany, may be given and taken: but a security for permanent protection against a standing danger the value of which depends on the good faith of those who give it, and not on the power of those who exact it, is worthless. The securities given by Russia against having a fleet in the Black Sea and fortifications at Sebastopol were good only if, and so long as, the Russians thought that we should go to war if they did what they engaged not to do, but as soon as they were relieved from that fear the securities became worthless. In other words, they never were any securities at all, and were never worth taking. We could have gone to war without them, and it was only by war that they could be enforced.

As to the value of any security given by laws relating to Ireland made by the Parliament of the United Kingdom, instances of their value are

so many and so glaring that I wonder at those who regard them as of serious importance. I will give only one proof of what I say. What security can the Parliament of the United Kingdom take against the Parliament of Ireland comparable in any way to the security which it now takes for the preservation of Irish landed property? As far as the law of the land goes, an Irish landlord's right to his rent is as clear and unquestionable as his right to the safety of his person from violent injury. "The law allows it and the Court awards it." All the apparatus of Government, police, law courts, and an army behind them are there to protect person and property. Every moral consideration which can operate to make the general obligation to fulfil the elementary duty of Government specially weighty in this particular case exists in its strongest form. The Encumbered Estates Act, which induced many persons to invest their money in Irish land on the security of an indefeasible Parliamentary title to it, surely had this effect. It is futile to warrant the title to land if the law permits the holder under that title to be wrongfully evicted from its rents and profits. Both the Land Acts were based upon and carried greatly by means of representations that if the landlord's rights were diminished in appearance what was left was made more secure. A judicial rent, it was said, would be paid without grumbling or delay. Every one would recognize its fairness. Does not this, in respect of this particular kind of property, increase the general obligation to protect all property, if such an obligation is capable of being increased? Is not the legal security as strong as any that can be given? And what is it worth? Can words devise any security that an Irish Parliament shall not abuse its powers as strong as the existing security that the landlords of Connaught shall receive

their rents judicially fixed within the last two or three years? And what is the last-mentioned security worth?

These general considerations appear to me to demonstrate the absolute worthlessness of any securities that can be taken against the abuse by an Irish Parliament of any powers intrusted to it; but the same thing may be shown quite as conclusively, and perhaps in a more striking way, by another set of arguments.

If a Bill for the establishment of an Irish Parliament ever came to be drawn, the draftsman would have his choice among numerous precedents. The Parliaments of Australia, of South Africa, and of Canada, and the legislative powers vested in at least five different bodies in India, several of which have concurrent legislative authority, all show on paper, and most show in actual fact, in how large a number of ways legislative authority may be divided and how smoothly in practice such divided authority may work.

What the mere study of the Acts will never show is the tacit condition on which such arrangements are possible. They are perfectly simple, and are reducible to two. Such powers can be granted safely (1) when the persons invested with them are themselves directly accountable to the Government of this country for the use they make of them, or (2) when the colonies to which they are granted are likely to use them in good faith and in a spirit friendly to England, and are either not intended to be retained in the last resort by force of arms, or are so small and weak that they are never likely to try to leave us. I will illustrate each case.

The first is the case in India. The Imperial Parliament itself has never exercised legislative powers so extensive as some of those which it has intrusted

to the Governor-General of India and his Council. The Viceroy personally can, in case of emergency, make by his own power ordinances to last for six months upon which no limit whatever is imposed. There is no danger in this immense delegation of power, and no risk of serious confusion between the different Legislatures in different parts of India, because those who are intrusted with it can on a moment's notice be deprived of it and made responsible in many ways for any abuse of it which they may commit.

Next come the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. The sphere of their authority and the number of the inhabitants are so small that their local Legislatures cannot possibly do any harm, nor are their good faith and appreciation of their position doubtful. It would be as great a pity to destroy these picturesque and useful anomalies as to exterminate the prairie wolves in Epping Forest.

The last and most important is the case of the great colonies. As to these it is plain that wherever, as in Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, constitutional government has been granted the grant has involved, as indeed it was meant to involve, the consequence that from that time forth the connexion between such a colony and the British Islands should depend ultimately on the good will of both parties, and that every idea of retaining it by force in any event whatever, and in the last resort, should be definitively renounced. That the Dominion of Canada could, if the Canadian Parliament thought proper, separate from the United Kingdom as effectually and completely as the United States, and that if it determined to do so no civil war would take place, can be denied by no reasonable man. The validity of Canadian statutes,

is no doubt sometimes called in question before the Judicial Committee of the British Privy Council. According to all legal theory, the laws of Canada are *leges sub graviore lege*, but this is merely theory. If English and Canadian law came into conflict on any subject whatever which touched the hearts of the Canadians, and for which they cared more than for whatever advantages, whether in point of feeling or in point of interest, they consider themselves to derive from their connexion with England, can it be doubtful, for an instant, that the Canadian law would prevail and the English law give way? The constitutional colonies are not independent only because they prefer not to be so. To take two simple illustrations where hundreds might be given. Suppose the Canadian Parliament refused to provide a salary for the Governor-General and such other officers (if any) as are appointed by the Queen, and appointed other persons to discharge their duties, how could we interfere? Or suppose, in the possible case of a war between England and the United States, they made a separate treaty with the United States declaring themselves neutral, or even allies of the States, how could we help it?

As regards the greater colonies, these arguments appear conclusive; they would apply with greater force to an Irish Parliament able to legislate for all Irish affairs. It would be legally competent to such a body to take away the sanction of all unpopular laws by disbanding the police or putting them under the orders of local governing councils. It might pass local Acts which would confine British troops in Ireland to exclusively military duties and prevent their interference in civil disturbances in any case whatever. The very object of its existence would be to confiscate the property of the rich and to oppress

in every way every class of persons friendly to England; if in answer to any remonstrance, by force or otherwise, of the British Parliament or Government, it declared itself to be by the laws of nature, or whatever other phrase it might prefer, the sole lawful representative of the will of Ireland, a working majority of the Irish people would be delighted to take up arms to support it, and would be in their turn supported by every unquiet Irish-American who wanted excitement and employment.

I do not know how anything can set the importance of these remarks in a clearer light than such a letter as the one you published the other day from that very able and outspoken man, Mr. Henry Labouchere. He tells us what the Parnellites would accept—a Parliament, the powers of which would be limited by a faint shadow of a House of Lords in the shape of an ill-defined Privy Council, a Viceroy who would exist for ornamental purposes, and a sham Opposition, which would exist, as far as one can judge, only to be overruled and to give a colourable appearance of discussion to the debates of the Commons. He proposes, in short, Irish independence restrained by a thread, and veiled with a fig-leaf. Not one word will be found from the beginning to the end of his letter as to what is to happen if the Irish Parliament refuses to be bound by the restrictions to be placed upon it, but he states the securities which the Irish would concede. It is said that the Viceroy and his Privy Council would have a veto on the acts of the House of Commons, a security as efficient as the veto of the Queen on British Acts of Parliament. Also, the Irish would go even further than this:—“(1) No contract existing or entered into could be set aside by Irish legislation. In the event of any one feeling aggrieved in this matter he might appeal

to the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords”—a phrase for which I suppose a misprint is responsible, as Mr. Labouchere of course knows that no such body exists. “(2) Any landlord would have the right to insist upon his land being bought by the Irish State on an estimate of its value by the land judges, due consideration being taken of tenants’ improvements.”

No more perfect instance could be given of the absolute worthlessness of guarantees than these. First, suppose a contract was set aside by the Irish Parliament and that some one “feeling aggrieved” got some English judicial authority to set aside the Irish Act of which he complained, how would the English Court enforce its decree? Would the Irish Parliament kiss the rod and the Irish civil power wield it? Where is the tenant in Ireland who would pay his rent because the House of Lords or the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council said that the Irish Act which excused him from doing so was *ultra vires*? Suppose, however, the Irish Parliament chose to keep within the letter of the law, as the sense of humour and the love for legal chicanery which are characteristic of Irish people might induce them to do, what would be so easy as to lay down rules for the interpretation of contracts which would do just as well as setting them aside, and be at least equally effectual?

As to (2), does any one require to have it pointed out that what it really means is that the Irish would perhaps be prepared to promise to give, say, three or five years’ purchase to landlords for their estates by way of a kind of compassionate allowance? If, ultimately, they did not see their way to carrying this promise out, who would force them?

I ought, perhaps, to apologize for repeating once

more what has been already said so well and so often, but on a matter like this those who feel strongly must not fear repetition or commonplace. The repetition of an unanswered challenge may produce an effect, and Mr. Labouchere's letter is a striking instance of a failure to answer the question—What effectual precaution can possibly be taken against the efforts of an Irish Parliament to effect a separation between Ireland and Great Britain?

I have never met with any answer to this question, but I have seen plausible remarks which tend to show that no answer to it is required. The line taken is this;—The cases of Canada and Australia show clearly that the power of separation is not dangerous to concede. The proper security against separation is in removing the will to use the power to separate. It is admitted that the Canadians could, if they would, separate from the United Kingdom. Have they done so? Do they wish to do so? Have they not at times been regarded as more loyal than could be wished, and is not this the habitual attitude of the Australian colonies also? Would not this be much more true of the Irish? Does not every able and ambitious man in Ireland look to, and must he not of necessity look to, England as the place where he is to win distinction and find employment? Let Irishmen do as they will in Ireland and you will find them as keen as ever to serve in your armies, to sit in your Parliament, to compete in your professions. Dare to be really just to Ireland to the full extent of the true principles of Liberalism, and Ireland will be just to you and a source of strength. Refuse to Ireland what you concede to Canada, to South Africa, and Australia, and Ireland will be an ulcer, never fully healing, but always more or less violent and capable of utterly destroying the Empire.

This, I think, is the strongest way in which the case for an Irish Parliament can be put, and I believe that this way of putting it has a considerable effect on the minds of many moderate Liberals. I think it an utterly mistaken view, founded on principles radically false, and I will ask your leave to give my reasons in another letter, and also to point out what, party politics apart, appears to me to be the true answer to the question, How should Ireland be dealt with?

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. F. STEPHEN.

MR. LABOUCHERE AND HOME RULE.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—As an old Radical who has passed his life in Parliament, I could not help being greatly amused by Mr. Labouchere's letter of the 26th December.

I hope that no one will read it under the impression that Mr. Labouchere expresses any one's opinion except his own, least of all that of the Radical party in the House of Commons. Mr. Labouchere has never been regarded by us as a Radical at all, but as a Separatist, and we have always profoundly distrusted his advice upon the few occasions on which it was possible to regard it as serious. The Radicals of England, so far as I know them, are at this moment intent chiefly upon one thing, that nothing shall be done, or promised by our leaders which may encourage the idea, even in Irish bosoms, that separation from England either in the near or the remote future is so much as possible. If the worst comes to the worst we should be animated by precisely the same views as those by which men of similar opinions in the United States were actuated when they did not hesitate to take up arms for the maintenance of the Union. We have long ago dismissed the notion that any concession whatever, short of separation, will permanently satisfy the Nationalist party; and our only hope of peace is that at last even Irishmen will despair of separation.

What we regard as the first duty of statesmen at this juncture is to restore the reign of law in Ireland and to compel the payment of just debts. Until this is done we are prepared to listen to no projects of Home Rule, however limited. With these views we should certainly not support Mr. Gladstone or any one else were he to approach the Irish question from what we regard as the dangerous side, and if he were to make the attempt those who have the most warmly supported him in the past would, with deep regret but with calm determination, desert him by scores.

Your obedient servant,
AN OLD RADICAL M.P.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—A good many gentlemen have replied in *The Times* to a letter from me which you were good enough to publish last week.

Perhaps you will allow me to say that I in no sort of way asserted that the Irish Nationalists are particularly enamoured with the plan that I submitted. My object was to show that if the English are prepared to grant a Parliament to Ireland independent in local matters the Irish are, on their side, quite ready to assent to such guarantees as may be deemed necessary to maintain the unity of the Empire, or rather, perhaps I ought to say, of Great Britain and Ireland, for, if we are to include the colonies in this unity, it is clear that it would not be threatened were our relations to Ireland those which now exist between us and New Zealand.

Mr. Fowle, in *The Times* of to-day, points to one of the difficulties which is involved in the Irish sitting alone at St. Stephen's when Imperial matters are discussed. I quite admit this, and, from many letters which I have received and conversations which I have had since the publication of my letter to you, I am inclined to think that public feeling here among those ready to grant Home Rule to Ireland is rather in favour of their not sitting in the

Imperial Parliament. To this I do not think that they would object, provided that we take upon ourselves Imperial taxation; and the following estimate will show that we should not be great losers by so going.

In 1883, a return was presented to the House of Commons, on the motion of Colonel Nolan and Mr. Craig Sellar, of the Exchequer receipts and expenditure of Ireland and Scotland. The Irish receipts are put down at £8,194,898, and from this £1,030,374 is deducted for spirits on which the tax is paid in Ireland, but which are consumed in Great Britain. This makes the receipts £7,164,524. The amount is gross, not net; consequently, taking the cost of collection at 7 per cent., from this must be deducted £500,503, while about £300,000 ought to be added for dutiable articles imported through English ports and re-exported to Ireland. This would bring the net receipts to £6,864,021. The total of the expenditure for the Irish civil government is set down at £4,933,932. Army is estimated at £1,854,446, and Navy at £213,056. As, however, there are 25,000 men in Ireland the Army estimate ought, all told, to be £2,500,000. I now turn to Scotland, and I find that Army is set down at £558,439, and Navy at £108,629. As there is no reason why the Army and Navy should cost more for Imperial purposes in Ireland than in Scotland, it is obvious that the difference in the cost of Army is due to a large number of the soldiers in Ireland being employed for police—i.e., civil—purposes; and that of the Navy to the extra transport of these soldiers. Taking, therefore, the proper cost for Army and Navy in Ireland to be the same there as in Scotland, the cost of civil government in Ireland is £6,979,920, against net receipts of £6,864,021. Assuming, however, that I may be wrong by one million in this calculation, I would ask whether £900,000 per annum is too much to pay to insure a friendly *modus vivendi* between the two islands? Indeed, I suspect that we now pay more than this to Ireland in the form of relief loans, &c.

It has been suggested by some that we should convert

the position of Ireland towards us into that of one of the States forming the American Union to the Government of Washington. To do so exactly would be impossible, because we are not prepared to federalize the entire British islands, and therefore the state of things which we would create is not, and cannot be, analogous to the relation of State to State in America and to their collective relations to the Government of Washington. It may, however, be well to lay before your readers, for their information, the restrictions which were imposed in the American Federal Constitution on the States, as a basis for those which we might—*mutatis mutandis*—impose on Ireland.

"1. No State shall enter into any treaty, alliance, or confederation, grant letters of marque and reprisal, coin money, emit bills of credit, make anything but gold and silver coin a tender in payment of debts, pass any bill of attainder, *ex post facto* law, or law impairing the obligation of contracts, or grant any title of nobility.

"2. No State shall, without the consent of the Congress, lay any imposts or duties on imports or exports except what may be absolutely necessary for executing its respective laws, and the net produce of all duties and imposts laid by any State on imports or exports shall be for the Treasury of the United States; and all such laws shall be subject to the revision and control of the Congress. No State shall, without the consent of Congress, lay any duty of tonnage, keep troops or ships of war in time of peace, enter into any agreement or compact with another State or with a foreign Power, or engage in war, unless actually invaded, or in such imminent danger as not to admit of delay."

I do not myself believe that there would be any great difficulty in establishing a Customs and Excise union between the two islands, provided that the nomination of all places of profit in both the Irish Excise and Customs were left to the Irish. Those however who object to any duties being levied upon articles such as tea, coffee, raisins, &c., might object to our entering into any binding arrangement obliging us to levy these duties until we obtain the assent of Ireland to remit them.

It has been urged that Ireland, had she the control of her police, would increase that force and thus obtain a

large standing army, which might be used against us. To this I can only say that I have never heard but one language in regard to this matter from the Irish Parliamentarians: they object to the present number of the police upon financial grounds, and if they are to be credited, they—had they the power—would immediately reduce that force to about one quarter of its present numbers.

The scheme of a veto being intrusted to a Viceroy and a Privy Council is objected to. Provided that the Viceroy were a man above party, and his tenure of office were not dependent upon the conflicts between English parties, there would, I think, be no objection from the Irish to his being intrusted, as is the Governor of the Dominion, with the veto. This was the state of things under Grattan's Parliament, when Mr. Burke said that he could not conceive anything more monstrous than Irish Bills being vetoed by English Ministers.

Lord Salisbury has apparently changed his mind since he made his Newport speech, and it now seems the intention of the Conservatives to rally under the cry of integrity of Empire, and to make no concessions to Irish aspirations, beyond a slight change in the present mode of county government. When, however, Mr. Gladstone is blamed for shadowing forth concessions to Ireland, to which it is asserted England will never assent, I would ask you to remember that Lord Salisbury went much further at Newport than Mr. Gladstone has ever done, for he suggested that the relations between the two islands should be modelled on those between Austria and Hungary.

Now, what are these relations? Each country has the exclusive control of finance, internal commerce, industries, religion, education, justice, post-office, railways, telegraphs, weights and measures, the army, and the raising of recruits. The bond of union is the Sovereign and the Delegations. The latter are composed of 60 representatives from each country, although Austria has 32 million

inhabitants and Hungary only 15 millions. Each delegation sits in a separate Chamber, and they communicate their decisions to each other by writing. When three communications have been interchanged without producing agreement, the two bodies meet together, and, without discussion, vote by ballot upon the question at issue, the majority of votes deciding the issue. The Delegations legislate on matters touching the relations of the Empire with foreign countries and its defence. A customs and commercial treaty between the two countries was signed in 1867 for ten years, and in 1877 it was renewed for a further ten years. All such treaties must be approved of by the Austrian Reichsrath and the Hungarian Diet. The Austro-Hungarian union is, therefore, based upon the absolute local independence of both countries, and upon their absolute equality in Imperial matters, although the population of Hungary is far smaller than that of Austria, and the relation of their respective revenues—upon an estimate of the relative wealth of the two countries—is 34·4 per cent. to 68·6 per cent.

Why, Sir, do you suppose that the union was established on these lines? Is it not probable that the Austrian statesmen saw its obvious weaknesses? It was because they preferred it to the continuation of the tension between Austria and Hungary, which was the counterpart of that which now exists between Great Britain and Ireland. They had to choose between two evils; there was no third course open to them, and therefore they chose the lesser, like sensible men. Ireland does not ask for such concessions. She will be satisfied with considerably less than what Lord Salisbury recklessly offered at Newport. Mr. Gladstone, with all his desire to establish a reign of peace and amity between the two islands, would not grant them. Am I, therefore, entirely wrong in thinking that, if the Conservatives throw up the sponge, we should at least see whether Mr. Gladstone cannot formulate a scheme which, while satisfying the Irish, and satisfying the requirements of Imperial unity, would put an end to a state of things

which is intolerable alike to us and to the Irish? I quite agree with you that if the Irish are to be judged by some of the reckless utterances or two or three of their leaders, they would use concession for ulterior ends. These, however, have been but the exaggerations of impulsive and hot-headed men, suffering under what they regard as great wrongs, and irritated at seeing—as they think—the future of their country made a mere pawn in the political game of chess that the English parties are perpetually playing against each other. As one of the Irish leaders forcibly put it to me, "You must not be surprised that we reply to bayonets with Billingsgate." You, Sir, have possibly not been brought closely in contact with the Irish leaders. I have; and more practical, sensible, I may indeed say, more moderate men, when not under the influence of temporary excitement, I never came across. While true to their own country they fully recognize the exigencies of public opinion in England; nor, as I said in my previous letter, do I believe that they allow the idea of separation to enter into the arena of their practical politics. Like Charles II., if they do not always say wise things, they never do foolish things. I have, indeed, been greatly struck with their largeness and broadness of view, which contrasts advantageously with our supercilious mode of treating political opponents who have not the advantage of being Anglo-Saxons, our insularity, and our want of facility to grasp new ideas, or to realize the necessity of adapting ourselves to circumstances. As Bunsen—one of our great admirers—said, what most struck him during his residence here was "the deficiency of the method of handling ideas in this blessed island."

Your obedient servant,

H. LABOUCHERE.

January 2.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 5.

SIR JAMES STEPHEN ON THE IRISH QUESTION.

II.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—In my previous letter I tried to show, first, that the establishment of Irish independence meant the establishment of a hostile nation within a short distance of our west coast, and that it included the prospect of a bloody civil war; and, secondly, that to establish any Irish Parliament at all, in any shape, would be to put it into the power of that Parliament to establish Irish independence whenever it pleased, all securities, guarantees, and pledges to the contrary notwithstanding. I added that the only plausible way of supporting such a proposal was to maintain that by conceding to an Irish Parliament the power of separation the will to separate would be taken away; that the general principles of Liberalism were those which had led to the establishment of constitutional government in the larger colonies; and that they would, if applied to Ireland, produce equally good results. I stated my dissent from this opinion, but reserved the discussion of it for the present letter.

The expression "true principles of Liberalism" appears to me to be rather declamatory than instructive, but I will consider it. "Liberalism" is a word as vague as it is influential, and may be used in a thousand senses; but, passing by political theories, perhaps of a somewhat abstract character, and using language in a loose, popular way, I would ask how Liberal principles operate

in relation to national integrity. Can any principle be laid down as distinctively Liberal which will justify the United States in the war of 1861, the French Republic in the suppression of the principles of the Federalists, the Italians in the establishment of a United Italy, and the Germans in setting up a German Empire; and which will condemn the unions between England and Scotland, and Great Britain and Ireland, and the establishment of the Indian Empire? If you take the assent of the people concerned as the test, what is a people, and how is their consent to be determined? Were the inhabitants of the Southern States a people, and did they consent to secession or to their own conquest? Are the inhabitants of Ulster a people, and would they consent to have a Parliament to rule them in Dublin? Such questions might be multiplied indefinitely, and seem to me to show clearly that the questions what constitutes the unity of a nation, in what cases a good man ought to wish for its maintenance, and in what for its division, cannot be solved by mere party watchwords like "Liberalism." The instinct which led the Northern States to defend and maintain the Union at the expense of the fiercest and one of the longest and most bloody of civil wars had nothing to do with Liberalism or Conservatism. It sprang from roots deeper than party. Questions of this order must be determined not by reference to any general principles, for no such principle can be stated, much less can it be proved to be true. Every case depends on its own special circumstances. The circumstances are sometimes such that it is desirable, as in the case of the United States and France, that different adjacent territories should form one indivisible whole; in others, that there should be a mere friendly connexion, as in the

case of England and the colonies; in others, that the territories should form independent nations, as in the case of Holland and Belgium. Under which of these classes does the case of Great Britain and Ireland fall? Phrases apart, what are the facts with which we have to deal?

They are these:—Every single consideration which makes it possible to invest the larger colonies with the power of separation from the United Kingdom makes it impossible to do so with respect to Ireland. Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia are separated from us and from each other by thousands of miles of ocean; by interests not, indeed, conflicting, but perfectly independent; by a difference of occupations and circumstances so great that it is hardly possible that those who are accustomed to the one should be fit to legislate for the other. We are connected with them, on the other hand, by every tie which naturally produces friendship and promotes good offices. English people have nothing whatever to dread from the natural development, by legislation or otherwise, of the opinions or sentiments common in any of the British dominions. If they did become independent, they would continue to be the most friendly of allies, and, as is sometimes the case with Americans, would hardly look upon themselves as foreigners. For these reasons the great colonies and England must stand to each other, not in the relation of indivisible parts of one great whole, but in the relation of friendly States, closely connected by friendship and by ties of habit and interest, but essentially and at bottom distinct.

The very opposite of each of these assertions is true of Ireland. Ireland is separated from Great Britain by a narrow channel of sea, by unhappy quarrels factiously inflamed for wicked purposes, and by

some unhappy memories, the latest of which is not far from a century old. They are, on the other hand, connected by every tie of interest, of business, and of language. Ireland is as inextricably mixed up with England as London with Manchester. The union between England and Ireland is one which laws did not make, and which nothing but force, strenuously and continuously exerted, can destroy. The Irish in England are counted by hundreds of thousands. There are a great mass of people in Ireland of English descent, and the difference between the educated classes in England and Ireland is imperceptible. The difference between the uneducated is more apparent, but my experience is that its importance is immensely exaggerated, partly for factious and partly for picturesque purposes. The amount of English capital, public and private, invested in Irish securities extends to very many millions. The administrative arrangements of the two countries are woven into each other at so many different points that it would be practically impossible to sever them without a complete reconstruction. The connexion between England and Ireland is, in short, so close and intimate that we cannot each take our own path and yet live in peace. A husband and wife may separate, but can hardly expect to remain friends if they do. We must either be component parts of one great whole, or else be bitter enemies; and if we are to be enemies, the enmity will split Ireland at once into two furiously hostile communities and establish a hostile colony in every great English town. It must never be forgotten that if the English and Irish ever separate it will be at the instigation of bitter enemies longing to wreak an ancient grudge. It is the Irish-American revolutionists, who live upon the crimes

which they promote and the factitious enmity which they excite, who wish to part us. Would O'Donovan Rossa and James Stephens and their friends wish to see a Dublin Parliament friendly to England? Is the hand in which we are asked to place deadly weapons the hand of a friend or that of a bitter enemy?

This is the vital distinction between the case of the colonies and the case of Ireland. The colonies have become substantially independent, or, at least, have had the power of becoming independent placed in their hands, because this course was really regarded as the best for all parties, and not because they had set their hearts upon effecting objects hateful and disgraceful to England. The object for which the Irish Nationalists seek independence is to confiscate the property of the landlords, and to humiliate England and all Irishmen who have been friends to England. Can any one seriously doubt this? Can any one allege that there would be any demand at all for an Irish Parliament if the Irish land question were at an end? The Duke of Argyll and Lord Cowper have said what is to be said on these points so powerfully and unanswerably that I will leave the matter as they have stated it.

I now come to the second phrase—"justice to Ireland." There is a touch of rhetoric about it, but it would ill become a judge to say a single word which could be supposed to undervalue so sacred a thing as justice. Yet what is justice? I understand by it, as applied to legislation, a determination to promote, to the best of the legislators' ability and judgment, the welfare of all who are affected by this legislation. In this sense, which is surely plain enough for practical purposes, let us by all means do justice to all classes of people, not only in Ireland, but in Great Britain, in India, and in the colonies; and let us

do it manfully, without fear or favour, to all who demand it. To all men in power, whether as judges or as legislators, it is the first thing needful. In so doing we shall only be carrying on the tradition of British legislation for the last 60 years. The Act of Catholic Emancipation was, no doubt, an act of justice to Ireland. So, in my opinion, was the Act by which the Church was disestablished, at least in the main. I do not doubt that the Land Acts of 1870 and 1881 were intended as acts of justice to Ireland, and it is too late to argue whether or not they actually were so. But in what sense can it be an act of justice to Ireland to set up an Irish Parliament? Would the welfare of either Great Britain or Ireland, or India or the colonies, be promoted by the destruction of the British Empire? Would the welfare of Ireland be promoted by the institution of a body which would certainly plunder the landlords and probably oppress the Protestants? Does justice require that proprietary titles to which for at least 200 years no objection can be taken should be set aside as worthless, and that confiscations which took place centuries ago should be regarded as an excuse for a new confiscation more terrible and searching than any of the old ones? Justice involves, among other things, scrupulous abstinence from all that would cause those who practise it to despise themselves. How, then, can it require the English people to betray their friends and crouch to their enemies, to leave all those who have trusted their laws and supported their Government to the mercy of deadly enemies, to go even a step further by providing those enemies with legal authority to work their will, and to veil this mean cowardice by representing this as an act of justice, because it is only leaving the Irish to settle their own affairs? An assassin is bad enough, but what description ought to be applied to a man who buys

the assassin a gun, hands it to him cocked and loaded, takes a promise that he will not use it in revenge, but only for self-defence, and leaves him with the remark that the man he wishes to murder is coming home that night by a specified lonely road, which the assassin, he hopes, will not take, lest he should be led into temptation?

Let who will call this justice, I call it organized injustice, the establishing of iniquity by a decree. I challenge an answer to the following argument. Whatever may be really for the good of Ireland the British Parliament can and ought to do, but it should do it itself and on its own responsibility. The claims of the Irish peasantry about the land are indistinct and have never been put into a tangible shape; but, be they what they may, they are either just or unjust, right or wrong. If they are just and right, the Parliament of the United Kingdom ought to grant them. If they are unjust and wrong, they ought not to empower other people to grant them. A part of the nation has, or thinks it has, a grievance. Is this a reason for disabling and tearing to pieces the organ by which the whole nation redresses grievances and makes needful changes? It is childish to say that Parliament is either unwilling or unqualified to deal with Irish questions, any more than it is disqualified to deal with Scotch, or Welsh, or exclusively English questions. The Irish are over-represented in Parliament, to say nothing of the Irish members who sit for English constituencies, and a scheme of legislation must be bad indeed if it is of such a nature that it cannot be proposed with any chance of success to a House of Commons. The English members of the House are elected principally by mechanics and agricultural labourers. Whatever their faults may be, English electors cannot be accused of a blind subserviency to the rich, or any superstitious regard for the rights of landed pro-

prietors. If what the Irish wish for is an act of justice, we ought to do it. If it is an act of plunder, we ought not to let them do it. The fact that no specific proposal has ever been put forward at all, though dreadful hints of its nature have been and are being given by a series of crimes and by the violent language of irresponsible speakers, is strong evidence to show that what they really want is not justice at all, but a Jacobin reign of terror. There are terms on which I can well believe that the Irish Nationalists would not wish to be separated from England or to form an independent nation. They would like well enough to retain seats in the English Parliament and their full share of all English honours, emoluments, and employments, if they were furnished by English law with the right of oppression in Ireland, and if they could require English troops to carry out their orders by putting down all resistance to them. The degradation of tearing the United Kingdom in two would be bad enough; but can any Englishman bear even to imagine the infamy of hearing how Belfast, Londonderry, and Enniskillen were held quiet by English troops under the legislation of Irish-Americans, and how by the same agency such of the gentry as retained any property in other parts of Ireland had their houses searched for arms and their movable property subjected to requisitions? By all means let us have justice in this as in all other matters, but let us remember that a just man ought to be too firm in his principles to be shaken by a popular clamour in favour of base conduct, or by the threats of a tyrant backed by any number of satellites, Parliamentary or otherwise. Still less ought he to be seduced by prospects of advantage to himself or his party.

But, it may be asked, what then would you advise if you say Home Rule is not in any case or

in any form, or under any guarantees, to be permitted? Would you do nothing at all? Assuredly not. That is the policy which has been and is being tried by Lord Carnarvon, with what results your columns have informed and are informing all who read them carefully, not the least to the surprise of those who are in the way of hearing what goes on in Ireland. It is notorious that the National League is, under the present state of affairs, quietly conquering the country by establishing a system of law enforced by sanctions more effectual than those of the law of the land. There is reason to believe that more crimes are committed in Ireland than are heard of in England, but this is not of so much importance. Let it be granted that crimes are less numerous than they once were. What follows? Only that the National League is gaining power. Establish any sort of law, and as it becomes established punishments under it become rarer because they are no longer needed. Just as the Crimes Act broke down crime while it lasted, so now does the National League break down the law of the land and diminish the occasion for crime. To stand still and do nothing is simply to allow the power of the law to be destroyed by degrees and in detail. I have heard much, and your readers have been and are being well informed, of what is going on, and this very general reference to it is enough. I pass on to my answer to the question—What, then, would you do?

What I suggest is the only remaining course—namely, to re-enact the Crimes Act, or such parts of it as experience has shown to be indispensable to the protection of life and property, and to give the Irish to understand that, while any specific measures proposed by them will be considered on their merits, they must expect no deviation from the established course of constitutional legisla-

tion, and must not regard the surrender of the authority of Parliament as an open question.

The following are the reasons in favour of this policy, and the answers to the objections made to it:—Three years' experience proved that with the powers conferred by this Act Lord Spencer was able to secure life and property without interfering in the least degree with the growth and expression of public opinion or the Parliamentary powers of Irish members of Parliament. This was done without recurring to the use of the provisions which were regarded as the most stringent and characteristic when the Act was passed, especially those which sanctioned trials without a jury. The most passionate and vehement efforts have failed to show that the Act did injustice. It simply, to a great extent, suppressed crime by punishing as criminals persons who would be treated as such in any country and under any code in the world, especially murderers. Of its most effective provisions, some—as, for instance, the section which permits magistrates to hold an inquiry upon oath upon the commission of a crime and before any particular person is accused of it—might with great advantage be made a permanent part of the law of England as well as of Ireland. Others—as, for instance, the sections which give to benches of magistrates summary jurisdiction in particular cases—do not increase the theoretical severity of the law, but substitute an efficient tribunal for one which has been silenced and rendered inefficient either by intimidation or sympathy with the criminals.

In all the discussions on Irish subjects, of which we have heard so many, it has always been matter of surprise to me that English people in general do not seem to appreciate the fact that the object to which what is called coercion has been ex-

clusively applied is only that kind and degree of coercion which is inseparable from the existence of all laws, and which is of their essence. A law which does not coerce men not to murder, wound, beat, and rob their neighbours is useless. To say "Thou shalt do no murder," and not to add "If you do you shall be hung," is to exhort instead of governing; and all the coercion which any one wishes to impose on the Irish is a coercion not to murder, or wound, or plunder people, or to interfere with the exercise of common legal process.

The very point of the whole dispute is that the Nationalist party wish, by committing crimes, to coerce their countrymen to break their contracts. When a law which prevents this is put in force, they exclaim about coercion and liberty. No doubt what they want is a kind of liberty. I have often tried to persuade people that it is impossible to say whether liberty is a good thing or a bad one till we are told who is to be at liberty to do what. The liberty wished for by the National League is liberty to coerce others into breaches of the law, not liberty to drive their own bargains or to express their own opinions. It is as if the Sheffield trade unionists had claimed a right not only to strike for higher wages, but to work their masters' mills for their own profit and to shoot every one who tried to prevent them.

In short, the question really at issue with respect to crime in Ireland is this—Which of two rival kinds of coercion is to prevail? Are the National League to govern according to their own views by coercing people to commit crimes, or are they themselves to be coerced not to commit crimes? When the matter is thus nakedly stated, can the answer be doubtful? Would any British statesman stand up and say boldly, "I advise that we

should give up the notion of preventing the use of murder, deadly assaults, and the maiming of men and cattle as the sanction of an unwritten law of which it is the avowed object to rob all Irish landowners of their property?" Yet this is what the proposition to establish an Irish Parliament really comes to. Indeed, it goes further, for it not only gives up the attempt to prevent crimes committed for this purpose, but gives the legal command of the country to those who commit them, and makes all resistance to their decrees criminal.

What are the objections to this proposal? I will state them as clearly as I can, and what I conceive to be the answers to them.

First, it is said no party will dare to take such a line. It is opposed to the theories and sympathies of the Liberals. It has been practically disavowed by the Conservatives. I admit the party difficulties of such a policy, but I have, as I said, no party and no party views. I think, however, that any party which took a plain, intelligible, courageous line on this subject would be surprised to find how much sympathy and support it would receive.

Secondly, it will be said "You advise civil war. You must be prepared to do away for Ireland with constitutional government and trial by jury. You must turn the country into a Crown colony and proclaim martial law. Even if you wished to do this, you would not have the heart. The days of Cromwell are past; you have no Cromwells, and if you had you would not let them carry out their policy. At all events, you shut the door against all conciliation."

This matter is often discussed on both sides with a vehemence of language and of sentiment which I much regret, but the several objections put together admit I think of a quiet

and complete answer. As to civil war, martial law, the treatment of Ireland as a Crown colony, and the like, the answer is that no sane man could advise such measures, or regard them, or any of them, otherwise than as among the gravest of all possible calamities; but I am bound to admit also that I should regard civil war as a smaller calamity than the dismemberment of the Empire, and that when a civil war has once begun the measures necessary to be taken must be taken, and must depend upon circumstances. During the actual contest the generals must have the authority which they exercise in the case of foreign wars, and after the actual contest measures which cannot be exactly foreseen or described might be required for a longer or shorter time. This would, no doubt, be a great misfortune. But at whose door would the responsibility for it lie? What is the precise point at issue? It is whether the National League shall or shall not be allowed to coerce, by various kinds of violence, the general population into a resistance to the law of the land. If not, it is said, there will be a civil war. Such a remark appears to me impudent in the mouth of the intending criminal, inexpressibly base in the mouths of those who advise submission to his threats. It is as if a robber were to say, "There is no use in your resisting. Give me your watch quietly, or I shall try to cut your throat. As you have a revolver in your hand you might be tempted to shoot me, and surely you would not do that; you are both too humane and too much of a coward." Would not the proper answer be, "Let go my watch and put away your knife, or I shall have to show you that I am no coward, though I do not like violence?" The argument used is—"You must not take really effectual measures to prevent the National League from usurping the government of

Ireland, for there will be an insurrection if you do." The answer is—"It is better to put down an insurrection than to allow the National League to usurp the government of Ireland." Will any statesman of any weight say it is not? If he does, he in fact advocates permission to the National League to usurp the government of Ireland.

One plain reflection supplies a conclusive answer to all language of this sort. Whenever, in any quarrel whatever, one of the parties announces to the other his determination to give way if matters are pushed to an extreme, the case is virtually decided against him. Two people quarrel about a debt. The creditor says to the debtor, who denies his liability, "Whatever happens, I shall never sue you." Two schoolboys quarrel. One knows that whatever happens the other will never strike him even in self-defence. Two nations quarrel. One is determined never in any event to fight. It is clear enough how all these differences will end. I think we, the British nation, at large, should say to the Irish Nationalists, quite quietly, but also meaning what we say—"We will not be deterred by threats of rebellion from effectually preventing crime. The amount of force used to put down rebellion must depend on the persistency of the rebels."

One great advantage of such language would be that it would very much diminish the probability of any serious rebellion. Those who advise submission always credit the Nationalists with a heroic pertinacity of which they have given no proof, and some of them ascribe to the English people a timidity and weakness of purpose which can hardly be said as yet to be a marked national characteristic. Some of our leading statesmen may have shown such qualities in their manage-

ment of foreign affairs, but there is no reason to suppose it has contributed much to their popularity. Suppose it to be true that we have no Cromwell, is it at all clear that we want one? A brave and honest man like Lord Spencer, ably and faithfully supported by Mr. Trevelyan (not a very oppressive Tory) and some others at headquarters, and represented in the provinces by a few special magistrates; the Irish police, well assured that they would be supported in the discharge of their duty, and made aware also that even they were servants, not masters; and the existing military force, to fall back upon in case of necessity, were amply sufficient from 1882 to 1885 for all purposes which any one wishes to see attained; and why should they not be sufficient from 1886 onwards as long as their services are required? How long would the National League stand out against such firm, continuous, steady pressure as paralyzed it for more than two years?

Of course, it will be said to all this, "There are 86 Nationalists in the House of Commons. Their presence makes such a policy as the one suggested an impossibility." The answer is that this depends on the degree of patriotism of the other members. If one party is so anxious to be in office that it is ready, in order to obtain that object, to consent to the dismemberment of the Empire, why, so it must be, and all that can be done is to lament the conclusive proof which will thereby be given of the utter falsehood of all the praises which have been lavished upon popular government, and of the truth of a melancholy prophecy which I once read, and which has not, like its model, the merit of ambiguity:—

Δῆμος ψηφίζων μεγάλην ἀρχὴν διαλύσει.

With a very moderate degree of patriotism and

good faith on the part of the great majority of Parliament, the Nationalists would be unable to do anything more dreadful than to arrest elaborate legislation. Is this such a great evil? Are the people of Great Britain so passionately desirous of any, and, if so, of what, statute that they would sacrifice the very existence of the Empire to get it? Besides, is it really true that the House of Commons is so feeble a body that it cannot make rules by which a fifth of its members may be kept from stultifying its very existence? If so, who can possibly respect it, or not regard its present position as one utterly incompatible with national greatness and good government, and as requiring a reform in a wholly different direction from any which this generation has seen? If it is so imbecile a body, can anything be more monstrous than to hand over the government of Ireland to another body like it, but composed of infinitely worse materials?

It is said that the course which I suggest would shut the door against all conciliatory measures. It seems to me that it would be eminently favourable to their discussion. The Irish members have only to say plainly what they want to secure any amount of discussion. They have only to show a very moderate amount of reasonableness in their demands to get them in a rational way. Suppose, for instance, it were thought wise that the Irish landlords should be enabled to sell and the Irish tenants to buy the land (a scheme on the merits of which I say nothing), would not the arrangement have a much better chance of succeeding if the tenants were made to understand that they were not going to get the land for nothing, and if both parties knew that there was a real, solid guarantee for the settlement of the price on the one hand and the payment of it on the other? The British Parliament might, if it were thought desirable, do

this. An Irish Parliament most assuredly neither would nor could.

I intentionally avoid going beyond the line I marked out for myself. I say nothing as to what justice to Ireland requires to be done. I content myself with saying that, whatever it is, the British Parliament ought to do it, and that till the Irish members have said plainly what they want there is no need for an English Government to say more to them than this:—"You must not and you shall not set aside the law by systematic crime. Whatever you propose we will discuss. What we believe to be just we will do, but threats can be answered only by warnings, and crimes by the punishment appointed for crimes."

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
J. F. STEPHEN.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I should not have ventured to have troubled you with another letter upon Home Rule had not Sir James Stephen in *The Times* of to-day asked me a specific question—viz., what effectual precaution can be taken against the efforts of an Irish Parliament to effect a separation between Ireland and Great Britain.

My reply is (1)—No sort of political arrangement between two separate islands, involving the Imperial supremacy of the larger and the local independence of the smaller, can be devised with any hope of its being workable, unless there be a *bonâ-fide* intention on both sides to make it workable. This is why I would have such an arrangement as, while providing for the former, would satisfy the aspirations of the Irish. (2.) We should retain the power of the sword. We should garrison the fortresses, and the harbours would be in the hands of our sailors and soldiers. There would be, moreover, regiments in various parts of Ireland, as in England and in Scotland. If the Irish were to attempt separation—which I assert is most

improbable—we should suspend their constitution, and administer the country, as did the Government of Washington the Southern States after their rebellion had been quelled. Sir James Stephen will, perhaps, reply that we ought to do nothing that involves the probability of a civil war, which, as in the United States, might cost much blood and treasure. It is not a probability, but only a possibility, that the Irish would seek separation, or even endeavour to encroach upon our reserved rights. If they did, however, the insurrection could be put down in a week. It must not be forgotten, with respect to the rebellion of the Southern Confederacy, that the United States army was far smaller than ours is, that the Southern States were far richer and more powerful than Ireland, and that their friends in Mr. Buchanan's Cabinet had prepared for the rebellion by denuding the South, and the Federal fortresses, harbours, and depôts of arms in that section of the country, of troops.

Ireland ought to be a "protected country." Its relations with foreign countries, political and commercial, ought to be in our hands; its independence should be limited to matters locally affecting it. The *ultima ratio* is our real guarantee. This the Irish perceive, while we, singularly enough, do not. They ascribe little importance to other guarantees. They regard them as devices to hinder them from doing what they do not want to do, and what they could not do did they want. They have, however, no more objection to them than would a tenant have to giving a guarantee to his landlord that he would not jump off a roof, and dash himself to pieces on the pavement.

In using the term Judicial Committee of the House of Lords, I meant the Law Lords. When they sit, the whole House is supposed to be sitting, but as lay lords are not expected to vote, they are in reality, though not in name, a Judicial Committee of the House.

Your obedient servant,
January 4. H. LABOUCHERE.

HOME RULE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—In *The Times* of December 31 a letter appeared

signed "M. D. Kavanagh, LL.D.," in which he states that "during the 14 years which succeeded Ireland's legislative independence no country on the face of the earth made such rapid progress as Ireland did." Again—"The annihilation of trade and commerce, the destitution, the misery, the starvation, the scaffold, all were occasioned by the Union." This statement must astonish all readers of history. In Froude's "English in Ireland" we find that "the magistrates were given power to order every meeting of more than 12 persons to disperse. Persons so ordered, who disobeyed, were liable to be shot. Conspiracies, terrorism, administering unlawful oaths, seizure of arms, interfering to silence witnesses, all these were made felony, with death for a punishment" (see Irish Statutes, 1787, cap. 15). Few can now be found who doubt this historian's painstaking accuracy, his prophecies respecting Ireland have been so fully borne out by events. But we can refer to other authorities. In a work published by R. M. Martin in 1848, entitled "Ireland Before and After the Union," which, as it has gone through a third edition, must be of some repute, we find some figures which are very instructive, and contrast curiously with Mr. Kavanagh's statement, while bearing out Mr. Froude's description of the jobbery of Grattan's shortlived Parliament. In page 43, he writes:—"The Irish expenditure was annually augmented, and public and private corruption became the order of the day. The expenditure increased from £1,490,624 in 1791 to £7,086,635 in 1799; from 1791 to 1795 the expenditure was £9,195,482, and from 1796 to 1800 £26,731,593, being an increase of £17,000,000." In page 55, he gives us the state of trade before and after the Union, thus:—

TRADE OF IRELAND.

Periods of ten years each.	Value of Imports.	Value of Exports.
1780 to 1801	£49,396,254	£51,322,620
1802 to 1813	74,511,058	63,483,718
Increase on latter period ..	£25,114,804	£12,161,098

If figures prove anything these show that trade increased

by over £57,000,000 in the first ten years of the Union, so that if the Union found Ireland prosperous, as Mr. Kavanagh states, her prosperity must have been indeed marvellous at the end of the first ten years of the Union. But unfortunately we have a few more figures to quote, and the report of a speech in 1795, made by Mr. Duguey, a member of the Irish Parliament, on the discussion of the Budget for that year. He thus portrays the state of affairs— "It is a striking mark of thriving that the country is getting into debt at the rate of one million and a half annually, for, under this glowing sun of prosperity, the Chancellor tells the House it is necessary to borrow. Of this sum England is to lend us £1,100,000, while 'rich' and 'prosperous' Ireland is only able to lend herself £400,000. Going on at this rate we must become amazingly prosperous; indeed, like a Salamander, we must live in the midst of fire. He could assure the House that the revenues for 1794 were less than those for 1793. Every one knew that the Custom-house quay was a parade, that the Custom-house itself was but for a show, a monument of Irish folly and corruption. Ireland as a proof of her prosperity was obliged to send the Chancellor with his knapsack on his back to bring home wherewith to support herself" (Taaffe, p. 549). If this be Mr. Kavanagh's idea of prosperity I do not think he will get many to agree with him.

The records of the Irish Parliament show petitions from various trades. In the year 1793 one appears from the hosiers, in 1792 from the shoemakers, in 1796 from the printers, in 1797 from the tanners, in 1783 from the batters, in 1787 from the merchants generally, and in 1797 from the builders, all showing that they were in dire distress and that their business was nearly ruined. But, in truth, the present movement is exactly what Lord Cowper described it to be, an attack on land, and I think his invitation to landlords to state how they had been treated is very well answered by Mr. Trench's letter in *The Times* of yesterday.

Mr. Davitt tries to persuade your readers, in his letter

which appeared to-day, that the question of Home Rule was the sole question before the Irish electors; while, in fact, not one speaker of note among the party ever alluded to Home Rule without at the same time speaking on the rent question, and he is himself far more remarkable as an advocate of the total abolition of rent, without any fixed rate of compensation, than he is as a separatist, a character that he occasionally repudiates.

Your obedient servant,

January 1.

ANTI-COMMUNIST.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—In Mr. M. D. Kavanagh's letter published in *The Times* of to-day he quotes a passage from Lord Plunket's speech in 1799 against the Union, copied, I daresay, from the report of the speech given in "The Life and Speeches of Lord Plunket," by his grandson, the Right Hon. David Plunket, M.P. I wish Mr. Kavanagh had extracted a few passages from Lord Plunket's later speeches on the subject. Permit me to supply the omission.

In 1822 Lord Plunket (then Mr. Herbert), speaking in the House of Commons on Sir John Newport's motion for an inquiry into the state of Ireland, said:—

"Since the year 1782 Ireland has been restored to commerce and to all the commercial rights enjoyed in other parts of the Empire. These advantages have been followed by a Union which placed Ireland on a footing with Great Britain in all other privileges and rights. As an Irishman I opposed that Union; as an Irishman I avow that I did so openly and boldly, nor am I now ashamed of what I then did. But though in my resistance to it I had been prepared to go the length of any man, I am now equally prepared to do all in my power to render it close and indissoluble. . . . I had been afraid that the interests of Ireland on the abolition of her independent Legislature would come to be discussed in a hostile Parliament; but I can now state—and I wish when I speak that I could be heard by the whole of Ireland—that during the time I have sat in the united Parliament I have found every question that related to the interests or security of that country entertained with indulgence and treated with the most deliberate regard."

In 1827 in the House of Lords—it was his first speech there—he said:—

"Beware, my lords, how you paralyze the Union. . . . When the Act of Union was carried I had a seat in the Irish Parliament. I was then a young man, and I felt it my duty to oppose it. I am now an old man, but under the same circumstances were they to occur again I should adopt the same course. As, however, the Union was carried, we ought to do our utmost to render it perfect and permanent. I thought in the year 1800 that it was a measure of party, that it would not be acted on fairly, and that the inferior country would be obliged to suffer without redress. I have been most happily disappointed."

Again, in 1832, he said:—

"I acknowledge that I did anticipate from the Union effects of the most painful and alarming character; therefore I opposed it vehemently. There never was a question in which the strongest feelings of my heart and understanding were so much engaged, for I thought the measure would bind Ireland hand and foot and leave her prostrate at the mercy of England. But I am rejoiced to say that my predictions were falsified. . . . Rejoiced, therefore, to find myself a false prophet, I am now as vehemently opposed to a repeal of the Union; and I now feel perfectly convinced that repeal could under existing circumstances have no other result than the separation of the two countries."

How strongly Plunket was opposed to separation may be judged from his speech in 1800 in the last debate on the question of the Union. "I do not hesitate to declare," he said, "that if the madness of the revolutionist should tell me you must sacrifice British connexion, I would adhere to that connexion in preference to the independence of my country." And again:—"For British connexion I am ready to lay down my life. My actions have proved it. Why have I done so? Because I consider that connexion essential to the freedom of Ireland."

Lord Plunket contended that repeal of the Union meant separation. In June, 1832, Daniel O'Connell in the House of Commons exclaimed that "he would regard the

separation of Ireland from England as one of the greatest evils that could befall his country."

Yours, &c.,

Dublin, Dec. 31, 1885.

W. H. KISBEY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—We have at length before us the irreducible *minimum* of the Parnellite demands in the form of a semi-official declaration. It would be easy to criticize many points of weakness in the programme set forth by Mr. Labouchere, and you have dealt with some of them in your leading article of Dec. 28. The manifesto, however, is of great interest and importance, and worthy of the attention of all intelligent Englishmen.

But the primary and essential difficulty which meets us at the outset of every discussion of the Irish question is lightly dismissed. The Irish question is in reality the land question, and, until this is finally solved, any project of self-government, nay more, any scheme of local government or of county boards, can only be pregnant with disaster, and must, in all probability, end in civil war. "The desire for Home Rule," says Mr. Labouchere, "is irrespective of any wish to alter the land system." Can any one who knows Ireland thoroughly support such a statement? The Land League was the parent of the National League; the desire of the Irish tenant to get better terms from his landlord, or, if possible, to get rid of him altogether, has been the lever by which the whole Nationalist agitation has been worked throughout the country. Religious animosity, so powerful a weapon in the hands of O'Connell, counts for comparatively little in the present movement, which is distinctly social in its origin and of a Communistic type. There is no individual dislike of Englishmen, but the vague hatred of England existing from time immemorial in the breast of the Irish peasant (for which England unquestionably has to thank herself) has been fomented and intensified by the promises of agitators and the prospect of plunder. "Ireland will not be happy till the land is free" is a common maxim with the Irish peasant. He does not mean till his country is

free from a foreign yoke, but till his farm is free from his landlord's rent. It is not his landlord's religion, or his English descent, or his anti-Nationalist sentiments (as Mr. Labouchere suggests) to which he objects; he objects to him, as Mr. Froude says, because he is there at all; he regards the land as *de jure* his own, and he will never rest till he has expelled the intruder bag and baggage from the country. Any one who is familiar with the peasantry of the South and West and has heard their unreserved opinions—they are very reticent with strangers—knows that this is no more than the truth.

This being so, it is obvious that to establish home government, or even any form of local government worthy of the name, would mean throwing the landlords to the wolves. County boards elected by and composed of tenant-farmers and shopkeepers dependent on them would soon crush the landlords by oppressive taxation and every variety of petty tyranny. Boycotting would flourish impressed with the stamp of authority. The guarantees suggested in the scheme before us are valueless. The right of appeal to the House of Lords—a tribunal which could not enforce its decrees—is illusory. The right of sale to the Irish Treasury—of which the probable First Lord has spoken of "wiping the landlords off the face of the earth" while the possible Chancellor of the Exchequer has described the landlords' interest as three or four years' purchase of the "fair" rent, (he does not define the adjective)—is, indeed, a questionable privilege. The estimate of value by the Land Judges might be some guarantee if the present functionaries could live for ever, but their successors would be chosen by the Irish Ministry. Finally, the Viceregal veto, exercised by consent of a Privy Council swamped by 100 "moderate" Nationalists, would indeed be a straw to be grasped at by the drowning landlord.

During the last century and the first half of the present the Irish people have been repressed by a minority too often insolent and domineering. Their passions have lately been fanned to white heat by agitation. Is this a moment

to cast the minority to their mercy? In the 16th and 17th centuries England paid the claims of her soldiers with Irish land. She is bound not to leave their descendants and representatives to starvation. Many landlords of Irish descent—and these not always the most successful in dealing with their tenants—retain their ancestral estates. Both nations are therefore bound to effect the abolition of landlordism (and this cannot be delayed) in the only way possible—the purchase of the landlords' interest either by the State or by making the Purchase Act compulsory and the transfer of the land to the tenants. Mr. Laing, advocating the former alternative in the *Fortnightly Review* of last month, estimates the purchase-money at 20 millions, the interest of which sum, if raised by the State, would be £750,000. The Royal Irish Constabulary alone, not to mention the complicated machinery now necessary for enforcing the law, costs England £1,500,000. It is admitted that if the agrarian discontent were allayed a fourth part of that force, for which the Irish are willing to pay, would suffice to maintain order in Ireland. It is therefore evident that, independently of any bargain the State might afterwards make with the tenants, it would be the best economy to buy out the landlords as soon as possible. Two things are evident—that landlordism must be abolished and that the landlords if left by England to their fate will fight before they starve. The contest may be hopeless, but *una salus victis nullam sperare salutem*; and their last struggles will not be witnessed with unconcern by their kinsfolk across the Channel.

I am not one of those who proclaim the inability of Irishmen to govern themselves. In the present crisis they have shown signs of a tenacity and discipline with which Englishmen have not usually credited them. Once the gangrene of a land system never suited to Celtic populations has been removed, these healthy Conservative instincts, which I am glad to see Mr. Labouchere recognizes, will assert themselves in establishing the security of property. The Catholic hierarchy will discourage socialistic

principles. Many of the priests, whose sympathies are strongly against the landlords, nevertheless joined the present movement with reluctance, owing to the dangerous admixture of Communism in the Nationalist teaching. The land question, I repeat, stands at the threshold of the Irish difficulty; had it been finally settled instead of being tinkered at 16 years ago the cry for Home Rule would probably have collapsed altogether, as the agrarian population would have settled down to quiet industry instead of following the *ignis fatuus* of agitation. Until it is settled the English people will never be able to estimate how far the cry for Irish self-government is genuine, to what extent patriotic aspirations can flourish apart from the prospect of plunder. Then, and not till then, will it be time for statesmen to formulate a system of self-government for Ireland, consistent with the authority of the Imperial Parliament and with the unity of the Empire.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JAMES D. BOURCHIER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Lord Cowper has unquestionably struck at the root of the matter of Irish desire—Home Rule it is not. That may be one root, but the “tap root,” so to say, of the plank is unmistakably separation—Ireland, a nation; they would have the very soil itself. Mr. Parnell, I fancy, would not hesitate for one moment distinctly to reassert this.

As you cogently put it, Sir, in your leading article of December 30—“Any Home Rule scheme that does not lead to the abolition of rent is an offer of a stone instead of bread.”

It is so constantly said by those who do not really grasp the question, “But we must do something.” Unhesitatingly I assert there is no necessity whatever to do anything save to enforce the law. Do not give in one iota to a lawless demand, or to rebels and mutineers.

There is no country on the face of the globe that has been so petted by legislation as Ireland has been. She

has, in truth, now no grievance whatsoever. She has been utterly spoiled by concessions and glutted by food she did not desire. Subtle writers may try to blind us by smooth words and fair speeches, but we cannot too strongly impress on the people of England that the real cry is for separation, and the real desire the land of Ireland. They demand that. It were worse than folly to give any sort of scheme of compromise to the demand of a communist.

About the only part of Mr. Lalouche's letters which have appeared in your columns that Irish loyalists and clear-headed Englishmen will thoroughly endorse is this:—"Cromwell had a plan; Mr. Gladstone has a plan. Between the two there is no medium." If it be found necessary to have recourse to either, plan better, far better, accept Cromwell's at first. If you accept Mr. Gladstone's you will undoubtedly be obliged to turn to Cromwell's afterwards.

No matter how things may go, this crisis will not tend to increase the safety of the lives and property of the loyal inhabitants of Ireland. If the agitators are balked in their desire to obtain a victory by fair means (as they call it), they have distinctly said through their spokesmen across the Atlantic they will turn to the foul means. We here thoroughly understand what this means.

Though we have been robbed of much, we have a little left; and our lives—they are dear to us still. We would ask for a protective force without delay. We would not desire it to come too late—as the relief to Kbartoun—when, perhaps, the bloodshed was over. We have no objection whatever that to refuse this demand for separation will end the question, any more than that to grant the demand would not end in civil war and reconquest. We do, however, believe in being prepared for emergencies and in the good old saying *bis dat qui cito dat*.

The loyalists of Ireland could not thank you, Sir, too much for the way in which you have spoken out for them,

and for the generous manner in which you have opened your columns to further their cause, and that of Imperial England—yet I cannot, Sir, but apologize for again intruding on your valuable space, though it be in lifting up a humble voice in a noble cause.

Your obedient servant,
Dublin, Dec. 31. AN IRISH ELECTOR.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE LAND QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir.—As we are probably now about to give extended powers of local government to Ireland, it is worth while studying the uses to which the powers already existing are being applied in those districts of Ireland where local government is being worked in the Nationalist cause. The county of Kerry affords the most conspicuous instance in point. What is elsewhere to be seen in its rudiments is here developed into a finished system. The organized force of the National League is brought to bear upon the administration of the Poor Law, which is so manipulated as to make the ownership of land an unendurable burden. The means through which this is effected is outdoor relief.

Three of the six unions of Kerry have since 1879 passed under the control of the elective guardians, who are Nationalists. These unions are Tralee, Listowel, and Killarney. The total cost of outdoor relief in these unions increased more than fourfold between 1879 and 1884; in one union the cost was in 1884 more than 80 times greater than it was in 1879, in another about 30 times greater. For the purposes of this comparison it must be remembered that 1879 was a year of distress and of partial famine, while 1884 was a year of plenty. Meanwhile, in the three other unions which remained in the hands of the *ex officio* guardians, the total cost increased only by about 1-10th. The figures relating to Tralee, Listowel, and Killarney are sufficiently startling to deserve being

quoted (shillings and pence are omitted in these totals):—

OUTDOOR RELIEF.		
Year.	Number of recipients.	Cost.
Tralee— 1879.. ..	87	£30
„ 1884.. ..	3,434	2,534
Lisowel— 1880.. ..	258	65
„ 1884.. ..	2,167	1,638
Killarney— 1880.. ..	2,107	1,752
„ 1884.. ..	2,867	3,617

The interpretation of these figures may be found in the printed evidence given before a Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Poor Law Guardians (Ireland) Bill in 1885. This Blue-book contains evidence to the fact that a recipient of out-door relief gets as much as 20s. or 25s. a week (No. 691); that this relief is largely given for political reasons (No. 707); that able-bodied men have received it in evasion of the law on the strength of a doctor's certificate (No. 769). Those who are familiar with Kerry will be able to supplement this evidence from their own experience and to read a good deal between the lines. The meaning of these liberal doles is not to be mistaken. They fulfil a double purpose. They serve as rewards to the faithful adherents of the League; at the same time (and this is their first intention) they are a drain upon the landlords' pocket. For it must be observed that by far the larger proportion of the rates in these unions falls upon the landlords, who (according to the Irish Poor Law) bear the whole rate in the case of holdings whose valuation is below £4 a year. It might be thought that the ratepaying tenants would look to their own interests and keep down the rates. But, as a fact, the increase in the rates is made a ground for demanding an abatement of rent, and, in the prevailing anarchy and impotence of the law, the demand has too often to be yielded.

It is clear, therefore, that Poor Law guardians even now have it in their power to throw ruinous burdens upon the owners of land, especially in districts where there are a large number of small holdings, and that in doing so they are following out a calculated policy. Now, if the county

taxation is, under an extended system of local government, placed in the hands of bodies similar to the boards of guardians, the plunder of property can within a few years be consummated under legal forms, and the land question tacitly solved through the oppressive mechanism of taxation. No effectual safeguards can be devised against the abuse of legal powers. In a society given over to intrigue and corruption precautions and guarantees are purely illusory. The Irish Poor Law has stringent regulations on the subject of outdoor relief. These do not save the law from being defeated. The Land Act of 1881 is full of checks and precautions which have been wholly inoperative in practice. Before one can form a reasonable forecast as to how a law will work in Ireland, the law must be stripped of all disguises and ingenious reservations and viewed in its essential outlines.

The inference to which these facts and figures lead is very obvious. Let the land question first be settled; there will then be nothing to fear from the utmost extension of local government. It must be recognized in England as fully as it is recognized in Ireland, that the Land Act of 1881 has not settled the question, but obstructed and delayed the settlement. The only final settlement is to be found in the creation of peasant proprietors. It may not be the most productive system of land tenure, but under it alone can the war of classes in Ireland be brought to a termination. This is the common ground on which Irishmen of every shade of political opinion meet almost unanimously. Hitherto the Purchase Act of 1885 is the single statesmanlike attempt to grapple with the land difficulty. In its extension lies the only hope of the future. It is very probable that the powers given under that Act will have to be enlarged, and that compulsory purchase will have to take the place of voluntary purchase. But the Act is a move in the right direction. It contains in it the only pledge of social order, and the only effectual safeguard of local government. The peasant who is owner or prospective owner of his holding,

and who pays the whole of the rates and taxes on that holding, will no longer give 25s. a week to the recipient of outdoor relief. His business will no longer be to ruin a landlord, but to better himself.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

S. H. BUTCHER.

IRISH OPINION ON HOME RULE.

(FROM OUR DUBLIN CORRESPONDENT.)

As the meeting of Parliament approaches the anxiety of parties and classes as to the course which the Government and the leaders of the Opposition intend to take with respect to the Irish question becomes more intense. Whatever may be done, it certainly cannot be said hereafter that it was done inadvertently and precipitately or without due consideration and full warning of the apprehended consequences. Never was a public question more thoroughly discussed in every possible phase and form. A flood of light has been poured upon it from various sources in the columns of *The Times*, and the attention of the nation has been drawn to it with an earnestness and persistency which leave no excuse for ignoring its vast and vital importance to the empire. To the Loyalists of Ireland, to whom the issue is one of life or death, in a political, a social, and to many of them, it may be, a literal sense, it is a matter of deep satisfaction and relief that so much diligence, care, and energy are devoted to the task of enlightening the public mind of England, and helping to form a sound and steadfast opinion upon the subject. They fully appreciate the great service which is done to the cause of liberty, peace, and the national interests and honour by the discussion of the question in a broad and patriotic spirit. On the part of the Nationalists the desire is to make it appear that the country is all but unanimous in demanding Home Rule, and that the Loyalists are beginning to see that their fears are mere phantoms of the imagination conjured up by frac-

tious prejudices, and that the will of the Irish people of all sections and parties was expressed in the great majorities in favour of the national candidates. It is also part of their tactics to make it appear that there is a universal expectation that Home Rule will certainly be conceded by one party or the other, and the only question about which there can be really any doubt or difference of opinion is as to the terms. Every incident, however slight, which may be represented as evidence of this state of general expectancy is eagerly laid hold of and commented upon. An example of this is to be found in a passing observation in a letter of Lord Rossmore to the effect that if an Irish Parliament in College-green was given it would be necessary to give another to Belfast and to divide the country into two parts. The visit of Lord Randolph Churchill is also represented as political, and the assurance that it was simply private is scouted as incredible.

In the meantime the declaration of the intentions of the Government and of the Opposition is anxiously awaited, and the country is very curious to know what passed at the meeting of the Cabinet on Saturday. None of their friends believe that they have the least intention to take the bait thrown out to them by the Nationalist leader and Press, but they would like to have some definite statement of their purpose. As this is not to be looked for before Parliament meets they await that event with nervous impatience. The state of suspense which has so long continued is most harassing and injurious to the interests of the country.

While the political side of the Irish difficulty is engrossing public attention, the social side of it, which is of more immediate and urgent interest, since it exhibits present facts and not probable or improbable contingencies, is in danger of being overlooked. This would be unfortunate, for not only does it show what are the realities of Irish life as they affect classes and individuals, but, as these have sprung from political action, it affords a

lesson to political theorists and experimentalists which may be studied with advantage. Those who judge of the present prospect by comparison with the troubles of 1843, 1848, or 1866, and talk of those critical periods as more dangerous to the empire and disastrous to Ireland, take a very superficial view and fail to recognize the essential difference between the Repeal agitation, the insurrectionary fiasco of "Young Ireland," the Fenian conspiracy, and the present movement. If the comparison were extended back to the tithe war of 1834 a nearer resemblance would be found to some of its most striking features. But the fact is that while a spirit of antagonism to English rule and law ran through them all and gave them a national character they each differed in their specific objects. Their leaders, their supporters, the means employed and the power they possessed—with the exception of the tithe war, and that was waged only against a particular class and grievance—none of them were agrarian. Repeal of the Union was the sole aim of O'Connell. He desired to restore the Parliament in College-green as it existed in form before the Union, with the constitution unimpaired, to have the Imperial peers sitting in the upper chamber of the Legislature, to bring back absentees and have the nobility of Ireland spending their incomes at home, reviving and stimulating native industry and diffusing around their social circles the benefits which wealth and refinement can confer. To the traders of Dublin halcyon days were promised in the presence of a Royal Court at Dublin Castle, and the residence of lords and county gentlemen and State officials of the public departments. The fine old mansions which have been converted into warehouses or public institutions and offices were to be reoccupied, and the popular imagination was to be filled with pleasant visions of the old glory, gaiety, and grandeur of Dublin renown, the streets full of carriages, the shops full of customers, tradesmen all employed, and the whole city prosperous. His policy divided the great party, comprising the most

influential representatives of different creeds who had cordially worked with him for the attainment of Catholic emancipation. The Catholic peers and ecclesiastical dignitaries, who believed that they were bound in honour openly by express compact to refrain from any action which would disturb or weaken the Crown and Government of England, kept aloof from him; but he gathered around his standard wealthy merchants and respectable traders, a class of supporters of which there are very few specimens to be seen in the National League. His means for the attainment of his object was by strictly constitutional agitation to collect the largest possible body of national sentiment and give emphatic expression to it by monster meetings, in which moral force only was advocated, although physical force was always suggested, while ostensibly deprecated. But his form of addressing the British Ministers and Parliament was by petitions and professions of loyalty to the Queen, and no means were resorted to in order to induce unworthy persons to join the Repeal Association. If they were not convinced by the arguments addressed to them every week by the repeal orators, they were not subjected to any organized compulsion, and crime of every kind was discountenanced in the strongest terms. The Young Ireland organization, though it repudiated these pacific doctrines and ridiculed his moral force plan, was very limited, and the many clubs which were formed to frighten England had no real strength. The abortive rising and its ridiculous collapse at Ballingarry disclosed the weakness and hollowness of the movement.

The Fenian conspiracy was far more formidable because it was secret and composed of many desperadoes in America, who aimed at the establishment of an Irish Republic, but it too was local and limited to a few counties in the south and west. The great mass of the people kept clear of it and the vigorous action of the Government in 1866 baffled their plan of a rising, forced their hand, and tore their system to pieces by the

strong hand of the law. This movement was never a national one in the proper sense of the term. It was condemned by the Church and avoided by the great body of the people. The land agitation was then started as the only possible form in which the national sentiment could be revived, because the people who cared nothing about the Union or an Irish Republic could be impelled by a sordid motive and the prospect of material and personal advantage. Its organization was thorough, and its mode of action unlike any previously adopted. It sought to make converts not by persuasion, but compulsion, and its forces were recruited and its rules enforced by a system of espionage and terrorism of the most penetrating and relentless character. The National League combines all the elements of previous political combinations, and its action is infinitely more formidable because it deals not with voluntary associations, but has its branches extending into every parish in Ireland, bringing pressure to bear upon every farmer and labourer and trader to join its ranks, and compelling them to act under the order of a supreme head without any regard to the judgment or convictions of any individual members. This Nationalist movement, based upon a sordid principle, and terrorizing masses of the people, is fraught with far greater danger than any of the previous ones. The combination against the payment of rent, the practice of boycotting, which is the most terrible instrument of tyranny, the inquisitorial and despotic interference with persons in the regulation of their business, and the general intolerance and disregard for the feelings of Loyalists are social characteristics of the present movement which distinguish it from all others, and are ruinous to individuals and to the general prospects of the country. These are more serious and pressing subjects of concern than the merely political consequences, for they convey an impression that the Queen's Government is unable to afford protection to her subjects in the exercise of their rights.

The Times, in its first leader this day, says :—

We publish to-day the second of SIR JAMES STEPHEN'S letters on the Irish question, which apply the tests of a rigorous and intrepid logic to the common-places of a controversy warped by uninstructed sentiment and audacious perversions of fact. Even those who may not be able to follow SIR JAMES STEPHEN in all his practical conclusions must acknowledge that he has swept away a whole mass of illusions and fallacies and presented the issue to the judgment of Englishmen in the clearest, the simplest, and the most intelligible form. The course of the discussion originating in the rumour of MR. GLADSTONE'S desire to negotiate with MR. PARNELL on the basis of large concessions to the demand for Home Rule has been of great public benefit. It has brought the country face to face with hard facts, and has, we trust, exploded or discredited the idle fancies with which intriguing or imaginative politicians have endeavoured to conceal unpleasant truths from themselves or from others. No one who is not determined to close his mind against argument and evidence can doubt that an independent Irish Parliament would mean, as SIR JAMES STEPHEN says, "the establishment of a hostile nation within a short distance of our west coast," ready to seize the first opportunity of striking a deadly blow at the British Empire, and intent on extirpating the loyal inhabitants, who are also, almost exclusively, the owners of property, real and personal, and, therefore, the objects marked down by the greed and malignity of the National League and its

adherents. It is still maintained by the advocates of concession that Home Rule does not of necessity lead to the foregoing results, from which, we take it for granted, all Englishmen, Radicals as well as Tories, would indignantly recoil. But the flimsy and unsubstantial character of any conceivable guarantees or pledges has been so plainly exhibited that even MR. LABOUCHERE, in replying to SIR JAMES STEPHEN'S challenge, is forced to rest his case on an unproved and, to any candid mind, an incredible assumption. If the value of guarantees is entirely dependent, as MR. LABOUCHERE now admits, on the *bona fides* of those who have to work them, how is it possible to contend that any pledges given by MR. PARNELL, if he were to consent to give them, would be worth embodying in an Act of Parliament, except for the purpose of blinding the eyes of the English people to the real nature of the change? MR. PARNELL has declared that nothing less than the shattering of the "last link" between the two countries will content him, and, though MR. LABOUCHERE may choose, in his pleasantly cynical way, to refuse credence to his friends when they thus proclaim the faith that is in them, it is material to remember that, autocratic as MR. PARNELL appears to be when he controls conventions and nominates representatives for cities and counties with less affectation of respecting the popular choice than a borough-mongering Duke of the last century, he is himself, not less than the most contemptible and obscure among his following, a puppet of which the strings are pulled on

the other side of the Atlantic. MR. PARNELL is the master of many legions in the House of Commons, but he is not his own master. He has to shape his policy not only to satisfy the rapacity and the rancour of his Irish adherents; he has to conciliate Fenian fanaticism and to avoid exasperating the darker spirits of the dynamite war. He has to take care that the paymasters of the National League in the United States get value for their money. Is it consistent with common sense to assume that MR. PARNELL, who, candidly enough, protests that it is not in his power to give any guarantees at all, will show that *bona fides*, declared by MR. LABOUCHERE to be an indispensable condition of a workable Home Rule scheme, when it would direct against the Separatist leader the daggers of his extreme allies, and divert from the exchequer of the League the dollars of American sympathizers?

After showing the fundamental distinction between the position of Ireland and that of the colonies, SIR JAMES STEPHEN goes on to examine the point which MR. LABOUCHERE and other advocates of Home Rule ignore, the claim of the loyal population to be protected against the consequences involved in the seeming-innocent phrase, "the management of their own affairs by the Irish people." The tyranny of the Land League and of the National League, which has been partially disclosed to Englishmen during the past few years, has afforded a sample of the aims and the methods of an Irish Parliament or a National Council with any large index

pendent powers. Either the owners of property would be stripped of what remains to them under the guise of legislation, or rights nominally allowed to subsist would be in fact abrogated by the removal of any restraints on a terrorism exercised with well-defined objects by a powerful and unscrupulous organization. SIR JAMES STEPHEN points out that the establishment of an Irish Parliament, in any form, implies the granting of impunity to murders and other outrages perpetrated to enforce an "unwritten law" depriving some men of their property and forbidding others to fulfil their contracts, and, indeed, goes further, "for it not only gives up the attempt to prevent crimes committed for this purpose, but gives the legal command of the country to those who commit them and makes all resistance to their decrees criminal." How would the *ultima ratio*, which, according to MR. LABOUCHERE, is the "only real guarantee" against the abuse of concessions to Home Rule, avail in practice to guard against this shameful betrayal of the loyal people of Ireland? There are over a million of them, at the lowest reckoning, probably many more; they are mainly of English origin, but they include also the majority of the educated Celtic and Catholic inhabitants; and, take them all in all, no section of HER MAJESTY'S subjects, in proportion to their numbers, can point to a prouder record of public service and of contributions to national greatness and renown. It is conceivable that the military power of the CROWN would be exerted to repress any open movements towards separation, though

the time would certainly be chosen when our hands were tied elsewhere and though the remedy would be civil war. But we cannot suppose that, if Ireland were handed over to be governed by the National League, whether through a Parliament or a Council, the process of harrying the loyalists would be so carried out as to provoke English interference in the extreme form of a military *coup d'État*. In no other way could we act, when the Imperial Parliament had once surrendered its controlling powers. The fortresses and the fleets, the regiments and the munitions of war to which MR. LABOUCHERE points could not be used to protect the life or the property of a single obnoxious loyalist or to save a landlord demanding his rent, a tenant suspected of paying more than his neighbours, or a shopkeeper seizing a farmer's goods in execution from the terrors of the "unwritten law." The system of boycotting which has already been perfected would only have to be applied more widely and unsparingly; taxation would only have to be heaped with more deliberate injustice on the "enemies of the people;" and, without the gibbet or the proscription list, the work of extermination would be thoroughly performed.

If it be argued that such a state of things would compel England to appeal to the sword and to restore order, enforce legal rights, and put down the despotism of "village ruffians," we must ask why Parliament should then face the duty from which, it is said, all parties now shrink. Many of the consequences of even a brief period of anarchy

would be irreparable; individuals would be irretrievably ruined, credit would be absolutely destroyed, and after an appeal to the *ultima ratio*, under conditions the most unfavourable to the Empire and the most encouraging to its enemies within and without, the same problem would lie before us with which we are now confronted. SIR JAMES STEPHEN brings the country back from fancy projects of cutting up the Constitution and patching it together again to the real question, which, under LORD CARNARVON'S Viceroyalty, has been as far as possible thrust out of sight by party politicians of every colour. He is not in favour of a do-nothing policy; but he does not propose to attempt to allay Irish discontent by concessions which its spokesmen declare beforehand to be not so much inadequate as altogether beside the mark. With schemes of county government SIR JAMES STEPHEN does not concern himself; he probably considers them neither more nor less objectionable than the existing powers of the municipalities and the Poor Law Boards, which, as PROFESSOR BUTCHER reminds the public, reverting to statements before the Select Committee on the Poor Law Guardians Bill noticed in our columns last summer, are employed to despoil and oppress the scanty remnant of the propertied classes. Any measure of county government, it is clear, must be subjected to strict limitations in practice and not merely to the revision of an elected body; but it would at least place Ireland on the same level with England, Wales, and Scotland, and remove whatever argu-

ments may be drawn from alleged inequalities. But what SIR JAMES STEPHEN insists upon is the impossibility of allowing those iniquities to be practised, as they are now, under the shadow of the Union, the dread of which constitutes the gravest reason for refusing Irish independence. It is true many English politicians have thoughtlessly declared that they will never again vote for "coercion," and to such, especially when the Irish vote is to be angled for, the proposal to renew the material parts of the Crimes Act may appear startling. But SIR JAMES STEPHEN'S argument is overwhelming. "All the coercion," he says, most justly and forcibly, "which any one wishes to impose on the Irish is a coercion not to murder, or wound, or plunder people, or to interfere with the exercise of common legal process." When such coercion does not exist—and it has ceased to exist in Ireland since the Crimes Act was allowed to lapse—civilization disappears and the case arises in which, as LORD INCHQUIN ironically, though not without a serious purpose, suggests, it would become the duty of HER MAJESTY'S Government to issue a proclamation putting an end to a tyranny more scandalous than that of THEBAW and extending over Ireland, as over Burmah, the equity and security of British rule.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6.

LOCAL COUNCILS FOR IRELAND.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir.—My last letter was commented upon in

The Times by Mr. Davitt, and he, no doubt unintentionally, misstated my views. I, of course, admit that a large majority of Irish members have been sent to Parliament pledged to vote for Home Rule. What I deny is that there is any evidence that anybody of the smallest importance in that country wishes for Home Rule for its own sake, as, for instance, the Hungarians wished for their Diet or the Basques for their Fueros. Home Rule is desired by some as a step towards separation, and by many more as a means to abolish rent. But the real fact is that Mr. Parnell has established such an ascendancy in Ireland that any platform whatever that he might have chosen to place before the electors would have been at once accepted without inquiry.

That he or any man should have succeeded in establishing such an ascendancy is one of the worst features of the present condition of affairs. It cannot be entirely owing to the abilities or strength of character of Mr. Parnell, though both are very considerable. Nor can it be entirely owing to the ingenious device of appealing, in the first instance, to the pockets of the people, though this, no doubt, was the immediate cause of his success. The powerful qualities of Mr. Parnell found an exceptionably favourable field, for the Irish have always shown a fatal tendency to place themselves blindly in the hands of a leader.

This tendency, it seems to me, has generally characterized a people in its infancy or in its decline; and, as the Irish have never been free from it, I sometimes hope that the period of sturdy, independent, reasoning manhood is still to come. Anything that might assist in developing this would be of inestimable importance. While, therefore, I maintain that there is no real demand for Home Rule, as I endeavoured to prove in my last letter, and while I am convinced of the insur-

mountable difficulties in the way of granting it, which have been much better shown by Sir James Stephen and others than could be shown by me, and which, therefore, I will not further allude to, I feel, at the same time, that county and district boards are altogether a different matter.

It is not as a sop, or an instalment, or an experiment to be pushed further if successful, that I would advocate them, but as a means of training the people to think for themselves.

In Ireland all local matters are really managed through the instrumentality of the resident magistrate, and the resident magistrate is in constant communication with the Castle. This state of things has partly arisen from the helpless nature of the Irish, and has partly contributed to prolong that helplessness. A hateful system of bureaucratic government is the result—hateful in itself, and only rendered tolerable in my time by the large-mindedness and fairness, as well as industry and skill, of the eminent man who then filled the post of Permanent Under-Secretary.

The first effect of these boards or councils, before those who elect them have learnt to think for themselves, may possibly be to make Mr. Parnell even more powerful than he is now. But there is every reason to hope that the continued effect of discussion and responsibility will by degrees raise the tone, first of the members of these councils and then of their constituents, and make it more difficult in future to establish such an iron despotism as that which is now exercised by the League.

Representative local boards have been already advocated by those who have lived far longer in Ireland than I have and who know the country much better than I do; but, without, I hope, going over beaten ground or trespassing unduly upon your space, I have been tempted to give what

seems to me at once a strong reason for their introduction and an explanation of the coldness with which the proposal is looked upon by the Parnellite party.

I remain, Sir, yours faithfully,
Panshanger, Hertford. COWPER.

LORD GREY ON THE IRISH QUESTION.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Since the public was startled by the disclosure of Mr. Gladstone's conversion to the policy of granting Home Rule to Ireland, the discussion which the subject has undergone in speeches and by the Press justifies us, I trust, in believing that on this side of the Irish Channel, at all events, there is an almost unanimous conviction among men of all ranks and of all parties that to allow the two islands of Great Britain and Ireland to be placed under separate Governments would be ruinous to both. The British people are, I am convinced, not less determined than the people of the United States were a quarter of a century ago not to allow their great nation to be thus broken up. But, though I feel no doubt that if the question were plainly put to them our countrymen would almost unanimously refuse to allow Ireland to be separated from Great Britain, and would be prepared to support their refusal by the most strenuous exertions, I am by no means equally confident that they may not suffer themselves to be beguiled by plausible but delusive language into measures that would assuredly bring them in the end into a position in which they would have to choose between allowing Ireland to declare her independence or preventing it by civil war. The speeches that have been made by mem-

bers (not of one party only) of the new House of Commons show an alarming disposition to consent to measures of this description, and among those who have thus spoken we must include, I fear, some of Mr. Gladstone's late colleagues. They do not all seem to understand, like Mr. Trevelyan, that "as far as law and order and the peace of the country are concerned there is no half-way house between entire separation and absolute Imperial control," and also that "unless we intend to keep the care of law and order in all its departments in the hands of the central Government we had much better go in at once for repealing the Union." I wish I was fully assured that the members of both the present and of the late Administration (except Mr. Gladstone) would act upon this wise view of the subject. Unfortunately this is doubtful. From what has been said in public, it may be inferred that among men of different parties there are not a few who, while declining to go with Mr. Gladstone in granting Mr. Parnell an Irish Parliament, are yet disposed to seek some such "half-way house" as Mr. Trevelyan speaks of, and talk glibly of its being right that we should try to satisfy the people of Ireland by giving to them, in common with the people of England and of Scotland, some increased powers of local government. Surely it is worse than idle to imagine, in the face of their own repeated declarations to the contrary, that those who are now insisting upon Home Rule would be induced by any concessions of this kind to forego their demand for it. And even if a scheme for giving increased powers of local government to England and Scotland had already been agreed upon, this would be no reason for extending it to Ireland in its present state.

If the Irish were like the English and Scotch, ready to obey the law, and anxious

to do what is just to all classes, and promote the common welfare and prosperity of the United Kingdom—if they would give us some valid assurance of their desire to act as faithful and loyal subjects of the Crown, and of their determination to yield a hearty obedience to the Imperial Government, I, for one, should willingly recognize their right to be put on a footing of perfect equality with their fellow subjects on this side of the Irish Channel. But while they ostentatiously proclaim their determination to be content with nothing short of the disruption of the Empire, while we daily see that the power which the Nationalists (as they call themselves) possess in Town Councils and in Boards of Guardians is systematically used to impede the measures of the Imperial Government, and to oppress all those who venture to refuse obedience to the League, it seems to me that it would be an act of childish folly to put more power into the hands of those who would only use it to oppose more effectually the constituted authorities of the State, and to make the tyranny of the rival and illegal authority they have set up more crushing than ever. Before we proceed even to consider the question of granting to Ireland additional powers of local government, common sense teaches us that by some means or other the obedience of the Irish people to the Queen and to the law, instead of to the League, must be secured. How this object is to be attained is no doubt a problem of extreme difficulty, but I do not believe that it is one which would prove insoluble, if its solution were attempted with courage and with judgment, and if party spirit could be got rid of in dealing with it. But, unfortunately, as it was to the rivalry of contending parties and to their endeavours to outbid each other in the race for popularity that we owe the mismanagement of the affairs

of Ireland, by which it has been reduced to its present miserable condition, so we have too much reason to fear that the same evil influence may still continue to prevail, and to prevent the adoption of the measures which are urgently required to bring the great British nation safely through the dangers that surround it. Our only hope is that our countrymen, who seem to be at length beginning to open their eyes to the gravity of these dangers, may be roused to such a sense of their reality that they may insist that those to whom they intrust the conduct of their affairs shall, without regard to party interests, unite in considering and in carrying into effect such measures as may be found best calculated to ensure the safety and the welfare of the nation. I shall not be guilty of the presumption of trying to point out what these measures ought to be, but I have no hesitation in affirming that they ought to be determined, not by the mere popular wishes of the moment, but by those rules and maxims which the wisdom and experience of statesmen and political philosophers have laid down as those which ought to be followed if we wish for good government and sound legislation.

A notion has of late prevailed that, in legislating for Ireland, what is wished for by the greatest number of its inhabitants ought to be taken as a guide, not what would be best for them, and the failure of the measures adopted by Parliament for some years may be traced to their having been guided by this idea. Yet it is one which was long ago pronounced to be a mischievous error by great writers of Greece and Rome. In the well-known lines:—

“Justum et tenacem propositi virum

“Non civium ardor prava jubentium,

“Mente quatit solidâ” . . .

the Roman lyrical poet tells us that what marks a man as just and firm and fit to be admitted among the gods is his being able to resist evil commands of fellow citizens. But now it appears to be held that Horace was wrong, that the *civium ardor prava jubentium* ought to be obeyed, not resisted, and that it is the business of statesmen of high influence and position not to guide their countrymen to what is good, but to do what they ask, whether it is wise or unwise, whether the measures they call for are calculated to work in the end good or evil to the nation. Mr. Gladstone has plainly avowed this to be the principle on which he intends to act with regard to the question of the disestablishment of the ancient Kirk of Scotland. He has not inquired whether that measure would really tend to the religious and moral advancement of the Scottish people, but he has told them that he wants to know whether more of them are for it or against it, that he may determine which side he will take. In like manner it appears that the wishes expressed by the most clamorous, if not the most numerous, party in Ireland have decided him to abandon his former objections to the concession of Home Rule. I am not aware that since the days when Mr. Gladstone was an opponent of Home Rule any new reasons have been brought forward for supposing that he was wrong in condemning, with almost all our leading statesmen, the proposal for so momentous a change in our constitution. On the contrary, all the discussions on the subject have only tended to show more clearly than ever that such a change must prove disastrous alike to Ireland and to Great Britain. The only apparent grounds for Mr. Gladstone's unexpected conversion are to be found in the great increase in the violence and in the bitter hostility to the Imperial Government with which the

Nationalists have insisted on their demand to be relieved from their connexion with England. To yield to their demand upon this ground would be strictly in accordance with the policy pursued towards Ireland since the general election of 1868 placed the power of directing it in the hands of Mr. Gladstone. Under his advice most momentous social changes have been made by Acts of Parliament avowedly in violation of what used to be regarded as sound principles of legislation, but which gratified the wishes and the passions of the people. So far has this been carried, that after having passed the Irish Land Act of 1870, with the most solemn assurance that it was to be a final measure, because it granted all that could with justice be given to tenants, Mr. Gladstone himself a few years later proposed (and Parliament unfortunately listened to his advice) that this final measure should be superseded by a new one of a still more revolutionary character.

Now that we are to be asked (with Mr. Gladstone's assent) to take another and very startling step in the policy of seeking to give peace to Ireland by concession to all popular demands, whether they are reasonable or unreasonable, it will be instructive to compare the state of Ireland as it was immediately before this policy was entered upon with what it is now. As I have said, the way was opened for the adoption of this policy by the general election of 1868, and in that year, not long before the dissolution, there was a debate in the House of Commons in which the then constitution of Ireland was described by various speakers, and especially by the late Lord Mayo, in a very remarkable speech, of which the general accuracy was acknowledged by Mr. Gladstone. In this debate it was shown that, although the condition of Ireland was by no means altogether satisfactory, it was decidedly improving, if not so

rapidly as was to be desired. The Fenian conspiracy, which not very long before had seemed dangerous, had been promptly and effectually crushed, having met with scarcely any support or sympathy from the agricultural population, and agrarian outrages had of late almost ceased. The relations between the owners and occupiers of land were as a general rule friendly, though in not a very small number of exceptional cases there was both oppression on the part of landlords and endeavours on the part of tenants to obtain unreasonable concessions by violence. The old unskilful and improvident methods of cultivating the land were gradually making way for a better system, and considerable agricultural improvements, especially by draining, were being carried on. New branches of industry were beginning to take root in some districts, while old ones were being more actively and successfully carried on. Such were the facts as to the actual condition of Ireland which were clearly established in the debate I have referred to, and they afforded the best grounds for hoping that, with a continued firm administration of the law, together with well-considered measures for improving it where it was admitted to be defective, Ireland might become prosperous and its population raised to a welfare they have never yet enjoyed. But, unfortunately, under the rule of Mr. Gladstone, a firm administration of the law as it stood and judicious attempts to improve it where it was faulty were alike wanting. Within the reasonable limits of a letter it is impossible to attempt to show what mistakes have been committed; but that grave mistakes have been committed and that the policy which has been followed has utterly failed is conclusively proved by the contrast between the condition of Ireland in 1868, as I have just described it, with what it is now. The terrible

state of things at present is too well known to require to be described; it amounts almost to a dissolution of civil society. This is only the natural consequence of the manner in which Irish affairs have been managed, and the nation has now to decide whether it will permit the system of government which has had this result to be continued, or will insist that an entirely new one shall be adopted.

Among those who may take the trouble to read this letter some will probably find fault with it as being in fact nothing more than a recommendation that Ireland should be permanently governed by mere force, sternly refusing any further measures for increasing the welfare of the people, and trusting to laws of coercion still more severe than those which have been heretofore enacted. This would be a complete misapprehension of my views. I do, indeed, hold that the first of all objects to be aimed at—one which must by some means or other be accomplished if we would have the slightest hope of raising Ireland out of its present misery—is to re-establish the authority of the law for the protection of all peaceable subjects of the Queen. Security for men's persons and property must be obtained before any real improvement in the condition of the Irish people can be possible. But it does not at all follow that the same means for attaining this end must be employed as those resorted to by the late Ministers. The first, at all events, of the Coercion Acts passed at their instance were, in my judgment, needlessly oppressive, and as ill devised for effecting their object as the concessions by which they were accompanied were for increasing the welfare of the distressed population. The later Acts, which were passed after the Phoenix-park murders, seem to have been framed with greater skill, and to have been more successful in putting down violence

than the previous ones. Still I should regret to see the re-enactment of even these without a careful inquiry whether some better means of enforcing obedience to the law might not be found, though I think it would be the greatest of errors to shrink from again resorting to all the provisions of the former Acts which can be shown to be really required in order to put down outrages and to assert effectually the authority of the law. Again, with regard to measures for increasing the welfare of the population of Ireland, and especially of that part of it which is now habitually exposed to severe distress, far from objecting to such measures, I consider it to be the duty of Parliament to adopt any that can be shown to be really calculated to answer this purpose, though I am altogether opposed to making to the Irish any more of such concessions as have lately been granted. In these they have been treated as foolish parents treat their children when they give them sweets that are bad for them to stop their crying. But without making concessions of this sort Parliament may do much for Ireland. No new laws indeed that could be passed, and no grants of money that could be made, could suddenly produce any marked improvement in the condition of the people. Such an improvement can only be the fruit of their own exertions, of more provident habits, and of greater and better directed industry. But there are not a few serious defects in the existing laws of Ireland which might be usefully corrected, and much might be done by wise and firm administration, as well as by judicious legislation, to encourage the advance of the people in a right direction, and to lead them to forget the fatal lesson they have been taught by what has been ignorantly done for them in recent years—that they may hope to better their lot in life, not by their own efforts, but by extorting

aid from the State and permission to possess themselves unjustly of what rightfully belongs to others. They are the true friends of Ireland who seek to have it governed with this view, not those who ask that they should be granted the Home Rule they insist upon having, though it would assuredly prove even more injurious to themselves than to us. The great want of Ireland at this moment is that English capital should be invested in the improvement of its resources. Give real security and this capital would flow in fast enough to take advantage of the many fields for its profitable employment to be found there. Grant Home Rule, and, besides all the other evils it could not fail to bring on the country, it would effectually prevent another shilling of English money from being sent there. Our capitalists would wisely be more willing to lend their money to the South American States of which the credit is lowest than to send it to be invested in the most promising Irish speculations under the government of a Home Rule Parliament.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Howick.

GREY.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Local government and Home Rule are the same thing etymologically, but the latter term has a meaning of its own, and signifies local government as applied to Ireland. The distinction is, therefore, a practical one, and, keeping it in view, we cannot but observe that most of the discussion which has hitherto occurred has been confined to Home Rule, whereas there are several most serious questions which arise upon local government in its general sense, and to some of these I desire, with your permission, to call attention.

The addresses of Mr. Trevelyan, Sir Charles Dilke, and Mr. Jesse Collings, all, as it happens, delivered in Warwickshire, which are reported in *The Times* of the 31st ult., will repay careful reading in connexion with this subject.

Sir Charles Dilke proposes elective national boards for England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland respectively, which should relieve Parliament of all private business (a term remaining to be defined), and, speaking of the Department with which he was last connected, he "recommends the transfer of most of the larger powers of the Local Government Board" to these bodies. He claims Mr. Trevelyan as an advocate of this policy for Ireland, but wrongly, or at least prematurely, as I read Mr. Trevelyan's speech, who would keep "the care of law and order in all its branches in the hands of the central Government," but appears to contemplate for other branches of administration, such as education, loans, and grants to public bodies or individuals, bridges, roads, asylums, and poor relief, so many different boards, which would differ from the present boards by being elective instead of nominated, and by representing the rate or tax payers instead of the Crown. From the tenour of Sir Charles Dilke's speech we must assume him to be speaking of the Local Government Board only as a specimen of the same policy to be pursued in transferring the analogous functions now exercised by the Board of Trade, the Home Office, the Education Department, the Charity Commission, &c., to the same elective national boards. But it will at once be seen that, unless these new boards are to exhibit centralization in a more aggravated form than at present, they must imply the co-existence of other more strictly local authorities, and he does not say whether there is to be any executive

control whatever over the whole of this hierarchy.

Now, it is important to bear in mind that the central Government at present hardly anywhere administers directly, but confines itself to veto and control, which it exercises by means of inspection, audit, and reports, under Ministers or boards, sitting, or represented, in Parliament. Local functions themselves are almost everywhere exercised by a local, and often elective, authority.

This balanced action of local and central government has been perfected during the half century which dates from 1832, during which period the greater part of the administrative system of this country has been created or recast. In the leading article of *The Times* of the 1st inst. there is the following very pertinent comment on Sir Charles Dilke's proposal:—

It would be matter for surprise if Liberal statesmen were to reject altogether the principle of central control over the proceedings of local elected and administrative bodies, which has hitherto been accepted as absolutely necessary by the most advanced economists. If it is deemed needful to prevent local boards from transgressing the law and abusing their delegated powers, the enforcement of that safeguard cannot be exclusively intrusted to a larger elected body composed of the same elements and dominated by the same influences.

True it is that Mr. Trevelyan is equally silent on this subject of executive control, but I understand him to abandon it on the part of the Crown, and to rest content with such security against injustice and corruption as may be found in confining the local authorities to the disposal of specifically limited grants, or of funds levied from their constituents.

Allowing, however, for the value of this safeguard, it is evident that the proposed change introduces a serious constitutional change in the prerogative of the Crown, and I submit that

reason for thinking twice before such a change is agreed to may be found in the said speeches of Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Jesse Collings. Sir Charles Dilke says to those he was dining with:—

When you obtain for the first time the chance of really governing yourselves, you will indignantly repel by your conduct in these counties the notion that you have been actuated in voting upon the Liberal side by any merely sordid considerations. I have read a great many speeches which have been addressed to these rural Midland constituencies, and I have never seen nobler doctrines advocated in more able language.

But Mr. Jesse Collings, who was sitting at the same table, and subsequently returned thanks for "the new Parliament and the Liberal members for Warwickshire," added, rather disquietingly, that "he was glad the agricultural labourers were masters of the situation. They were told to be thrifty and saving on 9s. per week. They would be fools if they did not use their votes to fill up (sic) the great gulf between Dives and Lazarus." There seems still to be room for the intervention of some superior and quite independent authority to decide whether a local body which shared Mr. Jesse Collings's opinions was "actuated by sordid considerations, or advocating noble doctrines."

If this letter had not already run to inordinate length, I should be disposed to ask whether, with the Irish trouble too exclusively in view, we had not forgotten that the only thing really requiring to be done is to extend to the country the municipal organization of the towns. The last Reform Act has gone far to obliterate the old distinction between county and borough. We need not pull all our executive machinery to pieces in order to extend the Municipal Corporations Act, 1882, to those Parliamentary divisions which are now outside it, and to rectify boundaries where this is necessary. It is a further question whether the functions of the local authorities thus made co-

extensive with the kingdom may not usefully be enlarged, but subject always to the controlling authority of the supreme executive power.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
January 5. AN OLD LIBERAL.

LORD WAVENEY ON IRELAND.

II.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—All government is, in Ireland, more or less personal, from the Lord Lieutenant down to the management of the smallest estate, and those who demand the abolition of the Lord Lieutenant are generally advocates of residence by members of the Royal Family. The Irish people require to feel that the head of the executive Government is in some sense their property, and that he is lifted above the ordinary turmoil of political life.

The late attempt to obtain a revision of the sentence on the Maamtrasna murderers would have been far more difficult to refuse by an Irish Chief Secretary, or by a Secretary of State alone. The Government must be in touch with the general mind and perceptions of the country. But there is a modification of the tenure of office, which would bring the functions of the Lord Lieutenant in closer accord with the practice of self-governing communities. The Americans of the United States, the Monarchists of Canada, the Republicans of France and of Switzerland have a fixed term for occupation of supreme power.

The Lord Lieutenant's appointment, therefore, should be for a fixed term of five years, so that the spirit of executive policy, though originated by one party, would be brought to a close under an unbroken rule of administration. It is a latent sense of some such expediency that guides the matured opinion of Liberals.

For the abolition of the Lord Lieutenant is a tradition of the Liberal party and the earliest known to our youthful political intelligence, and the idea is gradually

abandoned as the difficulty of any substitution becomes evident to our progressive experience. I remember but one distinguished politician who adhered throughout life to this dogma. Conceive Ireland receiving her ideas of Imperial rule from the permanent Irish Under-Secretary in the absence of a chief whose legislative action must be absorbed in great part by the Parliamentary needs of the English department. And in his enforced and frequent absence the government must be devolved on Lords Justices whose rule is tolerable for a while, but if frequent would prove as intolerable as ineffectual.

In truth the Government of Ireland must continue to, in a high degree, rule by tact; and in the maintenance of the Lord Lieutenantancy an officer is provided who should study and understand the Irish people, and be understood by them. Where executive administration would establish a mean between conflicting systems—say on denominational education—a judicial as well as an authoritative opinion is evoked.

If then it has been shown that forms of relief for national wants and of efficient government are provided by the framework of Irish administration, which of the perturbing causes is the more mischievous in its effects?

The operation of inconsiderate rule has done much to depress and stimulate, and in the second stage to enervate, the popular mind; but beyond question the abdication of repressive and governing power by the House of Commons has of late further debased the public mind until in three provinces the very air has become dark with treason to the empire.

Again, there are two main obstacles to the receipt of salutary influences—First, the systematic and deliberate exaggeration of the Nationalist party; they dignify their faction by the title of the Irish people; and secondly, the liberal trust with which the English people accept their own estimate of their merits, their sufferings, their wrongs, and the purity of their designs.

In this country, harassed by contending factions, it might be supposed that the mass of administrators would manifest an active and defiant policy in support of their special systems. But the most deplorable incident of public life in Ireland is the tendency of a large class to withdraw from the rough and stirring contest with popular prejudice. If, then, they refuse the aid of their intelligence and the weight of their example, the blame is theirs. As has been said the old machinery is abundantly available, but privilege must be justified by action. Of such a temper are the Orangemen; let us consider their genealogy.

The Orangemen are now rather a Protestant than a party and political organization. They are the grandsons of the men who fought at Vinegar-hill, and separating from the Roman Catholic body in sheer disgust at their purposeless policy maintained in the north the struggle for two years. Their own policy was well defined. To establish the republic of Ulster independent and self-reliant. When England bid Ireland defend herself the idea was adopted—under similar neglect Ulster would do so against "malice domestic" as well as foreign levies. There has always been a close connexion between Ulster and the United States. Forty years since the houses of the most considerable merchants were adorned with a portrait of Washington and a copy of the Declaration of Independence. But at this day these men are determined supporters of the British connexion and unflinching opponents of the Separatist faction.

And now to consider forms of improvement in national administration. To these the mind of England has been painfully addressed. They are three. The project of an occasional transfer of the sittings of Parliament to Dublin; the establishment of a Royal residence; and the absolute recognition of the tenant-right in Ulster in the shape of compensation for improvement, or for disturbance in the rest of Ireland. The first was abandoned in inception. The second would seriously hazard disappointments and regrets. The third has been successful in Ulster where it always had the force of law, from circumstances special to that province, and inapplicable with the full force of the tenant-right idea elsewhere.

In 1844, during the O'Connell trial, the Whig party under Lords Charlemont, Meath, Leitrim, Gosford,

Warlingham, and many other leading Liberals formulated a memorial for presentation to the Crown praying that a triennial visitation by the Houses of the Legislature might be held in Dublin. The matter was postponed and ultimately abandoned as the Government resumed its power of action, but the idea was earnestly discussed during that autumn and winter. No doubt was entertained of the feasibility of the proceeding though the expediency might be questioned.

More is expected from the establishment of a Royal residence than could be realized. It could not shine forth as a centre of grace or favour lest the march of Government be suspected or perverted. The intrigues of successive parties would be held to prevail within these walls, and it is therefore with great advantage that the personal influence of the Crown is relegated to Scottish mountains or a southern island. That members of the Royal family, as on a late occasion, should make a spontaneous progress is most advisable. The visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales was absolutely void of political character or result; but the larger knowledge the Irish people obtained procured for the Royal visitors the inestimable gain of public respect and appreciation.

Tenant-right is the compensation for aid in occupying land by colonization in addition to the value added by the labours of successive occupiers. It can, therefore, exist only where the population has equal rights as landlord and tenant in respect of the date of this joint peaceable occupation. And so exists in Ulster alone, and has no place in other provinces, as tenant-right proper. But in the conquered provinces this community of interest did not exist, and compensation for improvements does not cover the distinctive quality of the tenant-right—that of peaceable co-operation. Of guarantees and safeguards it must be said that they cannot be placed in the framework of law. The Nationalists can give none. That party has neither power to tender nor honesty to observe any limitation to their remarkable pretensions; and even if the party of Mr. Parnell tendered the observance of such safeguards as might appear sufficient, who shall guarantee the power to curb his followers?

“Perchance, the Cardinal can't make your peace.”
No more preposterous offer was ever made. But the belief in guarantees and safeguards is self-destructive.

If the policy advocated be good, why are guarantees required? If evil, then they will be of no avail.

The authors of a wider and more savage war than that of the convention—for this war is waged against the cabin as well as the castle—of a war that is signalized by the murder of the peasant at his potato patch and by the insults inflicted on shrieking women dragged forth under cloud of night—dare to talk of guarantees. And there are some who think that there are those in high places cajoled by these false and delusive declarations of peaceful confidence. But the end is at hand.

The final issues will be decreed by a power greater than political forces on either head—the strong impulses which renewed and extended freedom will send careering with new vigour through the torpid channels of a sluggish and doubting Legislature.

I have shown that the redemption of Ireland is not to be found in heroic remedies, but in the co-operation, by election, for public purposes, of the possessors of property in the making with the proprietors of accumulated wealth.

I do not turn aside to consider within what limits the duties of county boards should be defined, but only that no magisterial, executive, or functions of public justice or police should be exercised except by the responsible agents of the Crown.

All else is unreal, hollow, and deceitful. I have omitted much that I could well have added; but it seemed to me that I had said enough to show that the sober, enduring power of law on the ancient lines will suffice to remake Ireland.

Yours faithfully,

WAVENEY.

The Castle, Ballymena, County Antrim.

PROSPECTS OF PROPERTY IN IRELAND. TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—A feeling prevails that some great change is near at hand in the relations between England and Ireland, as well as in those which have existed between the landlords and tenants of the latter, and, indeed, perhaps, of both countries. Great Britain is not likely to consent to such changes without clearly understanding why they are demanded and what they involve. In such a crisis the present condition and immediate prospects of property in Ireland demand the attention of all Englishmen and

Scotchmen who do not choose to risk acquiescence in national disgrace and disaster.

Through the insufficiency of the ordinary law to resist and control an extraordinary and criminal combination, one more confiscation (and that more sweeping than any of those that have already stained the unhappy history of Ireland) is at this moment actually taking place.

The Land Act of 1881 declared the rents to which Irish landlords are fairly entitled, and converted the ownership of about 200 millions' worth of landed property into rent charges to the value of about 200 millions sterling. Exceptional legislation of this class, which set aside freedom of contract, may or may not have been justifiable, but there can be no question that it entails exceptional responsibilities on a Government resorting to it; and failure to protect the interests acknowledged and defined by the Irish Land Act must commit the Imperial Government to a startling betrayal of administrative weakness, and a melancholy derogation from national honour. Clearly that Act of Parliament is delusive, and property in land becomes extinguished, unless the judicial rents are collectable.

As a matter of fact, under the present ordinary law, wherever organized resistance to payment of rent exists the attempt to enforce such payment means having recourse to processes almost amounting to civil war, and involving scenes of violence which are a disgrace to any civilized country. Even under these conditions the collection of rent is becoming not only difficult, but, over an increasing area of the country, almost impossible.

Now, wherever the rent is uncollectable, the property which that rent represents passes forthwith into the possession of the non-rent-paying occupiers. Thus confiscation is accomplished better than any legislation could effect it, and the highest premium is offered to the tenant for resistance to the payment of rent.

Such a process of tacit confiscation is quietly but surely and steadily going on in the Western and poorer half of

Ireland, and as soon as it has been clearly established, in certain localities, that rents cannot be collected, what is now exceptional will become general, and the precedent will extend more and more widely until rent-paying has ceased over this little island, and the ownership of the soil has quietly passed from Her Majesty's loyal to Her Majesty's disloyal subjects, and from the friends of England to her bitter and implacable foes.

In stating thus clearly what is happening and will happen, I am not teaching the tenants any new arts of war. They know them already, and whatever they do not know there are plenty ready to teach them. The day has passed for a "head in the sand" policy, and the sooner that both sides take soundings and recognize existing facts, however disagreeable they may be to contemplate, the better for all concerned.

It will be useful now to explain more fully how the process already sketched is being accomplished. Where the moral obligations of contract are disowned, the recovery of rent, whether in England or Ireland, can only be enforced in two ways that I know of—namely, either by the seizure and sale of the tenant's goods, or by the fear of eviction. In England, by selling a tenant's furniture, stock, or interest, the rent may generally be realized. And if none of these courses are efficacious to produce the rent, the landlord may evict the tenant, and so at least recover the premises, even though he lose the arrears of rent due; and this is as true of a house in Belgrave-square as of a farm in Yorkshire.

In Ireland these courses are still open to landlords in the rich and civilized portions of the country, where the stock is heavy and the farms are large, although here also they are to a considerable extent nullified by the boycotting of all sales for rent. But in out-of-the-way places, where the farms are poor, the holdings small, the rent being under £20 per annum, and the stock insignificant, the above-named methods of recovering rent are a mere farce—for the following reasons.

Some time ago the Land League was legally suppressed; but it was not really suppressed; only its name was suppressed. As an association it still flourishes in full force, under the new name of the National League. Under its auspices boycotting and resistance to payment of rent have been carefully and widely organized. The Crimes Act, however, afforded partially efficient checks to lawlessness, and the lapsing of that Act has allowed during the last six months a considerable advance in anarchy.

But the real trial of strength and bloodshed has not yet taken place, nor will it until after the Quarter Sessions now close at hand at which landlords will obtain decrees for possession, where a year's rent or more remains unpaid. In February or March the landlords will proceed under these decrees to recover possession of the land for which those tenants have refused to pay. Then the struggle will commence in earnest.

It may be asked "Why should Irish landlords proceed to the extreme and terrible measure of recovery of the land by eviction?" To this natural inquiry the reply, already indicated, may here be given more fully.

The recovery of the land by the landlord is the only thing that the Irish tenant now fears. The seizure and sale of stock in Ireland have become impracticable. Tenants evade the law by exchanging cattle with one another, and when the landlord makes a seizure the tenant lodges an affidavit that the cattle taken were not his property and have been seized in error, and the landlord is thereupon bound by law to deliver them safely back to the place from whence he took them. Even if the landlord were to succeed in seizing the tenant's cattle they would not realize the rent, because they would either be rescued by a mob on their way to market, or if they were to reach the market their sale would be boycotted, and no man dare buy them. Indeed, in many out-of-the-way farms the cattle would be hunted up the mountains and instead of the cattle being

seized by the bailiff, the bailiff would be seized by the tenants, stripped naked, beaten, and possibly murdered. If time and space allowed actual occurrences in proof and illustration could be abundantly given.

It may be suggested that the tenant's interest in his farm should be sold to realize the rent, but this also is impracticable because (1st) the land cannot be sold under a Quarter Sessions decree where the debt is under £20 and even where the debt is over that sum the sale through this court is practically impossible; (secondly) even if the land could be sold, the sale would be boycotted, and would realize nothing.

The difficulty as regards the court might be got over by proceeding in the superior courts of Dublin, which can grant decrees under which land may be sold for rent. But if recovery of a debt under £20 is sought in this court the applicant will get no costs, as the Judges strongly discourage proceedings for which the inferior court is open being taken in the superior court.

With regard to this point, and also to wider considerations, it must be remembered that by far the larger number of the holdings in Ireland are rented at less than £20 a year. Under these circumstances it is plain that the seizure and sale of stock or land for rent are impracticable, and of course nothing but eviction remains.

But this brings us to the most serious point of all. It is manifestly useless to put a man out by law to-day if he can put himself back by force to-morrow: and this is now what actually occurs.

To evict the tenant again after he has retaken forcible possession would be no remedy, because it involves time and money, and is again useless, since again he retakes forcible possession, and all the while the landlord is not a bit nearer getting his rent than he was before.

But why not indict him before the Quarter Sessions? We reply because the sessions may be three months off, and then he would be tried by a jury of farmers who, no

doubt, would do their duty independent of all evidence, and hand in a verdict of acquittal without leaving the box.

There still remains the expedient of summoning the offender before the local magistrates at petty sessions for trespass. But both the offence of trespass and the penalty are regarded as frivolous.

The offender is really guilty of burglary and house-breaking, and yet he is summoned for merely committing a common trespass, much the same as if a hen were found scratching in a garden, and the utmost penalty that can be inflicted for trespass is a fine of 10s., with 1s. 6d. costs, for each offence so committed. But, even so, a trespass cannot be proved without an eye witness, and such can scarcely be obtained for any money, owing to the personal danger that he would incur, and if he were accompanied by police his advent would be observed, and the trespassers would remove into a neighbour's house, so that on the bailiffs arrival there would be no trespass visible. Usually the tenant leaves a few of his young children in the house, who cannot be summoned, but show that he is in possession, while defying the law.

In some localities the cost of such proceedings may easily exceed the amount of rent due, and of course this expense is commonly out of all proportion to the results obtainable.

It is worth while here to say something more of boycotting. By this now universally prevalent practice, the difficulties in the way of enforcing Imperial law are enormously increased, and Her Majesty's subjects, rich and poor, are deprived of their liberty of action.

Boycotting and outrage are the instruments of the National League executive, as the police and the army are at present of the Imperial executive. The former are effectively used, the latter are not.

No boycotted man can buy or sell, nor can he employ or be employed, and existence becomes intolerable under the dread sentence of the National League.

There are at present only three Acts of Parliament that at all bear upon the subject:—

(1) An old Act of Edward III., under which common offenders may be required to find bail to be of good behaviour; but that is ineffectual, as the culprit cannot be fined or imprisoned if he can find bail to be of good behaviour in future, which, of course, he readily does as soon as he has done all the harm he wants to do for the present.

(2) The Malicious Injuries Act of 1861; but that is useless, because no clause in it exactly meets the methods of boycotting now practised.

(3) The Conspiracies Act of 38 and 39 Vic., cap. 38, and this is ineffectual, because the wording of the Act was not framed or intended to meet boycotting as now practised, and because the offender may elect to be tried at Quarter Sessions by a jury, which in Ireland is almost certain to consist of farmers who are subject to the dread of the National League, and who will certainly not convict.

Thus boycotting, when practised without any overt act of intimidation, is not illegal, and even when done in an illegal way it is practically almost impossible to punish the boycotter under ordinary law; a fact which is made patent by the circumstance that boycotting exists unchecked in almost every part of Ireland.

By this means loyal British subjects in all classes, but more especially in the poorer and weaker classes, are deprived of the freedom they have a right to claim; and when the British Government fails to protect her loyal subjects against the tyranny of the National League she will soon have very few loyal subjects to protect.

There is a considerable body of Irish men and women of all degrees, largely predominating in Ulster and scattered throughout the other provinces, who (though not landowners) are loyal and law-abiding at heart. But if these men are left without the civic safeguarding which Great Britain seems unable or unwilling any longer to guarantee, they will in the end have no choice but submission to the revolutionists.

In this way, as in others, the paralysis of the Imperial Executive has already had a marked effect, and has materially lessened the apparent numerical strength of the Unionist party at the polls.

The present result, then, of the state of things above described is that there are many estates already on strike, firmly resisting the payment of rent; and as the ordinary law no longer enables the landlord to enforce rent in many parts of Ireland, the rent revolt will indefinitely extend, unless legislation intervenes. The payment of rent worth £200,000,000 sterling will cease, and a loyal section of Her Majesty's subjects, with their mortgagees and dependants, large classes who have not only inherited but have also bought and lived and spent in Ireland, on the faith of the Imperial rule and freedom, in reliance on British security and civilization—these, with whatever they represent and uphold of loyalty, order, and honour, are in danger of being wiped out of this country.

It should be remembered that it is not Irish property only which the present question involves. Millions of English and Scotch money have been mortgaged on Irish land, and the British Treasury has lent millions more for Irish improvements. These great sums are, like the lands, in danger of practical confiscation.

The remedy for the appalling and rapidly approaching disasters which have been pointed out is simple and at hand.

In a country where the jury system has broken down it is necessary for the preservation of order to supplement this peculiarly English institution by channels of justice less dependent on the temper and condition of the populace. Measures to this end have been branded as coercive in order to excuse the weakness which hesitates to employ them. But the word "coercive" does not here apply unless we allow it to include every mode of bringing criminals to justice, and of coercing the lawless into submission to the law.

Let then, the British Government take means to secure

the efficacy of her own laws, and relieve her legislation in Ireland from the shame of being regarded as a mockery. In the lately expired Crimes Act there are clauses directed against boycotting and retaking forcibly of possession. (See sections 7 and 8, also sections 21 and 22.)

Under that Act a constable might witness a forcible retaking of possession and summon the offender before two stipendiary magistrates, who could send the culprit for six months to gaol. It enabled two stipendiary magistrates similarly to deal with boycotting. This was effective. If stipendiary magistrates were empowered to deprive a publican of his licence in case he were to refuse to sell to any member of the public in the usual way of trade one of the worst forms of boycotting would be stopped.

A law making the six months' equity of redemption date from the granting of a decree for possession, instead of from its execution, would render many evictions unnecessary, and greatly tend to the preservation of the peace.

Such are a few rough suggestions towards enactments under which existing laws could be carried out, and if the necessity for immediate legislation to this end is once recognized the details will be only a matter for practical experience and investigation.

Let us now consider the alternative which the British Government must face if it lacks either the courage or the power to maintain Imperial order in Ireland. Unless Imperial law is made permanently effective in Ireland the country will rapidly pass into the hands of men who will repudiate every responsibility to the Empire.

The Loyalists once sacrificed, England's moral power against the revolutionary forces in Ireland will be shaken. It would then become difficult to withhold a local Parliament, which would be in immediate collision with the Imperial.

Among the first acts of such a Parliament would be resistance to Imperial taxation, and especially to taxation

for an Army and Navy which would be no less feared than hated. Capital would be unprocurable in Ireland for national requirements and for private industries, and the country would lose for an indefinite time all chance of material prosperity.

* Even the details of the change can to some extent be foretold. For instance, every present magistrate would be superseded, and every convict sentenced for agrarian outrage would be released.

If the Irish revolution is allowed to spread the foundations of property and of order will once more have been undermined, England will once more have brought upon herself the execration of those who trusted in her protection, and then, before 20 years are over, when Ireland has become the theatre of European intrigue, the victim of personal jealousies, intolerable alike to England and to herself, she will once more by inevitable necessity become a conquered province of the British Empire.

Meanwhile it does not surprise us that projects of revolution and spoliation should be promoted by the National League and their Parliamentary representatives. But we do not believe that these projects will have either the support or the acquiescence of English statesmen, gentlemen who, in their private capacities, would view practical complicity in plunder with a horror which no colour of temporary expediency could dispel.

We are at a grave crisis, and the interests of civil order, of trade, industry, and property in Ireland need prompt evidence that English honour and Imperial unity are not to be sacrificed on the altar of party politics.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. TOWNSEND TRENCH.

Kildare-street Club, Dublin,

MR. BUTT'S HOME RULE AND MR. PARNELL'S HOME RULE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Colonel King-Harman and I myself are the only

Parliamentary survivors of the Home Rule followers of Mr. Butt, and I therefore regret that the Press Association has so condensed, and in fact contorted, the answer I made to their inquiries that I must trouble you with this letter on the momentous change that the Home Rule programme has undergone.

Mr. Butt was totally opposed to the revival of "Grattan's Parliament," knowing that such a thing would lead to attempts at separation and to civil war. His proposals were strictly limited to Irish local affairs, and included guarantees against interference with property, with the customs duties, and, as might be expected, with religion, for the most influential of his adherents were Protestants.

On the other hand, Mr. Parnell places no limits to the aspirations of a nation, and as a first step towards destroying "the last link which keeps Ireland bound to England" claims that she shall have the regulation of her own customs. Mr. Davitt thirsts for the extirpation of landlords, and would appropriate rents and, according to a later development of his opinions, ground-rents also. Mr. T. P. O'Connor wishes Ireland to be like Canada, and as a preliminary would repudiate Ireland's share of the National Debt. The clerical party, who within the last few months have embraced the man whom they previously denounced and repudiated, hint at the restoration of alienated ecclesiastical property, and show their real feelings towards Protestants by such pastorals as the Bishop of Kilkenny lately placarded on his cathedral in which mixed marriages are spoken of in terms of unexampled harshness, hardly justifiable if the question related to the intermarriage of the black and white races.

Under these circumstances, and guided by these lights, the question naturally arises, Why has the Home Rule programme been thus changed, and who are now its advocates? The answer is plain. Mr. Butt's proposals did not go down with the ecclesiastics, for it protected religious freedom; it failed with the peasants, for it did not give

them the land without payment ; and it never satisfied the Fenians, for it did not include revenge on England. Mr. Gladstone seems to have had an early perception of this truth, for he called Mr. Butt's party, greatly to our annoyance, "Nominal Home Rulers."

Much is now being said by certain philosophical Radicals of the duty of Parliament to endeavour to satisfy Mr. Parnell, but those who keep facts before their eyes are well aware that he cannot be satisfied, for behind him, and towering over him, stand his stern paymasters, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, of which the Church is in mortal dread, and hopes to checkmate by its sudden junction with Mr. Parnell, as has been fully explained in the *Tablet*. This alliance is, however, very distasteful to the priests, whom he once called Papist rats, and with whom he has much less sympathy than he has with Rochefort and such allies ; but adversity makes us acquainted with strange company.

The country ought thoroughly to understand that Nationalism in Ireland has many significations, and, in truth, means only class interests, whether those interests are ecclesiastical or peasant interests, or the interests of those who long to be free of legal restraints. The Nationalism born of race sentiment is confined to a few, and, as I have said many times before, would disappear if our legislation had made the mass of the people less miserably poor and more hopeful of good.

It seems to me that we are in danger of repeating our ancient errors, and of legislating to meet what we think Irish sentiments, instead of legislating for the practical every-day wants of the country. The source of Irish disaffection and the strength of the revolutionary party are to be found in the empty stomachs of an unemployed agricultural population. The Governor of an Indian province would rapidly change the feeling of the people, for he would drain the worst parts of the country, and would make it habitable by the extension of roads, railways, and harbours. Our efforts in this direction have

been singularly silly and unpractical, and I may say that the Act passed by the late Government to facilitate the making of light railways has largely aggravated popular disaffection, for it was a mockery of the poor, whom it has sent empty away. No Irish member is responsible for its failure, for its terms were kept jealously secret until the last moment, and the Bill was pushed through the House under the threat that amendments would lead to its withdrawal.

I have many means of knowing that both in town and country the tradesmen, agriculturists, and labourers are thoroughly sick of the political tyranny that is being exercised over them ; they are half ruined, and dread the threatened conflict if the might of England has to measure itself once more against outrage and crime. That Government, in my opinion, will deserve best of the country which, while firmly asserting the supremacy of the law, puts hope into the hearts of the masses by the practical legislation which, as a dweller in one of the most destitute parts of the country, I have humbly advocated for so many weary years.

I am, Sir, faithfully yours,

MITCHELL HENRY.

IRISH LOYALISTS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT. TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—In your comments on Earl Cowper's letter you recommend Irish landlords to make their situation known to the British public. But to do this is just one of our difficulties. The columns of the influential English papers, though opened freely enough on the Irish question to well-known public men and large landed proprietors, especially if they be titled personages as well, are all but closed to the ordinary Irish landowner of small means—men whose rent-roll is under £2,000 a year, and who, unfortunately for themselves, have in the best of times only a certain margin of their nominal incomes to live on. As a representative of this much-wronged class, will you allow me to

call attention to an imminent danger by which we and all the Loyalists with us are menaced, and one that, so far as I know, has not yet been pointed out?

There is little likelihood that visionary theorists will succeed in inducing Great Britain to commit national suicide by giving an independent Parliament to the Separatist faction here, but there is very great danger that a considerable amount of what is called "local self government" will be conceded, and this is the rock ahead to which I have alluded. Except in Ulster, the Loyalists generally, and especially the small landlords, are like tired swimmers struggling to keep themselves afloat in mid-stream. The smallest added weight will assuredly cause them to sink at once, and the concession of local government to the disloyal majority would be this added weight.

With (the semblance of, if you will) an Imperial Government between us and our oppressors, it is as much as we can do to keep our heads over water. The landlords have to battle with the no-rent conspiracy on the one hand, and on the other to meet the demands for tithes, taxes, head-rents, interest on incumbrances, &c., while the Loyalist farmers, merchants, and mechanics are hardly better off, being in constant danger of having the frightful punishment of boycotting pronounced against them, should they disobey the unwritten law of the League. How will it then be with us, when those thirsting for our destruction shall have additional power for evil put into their hands? All guarantees for the protection of the loyal minority would be in practice only so much waste paper. Just one illustration.

The future elective local boards will be composed of the same stamp of men as our present Poor Law guardians, and "representative cess-payers" at presenting sessions. These officers do not hesitate now to coerce dispensary doctors into joining the League by threatening to allow them in after years no retiring pensions. Neither do they scruple to deprive aged women of outdoor relief for going against the wishes of the League, nor to oblige workmen

to leave "obnoxious" employers by threatening in case of non-compliance that Poor Law relief shall be withheld from their helpless and indigent mothers. They likewise in places refuse to carry out the provisions of the Labourers' Act in favour of any except those who can show a receipt from the League for subscriptions to its funds. The representative cess-payers now outvote the magistrates at sessions, and refuse compensation to Loyalists for malicious injuries to property, and if it were not that as yet the grand juries have a deciding voice in this last matter, no Loyalist would ever be compensated for the loss of his goods and chattels.

I ask you, Sir, how will it be with us Loyalists when our enemies constitute the final court of appeal in all such matters? Any one who has ever attended an Irish court of justice and seen how little the sanctity of an oath on the Bible is regarded by certain classes will have no difficulty in understanding that official oaths of impartiality will turn out to be mere forms, to be disregarded at will. The unchecked destruction of Loyalist property that will then ensue will be quite sufficient of itself to turn the scale against us.

I maintain that the country Leaguers at all events care little about local government, except in so far as it will give them increased facilities for possessing themselves of our estates. That is the real object of the clamour for Home Rule so far as they are concerned. If it were not for this, there would be little outcry against the grand jurors. It remains to be seen whether England, in deference to the dishonest demands of her enemies, will sacrifice those who trusted her promises and have ever been loyal to her.

Whatever may have been our opinion of the proposed Land Act of 1881, once it became law we honestly and loyally carried out our part of it. We cannot, however, shut our eyes to the disheartening fact, that judicial tenants here are, as a rule, not one whit more willing to pay the reduced than the old rents. On the contrary, before the land agitation began, they paid the higher far

more willingly than they do now the lower rent. In this neighbourhood these tenants are spending money freely for everything except the payment of those reduced rents which we were told during the debates on the Land Act would henceforward be collected without difficulty and thus recoup the landlords for their lessened incomes—alas! is the conviction to be forced on us that concessions to the Irish are as vain as would be the throwing of a few lambs to a pack of wolves, in the hope of inducing them to spare the remainder of the flock?

Placing no value whatsoever on anonymous communications, I sign myself Your obedient servant,

EDWARD M. RICHARDS.

Grange, Enniscorthy, Ireland.

“A STURDY SPEECH.”

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—At the late anniversary celebration of the memory of the Manchester “martyrs” at Chicago the Rev. Mr. Gordon, Milwaukee, addressed a large audience. After an eloquent panegyric on Mr. Parnell, he said:—

“If his methods failed, nothing remained for the Irish people but a policy of desperation. (Cheers.) There, for example, was the question of dynamite. It was very unpopular in England. (Laughter and cheers.) It was also out of favour at the Court of Russia. (Renewed laughter and cheers.) Some people in America even affected to be horrified at its very name. (Laughter.) Yet it might become, under peculiar circumstances, a weapon for the oppressed. (“Hear,” and loud cheers.) It would be criminal to use it for the freedom of Ireland, unless they were assured that it would accomplish its purpose. But if all other methods for obtaining the freedom of Ireland failed, if the legitimate struggle of Parnell should not succeed, if the British Government should oppose to the Irish demand force, and nothing but force, he said, as an English Republican, as a friend of universal liberty, that it would then become the duty of the Irish people, as a last resort and for their self-preservation, to try what virtue there was in dynamite. (Loud and continued cheering, which was several times renewed.)”

This atrocious exhortation to the wholesale assassination of the English people is prominently reported in the current number of Mr. Parnell's paper, under the heading “Splendid Meeting at Brand's Hall, Chicago. A Sturdy Speech by a Scotch Clergyman.” Are the men who circulate and endorse such teaching to rule over us, the million of Her Majesty's peaceful subjects in West Britain? I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
HIBERNIOUS.

THE IRISH QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—However ingeniously a section of the inhabitants of Ireland may argue as to the results of the Irish elections, and whatever conclusions they may wish us to draw from the number of electors who did not vote for Mr. Parnell, Parliament cannot go behind the result, which gives 86 representatives who will demand for the Irish people the right to manage their own affairs. The number by which the demand will be made makes the refusal of its consideration impossible, unless England is prepared to go back once more to government by the sword. Such a reversal of all recent attempts to do justice can hardly be contemplated. It would make another most disastrous break in that continuity of policy which is essential to success. Ireland has never had any sufficiently continuous policy of justice extended to her, partly by her own fault, and partly on account of the system of party government which prevails. A change in the position of English political parties has usually meant a reversal of the Irish policy. The Irish people consequently expect a change of power from Liberal to Tory, and *vice versa*, to make a necessary alteration in the attitude of the Imperial Government. It is the same expectation that animates them now. There should, therefore, be some security taken, in any scheme for Home Rule or local self-government that may be proposed, for giving it an

element of continuous development for a few years. Finality in such matters is scarcely possible, but any Home Rule scheme should have a promise of permanence. To attain these objects the scheme should be progressive. No people can, even in matters of government, avoid with safety the law of evolution. Constitutions that are developed all at once, perfect in all their parts, are seldom the most lasting. To give Ireland forthwith a Parliament in Dublin would be a doubtful experiment; it would be a surer and a safer plan to let such a National Council follow as the pledged and premeditated result of a gradual development of a full and free system of local self-government. Let the Parliament be the crowning of the edifice which Irishmen may gradually build up by a wise and just administration of local affairs. Surely it is not too much to ask our statesmen for a plan by which the establishment of County Boards in Ireland should lead in the course of a year or two to the formation of Provincial Councils, one each for Ulster, Munster, Leinster, and Connaught, which would be supreme in all matters affecting the interests of the counties in their respective provinces. The crowning of the edifice would naturally occur later, when the final power in all domestic matters for Ireland would be constituted in a Parliamentary or National Council to settle questions affecting larger areas than a single province. Such a National Council might be composed of representatives sent up by the Provincial Councils, or by the members elected to serve in the Imperial Parliament acting as a committee on Irish affairs. The elaboration of such a scheme may be difficult, but is not impossible. The suggestion has this merit, which is not unimportant—it would give Ireland a period of progressive development. For the next few years all her energies would be directed to building up the successive parts of a system of self-government. The evolution of the government of Ireland by the Irish would be insured under a consistent and continuous policy, and when the final result—a Parliament in Dublin—was won, every county would have created its own

body of trusted representatives, fitted by some years of experience in local work for the administration of larger affairs. Let the Irish have an Act which will let them work out their own freedom, and the nation will learn, as the individual, that "the reward is in the doing."
I am yours truly, F.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Among the numerous excellent letters which you have published on Irish affairs, no one of your correspondents has given an account of the working of the rent bank system of Germany. This was put into operation in 1860, and in many poor districts the conditions must have been similar to the Irish problem, the chief crux of which is, how to change tenancies into freeholds?

Will not some correspondent describe the effects of such legislation in different parts of Germany, both where land and people are poor, and where more favourable circumstances prevail? I remain, &c.,

AN EX-OFFICIAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Having read in *The Times* of to-day the letter of "An Irish County Magistrate," I beg to state my case as one somewhat similar. Rental about £4,000 a year. Tenants had leases for 21 years, from 1859 to 1880. Rents were considered moderate and paid most regularly. From 1880 abatements have been given at 15 per cent. Some small tenants availed themselves of the Arrears Act; about £200 a year has been taken off by the Land Commissioners. Now, up to and for November, 1884, arrears are £1,378. The whole of hanging gale to May, 1885, is outstanding, as no arrangement as to abatement can be made. In addition, I have had to pay for the last few years to the Public Works the full amount of interest on arterial drainage loans, contracted at request of tenants, and which, with the exception of a few pounds charge on *demesnes*, only benefit them. So much as to my estate, As to the state of the country as distinguished from the

towns, doubtless many tenants are impoverished, generally from having contracted debts in the years when profits were great and credit at banks and shops given to an extent scarcely to be credited; but it is certain that there is money saved among the middle and lower classes (witness the amount drawn out during the run on the Bank of Ireland), and if there were free action and no terrorism nearly all the broken men would be bought out. The middle-aged farmers and shopkeepers may have a hankering for Nationalism in some form or other, but they wish still more for peace and quiet. In the country parts the movement is kept up by a very few enthusiasts, by a crowd of dissatisfied men who have failed in their agricultural or commercial pursuits, and by the younger sons of farmers debarred from share in land. All these classes profit more or less by the money from America, and, being noisy and having lots of time at their disposal, become the real leaders of the village leagues, and coerce not only the ordinary inhabitants, but also the clergy, who generally have been appointed presidents and vice-presidents whether they would or not.

The elected guardians, who have ousted the landlords from the management of the unions, are getting tired of their duties in many parts of the country. The novelty of being chairmen and vice-chairmen has ceased to amuse, and they find that when they have to enforce collection of rates they get as loudly abused as their predecessors, and it is more than doubtful that as a class they will be anxious to assume the responsibilities of being members of local government boards without having the check of a grand jury.

In the large towns the agitation is directed by clever men who have become professionals, and there the circumstances are quite different.

A MUNSTER LANDLORD.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Lord Cowper's letter tells the truth about Irish politics; it is not patriotism but plunder that attracts the Irish farmer; it is not everything for our country; it is "the land for nothing." The strike against rent in the form of application for abatement is simply to depreciate the value of land with an eye to future purchase if it is not given to them for nothing. Small tenants in

the west have not suffered; both food and fuel are plentiful and cheap, as the returns of local markets show. I can give two instances in North Mayo of this strike, and there are many similar—(1) where tenants hold at judicial rents, when 20 per cent. was taken off, a reduction of 30 per cent. is demanded; (2) where the rents were so low the tenants did not venture to try the Land Courts, 25 per cent. was asked. In both these cases the tenants were headed by their priest, who, when their preposterous demand was refused, made them ledge their money with him to leave no loophole for repentance. This shows pretty clearly that it was not poverty that compelled them. I make no comments, but is a country where such is the unwritten law of the land fit for self-government? I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

LOYAL.

THE IRISH CRISIS—WHAT IS TO BE DONE?
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—The British nation seems to have at length become aware of the fact that we stand face to face with the gravest crisis in our history that has occurred since the great struggle with the First Napoleon at the beginning of this century. An agitation, supported by American Irish funds, and headed by an American Irish leader, has convulsed social order throughout one portion of the Empire. Stimulated by the direct encouragement of some prominent men of both political parties in England, and by the faltering language of nearly all the so-called leaders, the party whose aim is the disruption of the Empire now claims an independent legislature for Ireland, with the immediate object of confiscating the property of the present owners of the soil, and the ultimate result of a conflict that must lead either to final separation or to a sanguinary civil war. With the assent of both political parties, Ireland has received an undue share in the national representation, the electoral franchise has been extended to the poorest and most ignorant class of the

population, and a mode of election adopted that has practically disfranchised, throughout five-sixths of the country, the large minority that includes nearly every man of education. No one who knew Ireland doubted of the result, or waited for the general election to know that Mr. Parnell would have a following of some 85 members of the House of Commons pledged to absolute obedience.

Meanwhile, under a Government which calls itself Conservative, every provision that was found essential to enforce the observance of the law has been allowed to expire; the National League rules the country and enforces its decrees by penalties that few dare to encounter. Lord Carnarvon is able to move about freely without an escort, and looks on at a reign of terrorism under which no one dares to appeal for protection to the constituted authorities.

Men are anxiously asking what is to be done; and, while awaiting the proposals of the responsible Ministers of the Crown, suggestions of every kind are freely presented to the public. The boldest, but, as I believe, the most hopeless, is that of immediate and absolute separation. It is monstrous in theory; for if you once grant that a majority in one portion of the kingdom is entitled to whatever it demands, irrespective of right or policy, where do you mean to stop? If a majority of Welshmen can be got to vote the repeal of the Ten Commandments, are you to assent to the creation of a Cambrian Republic where robbery and murder are to become legal institutions? But the best practical security against separation is the instinctive sense of the people of this country. If public men have become feebler, and do not assume the determined tone taken by the leaders of both parties against the Repeal agitation half-a-century ago, I do not believe that Englishmen and Scotchmen have lost the spirit of their fathers, or that they have less national feeling than their kinsmen beyond the Atlantic, who not long since freely spent their lives and their for-

toes to maintain the Union. This great country, with its glorious traditions, with its unexhausted power of usefulness to the progress of the human race, is not to be maimed and crippled to the condition of a second-rate Power, with a foreign enemy at her gate, because we basely shrink from facing the difficulties and dangers that now beset us.

The notion that you can grant to Ireland a separate and independent legislature, and yet maintain the union of the three kingdoms, has been, I trust, sufficiently exploded by the discussion it has undergone during the last two or three weeks. If you mean it to be a reality you thereby give your consent in the first place to the confiscation of the land, and with it some 80 or 100 millions of English capital lent on the security of that land, to say nothing of some 50 millions that have been paid for property sold under the Land Courts during the last 40 years, for which you gave what you styled a Parliamentary title. If you have brought yourselves to that point, do not, in Heaven's name, adopt the policy of Pontius Pilate by leaving to an Irish Parliament the execution of the work. Do it boldly yourselves, and you will satisfy the class whose support is the strength of the present agitation, at the cost of ruin to every one in Ireland, many of them your own kith and kin, and most of them Irishmen, who have hitherto believed in you and trusted you.

With an independent Irish Parliament the work of spoliation would be accomplished, but you would not escape the certainty of conflict and ultimate civil war, in which you had given every advantage to your enemies. Unauthorized reports have attributed to the most eminent of British statesmen the idea that the difficulties of maintaining the Union, while granting to Ireland a separate Parliament, could be overcome by stipulations and guarantees. I can give no credence to such reports. I cannot believe that any man knowing the present condition of Ireland could be idiotic enough to confide in such

a rotten reed. With all his apparent power, Mr. Parnell dares not attempt to baulk his followers of the prize which he has promised, and for which alone they have struggled.

If you mean the Irish Parliament not to be independent and to act only as you deem right for Ireland and for the rest of the Empire, it would be a sham, and the present conflict would be at once renewed under conditions more favourable to your enemies.

Lord Cowper has stated the plain fact, well known to those who look calmly at the state of Ireland, that the real strength of the so-called Nationalist agitation is the desire of the peasantry to possess the land. There is the one question to which practical politicians should apply themselves. I agree with most of what Sir James Caird has written on the subject. I believe that economically Ireland would suffer by a large transference of the land from the present proprietors to the occupying tenants; but the political advantage of such a measure is so manifest and so pressing that it would repay even considerable sacrifices on the part of the Imperial Exchequer. Most Irish proprietors would now accept 20 years' purchase of the judicial rents, and with an efficient administration of the law the instalments of repayment by the new peasant proprietors could be enforced as well as the present collection of rates and county cess. The alternative lies between a large, perhaps a compulsory, measure of this kind and the maintenance of the present state of the law. But the first crying need is that of efficient administration, with such provisions as will enable the Executive to protect the law-abiding population and to repress outrage. Your columns sufficiently show that the present condition of a great part of Ireland is a scandal which should be made to cease at whatever cost.

As to the Parliamentary difficulty of dealing with Mr. Parnell and his 85 followers in the House of Commons, I make light of it. If 584 Englishmen and Scotchmen can

not find the means for carrying on the national business because of the opposition of 86 Irishmen they must have strangely degenerated. If through sheer weakness or for paltry party advantage the leaders shrink from devising and carrying out the requisite means I am convinced that the people of this country, now that they are aroused to the danger and disgrace of the position, will discover leaders who will give effect to the national determination.

I am, Sir, &c.,

JOHN BALL.

The Times this day says ;—

The letter of "AN OLD LIBERAL" which we print this morning opportunely calls attention to a somewhat neglected aspect of the question of local government in general. The question of local government in Ireland is acknowledged to present special difficulties. Etymologically, as our correspondent remarks, Home Rule and local government are equivalent expressions, but the problem for Parliament to solve is that of establishing local government in Ireland without making mischievous concessions to what Nationalists understand by Home Rule. It has not, perhaps, been sufficiently considered that a somewhat similar problem really confronts us in England. It is acknowledged on all hands that the reconstruction of local government is one of the first tasks which the new Parliament will be called upon to take in hand. There is, moreover, an unusual *consensus* of opinion between

the two parties as to the general lines on which this reconstruction is to proceed. SIR CHARLES DILKE, who has made the subject his own, and has treated it at length on several recent occasions, seems almost to assume that the measure which the present Government will introduce will be identical in substance with that which was prepared in outline by himself before the late Government quitted office. The assumption is probably not ill-founded. Successive Presidents of the Local Government Board, being inspired from the same sources, are very apt to speak the same language. This harmony of opinion, as MR. PELL lately remarked, must not be wholly ascribed to independent thought and reasoning. "Its origin might," he added, "without any great strain on the imagination, be traced to Whitehall inspirations." It is likely enough, therefore, that departmental influences will be predominant in any Local Government Bill, whether it is introduced by one party or the other. Its object will be, in LORD SALISBURY'S own language, to give practical recognition to the principle "that people in their own localities should govern themselves." The principle is excellent and unimpeachable; but, as "AN OLD LIBERAL" points out, it does not touch the question of central authority and control. What security will there be that the new local authorities, constituted by direct representation and invested with large powers of taxation and administration, will be proof against injustice,

oppression, and corruption? The question is not easy to answer. SIR CHARLES DILKE seems disposed to rely on the moderation and good sense of Englishmen in general. A hierarchy is to be established, beginning with the lowest grade of local administration and ending in the sublimated influence and mature wisdom of the Local Government Board. But it has not yet been sufficiently explained how this wisdom and this influence are to be brought to bear on the subordinate authorities, who are to be invested with many of the powers now exercised by the Local Government Board.

We seem, in fact, to be placed in this dilemma. If the several local authorities are to be independent, there is no guarantee for uniformity of action and no security against injustice and oppression. If the ultimate control is to be vested in the Local Government Board, the local government of the country, instead of being decentralized, will tend to become more centralized than ever. SIR CHARLES DILKE, indeed, when he spoke at Halifax in the autumn, seemed to think that in spite of the establishment of representative local authorities, the power of the Local Government Board would be raised rather than lowered. "It would become," he said "in an even higher degree than it now is, a great legal court of appeal with many of the most dignified functions of Continental Councils of State and of the Supreme Court at Washington." If this is to be its character well and good; but it seems obvious that such a character must be impressed upon

it by direct legislation ; it can hardly be expected to acquire it by a spontaneous process of evolution. The normal tendency of such a process would probably be in quite an opposite direction. An administrative Board with no specific powers of control would find itself powerless in the face of local representative bodies. Its advice might be the quintessence of wisdom, but it would be disregarded if it happened to go counter to the prevailing sentiment of the local authorities themselves. Even at present the relation of such bodies as the Charity Commission to local authorities is not always a very amicable one. If the powers now exercised by the Charity Commissioners under Mr. JESSE COLLINGS'S Small Holdings Bill were transferred to local authorities imbued with Mr. COLLINGS'S own views on the subject of allotments, it is certain that the mere advice of the Charity Commissioners would have but a very poor chance of being listened to. The whole question, in fact, resolves itself into the choice between confidence and control. To borrow and apply SIR CHARLES DILKE'S analogy, a series of representative bodies uncontrolled by any central authority, and subject only to the advice of the Local Government Board, would be like an assemblage of confederated States emancipated from the control of a Supreme Court. No State in the American Union can levy duties against another State or pass statutes impairing the validity of contracts. If it did the Supreme Court would, when appealed to, disallow and annul the legislation in question.

But the power of the Supreme Court to do this is clearly defined in the Constitution ; its sanction, in the last resort, is the whole force of the Federal Government. Its power would be *nil* if it were confined to the mere function of giving advice, or of laying down general principles, which might appeal to the reason but need not interfere with the action of those to whom they were addressed. Of course, if it be conceded that the Local Government Board is still to be invested with the whole force of the State for the purpose of enforcing such control as it is empowered to exercise over the acts of local authorities, *cadit questio*. But at present this point seems to be left uncertain. SIR CHARLES DILKE seems to lean towards the principle of controlling one representative body by another, superior in authority and elected from a larger area. But, as we have already said in the article quoted by "AN OLD LIBERAL," such control cannot be safely exercised by a body composed of the same elements and dominated by the same influences as the body it is required to control.

The importance of the question largely depends, no doubt, on the nature and extent of the powers to be intrusted to the new local authorities. "AN OLD LIBERAL" suggests that the only thing really requiring to be done is to extend to the country the municipal organization of the towns. SIR CHARLES DILKE, on the other hand, proposes elective national councils which should relieve Parliament of all private business and exercise most of the larger powers of the Local Govern-

ment Board. Between these two extremes there is room for an almost inexhaustible variety of intermediate proposals. But in every case, except that of working entirely on existing lines, the question of the proper distribution of public powers is one which cannot be left undetermined. MR. JESSE COLLINGS, we are reminded, has told the rural voters that they would be fools if they did not use their votes to fill up the great gulf between DIVES and LAZARUS. The metaphor halts, but the language is somewhat disquieting; the process, however it is defined, would probably commend itself more readily to DIVES if he knew it would be controlled by the ability and wisdom attributed by SIR CHARLES DILKE to the Local Government Board, and not merely by the noble principles discerned by the same authority in the speeches addressed to the rural Midland constituencies. We should be very sorry to attribute a spirit of deliberate or intentional injustice to any class of Englishmen; but class legislation is not unknown in this country, and the tyranny of a majority is not merely a phrase but a fact. If the rural voters are to take MR. COLLINGS'S advice, and to use their votes principally for the purpose of filling up the gulf between DIVES and LAZARUS, they will start with a very mischievous conception of their rights and duties as citizens. In that case it will be necessary very clearly to define the powers to be intrusted to them in the management of local affairs. In any case some definition will be necessary. Definition means limitation, and limita-

tion implies control. How that control is to be exercised is a question to be determined by the Legislature. It must either be executive or judicial. SIR CHARLES DILKE seems to think that it might begin by being the one and end by becoming the other. This, at any rate, is the natural interpretation to be placed on his reference to the Supreme Court at Washington. We are not, however, concerned to determine in what precise manner the control is exercised provided it is distinctly recognized in principle and clearly defined in practice. The nature and extent of the control required will largely depend, of course, on the nature and extent of the powers conferred on the local authorities. But the necessity of control in some shape or another is inherent in the nature of delegated authority in general. We are nevertheless inclined to think that the full significance of this proposition has been somewhat overlooked in recent discussions on the question of local government.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 7.

SHOULD THE NATIONAL LEAGUE BE
PROCLAIMED?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Sir James Stephen, in his two masterly letters on the Irish question, having cleared the ground of many fallacies and illusions, it is to be hoped, in the cause of humanity and in justice to Ireland, that no time may be lost in proclaiming the National League and in re-enacting some of the clauses of the lapsed Crimes Act, to assist in

the early suppression of the most hideous form of coercion ever practised in a civilized country.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Yotes Court,
TORRINGTON.

THE IRISH SECESSIONISTS AND THEIR ADVOCATE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Mr. Labouchere, M.P., says that a good many gentlemen have replied to his letter in *The Times*; but I am afraid he has not replied to them.

Will he be good enough to state what he thinks of the utterances of Mr. Parnell which I have quoted? Does he reckon him—at whose dictatorial behest the Nationalists slavishly voted as they did—among the “impulsive and hot-headed men”? If so, I fear Mr. Labouchere lacks that first requisite of a politician, the ability of understanding the character of men. But will he say whether, in his opinion, the dictator does not represent the views and aims of his retinue? Was Mr. Parnell's boast of “carrying arms for Ireland some day or other,” and destroying the last link which keeps “Ireland bound to England,” mere humbug?

Mr. Labouchere continually refers to his friends, the “Irish Parliamentarians,” as his warranty. I call upon him to give us their and his opinion about those declarations of the leader of the National League.

It would take considerable space to show up the several inaccuracies of the impossible comparison between England and Ireland on the one hand and Austria and Hungary on the other. Mr. Labouchere speaks of “32,000,000 inhabitants of Austria,” and of the 15,000,000 in Hungary. In reality, Austria, including Galicia, has a trifle over 22 (not 32) millions, and Hungary nearly 16,000,000. But who that knows the history of Hungary and keeps in mind also that the State language of Austria is German, while that of Hungary is Magyar, could be infatuated enough to compare their position with that of England and Ireland, which are both of the same speech?

Mr. Parnell said once, “We will work by constitutional means as long as it suits us.” He went on to say that he would not refuse, but rather consider it the “highest duty,” to plunge the country into “civil war” if he saw a “fair prospect of success.” Will Mr. Labouchere give us his opinion about this point, too?

Yours truly,
ONE WHO REMEMBERS THE SWISS
SONDERBUND

THE IRISH QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I am reluctant at a time when you are so generously opening your columns to the ventilation of the question of Ireland to add to the number of your correspondents, but I have just read a letter of Lord Cowper's in *The Times* which has filled me with amazement.

I pass by the remarks made on the Irish Administration—viz., that it is “a hateful system of bureaucratic Government,” &c.—an opinion which was certainly not held by those whose duty it was in the last Parliament to defend what is popularly called Dublin Castle.

But I desire to call especial attention to such a misleading statement as the following:—

“In Ireland all local matters are really managed through the instrumentality of the resident magistrate, and the resident magistrate is in constant communication with the Castle.”

Were his lordship to substitute “all measures for the repression of crime” for the words “all local matters” he would have properly defined the duties of a resident magistrate. But to say that all local matters are managed through his instrumentality is one of the most extraordinary statements I ever read.

I may mention the following “local matters,” among many, with which such an officer has nothing whatever to do—viz., the assize and fiscal duties of counties performed by grand jury; the business discharged under the Local

Government Board by the Poor Law guardians and sanitary authorities; the work of municipal corporations and town commissioners; the multifarious duties intrusted to the Commissioners of Public Works, also lunacy, education, prisons, fisheries, &c. In fact, he has nothing whatever to say to local matters outside magisterial and police duties pure and simple.

At a time like the present it is of the greatest importance that a statement so erroneous and so calculated to create a wrong impression, especially when made by such an authority as Lord Cowper, should not be allowed to pass without correction.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
W. LE POER TRENCH, Colonel.

Carlton Club.

"NATIONAL" ORATORY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—There have been frequent appeals made by the leading Nationalists to the Loyalists of Ireland to join their ranks, and work jointly for the establishment of a native Parliament, but, I think I may say, without result. We who live in Ireland, and are well acquainted with affairs there, know that the Home Rule movement is a communistic one, having for its object the transfer of all power and property from their existing possessors to another class hostile alike to England and the Anglo-Irish.

The leaders of Mr. Parnell's party lately have been writing and speaking with moderation (from their point of view), but if once Ireland were intrusted with the management of her own affairs, they could not resist the demands of their more extreme followers, whose utterances up to the present leave no doubt of what they expect to obtain of Home Rule, such as they desire, be granted. In proof of this assertion I take from the *Daily Express* of the 4th of December, 1885, the following report of a

speech delivered on the occasion of the declaration of the poll at the North Dublin election:—

"The Rev. Father Beham, C.C., also spoke, and in the course of his observations declared that all the Castle officials with distended abdomens (laughter) should have to go; it was time for them to be on the run. They (the Nationalists) were now struggling merely for a green flag. They wanted three meals a day, good clothes on their backs, and employment for honest men. The election was over, and the real struggle was to begin now. What they wanted now was the spoils (cheers), the loaves and fishes of all those fellows who had the monopoly up to this. They wanted men of their own to be officials for this country to fill every situation and every occupation they were qualified for, from the highest to the lowest; and the topmost man in the Castle must make way for one of theirs, and the lowest official in the poorhouse yonder must be replaced by one of theirs. What did their opponents do in their day? They kept everything to themselves, and now they might thank God if they (the Nationalists) gave them raw and unboiled justice. (Much cheering.)"

Ex uno disce omnes.

Your obedient servant,

Q.

THE LAND QUESTION IN IRELAND. TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—“Celtic Landlord” states that “the concerted demands for rent reductions in Ireland . . . were not the result of agricultural depression, but formed part of a well-laid scheme to upset the settlement of 1881, to get behind the ‘judicial rack rents,’ to ‘bear’ the price of Irish land, and thus to facilitate the operation and amendment of the Land Purchase Act on Land League lines.”

As a proof of this I mention my case on a property in Mayo. In 1882 the tenants on two townlands demanded 25 per cent. permanent reduction and some common land to be thrown in. I granted their demands, and gave them judicial leases at something like 33 per cent. reduction by putting a fair value on the commons. Last November they

sent me a printed notice from the local League demanding a further reduction of 6s. in the pound, and on this being refused the rent has been withheld. I issued ejectment notices, embracing some three score persons. These were posted, as a process server could not be found to serve them. The tenants, while adhering to their first demand, offer an alternative—viz., to buy the land at 12 years' purchase.

My case is not an isolated one, for all the surrounding properties are being managed by the League in the same way. Some landlords, through fear of boycotting or other outrages, have given in, which only makes it more difficult for others who are, like myself, determined not to be coerced. The demand for reduction has spread even to the townlands, where the tenants were rented so low that they did not avail themselves of the Act.

To have peace in this country the League must be suppressed and the land question finally settled. Home Rule means no rent. Local Boards and national councils are not wanted by the 600,000 farmers of Ireland. What they want is the land, and until some party in the

House of Commons is strong enough to buy up the land of Ireland, so long will there be war and pillage in this unfortunate country. The Parliament of Great Britain must now drive off the wolves, which the Land Act has blooded, by so far satisfying them, by declaring the land of Ireland to be State property, the tenants to be tenants of the State, and the landlords to get debentures at a fair rate of interest. Either this and kill Home Rule, or allow the country to go back to savage anarchy.

Your obedient servant,

Knockadoo, Boyle.

R. VESEY STONEY.

NO RULE VICE HOME RULE SUPERSEDED.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—In *The Times* of January 1 Mr. Michael Davitt and Mr. Wilfrid Blunt beg the whole question.

Statesmen like Lord Cowper see clearly that it is no longer a question of Home Rule at all. The cry now is "No Rule." At this election the candidates for the miscalled Irish party in the House of Commons no longer appeared as Home Rulers, but as Nationalists or Parnellites.

Mr. Parnell has not yet written to you, but allow him in his own words to define his position. At the Castlebar Convention last November he thus deliberately and clearly stated the aims of his party:—"We will never accept anything but the full and complete right to arrange our own affairs and make our land a nation; to secure for her, free from outside control, the right to direct her own course among the peoples of the world." In other words, it is not Home Rule or any other rule but separation that Mr. Parnell deliberately desires.

Mr. Parnell was supported during the late elections in Ireland by at least three distinct masses of dependent voters:—

(a) Those under the thumb of the priests.

(b) Those hungering after land belonging to other people.

(c) The proletariat generally—a class constitutionally opposed to any powers that be, and just now ready, under the pressure of the general depression, to support the cry "Anything for a change."

But even these and other sections of the discontented, the misled, or the coerced were only able to give the new and seductive cry the support of one-half of the Irish electorate, and of these a large percentage could not even read or write, and therefore only believed what they were told.

Opposed to the cry are nearly all holders of property or holders of capital in Ireland, who protest that even this vote is but a passing craze and not the real, intelligent wish of the Irish in Ireland; that it is merely a result of the communistic propaganda of a few Irishmen, some from the purest and others from the most selfish motives.

drawing with them all who have nothing to lose and therefore everything to gain from any revolutionary change.

In opposition to this cry Mr. Gladstone issues a counterblast. But the world refuses to forget that twice over Mr. Gladstone has devised a panacea for Irish troubles, and in each case miserable failure has resulted. Not without a great wrench did he come to the conviction that the disestablishment of the Irish Church and the establishment of religious equality in Ireland would lead to a final settlement of grievances and prove a final concession to the claims of justice to Ireland.

But in a very few years he discovered another crying Irish injustice. Speedily he devised the remedy of the three F's, and in order to apply this he did not scruple to place Ireland outside the pale of human experience, outside the pale of political science. Mr. Gladstone remained curiously blind to what all others clearly saw—that "Low rents" was merely the heedless cry of a crowd rushing in the direction of no rents.

And, now that facts force attention to this inevitable conclusion, Mr. Gladstone is again to the fore with a new remedy. He advocates Home Rule, blind to what all others clearly see—that Home Rule is but a stepping-stone to no rule in the eyes of that so-called Irish party which, in the words of Mr. Parnell, will never accept anything but the full and complete right to direct the course of Ireland among the peoples of the world; or, in other words, separation.

It may be questioned how far all the members of the Parnellite section foresee or desire such a consummation. But it is none the less certain that the Parnellite cry only commends itself so long as prosperity and order are dormant in Ireland. The Parnellite members would find their occupation gone were Ireland again prosperous and peaceable. Already their cry has driven from that luckless island many sources of wages to the poor and of wealth to the general body of the people. If that policy and that cry be continued the

only outcome can be depriving property of all marketable value, and altogether scaring capital from the country. The vitality of the cry depends on the continued decrease of prosperity, and it can only end in the industrial ruin of Ireland.

Happily there are now signs that this subversive policy has reached its zenith, or even passed its culminating point. There are evidences already of a serious split in the Parnellite ranks, for a great bulk of the supporters never intended to go further than a redistribution of lands, or at most Home Rule. And a cry that has its being in ruin and lawlessness has no inherent vitality. The British Empire will certainly not suffer one of its fairest provinces to become the victim of mere self-seeking intriguers; the Imperial Parliament will not allow a mere fraction of its members to ruin any portion of the Empire and still less to break it off from the Empire.

Mr. Michael Davitt himself seems quite unconscious whither his party is drifting. He no doubt has his reasons for Home Rule for Ireland; but he will be too shrewd to see any practical prospects of success in a cry for separation. In the new House of Commons the representatives of 4,500,000 electors—as against the representatives of some 300,000—that is to say, 94 per cent. of the total—will know how to support the Constitution and the laws, and how to uphold the rights and liberties which a common nationality assures to all citizens of the Empire, even though they be resident in Ireland.

Mr. Blunt proves the inherent weakness of his case by such strange statements as that "Ireland hates us now because we still hold her in subjection," and that "the stigma of conquest still remains." He quietly ignores all that history records as to the state of affairs that culminated in the Union. He also ignores Mr. Parnell's boast that the Irish members, who follow him, are now the dictators of the Imperial Parliament. Moreover, endless statistics have been put forward to show that Ireland is already over-represented in the House of Commons as compared with England, Scotland, and Wales.

Mr. Bunt unconsciously gives voice to the one vital blot in all Irish policy, and especially in that phase of it due to the initiative of Mr. Gladstone. That blot consists in regarding Ireland as in a different category to England, Wales, or Scotland. This assumption has been made the basis of all Mr. Gladstone's Irish schemes, and the actual results of such hypothetical logic are painfully visible in the absence of all substantial results. The assumption has shown itself to be at variance with actual fact; and this negative experience points to a new departure in Irish policy—one in which Ireland is to be treated on precisely similar lines to England, Scotland, and Wales. The same laws, institutions, and arrangements must be made to prevail in all four provinces of a United Kingdom without distinction or difference. In common affairs leave all to an Imperial Parliament; in local affairs let each locality manage for itself. Wessex differs not less from South Wales than Ulster from Connaught. In these days there is a growing demand for local management of local affairs, the greatest advantage of which is that the Imperial Parliament will thus be relieved of many of the parish functions it now wastes time over. By all means introduce a comprehensive scheme embracing in one system all the constituent provinces of the United Kingdom, and let it pave the way for the Imperial Parliament to become Imperial in nature as well as in name; and, by relieving it of its local vestry work, allow time and opportunity for the due presentment and treatment, and ultimately representation, of the great and growing colonial interests.

But in all this do not, after Mr. Gladstone's fashion, treat Ireland as some strange and uncouth nation to be alternately coddled and coerced. Secure to Irishmen in Ireland all the liberties, prerogatives, and advantages enjoyed by all citizens of the Empire, and above all save the Irish in Ireland from the communistic agitators who batten on the misgiven contributions of servant girls in foreign countries.

That this new year may witness the overthrow of Ireland's worst enemies is the ardent wish of

Your obedient servant,

VINDEX.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN IRELAND. TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I think no one will deny that should a measure of local self-government be passed substituting elected county boards for the present grand juries in Ireland all the members of these boards will be of the same politics as the elected members of the present boards of guardians.

Any one who has had any experience of the subject will admit that, notwithstanding the influence of the *ex officio* guardians and the Local Government Board (and no equivalent to these seems to have been suggested), the elected members of the Poor Law Boards are able and willing to abuse the powers they now possess in a manner which to any unprejudiced mind ought to point to the curtailing of those powers rather than to their extension.

By way of illustration as to the way in which the elected guardians do their work I will mention only two cases in point, though many others might be quoted.

(1.) The Labourers' Dwellings Act has been largely used to erect, at the expense of the ratepayers, Land League huts (they can be called nothing else) for evicted tenants on the farms from which they have been evicted; and it is curious to observe that the half acres on which the cottages are built are very seldom, if ever, taken out of the farm of a prominent Land Leaguer, but are cut out of the holdings of those who refuse to join the ranks of the League, or who are lukewarm in their support of it.

(2.) It will be found that in those unions where Nationalist ideas prevail, the poor rate and the amount of money expended upon out-door relief is very much on the increase, and this in face of the fact that the population is steadily diminishing.

There could not be a word said against local self-government if one could hope that the elected boards would act fairly, but does not past experience forbid us to indulge in this hope? Ought not English members of Par-

liament of both parties to pause and consider well before they put so formidable a weapon into such unprincipled hands?

Supposing such a measure to be passed, what chance would there be of a true bill being found against any one for a political or an agrarian offence, no matter what the evidence might be? How could a landlord work an evicted farm? What chance would he have of getting compensation from such a board for malicious injury to his house, his beasts, or his hay barn? And if it is thus made impossible for him to work his evicted farms what chance has he of being able to collect his rent?

But it is urged exceptional legislation for Ireland is bad. You must give Ireland elected county boards because you are giving them to England; if so, why were the Land Acts, Church Act, Arrears Act, &c., confined to Ireland?

In the name of common sense why give a razor to a child who has already proved by wounding himself and others that he does not know how to use one, merely because his elder brother is getting one now that he has arrived at an age when he requires one and knows how to use it?

Yours truly,

J. P.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 8.

THE IRISH CRISIS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—There is no practical difference between "Repeal of the Union," as propounded by O'Connell, and "Home Rule," as demanded by Mr. Parnell and his followers. I should be glad, therefore, if you would allow me to add to the interesting collection of letters which have appeared in *The Times*, on the latter phase of the subject, some remarkable passages from the Duke of Wellington's correspondence. at the period

when the Repeal agitation was at its height, and when, to all appearance, it wore even a more threatening aspect than at present. The voices of great men are worth recalling to memory, though they have long passed away, and none more so than that of the great Duke, whom Charles Greville describes as the "only great man" of his day. On December 6, 1832, the Knight of Kerry, the Hon. Maurice Fitzgerald, writes to the Duke as follows:—

I have abstained from writing to your Grace, having nothing to mention but the miserable political state of this country. . . . From the time that Mr. Pitt abstained from giving practical effect to the Union, as it was explained to me by Lord Cornwallis, by settling the religious question, and pensioning the Catholic clergy, as Lord Castlereagh proposed, and for which they were eager, I have never ceased to calculate on the question of Repeal being sooner or later taken up as an angry and national question. The abandonment of all the influence of the Crown in Ireland has tended fatally to loosen and alienate the middle classes of society from English connexion, teaching them to view this, the sweeping away of public establishments, as a transfer for the benefit of their more powerful neighbour, which also attracts the expenditure of our landed income. These considerations generate an aptitude to separation as a remedy; and I am convinced that, were it not for the betrayal of the desperate ulterior purposes of the Popish conspiracy, a dissolution of the Union would be popular with most of the resident proprietary. But, as the conspiracy of the united Irishmen, originally Protestant and Republican, turned in Leinster into a Popish plot, so the present Repeal project is now quite understood to mean a confiscation of Protestant property and an expulsion of the Saxons. The whole body of the Catholic clergy are therefore lending themselves to Repeal, and the less cautious speak among their partisans of the resumption of the forfeited lands. Every country town is a hotbed of sedition, capable of being fermented at any moment at the dictation of O'Connell, who now acts through a systematic organization, having its branches everywhere. . . . I do not think it rational in these circumstances to think of governing Ireland by a Parliament

tary Constitution. If it be persisted in, the countries must soon be separated, and property overthrown in Ireland. In the present state of the Protestant mind, I think they would be reconciled to any state of abeyance of the Constitution which controlled the present menacing torrent of Popish democracy. No doubt it threatens the existence as well as property of the body. The only alternative by which this country can be retained as part of the Empire would be the re-establishment of a domestic Legislature, affording adequate security for Protestant property. In looking at the dangers which surround us, I have sometimes, and anxiously, speculated whether any means sufficient for such an end could be devised. I think that a great deal could be done towards it, but by no means sufficient to justify such an experiment if we be not actually forced to it. That either some such experiment must be thought of, or that the Union must be fought for, appears to me inevitable.

To this letter the Duke replies, December 16 :—

I assure you that I look at your affairs in Ireland with an anxiety that I cannot describe. It is impossible that we can avoid a fresh contest for the possession of that country. You are quite right in what you say about the Repeal of the Union. The Protestants of all classes will soon discover that, like the Rebellion of 1798, it must become a religious affair. They must draw away from it, or be destroyed in another Scullabogue. . . . If O'Connell was out of the world we should have another in his place; not so able in Parliament, not so capable of being the head or the instrument of the formidable party whose representative he is, nor probably exercising power so permanently. But we should have another. There is no end, then, to our troubles in Ireland. We shall have to fight for the possession of the country.

To Lord Roden the Duke writes on the 26th of December :—

It is my opinion that one of the great questions of the day is the Repeal of the Union with Ireland. Thirty-five years ago it might have been a question whether the Union was necessary; in other words, whether the countries could continue connected, each having a separate Legislature. This point is, in my opinion, no longer questionable. I shall so reason upon it. The Repeal of the Union must be the dissolution of the connexion

between the two countries. It is difficult to say what will rouse a country so demoralized as this is; but if anything can, it will be the idea of the separation of these countries. We must expect, then, that the Repeal of the Union will be the great field upon which the battle will be fought; and I draw your attention more particularly to this question, as it appears to me that it is a rallying point upon which you might collect your party. . . . O'Connell is certainly driving at the Repeal of the Act of Union, and I cannot doubt that he knows that the Repeal must occasion the dissolution of the connexion with Great Britain, and all the other consequences which I have above detailed. He will work at the repeal in Parliament, and out of Parliament in Ireland. If he should fail, as he will, he and his followers will then commence a sort of desultory plan of operations against the Government, *having for its object to prevent all business.*

I underscore the last words of this passage as prophetic of what has since come to pass. They might have been written ten years ago, instead of at the time when Mr. Gladstone was just beginning his Parliamentary career. I might have underscored much more, so prophetic are some of the passages of what has since happened and of what may happen yet. Mr. Parnell has taken the place of O'Connell. He is a Protestant, it is true; perhaps the Bishop of Kilkenny might prefer to call him non-Catholic; but he has the whole of the Roman Catholic clergy at his back, and no doubt they understand each other.

Nor let it be supposed that the old Duke took merely a soldier's and not a statesman's view of the Irish question. No one who reads his correspondence can entertain such an idea. His policy, like that of his successors, was first to redress grievances and then enforce the law. With this view he passed the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829, as he explains in a letter to the Duke of Northumberland dated July 16 of that year :—

To tell you the truth, it is the consideration that this would be the state of things as between the Government and the British public and Parliament which

was the strongest inducement to me to be a party to propose to Parliament the measures which we carried last session. I knew that Parliament would be prepared to expect that Ireland should be kept in tranquillity, and would support us in all reasonable measures to effect that purpose. If I had not had that expectation I should have doubted the expediency of incurring the risks which we did incur.

He proceeds to urge upon the Duke of Northumberland the necessity of taking stringent measures for the repression of disorder and the discovery of crime, and adds these words :—

If we allow matters to go on as they are, we shall lay the foundation for a continuance of that state of agitation and disturbance in which the country has been kept for years, and for which the only remedy will then be a civil war and reconquest of the country.

The Duke, it is true, thought that, in passing the Emancipation Act he had gone to the furthest limits of concession. He says, in the letter I have just quoted, "We can make no further concessions. We have nothing to concede except the property of the Church or of individuals." He little knew what was in store for both those institutions. Perhaps even his strong sympathies and iron will would have yielded to the reasons which compelled the concessions of 1869 and 1881. He had little sympathy with Irish landlordism in the form of absenteeism and exorbitant rents. The following extract from a letter to the Duke of Northumberland, July 7, 1830, is well worth reading :—

I confess that the annually recurring starvation in Ireland, for a period, differing, according to the goodness or badness of the season, from one week to three months, gives me more uneasiness than any other evil existing in the United Kingdom. . . . Now, when this misfortune occurs, there is no relief or mitigation, except a recourse to public money. The proprietors of the country, those who ought to think for the people, to foresee this misfortune, and to provide beforehand a remedy for it, are amusing themselves in the clubs in London, in Cheltenham, or Bath, or on the Continent, and the Government

are made responsible for the evil, and they must find the remedy for it where they can—anywhere excepting in the pockets of the Irish gentlemen. Then, if they give public money to provide a remedy for this distress, it is applied to all purposes excepting the one for which it is given; and most particularly to that one, the payment of the arrears of an exorbitant rent.

I have quoted this passage to show that the Duke both recognized and denounced the abuses of Irish landlordism, as few public men did in his day. No man more heartily abhorred oppression or neglect of duty in any shape, and had the Irish Land question been ripe for legislation in his day I have no doubt he would have dealt with it in a liberal and considerate spirit, if not in the form that was actually adopted. But no one who reads this letter can doubt that, having once satisfied himself that he had done everything that justice required by the removal of real grievances, he would never have listened to a demand for separation, but would have taken care that the Queen's writ should run in Ireland as long as the British Empire endured.

CIVIS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Through the mists of this Irish imbroglio there are some principles which shine out with clearness, especially those of a negative kind.

1. We should look at this matter not as Liberals or Conservatives, but as Englishmen.
2. On some points we can make no concession. We cannot again allow Mr. Parnell such a position in the House of Commons as may enable him and his 85 followers to decide who shall govern the Empire.
3. That Empire we utterly refuse to dismember.
4. We cannot so far neglect our own honour as to give up the property of those whom Mr. Parnell chooses to call the English garrison in Ireland, by which he means chiefly the Irish Protestants, who number a third of the popula-

tion and possess far more than a third of its wealth and civilization.

These things granted, it is our duty to hear the representatives of Ireland with all due respect. We cannot but remember that they avow themselves representatives of Ireland alone, and profess to consider the welfare of England as secondary and comparatively unimportant. They avow themselves hostile to us.

Hence it follows that Lord Salisbury and Mr. Gladstone should require Mr. Parnell to speak first.

All that he has yet vouchsafed to tell us is that he asks for Grattan's Parliament. But this is no plan. Grattan's Parliament no longer applies to these days. In Grattan's Parliament there were no Roman Catholic members, but there was a House of Lords.

Again, we may fairly ask Mr. Parnell whether, Home Rule being granted, he would give up his claim to be represented at Westminster. Would he insist upon Ireland having representatives there, not fewer than those whom he already commands? Are they to vote upon all matters, or only upon those in which the Imperial interests are concerned so far as mixed up with Irish politics?

In short, we must know whether we are to vote for the plan of a Unionist or a Separatist, for both elements exist in the Irish party.

Whatever difficulties we may have, we are sure Mr. Parnell has his. We do not want unauthorized go-betweens like Mr. Labouchere, but it seems we are entitled to a plain answer to a plain question—what is your present plan? and what are your ultimate aims?

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

NORTHBOURNE.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN IRELAND.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—It is well when there is so much high-sounding talk about the necessity for the protection of the loyal

minority, that the subject of local government for Ireland, if to be approached at all by either party, should be approached with open eyes. The mud hovel franchise, which a cry of "justice" and the demand of party exigencies extended to Ireland, has wrought enough mischief. Will any statesmen of responsibility dare to formulate a scheme providing for the administration of the fiscal affairs of Ireland by a body elected under this same franchise? The worst results will surely follow. The landed gentry, or those of them who will have the courage to remain in the country, must be overwhelmingly outvoted by their Nationalist labourers, and these County Boards will descend to the level of the Boards of Guardians and Town Councils of the south and west—bankrupt in character and credit, and utterly irresponsible in action, their members only retaining office so long as the priests, who control the situation, are pleased with their language and doings. There are few gentlemen who are not compelled, owing to the absence of Protestants from the lower circles of life in agricultural districts, to employ at least some Nationalist labourers, and the remarkable spectacle will be witnessed under the suggested County Boards of a cottier paying (or agreeing to pay) 1s. a week rent, being invested with all the elective importance of the Duke of Manchester, the Duke of Abercorn, or any other large Irish landed proprietor. So it will be seen that even "county government," which some people seem to consider as a heaven-sent method of disposing of the whole business, is fraught with danger. Are there not already enough Fenian lodges gravely posing as Boards of Guardians? Talk and scheme and plot and bid as they may, English statesmen will find that the fiscal affairs of Ireland cannot be more efficiently or more economically managed than by Grand Juries, provided a few reforms are introduced, mainly on the subject of choice of members, which at present is exercised in many instances with too much exclusiveness. But let English statesmen, unauthorized by their Protestant constituents, tinker to their hearts' content with Ireland, they can give no form of county government that will rid them of the 85 nominees of the Irish priesthood

seconded by Mr. Parnell, and they dare not dismember the empire. The *Londonderry Standard*, the leading Liberal organ in the north-west district, thus puts the case in an article this morning:—

“Nothing that Mr. Gladstone has done for Ireland has ever met with anything but abuse and ingratitude from the Parnellites. No concession has ever satisfied them, but has been made only the foundation of something else which lay beyond it. No half measure will suffice; their ultimate aim is land without rent, Romanism without Dissent, a Parliament without control, and a Republic without even the shadow of a Crown. Except England intends to give them the independence which they seek, they will take the first opportunity to secure it. England, therefore, should pause before taking a step that will make resistance at a future stage more difficult. Mr. Gladstone should surely hesitate before moving an inch on the road, the goal of which is the separation of the kingdoms, and untold calamities for Ireland.”

Thanking you in the name of Loyalist Ireland for services in the present plight which can never be forgotten,

Yours truly,

Londonderry, Jan. 1. A NORTHERN LOYALIST.

A PROPHECY OF BISHOP PHILLPOTTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—In accidentally opening a volume containing letters of the famous Henry of Exeter I came across the enclosed passage. We have lived to see the prophecy of the Bishop wonderfully realized, and possibly you might think it worth a corner in *The Times*, so I send it:—

“I know not whether I shall be considered by your lordship as ascribing too much importance to the control exercised by the priests and demagogues of Ireland over the representation of that country, when I say that if they are suffered to retain their power to the time of the next general election I do not think that the present Constitution can last ten years longer. Eighty nominees of such a faction sent into a House of Commons which is already filled with the dupes of modern Liberalism, and which is utterly devoid of a single head capable of guiding or controlling them, would very soon be able to overturn all the institutions which, under Providence, have given strength, dignity, and virtue to England. The only hope would be

that the rashness and self-conceit of such a party would precipitate matters too violently, and cause a reaction even in the ranks of vapouring declaimers who now testify, on every occasion, their readiness to sacrifice every ancient principle to their own presumptuous dreams of improvement.”

The language and its fulfilment seem to me very remarkable.

The passage will be found in “A Letter to Sir Robert Inglis, Bart., M.P., on certain statements in an article of the *Edinburgh Review*, No. 193, entitled ‘Bishop Phillpotts,’ by Henry Lord Bishop of Exeter.” London, John Murray, Albemarle-street, 1852.

I am, yours obediently,

H. E. FANSHAWE,

Newton Rectory, Sudbury, Suffolk.

HOME RULE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Will you allow me to bring before your notice the aphorisms of two distinguished statesmen, of which, in the present crisis, the public, I do think, have not been sufficiently reminded? One fell from the lips of Canning; the other was that propounded by Mr. Gladstone in 1847, when sharpening his axe at Hawarden for the Irish upstart tree. “Repeal the Union!” said Canning; “restore the Heptarchy!” “Govern Ireland,” said Mr. Gladstone, “according to Irish ideas.” Canning felt instinctively that repeal of the Union meant the break-up of the British Constitution, and he required no argument to prove that the self-government of Ireland was a political impossibility. Mr. Gladstone, on the other hand, must have intended to accomplish the impossible, for when he pronounced his novel dogma—a dogma his action upon which has brought this country to its present condition—he could not have forgotten O’Connell’s monster meetings in 1843, and he must have known perfectly well that Ireland’s

most Irish idea was, in fact, repeal; indeed, it may be inferred from his language in Parliament that Canning's impossible was possible to him, for, when Home Rule was brought before the notice of the House of Commons, as it recently was, so far from discouraging it, he advised its advocates "to formulate their scheme." One would have thought, Sir, that the statesman to whom was intrusted the guidance of a United Kingdom would have remembered the language of Shakespeare—

"The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
"Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel,"

and would have endeavoured, by every constitutional method, to strengthen in Ireland the link—must I say the only link?—which binds her to Great Britain. But Mr. Gladstone reversed the maxim of Polonius, and Parliament, seduced by his eloquence and having unbounded confidence in his judgment and integrity, allowed him to weaken, if not destroy, the bonds of connexion between the two countries, and to govern an island whose property, industry, manufactures, and education—in a word, whose civilization belonged almost exclusively to the Protestant descendants of the English and the Scotch, in accordance with the ideas of its more numerous but far poorer classes, and who, to put it mildly, have but little sympathy with their loyal fellow-countrymen. In deference to the Irish Roman Catholic idea, our pure Protestant Episcopal Church, the gift to us of the great English Reformation, whose maintenance, as expressed in its articles, was the very basis on which the Union of 1800 rested, the main condition of that solemn compact between two independent nations, was pulled down from a position legally unassailable, and deprived of its property—with what advantage to the peace and prosperity of Ireland, let the present attitude of the Roman Catholic clergy testify. In deference to the Irish Roman Catholic idea, the rents of Ireland, which were almost exclusively in Protestant hands, have been forcibly taken from their lawful owners, from landlords who either inherited them from those who bought them, or who themselves bought them on the faith

of an Imperial guarantee; and the law of contract, hitherto deemed sacred in this country, as it still is in England and Scotland and every other civilized community, and on which depended vital interests of the purchaser, the creditor, the widow, and the orphan, has been absolutely annulled, and this without compensation to the innocent victims of so cruel and so faithless a policy. And, lastly—the inevitable result of the enforced violation of a principle which nature has implanted in the heart of man—landed property, which, before Mr. Gladstone conceived and carried his Land Acts, was selling at from 24 to 30 years' purchase, is now unsaleable, and communism, terrorism, dishonesty, and cruelty run riot in open defiance of the law.

However, smoothly as things have gone and are going in accordance with the Irish idea, Ireland's most cherished idea has not yet been realized, though the Nationalists think it is on the eve of its triumph, for "the Grand Old Man," they say, "has taken off his coat." Sir, it may be so; in the lowest deep, we are told, there is a still lower deep, and there may be still greater misery and confusion in store for the United Kingdom than that in which mistaken policy has already involved it. However, I myself believe that this crowning act of obliquity and madness, the repeal of the Union—which the author of this policy will, it is to be feared, accomplish if he can—is what Canning instinctively felt it to be, a political impossibility. But, nevertheless, it behoves our rulers and Parliament, as soon as ever it has been proved to be possible, to place it thereafter outside the pale of agitation, and to make any future attempt to effect it a crime of the first magnitude, punishable with the extreme penalty of the law. Let Parliament declare that any attempt of any kind whatsoever, either covert or overt, by word or by deed, in favour of repeal of the Union, in favour of what is known as Home Rule, in favour of self-government either for Ireland or for any other portion of what constitutes the United Kingdom, any attempt of any kind to

sever or even to weaken the unity of either island or the bonds which bind both islands together—let Parliament, I say, declare every such attempt to be an act of high treason, and this bugbear, depend upon it, which we have so foolishly allowed to affright us, this unreal mockery, will hence and disappear for ever. And then, Sir, whether Mr. Parnell and his chosen band of bravos shall or shall not have subsided into the insignificance which I believe awaits them, let Parliament legislate for the United Kingdom in accordance with those ideas only which are consistent with the welfare of all its parts, and which are best calculated not to sever but to cement, not to weaken but to strengthen that Union on which depends the general prosperity. Let law, as far as possible, be everywhere uniform, exceptional nowhere, and (*Nat justitia ruat calum*) let justice, at whatever cost, be the mainspring of our Legislation, not expediency nor yet the ringing of the chapel bell; and let its mandates be enforced with decision, or, if it must be so, with sternness and severity. And if it should be necessary, as I think it is, to repeal the Act of Parliament known as Lord O'Hagan's Jury Act—another of Mr. Gladstone's measures, passed in deference to the Irish idea, and which, as all our Judges can testify, has worked incalculable mischief in Ireland, giving free rein to agitation, shielding the guilty, and defeating the righteous claims of property—let it be repealed forthwith, and let the administration of the law be once again intrusted to those by whom law is respected, and whose station and education are guarantees for faithful discharge of duty.

But, to conclude, when Ireland has been taught, as she surely will, that she must for ever remain what she is, an integral portion of the united Empire, let England consider whether much, very much, may not be done to reconcile her now to the inevitable, and to make her grateful hereafter to the hand which will have saved her from herself. Let England consider seriously what the cause is of the discontent and lawlessness which have been Ireland's unhappy lot since her

first connexion with her more powerful neighbour, and which, existing in Ireland long before, and at the time of the Union of 1800, have ever since continued and have culminated at last in this delusive and deluded demand for separation. Discontent so real, so deep-seated, and so abiding must have some solid ground to rest on. My own belief is that Ireland's discontent springs entirely from Ireland's poverty, not from differences in religion, not from the distinctive character of its inhabitants, not from recollections of the penal laws (which by no means retarded her material prosperity, and for which England is absolutely blameless, having been compelled to enact them by reason of danger to the Empire from Roman Catholic conspiracies, and from well-grounded fear of Romish persecution and cruelty), but from enforced and continuous deprivation of the resources which were naturally here—resources which, if she is herself unlike other countries, no other country in the world has ever been deprived of, and which possessed by our colonies have so rapidly raised them in wealth, civilization, and contentment. "The evils of Ireland," said the deepest thinker upon the Irish question that our time has known, "may all be summed up in one short sentence—the accumulated absenteeism of centuries." Let our statesmen seriously, perhaps for the first time seriously, reflect upon the terrible import of those few pregnant words. The wealth which our country produced, which was its own, which the Creator had bestowed upon it, which was intended by nature to remain here and fructify, which had it remained here must have been fructified, diffusing blessings and begetting industries which in the absence of capital can never exist, year after year, generation after generation, century after century, withdrawn from it whether it would or no, and this on a gigantic scale, and with its withdrawal the absence, the perpetual absence, from this island of those civilizing influences which must ever flow from birth, wealth, station, and education, and which a rich and prosperous resident proprietary has from time immemorial diffused throughout

every county in fortunate Great Britain. And, again, let England consider—for nations, like individuals, are influenced by sentiment and sympathy—whether the annual presence in Ireland of the Sovereign of the United Kingdom and the cultivation by the Crown of the affections of a people who are naturally affectionate, and who have been so long, so strangely, and so utterly neglected, may not have its bearing upon the solution of a problem, the difficulties of which have been enormously increased by heroic legislation, but which, whatever its solution be, can never be solved while law and order remain in abeyance, and while lawlessness rests secure under the shadow of what courtesy miscalls a Government.

I am, Sir, yours obediently, C. V.
Dublin.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—At such a time as the present it is the duty of Irishmen, and especially of Irish Liberals, to express their views. *The Times* has conferred a great benefit on Ireland, by the manner in which it has opened its columns to correspondents and the vigour with which it has advocated the cause of liberty and justice, which are bound up with the maintenance of the legislative union.

Notwithstanding official disavowals there is too much reason for believing that Mr. Gladstone is preparing another grand message of peace to Ireland. He has convinced himself that the Irish people are an oppressed nationality, rightly struggling to be free, and it is the dearest wish of his heart to attempt our deliverance, even though he should politically perish in the effort. The utter failure of his previous messages of peace ought to make his followers somewhat doubtful about his infallibility.

He has never shown real knowledge of Irish facts. He shuts his eyes and ears to Irish Liberals, and waits for the ringing of the chapel bell. Then his legislation is quite inadequate and behind the times. His Land Act of 1870 might have done in 1850, and his Land Act of 1881

in 1870. As things are, he has unsettled everything and settled nothing. Now, as regards the Home Rule question, he appears to be about where Mr. Butt was 15 years ago.

He does not believe in the existence and power of Fenianism, and so he thinks that a half-measure of Home Rule will satisfy and settle Ireland. In reality it will be only the starting point of a further struggle. The fact is the Fenians are more numerous and powerful than ever, but for the time being they have laid aside physical force and thrown in their lot with Mr. Parnell and his so-called constitutional agitation. They tolerate and support Mr. Parnell as long as he is going ahead, but the moment he pauses they will overthrow him. He is like a vessel in a storm running before the wind, and forced to keep up her speed for fear of being passed by the waves that are running after her.

The idea of giving Ireland a local Legislature and then attempting to circumscribe its powers is utter folly, and to talk of guarantees to be provided by Mr. Parnell is nonsense. Mr. Parnell himself is far more in want of a guarantee than capable of giving one. What the Nationalists want is separation. They want to be as separate as Canada is, and no half-measure of local legislation will settle the matter. In my opinion, separation would be better for Irish property-owners and Unionists, whether Catholic or Protestant, than a half-measure. When I speak of property-owners I do not by any means confine myself to landowners. I include traders, merchants, manufacturers, owners of stocks in railway, banking, and other public companies—whose possessions are all in jeopardy. I myself have not even as much interest in land as the regulation allowance of three acres and a cow.

After a half-measure the Nationalists will still struggle for separation; all the ills of Ireland will still be laid at the door of English domination; and Irish Protestants and Unionist Catholics will be looked on as the friends of England, and will not be trusted, so long as English con-

trol of any kind exists. If Ireland is still to send representatives to an Imperial Parliament, after a half-measure of local legislation, those Imperial representatives will be ordered to conduct themselves at Westminster as the Parnellites now do until the whole measure of separation has been forced upon England.

Of course those Irish representatives at Westminster cannot be allowed to interfere in legislation for Great Britain. They can only be allowed to join in legislation for the United Kingdom or the Empire. In order, therefore, to satisfy the Irish claim for local legislation, a federal system of government is to be forced on England and Scotland, although they do not ask or wish for it. It appears to me that it is only those who have half thought out the problem who advocate the half-measure of local legislation.

Some English politicians compare Ireland with Canada. There is no real comparison. Were Ireland 1,000 miles from England, I should say at once—Give us separation; let us be as Canada is. We will fight it out among ourselves, and the strongest will rule. But, being where we are, I say—Give us as wide a system of local self-government in matters of administration as you like, as wide as you give to England and Scotland, but give us no form of local Parliament for legislation. Keep us in the Imperial Parliament and make it legislate for Ireland in accordance with Irish needs. Put Irishmen at the head of Irish affairs. Give us an Irish Secretary of State, an Irish Minister of Education, an Irish Parliamentary head of the Board of Public Works and of the Local Government Board. At the same time let there be as little separate legislation for Ireland as possible. Put us as much as possible on the same legislative lines as England and Scotland. I am quite aware that this will not satisfy Irish Nationalists, but this question of union is, in my opinion, precisely a question on which the majority have a right to coerce the minority. The point put by Mr. Boyd Kinnear in a recent letter to *The Times* is

unanswerable—that the majority in the United Kingdom has just as much right to coerce the three southern provinces of Ireland as the Irish majority in the three southern provinces would have to coerce the minority in Ulster. I say that it will be a lasting disgrace and dishonour to Great Britain if she hands over the Unionist minority in Ireland to the tyrannical rule of the Separatist majority. As Mr. Boyd Kinnear has pointed out, under the half-measure, the Imperial police and army would actually be employed to enforce the tyranny of the Irish anti-English majority over the pro-English minority. The British Empire may not be worth preserving. I know that many extreme politicians do not think it is, and that England and Scotland would be happier without the cares of Empire. I do not sympathize with this view. I hold that Imperial power is a talent to be made use of like any other talent; and I hold that the Empire is worth preserving, if for nothing else, for the enormous advantage it secures in the bond of peace between the various communities that owe allegiance to the British Crown. I cannot but feel that if the Unionist minority in Ireland is now deserted and cast adrift by Great Britain the consequences will tend to the disintegration of the Empire. Our colonies, India, and foreign countries will take a very different view of the transaction from what Mr. Gladstone fancies. The Anglo-Irish whose fault is that they have loved English rule, not wisely, but too well, will feel themselves betrayed, and they will become the fiercest haters of England. Among Washington's troops there were no more determined men than Irish Protestant exiles from Ulster (Presbyterians chiefly), exiles for political and social reasons.

Irish Protestants have emigrated largely to the colonies, and they will, if Mr. Gladstone succeeds, have to emigrate still more largely. Wherever they are and wherever they go, they will become foci of anti-English feeling, and they will have far more influence in the colonies than the Irish Catholic exiles have in the United States. In proportion to their numbers, Irish Protestants have probably done

more for the Empire than any other subjects of the Queen. But if Mr. Gladstone succeeds in his meditated betrayal of Irish Protestants, though England may have plenty of Irish mercenaries thereafter, there will be no successors to such men as Lord Lawrence, Lord Mayo, and Lord Dufferin, and the host of other Irishmen of minor position in the Imperial service.

Assuredly, if the British Constitution is to be pulled to pieces to satisfy Mr. Parnell and his 85 followers, absolute proof will be given of the truth of the saying with which Mr. Davitt concludes his letter in *The Times* of to-day, that "when Ireland is mentioned Englishmen take leave of their senses."

Yours,

Dublin, Jan. 2.

AN IRISH LIBERAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Your kindness in inserting my letter of the 26th ult. encourages me to ask your further indulgence for a short reply to Mr. Davitt's rejoinder to Lord Cowper, who has raised the timely and pertinent issue as to whether there is any serious demand in Ireland for Home Rule for its own sake.

I appeal from Mr. Davitt's assertion that there is to the speeches of every Nationalist candidate at the late election. The text of all their appeals was the extortion and thievery of the landlords, the consequent necessity of their being driven from the country, and that the only means of accomplishing this desirable end was by the action of a native Parliament.

Here in Ulster, throughout which I attended many meetings, I can assert with truth that Home Rule was never mentioned, except incidentally as the only means by which rent could be cheapened or abolished. In the Catholic districts no rent was the bribe held out to and most firmly believed in by the public. In the Protestant districts the farmers were paid the compliment of being offered the lesser bribe of cheap land. The ordinary administration of local or national affairs was not once touched upon from start to finish. Not one

Nationalist candidate issued an address to the electors, for the obvious reason that, while the most reckless and inflammatory appeals may be made from election platforms, an election address is of a more responsible and permanent character, and usually couched in reasonable language; and though the latter would have been better received by the Protestant farmers it would have utterly failed to satisfy the Catholics, accustomed to daily increasing doses of communistic stimulant, administered through their only literature, the Nationalist Press.

In conclusion, I would ask the question—is not Mr. Davitt the father and founder of the Land League, an organization having for its avowed object the violent destruction of landlords, chiefly through the operation of a native Parliament? Has he not refused to be nominated or to sit in the British Parliament on the broader basis of Nationalism, and finally has he not, as an advanced Irish Republican, expressed his determination never to take the oath of allegiance to the Sovereign of England?

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

AN ULSTER PLANTATION LIBERAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—As a Scotsman resident in Dublin for the past 36 years, and with all my ties, mercantile and social, centred here, will you kindly permit me to make a suggestion on the all-absorbing Irish question?

The vital urgency of a prompt and reasonably final settlement of the question is now becoming as obvious at your side of the Channel as it has long been at ours, and the present thorough ventilation of the subject cannot but be productive of good, although up to the present its only effect seems to have been to bring all the inherent difficulties into prominence, without indicating any means by which they may be avoided or overcome.

There can be no doubt that much of the recent legislation affecting Ireland has been the result of acquiescence

by British statesmen in two utterly antagonistic principles, urged each in turn by the Irish Parliamentary party.

First—That the circumstances of Ireland are peculiar and necessitate exceptional legislation. This argument is used when a Land Act or Church Act is advocated or a special allocation of Imperial funds is desired.

Secondly—That exceptional legislation for Ireland is unjust and unconstitutional. This argument is used if it is proposed to enact a Crimes Act for Ireland or to omit her from a scheme of franchise extension, even, although there may be special circumstances to justify these special arrangements.

Now, I contend that it is the first duty of British statesmen to decide definitely which of these principles they intend to act on in dealing with Ireland, and I have no hesitation in stating that it has been largely owing to the absence of this definiteness that so much indecision has been shown in dealing with Irish questions and so much unsatisfactory and inconsistent legislation has resulted, while agitation has been fostered and encouraged.

What Ireland requires above everything is a feeling of confidence and stability, and this can only be brought about by the adoption of a definite policy on the part of British statesmen in dealing with Ireland, and by a rigid adherence to whatever policy is adopted. At present we in Ireland are like the dove sent out from the ark—unable to find rest for the soles of our feet, and utterly unable to determine whether the flood will prevail or abate.

It is acknowledged on all hands that things cannot remain as they are. It is abundantly evident that any further concession to the national sentiment will only be another stage on the road to complete independence, while a return to special coercive legislation would be but a temporary and unsatisfactory expedient. Any of these courses would but prolong the present stage of unrest and uncertainty and postpone for a short time the necessity for grappling with and solving the Irish difficulty.

What, then, is to be done? It seems to me that most of

our recent difficulties have arisen from the adoption, or partial adoption, of the principle that Ireland is to be governed according to Irish ideas. If we adopt this principle in its entirety we must concede the right of Ireland to complete independence, because that is the Irish idea. If we only adopt it within certain limits it is evident that every attempt to define these limits will lead to collision with Irish ideas, and so we have the choice of either horn of a very awkward dilemma.

The principle seems to me essentially false and mischievous. Ireland is not an independent kingdom, entitled to govern herself according to her own ideas. She is an integral portion of the United Kingdom, and her ideas have only a right to prevail in the united Parliament so far as they are founded on reason and justice, and so far as they commend themselves to the other portions of the United Kingdom. What is Ireland but a junior partner in the firm of Great Britain and Co., and what right has the junior partner to dictate to the senior how the business is to be carried on, or to threaten to prevent the business being carried on at all unless it is managed according to her ideas?

It may be argued that Ireland only wants to manage her own affairs, but any one who has given the smallest attention to the subject knows that many of the matters claimed as Irish are really matters of British interest; and that—to return to my simile—to decide what matters are personal and what partnership as between Ireland and Britain would inevitably lead to quarrels and bickering during the continuance of the partnership, followed at no distant date by a complete break up of the firm.

I have already stated that most of the recent difficulties have arisen from the want of steady adherence to a definite guiding principle by British statesmen in dealing with Ireland, and my idea of the way to get rid of the Irish difficulty is by deciding once for all on the principle of uniform legislation for Great Britain and Ireland.

In other words, I would get rid of the difficulty of legis-

lating for Ireland by having no special Irish legislation.

It seems to me that the time has come when Britain must either start the Irish car on a separate track diverging further and further from her own, or she must boldly couple it on to her own train, and so not only keep it travelling on the same track but at the same speed.

I do not say that there are no difficulties in this course, but they are few and simple compared with those attending any other, while the beneficial effects would be great and immediate. Think of the confidence that would at once be inspired in all the loyal, well disposed inhabitants of this island, and in all those who have a stake in it, if they knew that in future no legislation would be applied to this country which did not also apply to Britain. And what is of equal importance, think of the discouragement, the immediate discouragement, which would be given to the disloyal section and to the army of agitators who are counting on separation, and who desire to vary the monotony of preaching law breaking by trying their 'prentice hands at law making for this unfortunate country. And still further, think of the beneficial effect on the dupes of these agitators, on the peasantry who are taught to believe that the millennium will be the immediate result of Irish independence, the said millennium to consist in the abolition of landlords and rents. Is it any wonder that the peasantry vote for separation? I may be asked, Would you, then, do nothing to extend the principle of local self-government in Ireland? I reply that I am strongly in favour of an immediate extension of the principle, but I want it to apply to all portions of the United Kingdom alike, and I have not up to the present seen a single valid argument in favour of applying it to Ireland separately.

Again, it may be asked, How would the British Legislature deal with an outbreak of agrarian crime in Ireland, or with a revival of fenianism or ribbonism, if they adopted the principle of not legislating specially for Ireland? To which I reply that they would deal with these matters

as they at present deal with cattle disease. The powers would be general and applicable to Great Britain and Ireland alike, but they would only be put in force in infected districts. In this way parts of Ireland which are as loyal and law-abiding as any part of England or Scotland would escape the injustice of being included, as heretofore, in an Irish Crimes Act.

Then look at the position Britain would occupy in the eyes of foreign nations if, in reply to the discontent of a section of the Irish people, she could hold up her head and look the whole world in the face, as she proclaimed that, whatever her past faults and failings had been in dealing with Ireland, now, at all events, she had admitted her to free and full equality, that exceptional legislation had become a thing of the past, and that for the future Britain would impose no legislation on Ireland that she did not at the same time adopt herself.

And if in spite of all this a section of the Irish people still continued discontented, Britain and the world would alike know that the people of Ireland had just the same ground for complaint—no greater and no less—than the people of England and Scotland and Wales.

Yours faithfully,

J. MALCOLM INGLIS.

Trenton-house, Dublin.

The Times this day says:—

It is not without reason that MR. JOHN MORLEY, as President of the London and Counties Liberal Union, has paid his tribute, as he did last night at Chelmsford, to the services rendered by the Liberals of Essex to the cause with which he is identified. Essex is the only one of the Home Counties, taking that expression in the widest sense, in which the progress of the reaction against recent developments of Radicalism has

met with a serious check. The extension of the franchise has strengthened Conservatism in the metropolis and all around it, save at one point. Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire (excepting a single division, where the rivalry of two opponents gave a seat to LORD SELBORNE'S son), Sussex, Kent, and Surrey are all shown to be held by strong Conservative majorities; but in Essex the Liberals have won four county seats out of eight, and stand at least on an equality with the opposing party. MR. MORLEY comforts himself and his friends, including a number of defeated Liberal candidates, with the somewhat faint expression of his hope that the example of Essex may prove contagious. This is, of course, a sentiment which may be proclaimed with equal confidence on the other side. But, in truth, the main portion of MR. MORLEY'S speech shows how futile it is to construct from the results of the last appeal to the constituencies any theory of the balance of political forces in the next Parliament. We pass by the question of disestablishment, on which MR. MORLEY touched briefly, warning the clergy in a familiar, but now rather anachronistic, strain against the danger of placing the Church in an attitude of hostility to "the party of progress." This was a legitimate, though not, we think, a very cogent, argument during the late contest, when the question of disestablishment, having been rashly put forward by a section of the Liberal party, was hastily withdrawn from "the sphere of practical politics." But MR. CHAMBERLAIN has declared within the past few weeks that

at the next election it will be inscribed on the Radical banner, and if that be so MR. MORLEY can hardly expect that earnest Churchmen, whether laymen or clergymen, will refrain from doing their utmost to prevent a Radical victory. The Liberal successes in Essex were achieved, however, by the united action of sections whose co-operation in the future it will be hardly possible to secure. The Irish difficulty has presented itself in a truly menacing form, most menacing because some English politicians are tempted to rid themselves of it by a helpless surrender to Separatist demands. In one way or other, the question must be met, and no one knows better than MR. MORLEY that on this very point the profoundest, the most irreconcilable, differences exist and are developing in the heart of the Liberal party.

It is very noteworthy that MR. MORLEY himself makes no attempt to compromise or conceal those differences. He dismisses contemptuously, and without the slightest reserve the more moderate proposals of concession which have been supposed to commend themselves to some of MR. GLADSTONE'S former colleagues even more than to LORD SALISBURY'S Ministry. He will be content with no "tinkering" plans, elective County Boards, and changes in the Irish Executive. The proposal which, he maintains, is the only one worth discussing, from the point of view of concession, goes so far that, without doubt, MR. PARNELL might accept it—of course, provisionally, and *sous bénéfice d'inventaire*, but

setting no limitations to "Ireland's nationhood." Mr. MORLEY tells us that he desires to compass two points by his Irish policy; "I want order in Ireland, and power in the House of Commons at Westminster;" but though he puts them apparently on an equal level, he has substantially to make a choice between the two, and it is the former that is sacrificed for the latter. "Order in Ireland" is to be secured by making Mr. PARNELL and his party, the elected representatives of the majority of the Irish people, exclusively responsible for its maintenance. But responsible to whom? To the constituent bodies who have returned a Parnellite majority, of whom one member, speaking at Navan on Wednesday, is reported in the Nationalist organ to have exhorted the tenant farmers not to relax their efforts "until they got the land for themselves without rent at all." Is Mr. MORLEY of opinion that the pursuit of this object by an Irish Parliament and an Irish Government, invested, as he proposes, with complete legislative and administrative control over Irish affairs, would be consistent with order, for, if so, he uses the word in a sense repugnant to English instincts? It is hard to believe that he has not considered this point, for after vindicating the Land Act of 1881 as a measure framed to prevent the landlords from confiscating the property of the tenants, he goes on to say, "I do not think we shall be able to deal satisfactorily with Ireland until we have passed some legislation to prevent tenants from confiscating the property of the

landlords." It is absurd to suppose that an Irish Parliament would pass such legislation or that an Irish Government would give effect to it if passed. But is it the Imperial Parliament that is to undertake the task of carrying a new Land Bill, in the landlords' interest, over the head of Mr. PARNELL and his self-governed Ireland? In that case Mr. PARNELL will scarcely be so accommodating as to make the concession demanded by Mr. MORLEY on the other point, relieving the House of Commons of the presence of the Irish members and removing that paralysis of Parliamentary power which Mr. MORLEY attributes, justly enough, to the tactics of a faction operating in the field of British and Imperial politics with reference only to the objects of Irish Separatism. The excision of the Irish element from the Imperial Parliament can only be accomplished, on Mr. MORLEY's principles, by rejecting every form of federalism and placing Ireland in the formal position of a self-governing dependency, united to the Empire only by the personal link of the Crown, bearing no share of the Imperial burdens, and with absolute power over law and order, life and property, the rights of loyal Irishmen and of British investors in Irish securities. This would be practically indistinguishable from separation, and, unless some moral miracle were to be wrought, it would lead immediately to scenes of rapine, oppression, and probably bloodshed, the sight of which it would be difficult—nay, impossible—for Englishmen and Scotchmen to endure.

The foundation of Mr. MORLEY's reasoning is an

assumption which we should be sorry to admit, for, if well-founded, it would strike at the root of Parliamentary Government and would produce that "collapse of Parliament," which, MR. MORLEY declares, would be "the greatest tragedy in the history of human institutions." It would be tempting fate to acknowledge that a small minority in a great legislative body can, by bitter and persistent opposition, compel the majority to grant them anything they choose to demand, including even the dissolution of national unity and the power to inflict cruel wrongs. There is, indeed, another way out of the difficulty, and though MR. MORLEY would not look in that direction, an increasing number of the English people are willing to do so, should the alternative be forced, according to MR. MORLEY'S view, upon their minds. If the House of Commons is unable to deliver itself, by firm and patriotic action, from the paralyzing power of MR. PARNELL'S band, the choice will lie between separation in the thinly-disguised form advocated by MR. MORLEY and the suspension of Parliamentary institutions, backed by a strong, just, and impartial administration of the island as a Crown Colony. We print in another column a letter containing some most interesting and instructive passages from the despatches of the DUKE of WELLINGTON, which show the prescience of that most illustrious and high-minded of loyal Irishmen. The DUKE, who knew the country and the people well, did not doubt that the reconquest of Ireland, and therewith the temporary abrogation of rights

misused, would become a necessity. This is a power we hold in reserve, unless, indeed, we divest ourselves of it, or at all events render its exercise most difficult, by setting up a separate Irish Government; but, in spite of MR. MORLEY'S contention, we are unable to see that the alternatives are as yet presented to us imperatively. There remains the policy of steadily doing justice, giving Ireland such reforming legislation as will place her on an equal footing with England and Scotland—though that work is by this time well-nigh done—and living in the hope that time will appease traditional hatreds or wear out the rancour of disappointed greed. But we must, on the one hand, be prepared to act with vigour in the House of Commons against organized obstruction, and, on the other, we must make it clear that so long as Ireland remains a part of the dominions of the British Crown the law will be upheld and crime brought to punishment. MR. MORLEY is indignant with SIR JAMES STEPHEN for recommending this fulfilment of a plain national duty. The commonplaces of sentimental Liberalism, however, no longer produce much effect. "Coercion" is seen to be, in a country like Ireland, no more than the means for securing the protection of life and property, the repression of terrorism and outrage, and the vindication of legal rights—social safeguards, which, in more advanced communities, are almost automatically asserted by public opinion. If the law as it exists in England does not suffice in Ireland to create these elementary conditions of civilized society it is

the duty of the Imperial Parliament to strengthen it, and the obligation is not in the smallest degree diminished by the fact that Mr. PARNELL has now 85 followers in the House of Commons.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 9.

HOME RULE.

In this day's issue of the *Statist* appears a letter under the signature "Economist" containing a suggestion which, in the writer's opinion, would enable Home Rule to be granted to Ireland without exposing the property of the landlords to plunder and without imposing any serious burden on the Imperial Exchequer. "Economist" describes his scheme as follows:—

The plan is for the Imperial Government (1) to buy out every landlord in Ireland, giving him Consols at par equal in nominal amount to 20 years' purchase of the present judicial rents; (2) to give the land free to the present occupier subject only to a rent-charge of one-half or two-thirds of the present judicial rent payable to the new local authorities in Ireland; and (3) to relieve the Imperial Exchequer of all payments now made out of it in connexion with the local government of Ireland. The plan is, in fact, to throw the cost of local government in Ireland upon Irish resources exclusively, and to give the Irish people the rent of the country for the purpose of conducting it. The conflict between landlords and people would thus come to an end. We need no longer fear that if we give Ireland Home Rule the property of the landlords would be confiscated.

It might be thought at first sight that the concession is extravagant, that we concede far too much to Ireland; but the truth is that the account would be nearly balanced as far as the Imperial Exchequer is concerned. Taking the rent of Ireland, as settled judicially, as about £8,000,000, the Consols at par to be given in exchange at 20 years' purchase would be £160,000,000, involving an annual charge of £4,800,000 upon the Imperial Exchequer. At present we spend annually upon Ireland for its local government—

for law, prisons, police, education, and such matters—close upon £4,000,000, exclusive altogether of the outlay for the army of occupation, for the collection of revenue, and other Imperial matters which would still remain Imperial. If it is thought that the account should be exactly balanced, it could be arranged that the local authorities in Ireland should pay over to the Imperial Exchequer out of the rent-charge which they would be allowed to collect any sum needed to make up the difference between the cost of the Consols necessary to buy out the landlords and the amount now spent out of the Imperial Exchequer on the local government of Ireland.

The position as regards the Irish tenants would be, that where they now pay £8,000,000 they would have to pay only from four to five and a-half millions. We are enabled to give them this advantage by means of the Imperial credit; but the emergency is one for which the Imperial credit should be used. Much of the present Irish difficulty is due to the fact that events have been fatal to the judicial rents fixed a few years ago. The subsequent fall of prices has upset the whole theory of judicial rents. It is not practicable to fix rents for 15 years by external authority, because no one can foretell what the prices of agricultural produce will be. If prices go up no one cares; it is the landlord only who suffers. But if prices go down the tenants cannot pay, and so there is an end of judicial rents.

In constituting a rent-charge of the kind described, it would of course be necessary to make special provision for cases where no judicial rents are fixed, or where land is in the occupation of the owner. But the scheme must be general. On all the land of Ireland there must be a rent-charge, the occupier becoming the owner subject to it, and the present owner being paid out by Consols in the way described. Where the present owner is also the occupier he would of course continue occupier or new owner under the new conditions, his present ownership being bought out.

It would further be necessary, looking at what has happened regarding judicial rents, that provision should be made for varying the rent-charge according to the average changes in the prices of agricultural produce. The precedent of the arrangement for levying the tithe in England could be followed, or some analogous plan.

In the event of a plan like what is here suggested being carried out, it would be possible, and even necessary, to

let the new local authorities in Ireland have control of the police. They would have to be their own rent-charge collectors. The Imperial Government, however, would retain a small police force of its own to enforce the collection of Imperial taxes required for Imperial purposes and the Imperial laws relating to freedom of commerce and transit, and other matters which would remain Imperial as long as there was no "separation."

As to what form of local self-government and local authority should be set up in Ireland I do not speculate. That there would be dangers in any form of Home Rule, even if the cardinal difficulty of the feud between landlords and tenants is got out of the way, goes without saying. But, this difficulty removed, the experiment of giving the Irish a very complete form of local self-government, and even a Council in Dublin, would apparently become more tolerable than it would otherwise be. The difficulty that such a Council could not be trusted to rule Ulster would, of course, be got over by giving Ulster a Council of its own.

Whatever is done it would be necessary to reduce the representation of Ireland at Westminster. Its representation there, if it is given the desired control over its own local affairs, and if it receives the present of the large resources described, ought to be reduced to something like what the proportion of its contribution to Imperial revenues will be—that is to say, to something less than 5 per cent., or about 35 out of 670. Thirty-five Irish members in the House of Commons would probably be more useful to Ireland than the present 85.

THE IRISH QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Will you allow me to describe, in a few words, an Irish estate—that belonging to Sir George Colthurst, at Ballyvourney, in the county of Cork? It contains about 23,000 acres.

When I became acquainted with it in 1844, the rent in round numbers was £5,000 a year, and most punctually paid. The tenants were wretchedly housed, there were few roads, and the land was very badly divided. There was no railway

station nearer than Cork, at a distance of 34 miles. From the year 1845 to 1878 the late Sir George Colthurst expended about £20,000 in making roads, re-dividing the land, in drainage, plantations, and in contributing to build about 150 slated houses to replace the thatched cabins. A railroad being brought to within ten miles of the estate he subscribed £4,000. Between 1879 and 1881, the present Sir George Colthurst borrowed from the Government and expended £9,000 in drainage, fencing, and general reclamation of land. These were the acts of the landlords during a period of 36 years.

When the Land Act of 1881 came in force, nine-tenths of the tenants applied to have their rents settled by the Land Courts, and the rental was reduced to £4,500 a year, thus making it by £500 a year lower than it was before any money was expended by the landlords. The £29,000 expended by them was not even considered.

I attended last November to receive the reduced judicial rents, and the tenants in a body declined to pay without a further reduction of 30 per cent. The clergyman who spoke for them said that "the tenants had made the land by their own reclamation," and that "they had paid rent long enough, and if they could help it they would pay no more."

I should have mentioned that the entire rent of this estate is derived from butter and cattle, and although the prices of both were low this year, yet, as the season was unusually dry, the quantity produced was much greater than usual; so that, calculating by the money received, it was about an average year.

I need make no comment on these facts, and will only add that a Land League meeting has been lately held on the estate, attended by two M.P.'s., and Sir George Colthurst and his agent were denounced in unmeasured terms for commencing proceedings to recover the rent.

Your obedient servant,

London.

S. M. HUSSEY.

AN IRISH FARMER'S LOGIC.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—It is certain that few Irish farmers read *The Times*, and I have seen no letter from any representative of this class in your columns lately. The Home Rule movement has received great support from them, and perhaps you may not refuse to hear the views of one (although they may be odd) just to show English people how some of us look at things. My father, grandfather, two uncles, and three brothers and myself have been or are tenant farmers.

I voted for the Nationalist candidate, and subscribed to the Parnell Defence Fund. I am not a member of the National League, but have always refused to join any union or association opposed to it.

Why did I vote for the Nationalist? Because Mr. Parnell has done more for Irish farmers than any other living man, and he has got a real hearing for Irish questions in the House of Commons—a hearing which was refused to them for decade after decade, so long, in fact, as they were brought forward quietly and in moderation.

I regret this, for it almost seems as if we were doing evil that good may come, when we vote for men who get a hearing by obstruction and cleverness in supporting first one party, then the other. But is it not legitimate warfare in a Parliament which will keep putting you off session after session unless some unusual means are adopted to get a hearing? I think it is.

I am called a strong farmer, but for four or five years well know how hard it has been to pay rent; and if I am hard set how must it be with my poorer neighbours?

The landlords exasperate the farmers by not accepting a fair reduction; if there is any doubt about a reduction the man who is nearest the limit of subsistence should get the benefit of the doubt.

A rent which was a fair rent three years ago should have, as a rule, at least 30 per cent. taken off it now, but of course every case has its own peculiarities and must be

judged accordingly. You in England have manufactures, but we have nothing to turn to except the land. The hunger of the Celt for a bit of ground is but the result of a necessity, and so long as this hunger was unchecked rents ran up to absurd figures—we were cutting our own throats. Then the Land League, or as it is now called, the National League, was formed. As originally intended, it was an admirable self-restraint society to prevent farmers bidding against each other to the delight of greedy landlords.

Lord Cowper is perfectly right; the land and the rent derived from it are the backbone of the Home Rule movement. This is what has united us, and it has certainly had enormous weight with the northern farmers who voted for the Nationalists, but do not care a jackstraw for Home Rule.

It is almost a truism to say that every country has some of its inhabitants discontented; you cannot satisfy everybody; but if we had no rent to pay in this country Home Rule might go to Jupiter or Saturn for all the farmers care. Honest men see this can never be, but though they be honest they find it hard to make ends meet and pay the landlord, and they look to Home Rule to do something for them. The labourers also believe good times are in store for them, but I tell them it may be otherwise. If the labourer lived in a palace and had no work he could not live. Assuredly, they are entitled to good and comfortable dwellings, but what use are they without the labourer has work? A good house and half an acre of land rent free, or even three acres, will not keep a man unless he has work. And who is to give them work? No law will make the farmers till if it is more profitable and less bother to graze. It may be done for a year or two under pressure, or an odd farmer may do it as a matter of duty; but, unless rents are lowered as a reward for tilling and raised when the land goes out of cultivation, it will gradually run to grass. I cultivate the five-sevenths of my farm, but it does not pay, and, although we have held our own for the

greater part of the present century, two or three years will run us ashore if the rent is not reduced.

The priests would have been left high and dry if they had not joined the National cause.

Will the English Parliament reconstruct the Healy clause, bring in compulsory purchase, reform the rotten Grand Jury system, and give us denominational education and a magistracy less largely drawn from a single class, and grant that we need not run over to London to ask the advice of people there about every petty local Bill before we can make an Act of it? If they will not, then I believe Home Rule will be voted for again and again, by some as a means of obtaining absolute separation, and by others as an indirect means of attaining the objects just mentioned. The land is at the root of the matter, however. We get too many advantages from England to wish for absolute separation. Suppose the importation of live stock and butter into England from Ireland was put a stop to in any dispute between the two countries. It would take away the breath of every farmer from the Giant's Causeway to Cape Clear, and even the very thought that England might do this (be it far fetched or not) has its influence in making many cling to a union of some sort.

Undoubtedly, some of the difficulties attendant on a separate Parliament did not occur to many until it was discussed so much lately. To thick-headed persons illustrations are admirable arguments, and Sir James Stephen has certainly made a strong case against Home Rule. The discussion of the subject in Parliament is sure to be of immense value. The worst of it is we have no local press which will report the arguments with equal fairness on both sides.

Boycotting is an awful weapon, and it has been fearfully misused. I would warn Mr. Parnell that if the League is not better kept in hand, and if village tyrants are allowed to use its legitimate influence for the furtherance of private animosity and spite, it will slowly collapse by the weight of its own misdeeds, and that the labourers

and farmers who have been injured by it will at the next election vote against the Nationalist candidate.

Being a friend of neither party, and running therefore some risk of being boycotted by both, I withhold my name, and subscribe myself

Yours respectfully,

AN IRISH FARMER.

SMALL PROPRIETORS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—It is straining the bounds of courtesy to ask you to admit one more letter from so inconsiderable a person as myself, but there is one thing more which ought to be plainly said on behalf of the average English voter of whom I venture to constitute myself the representative. It is in answer to Mr. Justice Stephen's proposal for new coercive measures, and it is this.

The reason why mere coercion fails is because we, the average voters, cannot be depended on to sanction its continuance, even if we are aroused by some outbreak of crime to sanction it as an experiment. And the reason of this, again, is because our conscience is not clear nor our intelligence satisfied so long as the relations of landlord and tenant are permitted to exist in Ireland. We are not inspired by any fanatic dislike of those relations as they exist in England, nor, again, by any hope that the economical condition of Ireland would be *ipso facto* improved by their removal. We are aware that the process would have to be gradual, and that many exceptions, *e.g.*, the estates of great English landlords, might be by common consent admitted. But we are sure that this system works ill in Ireland; that its historical associations are odious to the people; that its existence affords just the occasion and the opportunity required by disloyal agitation; that its removal would take away the last rag of real grievances wherewith that agitation hides its nakedness?

Now it would be mere impertinence for me to discuss the question, but I may perhaps be permitted to give the answer to three plausible objections that would. I am con-

vinced, be given by the average voter if the matter were explained to him.

First, it is a difficult process. I answer that the creation of small proprietors has been accomplished over half Europe. The only special difficulty arises from the curiously infelicitous legislation of 1881 by which it was made worth the tenants' while to retain their landlords instead of buying them out. But that was done during the temporary absence of political economy, ostracised for inconvenient virtues to supramundane spheres. And now that she has returned, and is very plainly calling her rebellious citizens to account, may we not hope for some simple and final settlement of the question?

But secondly, it would cost money. Most true, and great nations when trying to undo the effects of past legislation are in no position to drive good bargains. The history of the London water question is enough to show that in the long run we have only to pay much more for standing out too obstinately for better terms. It may well be that the actual money loss would be little or nothing when the decrease in military and police expenditure was set against it. Be this as it may I would venture to remind Mr. Justice Stephen that justice like other excellent things is apt to be expensive, and anyhow is none the less palatable if served up with a little self-sacrifice.

Thirdly, it would drive the loyal inhabitants, represented especially by the country gentlemen, out of the country. Why? Would the gentlemen whose hunting is stopped be the less likely to obtain it if, save their home farms, every acre of land they rode over was the property of men who had no sores rankling against them, and whose interest it would be to encourage sport? Or would their position be less tolerable if, instead of exacting rents from unwilling tenants, they were able to exercise a kindly influence among small owners standing in much need of mediation and sympathy. But once more, whatever the result, if you ask us, the average voters, for power to exercise coercion where needed, we in turn must ask you to take away the occasion and the excuse for those crimes which make coercion necessary.

Add therefore to the three points of policy—viz., to Home Rule, local government, and the preservation of

order—this fourth, viz., the abolition of the relationship of landlord and tenant, and you have the programme of the average voter, such as

Your obedient servant,

Islip.

T. W. FOWLE.

MONDAY, JANUARY 11.

THE IRISH QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I am reluctant to trouble you upon the above question, but I should much like to ask—as one of those Liberal members who care more for the Imperial interests of the United Kingdom than for any other political interests whatsoever—why the new Parliament is at present to be harassed with any Home Rule or county government proposals by either of the great political parties? Why should not Her Majesty be advised to say in the forthcoming Address something to the following effect:—

“I observe with interest that my subjects in Ireland have returned to the House of Commons a large majority of members pledged to support with unanimity the policy of a recognized leader. When their wishes have been matured and formally made known in Parliament it will be my desire to give effect to them, in so far as they may be consistent with the integrity of my Empire and with full and equal justice to all my subjects.”

This course would relieve both the great British political parties from the dangerous necessity of propounding schemes which, whatever they may be, are certain to bring this solemn national question into the arena of party contention and conflict, and thereby jeopardize the interests of the Empire. It would at the same time place the duty of stating any grievances which the Nationalists may have to complain of, and of formulating reasonable remedies, upon Mr. Parnell, to whom, as the trusted leader of an important political party, it obviously belongs. I do not see how he could evade this duty without demonstrating to every loyal subject of Her Majesty and to the entire world that his objects are such as cannot be avowed

and are therefore such as the whole Empire is bound to resist; and both Parliament and the country would then know how to deal with any violence in Ireland or any obstruction in Parliament that might arise. On the other hand, should Mr. Parnell prove himself able to show that great and real grievances do still exist in Ireland, and should he formulate remedies consistent with the integrity of the Empire and with justice to all concerned, I for one, and I believe the whole Liberal party and probably the larger portion of the Conservative party likewise, would be both willing and gratified to give them our hearty support.

I am aware that the course suggested would not be acquiesced in by the mere political agitators of either of our great parties, and I doubt not that attempts would be made to snatch political capital out of the Irish question at any cost; but the country now understands that Imperial interests are at stake, and would silence, as it knows how to silence, those who would humiliate it, and sacrifice its honour to their own advantage.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Westminster.

E. J. REED.

DIVIDE ET IMPERA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Some time ago I ventured to suggest the appointment of a small Commission or Committee of nine persons, representing the three parties in Parliament, for the purpose of inquiring into the government of Ireland with a view to determining whether a legislative assembly, sitting in Dublin, could be intrusted with the administration of Irish affairs consistently with the sovereign rights of the Imperial Parliament.

At that time this proposal was perhaps not unnaturally designated as a stale expedient. But much has happened since then; and in the face of startling proposals for organic constitutional changes, a method of procedure which can be described as unoriginal and customary has much to recommend it.

The problem appears at the present time to be how to govern Ireland in the teeth of the majority of the Irish people, and how to govern England in spite of a minority of Irish representatives.

We may dismiss the suggestion for a while that the Constitution should be suspended in Ireland, and that the Irish members should be ejected from the House of Commons. Although such measures may become necessary, it will be admitted that they are not feasible at present. Whether or not it will be possible to carry out the proposal of a judicial luminary, whose previous descents into the political arena have not been associated with success, and to return to a policy dropped by Mr. Gladstone's Government and repudiated by Lord Salisbury's, events will shortly decide. But indications seem to point to the rapid drifting of both political parties, in spite of the natural dislike which the majority of Englishmen feel towards the idea, in the direction of giving to Irishmen the control of their own affairs, whether the particular plan is called local government on the one hand or Home Rule on the other.

The latter more drastic proposal has during the last few weeks become associated with the name of Mr. Gladstone. It would be unfair to him, and no doubt fallacious, to identify Mr. Gladstone with any particular scheme; but it has for some time been suspected, and he has never denied it, that he views favourably the creation of an Irish Legislative Assembly, which is the distinguishing feature of Home Rule as opposed to other forms of self-government for Ireland. And it is against this particular idea that the full force of the destructive criticism of your correspondents and your great journal has been directed. But it is worth while to recollect that Mr. Gladstone has not yet attempted to explain or defend what is assumed to be his opinion, and that when it is forthcoming that explanation cannot fail to produce a profound impression; and secondly, that because no serious effort has been made by any one to reply to the manifold objections raised to the

idea of Home Rule, it must thereupon be assumed that they are unanswerable.

These objections may be divided into two classes—first, those in the nature of hypotheses, such as “that all forms of Home Rule are mere steps to separation,” and “that it is absurd to suppose that an Irish Parliament would do this or that,” or that an “Irish Government would give effect” to this or that just stipulation. Now these hypotheses are all framed on the assumption that the hatred of Irishmen towards England is undying, and that men capable under one form of government of atrocious acts are incapable under another form of becoming decent and loyal citizens. Obviously this is a matter of opinion, not susceptible of proof. But it ought to be remembered that experience, which counts for something even in the domain of comfortable hypothesis, shows us Hungarians and Austrians, after a long and bitter strife, in spite of Haynau, in spite of Count Beust’s critics, settling amicably down under one Sovereign and one Constitution. What, again, could exceed the class and race bitterness engendered during the great American struggle in the Southern States? Yet after the war, in spite of prophets of ill, this bitterness led to no acts of glaring injustice when the slave and his owner were forced to live side by side as fellow citizens. Finally, where were the croakers who denounced the elder Pitt for his rash confidence in trusting Highlanders under English officers against the enemies of Britain when, less than 14 years after Culloden, Highlanders were the first to scale the heights of Abraham? But if no great importance need be attached to this class of objections, it is a different matter when we approach the practical difficulties in the way of this constitutional change. Those of obvious magnitude appear to be the necessity for protecting the rights of individuals holding land under the distinct guarantee of the State, the means, if necessary, of enforcing the sovereignty of the Imperial Parliament, and the settlement of the comparative financial burden to be borne by

Ireland for Imperial purposes. There are other difficulties, but these are supreme.

1. Mr. John Morley has been criticized for saying that before creating an Irish Legislative Assembly we ought to take steps to prevent tenants from confiscating the property of landlords. It seems to be supposed that there is an inconsistency in binding an Irish Legislature not to commit or sanction certain Acts. Yet any one who refers to de Tocqueville’s “Democracy in America” will find in the eighth chapter a catalogue of the Acts which the State Legislatures of America are forbidden by the Constitution to pass. And in the 10th section of the first article of the Constitution of the United States appears, among other provisions, these—that no State shall pass any Bill of Attainder, or retrospective *ex post facto* laws, or laws “impairing the obligation of contracts.” And in the first draft of the Constitution submitted by Alexander Hamilton to the Convention in 1787 (Hamilton’s Works, vol. I., p. 349) the eighth article provides that “the Governor or President of each State shall be appointed under the authority of the United States, and shall have a right to negative all laws about to be passed in the State of which he shall be Governor or President, subject to such qualifications and regulations as the Legislature of the United States shall prescribe.” From these illustrations may it not be reasonably inferred that difficulties which have occurred in other countries very similar to those arising out of the proposal under examination, and which have been surmounted by foreign statesmanship, are not insurmountable by English statesmen.

2. But it is said that although a Constitution might be framed for Ireland upon certain definite lines, if the Irish Executive or Legislature were to overtop them it would be impossible to assert the sovereignty of the Imperial Parliament. Yet observation shows that in North and South Germany, in Switzerland, in the United States, and within the

British Empire itself there are examples of occasional conflict between subordinate and sovereign legislatures which have been settled without an appeal to force. The town of Birmingham, as well as the colony of Victoria, possesses a constitution under which great powers are exercised—powers of taxation and of police—yet no attempt to override its limitations is ever attempted. In a more restricted sphere, the London and North-Western Railway Company possess legislative and administrative powers within limits carefully defined by Parliament, and any attempt to expand them would be checked by an appeal to the ordinary Courts of Justice. Professor Dicey, in his admirable lectures, shows how smooth are the relations between sovereign and non-sovereign legislatures, how powerful are the various sanctions for good behaviour, and how simple the appeal to the law when differences of opinion as to the limits of authority occasionally occur. But the *ultima ratio*, if men or legislatures cease to act fairly, must necessarily be the sword, and the 10,000 or 20,000 British troops which in quiet times garrison Ireland will always be at the service of the sovereign Parliament. Whether Ireland is home-ruled or not her garrison remains, and, if more peaceful methods fail, is at the command of the State. In what respect does this sanction differ from that upon which, in the last resort, law rests in Ireland at the present time?

3. The fiscal arrangements are no doubt complicated and difficult, and it is in that peculiar province that a competent Commission would find its chief labour of inquiry and adjustment. But, though difficult, such questions have arisen before now in other nations and have been satisfactorily solved. In the Austro-Hungarian arrangement a proportional contribution towards Imperial funds was settled by the Constitution. In America, infinitely complicated as the arrangement was, a solution was found which has worked satisfactorily. It cannot be supposed that English statesmanship is incapable of the task of separating domestic expenditure in Ireland from

Imperial expenditure, and of laying down the limits within which, and of fixing the methods by which, each is to be met.

In his "Constitutional History of the United States" Von Holst observes that the whole secret of American history is contained in the words of Gerry:—"We are neither the same nation nor different nations. We ought not, therefore, to pursue the one or the other of these ideas too closely." Could this not be said with as much truth of Great Britain and Ireland? We have before now as a nation set many an example to Europe and to the world. Is it asking more of the new Parliament than is consistent with the traditions of its predecessors to approach this question without passion, with no intentions of helpless surrender to Separatist demands, on the one hand, nor feeble shrinking from difficult legislation into exploded methods on the other, but with an honest desire to lighten the labours of Parliament and to maintain its sovereignty over the United Kingdom?

I remain your obedient servant,
REGINALD B. BRETT.

ANOMALIES OF IRISH GOVERNMENT.

It has been very generally assumed in the course of the discussion on the Home Rule question that the administrative government of Ireland differs widely from that of England and Scotland, that popular representation is imperfectly recognized, and that "Dublin Castle" exercises almost despotic powers and embodies the authority of a complicated bureaucratic system. Mr. Gladstone in his address to the electors of Mid Lothian said:—"Down to this hour Ireland has continued greatly in arrear both of England and Scotland with respect to those powers of local self-government which associate the people, in act and feeling, with the law." Mr. Chamberlain, immediately after resigning office last summer, told a Liberal audi-

ence at Holloway that "the majority of Englishmen had not the slightest conception of the system under which this free nation attempts to rule the sister country. It is a system," he went on to say, "which is founded on the bayonets of 30,000 soldiers encamped permanently as in a hostile country. It is a system as completely centralized and bureaucratic as that under which Russia governs Poland or that which prevailed in Venice under the Austrian rule. An Irishman at this moment cannot move a step or lift a finger in any parochial, municipal, or educational work without being confronted with, interfered with, controlled by an English official, appointed by a foreign Government, and without a shade or shadow of representative authority." "The Radical Programme," published with the *imprimatur* of Mr. Chamberlain and of the National Liberal Federation, speaks of the Irish as "a nation of serfs," subjected to an "odious and intolerable" foreign supremacy.

Do the facts justify this passionate language or may we dismiss it as "a tale of little meaning, though the words are strong"? There are some important differences between the machinery and the methods of administration in Ireland and those with which we are familiar in Great Britain; but a candid inquiry, we think, will show that they do not seriously restrict popular liberties, and that in many respects they are to the advantage, not to the disadvantage, of the Irish. We do not contend by any means that anomalies of historical origin or arising out of diverse social conditions may not be mitigated or removed; but we see no ground for the charge that popular rights in Ireland are overridden by a bureaucratic despotism.

The Lord Lieutenancy is an institution which casts a

thin disguise over the realities of the situation. The Viceroy has in Ireland substantially the patronage divided in England and Scotland among the principal Ministers; but, though he directly represents the Queen, his acts are subject to the rules of Ministerial responsibility, and in practice they are checked and controlled by public opinion and Parliamentary pressure, precisely as are those of the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary. The Irish members are able to question the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant in his place in the House of Commons about every detail of administration, great and small, and, as a matter of fact, Mr. Forster, Mr. Trevelyan, and Mr. Campbell Bannerman were thus called to account during the last Parliament much more frequently than Sir William Harcourt. The Chief Secretary, who is generally in the Cabinet when his nominal head is not there, has responsibilities of his own. He is, for instance, at the head of the Local Government Board for Ireland, associated with permanent officials, almost always Irishmen, and in this capacity the Board exercises an authority over the conduct of Poor Law guardians and, in some matters, over the management of municipal affairs, with the same administrative objects and subject to the same responsibility as the department at Whitehall over which Mr. Balfour now presides. The Chief Secretary can be called to account in the House of Commons for anything connected with the administration of the Poor Law in Ireland as effectually as the President of the Local Government Board in England. But, it is argued, these administrative Boards do not represent the people, and prevent the elected representatives of the rate-payers from acting as they please. That is exactly the function of a central controlling authority, as John Stuart Mill points out in his "Representative Government." The proceedings of local

bodies, such as Poor Law Boards and municipalities, are limited by Acts of Parliament, and it is for the central body to take care that those limitations are not exceeded. The Irish local bodies are not subject to any restraints which do not apply to Great Britain, and Mr. Chamberlain's imaginative description of "alien interference" looks somewhat absurd when placed side by side with the examples of reckless expenditure and contempt for administrative rules to be found in the report of the Select Committee on the Poor Law Guardians Bill. The scene at the Kilmallock Board, which is reported in another column, shows that the guardians, under the influence of agitators like Father Sheehy, are only too willing to defy the law. Nor can it be seriously alleged that the municipal corporations and town commissioners are mere clay in the hands of the potter, when it is seen how the Dublin City Council uses its patronage and enters into its contracts with an avowed Separatist purpose. Mr. Davitt's appointment to the Port and Docks Board and the price paid for Mr. Parnell's paving stones are illustrative of an independence as remarkable as the nomination of suspects as sheriffs by several provincial councils, and the defiant refusal of Limerick to pay for the extra police. In one point, indeed, the Irish Poor Law differs from the English to the advantage of the tenants, for only one-half of the rates are paid by the occupiers, who, through the elected guardians, now rule most of the boards, the remainder falling on the landlords.

But whether the system of central supervision be good or bad—and it is apparently necessary both to prevent jobbery or extravagance and to protect officials against wrongful dismissal and other forms of petty tyranny—it does not differ in Ireland from that prevailing on this side of St. George's Channel. Speaking of England, Mr. Fowle, in his

excellent little manual of the question, says:—
 "From first to last, the Poor Law has been exactly what the Poor Law Board has made it, and there has been no relaxation of the absolute control which the Board has exercised over every detail of administration."

The case of the National Board of Education, the Intermediate Education Commissioners, the Board of Works, the Fishery Board, and the Prisons Board is somewhat different. In all the elective element is excluded, and the three last-mentioned boards are directly subject to the Treasury in London. It is the Financial Secretary of the Treasury who is responsible for dealing with any matters arising in connexion with them in Parliament, having the advantage, however, of the advice and assistance of the permanent members in Dublin. The arrangement is not satisfactory, but it is the necessary consequence of the special indulgence in financial affairs conceded to Ireland. The expenditure of these bodies is not provided for, wholly or partially, out of local rates, but out of Imperial taxation, and the proposal to give boards or councils elected in Ireland the unrestricted power of voting away immense sums and dealing with immense investments to which the taxpayers of Great Britain are by far the greatest contributors cannot be seriously entertained. If it is intended that the Imperial grants should be withdrawn, under a system of improved local government, or voted only in proportion to the amounts raised by local rates, the elective plan may be introduced, subject to proper securities; but while the whole of the cost of primary education in Ireland is borne by the Imperial Exchequer, and while the Board of Works, the Fishery Board, and the like expend and sink a large capital advanced on the Imperial credit, the strict control of the Treasury is as im-

peratively required as it would be under similar conditions in England or Scotland. It would be difficult to point out any public duties of which the cost is borne by the Imperial Exchequer, while the uncontrolled responsibility of administration is allowed to rest with elected representatives.

The same argument applies with still greater force to the Constabulary, the cost of which is also an Imperial charge. We need not touch here upon the political reasons for refusing to place the Irish police under the control of local elected bodies. The financial point cannot be got over. The charges for the judicial establishments and for the stipendiary magistracy are also Imperial charges; but it is difficult to believe that the transfer of the appointment of those functionaries to elected councils, such as would be returned in Ireland by the popular vote, is within the range of practical discussion. It has certainly never been even proposed for England or Scotland. The appointment of the unpaid magistrates and the supervision of their conduct by the Irish Executive are subject to the same checks and responsibilities, enforced by Parliamentary vigilance, which are found effectual in the case of the Lord Chancellor and the Home Secretary in this country. There is no difference in the systems except that the most important duties of the magistracy are confined, by a number of recent statutes, to the stipendiaries, a movement in the direction favoured by English Radical reformers. The complaint that the magistrates, both paid and unpaid, belong to a class not in sympathy with the masses of the people is founded on the fact, in so many ways significant, that the whole of the educated opinion of Ireland, Protestant and Catholic, is in revolt against the domination of the National League.

It is equally unreasonable to point to the grand

jury system in Ireland as constituting a grievance to which there is nothing comparable in England or Scotland. The grand juries acting for fiscal purposes and the magistrates with the associated cesspayers at baronial presentment sessions are, no doubt, nominated bodies exercising large rating powers which it would be difficult to justify in theory. But, whatever be the theoretical weakness of the system, it stands on the same basis as the fiscal powers of magistrates at quarter sessions in England, and in practice it has, in recent years at all events, been economical and free from the suspicion of jobbery. The expenditure on roads, bridges, &c., will have to be placed, in both countries, under the control of elected bodies, but the change will not be greater in Ireland than in England, and it is to be feared that, in the former country, at any rate, the results may not be entirely agreeable to the ratepayers.

The grievance of which the Irish may with some justice complain is that they are not allowed to establish a system of denominational education for themselves. As we have seen, however, they cannot put in a claim to do this unless they are willing to forego the great advantage they at present enjoy in receiving large Imperial grants without any such conditions of proportionate contribution and the like as are insisted upon in the grants from the general revenue of the State to schools in this country. Any scheme which gave complete control over this and cognate subjects to local elected bodies would involve the withdrawal of the Imperial contributions, which, it is estimated, amount to nearly £4,000,000 a year, including education, law and justice, prisons, police, and so forth. But Ireland is not a prosperous country, and since power has passed into the hands of a party preaching socialistic doctrines her resources

are dwindling, her credit is sinking, and capital is flying from her shores. What probability is there that she will be able to bear alone the burden the taxpayers of England and Scotland now so largely share, even without counting the cost of those wild projects of national development which Mr. Parnell holds out to his credulous followers? Under the existing financial system, Ireland is treated with peculiar tenderness. So far as any differences in taxation and expenditure exist between the two countries they are all in favour of Ireland. It is calculated that the burden of Imperial taxes amounts in England to £2 1s. 8d. per head of the population, and in Ireland only to £1 4s. 11d. Ireland, as we have seen, obtains large special grants out of the Imperial Exchequer, while, on the other hand, she is exempted from several important items of charge. The land-tax has never been imposed upon Ireland, nor the inhabited-house duty, nor the assessed taxes, and the income-tax is levied more indulgently than in this country, the occupiers of land, in particular, paying only on "Griffith's valuation." It is clear, therefore, that the farmer or the trader in Ireland is at an advantage, so far as the incidence of Imperial taxes is concerned when compared with his competitors in England or Scotland.

It remains to notice the gradual changes in the Irish legal system, completed by the Judicature Acts, which have at length brought the substance and the procedure of Irish law into entire harmony with that of England. In some matters of practice unimportant differences remain, but, generally speaking, they are not to the disadvantage of Ireland. Law reformers in England will be puzzled by one of the articles of indictment against "Dublin Castle" put forward in "The Radical Programme":—"The magistrates, paid and unpaid, throughout Ireland in any cases

of difficulty send up queries to the Castle, so as to be advised by the Attorney or Solicitor General, both of whom have offices in the Castle; and prosecutions, instead of being undertaken by the magistrates or by private individuals, as in England, are instituted invariably in the name of the Irish Attorney-General and under his direction." It does not seem a very serious ground of charge against the Irish Executive that it relies upon the services of a public prosecutor instead of trusting to the haphazard system which is still tolerated here. In Ireland, when terrorism like that of the National League has obtained an ascendancy, it would be as hopeless to trust to the initiative of private individuals for grappling with organized crime as it would be to depend upon a police controlled by local elected bodies for suppressing outrages and bringing criminals to punishment. This is the one point on which the claim of the majority of the Irish people to equal institutions with Englishmen and Scotchmen must be overruled by considerations of a higher order. The law must be made to prevail, life and property must be protected, terrorism must be put down with the strong hand, even if in doing so we have to suspend, under local and temporary conditions, the operation of principles of English law, including trial by jury itself, which the Irish masses have perverted and misused to their own discredit and to the danger of society.

The Times this day says:—

The public will receive with lively satisfaction the official announcement that the QUEEN will open Parliament in person. HER MAJESTY'S rare public appearances are always welcome to her loyal subjects, who respect without ceasing to

regret her comparative seclusion. There is a peculiar appropriateness in her personal discharge of her constitutional functions at the opening of the first Parliament chosen by a widely extended electorate, since it adds emphasis to the formal recognition of a work completed by the united exertions of the two great parties in the State, and marks the unbroken continuity of our institutions. It is, of course, understood that, although the House of Commons will assemble to-morrow, the formal opening of Parliament does not take place until the 21st. A good deal of preliminary business, including the election of a Speaker, has to be got through in the meantime; and party leaders will doubtless be busy endeavouring to appraise the material with which they have to deal. The leaders of the Liberal party are expected to meet to-day to settle the outlines of their policy, but their conclusions can hardly be other than negative in the existing uncertainty as to the precise value of several factors in the problem. Considerable speculation was excited yesterday by a rumour, current in political circles, to the effect that the Cabinet intend to propose the abolition of the offices of Viceroy and Chief Secretary for Ireland and the substitution of a Secretary of State. We have the best reasons for affirming that this rumour is without foundation. No scheme of the kind has been proposed, probably in view of the grave administrative difficulties that such abolition, which is on other grounds desirable, would involve. At the same time we have to face, as one of the possibilities of the future, a failure

in the supply of men suitable for the difficult and thankless post of Viceroy. It can be held only by men of high rank and position; it ought to be held only by men of great capacity and force of character; it is fraught with danger even for men of high ability and established reputation; and it is not likely to be accepted by any man of the requisite powers and position save under an overwhelming sense of public duty. For the Chief Secretaryship we may fairly expect that there will always be candidates in the House of Commons; but rich as the English aristocracy has always been in men fit for the highest and most arduous duties, it is not inconceivable that though the Viceroyalty remains we may find it exceedingly difficult to discover a Viceroy. Other plans imputed by rumour to HER MAJESTY'S Government are a Bill to put down boycotting and one dealing with higher education in Ireland. As to the last named, we presume that the Government would be prepared to deal with it were circumstances propitious, but it is plain that until more exciting topics are out of the way education has not much chance. Boycotting cannot be put down directly; that is to say, it would be futile to pass a Bill declaring illegal a social process which it would be difficult even to define in legal phraseology. But boycotting depends upon the existence of a system of organized terrorism which could not exist for a day were the ordinary law duly enforced, and in that sense it is not too much to say that to put down boycotting is the very first duty of Government.

The more the Irish question is discussed and

examined the more clear does it become that it is perfectly idle to busy ourselves with theoretical divisions of administration into Imperial and local so long as the primary conditions of all government are non-existent in Ireland. MR. R. B. BRETT, who to-day repeats with fascinating intrepidity a number of arguments which have been again and again demolished, quotes as a precedent for Home Rule with an independent Parliament the terms on which the different States are united in the American Union. The DUKE of ARGYLL has already pointed out the vital distinction between States federated to give effect to a centripetal tendency and States held together by some artificial system in order to defeat a centrifugal tendency. To put the matter in more detail, MR. BRETT is bound, before quoting American Union, to point to an American State in which the writ of the Federal Government does not run, and in which a Federal garrison vainly struggles to give occasional effect to Federal law in the teeth of a conspiracy terrorizing the people by its control not only of physical force, but of local organizations. That is the condition of affairs in Ireland. Throughout the greater portion of the island the QUEEN'S writ does not run; the ordinary law is set at defiance; no man's property or life is safe unless he submits to the orders of the National League, whose courts possess all the power which the courts of law have lost; the QUEEN'S name has been expunged from the public prayers of the dominant Church, and is ostentatiously omitted from public pro-

ceedings; and, in a word, absolute rebellion against Imperial control in every form and degree is thinly veiled by wholesome dread of a numerous garrison aided by a semi-military Constabulary. The most pressing duty of the Government is to make a strong and serious effort to remedy or mitigate the evils of this state of things, which is daily adding to the poverty and distress of the Irish people themselves and thereby daily increasing the misery which is the most formidable source of political discontent. Further powers are probably required to do this, but it is not certain by any means that the most has been made of existing powers. The VICEROY is a most accomplished and amiable nobleman, who has held with credit some of the highest posts in the State, but for a crisis of this kind the chief administrator of Ireland ought to be made of sterner stuff. The CHIEF SECRETARY, again, has an official sphere in which he is capable of doing excellent work, but we cannot think that he is in his right place as the Parliamentary target for the *mitraille* of questions which eighty-six Nationalists are prepared to direct upon him as soon as the House of Commons gets into working order. It is due not only to this country, but to the loyalists in Ireland, who, encouraged by the tone of public opinion here, are now rallying for common defence, that the Irish administration should be intrusted to men better fitted to grapple with what is in everything but form a rebellion subsidized and directed by foreign enemies of England. There is at present too much force in MR. JOHN

MORLEY'S criticism that the Government neither govern Ireland themselves nor allow the Irish to do it.

In another column will be found an article upon the "Anomalies of Irish government," which will be found useful as a corrective of the vague ideas commonly held concerning Irish grievances. The public mind has been a good deal debilitated by cant upon this subject. We have heard so much about justice to Ireland that people have got rather into the habit of thinking that there is an indefinite quantity of injustice still waiting for redress. LORD MORLEY, we are glad to note, on Saturday exposed this mistake with a clearness and emphasis that leave nothing to be desired. The fact is that Ireland enjoys a system of government under which any orderly and law-abiding people might be glad to find themselves, and suffers under no grievance which can in the remotest way justify revolt against the fundamental principles of morality. Our great sin against Ireland is, and has been for some time, that we do not insist upon government being respected, upon professional agitators and paid traitors being suppressed, and upon fair play being given to the honest men who, minding their own business and doing their daily duty, are the true and only mainstays of national prosperity. We publish to-day a letter from SIR EDWARD REED, which is significant as indicating the kind of reflection forced upon sound Liberals by the glaring facts of the Irish situation. He thinks there is no reason why any English Government should raise

just now the question of reforming Irish local institutions. We know that there are eighty-five Irish members ready to obey MR. PARNELL and inspired by the most hostile feelings towards this country. But we do not know, except in the vaguest possible way, what it is they want or on what terms they are willing to lay aside their hostility. SIR EDWARD REED holds that it is for them to state their wishes—or their grievances, if the term be preferred—not for us to play into their hands by making proposals which are sure to be rejected merely because we make them, and to be used as far as possible against us. The argument is perfectly sound against any exceptional measure for Ireland, but if we are going to deal with local government in England and Scotland we ought, *mutatis mutandis*, to deal at the same time and in the same way with Irish local government. Otherwise we shall at once have an outcry about exceptional disabilities imposed upon Ireland, and the whole unreasonable clamour about Irish grievances which have no real existence will take a new lease of life from this single obvious inequality of treatment. The Cabinet are bound to deal with local government in England, and cannot but offer proposals for dealing with it in Ireland as well, notwithstanding the certainty that the worst use will be made of their concessions. In dealing with this question and with that of land transfer it is to be hoped that the Cabinet will put aside the prejudices to which many of its members are subject, will avoid timorous and half-hearted measures, and will do

handsomely and in a broadly liberal spirit what they have admitted must be done. The crisis of its fate on the purely Irish question may be postponed for some time. The Liberal party is very far from united on that subject, and even MR. PARNELL may find many reasons for abstaining from hasty or violent action. If in the meantime the Cabinet bring in measures palpably inadequate for the settlement of English questions they may find themselves discredited as domestic legislators and may fall in an ignoble and commonplace manner, not in defence of the Empire, but merely as men incapable of playing the rôle of moderate reformers which they have undertaken.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 12.

THE IRISH QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Admitting that the two great parties of the State are in the dilemma in which Mr. Parnell's tactics have placed them, one in which they are now forced to grapple with the question of Home Rule, and assuming that this will necessitate some action from the one party or the other, or from a temporary coalition on the part of both, to arrive at a practical solution of this important question, is it not as well to consider how far, if this solution can be arrived at after some fashion which will go far to meet Mr. Parnell's demands and yet preserve the integrity of the Empire, the material is to be found to carry out

any real government of Ireland, let it be called by what name it may? It necessarily follows that the Executive must be one not only largely recruited from Mr. Parnell's adherents, but, being so, that it must have what is called the support of the great body of those Nationalists who have placed him in the position he now occupies. It has, however, been but too readily assumed that a desire for what is called Home Rule was the moving cause which has secured that powerful Parliamentary force of which Mr. Parnell is the commander. That he may choose to assume, or affect to assume, this for his own ulterior purposes it is easy to understand. I, however, have no doubt whatever that if he once gains his point, and finds himself, with the following he has secured for Parliamentary purposes, placed in a position to carry out Home Rule in any practical form, the very forces which have given him his position will just be those who will confront him in a way to defy all such rule as any civilized community requires to preserve its social and constitutional existence.

I do not for one moment believe that one-tenth of those who have, under the mask of the cry for Home Rule, supported the Nationalist party regard such change of ruling power in any other light than simply as a means to an end, which with them outweighs all other considerations—one which promises that when those men are in power who have urged them to their lawless warfare against rent they will be able with impunity to push their demand for land rent-free.

Home Rule, with the vast mass of the peasantry, has little other meaning than the rule of those they have lifted into power by the leverage of outrage against all who, being landlords, will not submit to the tyranny which reduces them, as such,

to the conditions in regard to ownership which make it profitless to return fair income, dangerous to life if any attempt is made to obtain it.

The Irish peasantry are of the earth, most earthy. They, in their hearts, set land possession above all other feeling; it is with them an inherited, impulsive force ever in action, one which swallows up all other national or religious sentiment. It is of their very nature to cling to the portions of the soil on which they have been born. No owner of any, the largest, estate to which he has succeeded by inheritance, and which he hopes to hand down to his heirs, has a stronger territorial sentiment than Paddy has for the wretched hovel and its few acres of soil, be it good or bad, which he may have rented as his forefathers did, or, it may be, at one time owned.

We are too apt to forget that to the peasant land-renters of Ireland life has long been one of perennial struggle for the means to sustain it. When the gathering of the English harvest depended in no small degree on the immigration of the Irish peasantry, the assistance they rendered to us was most valuable, as it was a great boon to them. They worked with industry, receiving fair wages, and saved their earnings for their home expenditure. These, with the aid of the then existing conacre system, which afforded to these peasant farmers their cherished food, the potato, enabled them to live the life to which they were born and bred. They were content with the home little better than a hovel, so long as thus homed they could exist. At the time I wrote much in your columns denouncing the condition of the cottages in which English peasants had to live, it was forever forced upon me that the worst dwelling in their case on which I ever looked was in the case of Hodge a palace compared with the ordi-

nary home of Pat, and yet the latter was quite content it should be so.

The failure of the potato, the cessation in England of the harvest demand on the Irish, the years of famine and cholera utterly dislocated the economy of Irish peasant life.

If land, in however small a quantity, the few acres and the pigs, was at any time so much cherished, it became now of the more value, for, small as could be the return from it to support life at all, it was *the all*. Now came the inability to pay rent, followed at once by the reckless system of eviction, which cast into the gigantic workhouses those over whose heads the roof-tree had been broken.

When I re-peruse the statements I published in your columns of what I saw in the many miles I travelled in Ireland more than 30 years ago; when I had, from day to day, to inspect the workhouses containing thousands under their roofs of this race thus pauperized, hopeless, if disease spared them, ever again to find a home, I felt satisfied that thus was sown the seed of a disaffection one day to bear bitter fruit, and so I have lived to see it come to pass.

Pat is by nature a strangely emotional being; his passions are but too easily excited, when so but little under control. By the force of circumstances he has become dependent on land occupation to live at all. He is just the instrument ready made for the hand of those who, for ulterior purposes, would enlist him in that wide conspiracy which attracts him with the hope that, as pressure by outrage and murder led to the Act which laid down terms of present rent, more of the same pressure would still further reduce it, or even make land free to the present tenants. Thus inculcated with the virus of a disaffection to which he is but too much disposed, he is taught,

under the thin cloak of the patriotism which would cast off Imperial rule, to believe that Home Rule would further the most extreme of those views which offer to him free occupation of land. Hence the well-organized system of outrage, that rule by terrorism which now shakes the whole social fabric, and makes the lives of those compelled to live in the disturbed districts an existence of continued fearful apprehension.

Of all conceivable forms of wickedness no one is more flagrant than the building up a political party by pandering to the lawless passions of those from whom it is to derive its force; in every such case there will be a fearful Nemesis. To obtain the power to rule by fostering lawlessness is to prepare for the rulers a time when their own destruction shall be the fruit of the spirit they evoked to obtain authority. That the so-called National representatives are heavily subsidized from America is not denied. This being so, an ignorant peasantry will give this foreign aid a complexion leading them to believe that actual force as well as money will, if required to sustain the party their own action has placed in the position to threaten the Imperial Government, be as readily afforded.

Let it be supposed that Mr. Parnell by some means so far carries out his programme of Home Rule that with his followers he is placed in a position of authority under it, in what position will he stand in reference to the land question? Can he suppose that by any possible exercise of authority or persuasion he will be able to meet the demands which will be made upon him by the National League short of confiscation? He can hardly entertain the idea that a home Government would entertain a project so wild as this. If short of this he endeavours to procure the enactment of another Land Act, can he really believe

that it would be accepted, that any possible re-valuation of the land for the determination of its rental would appease the appetite for land, on their own terms, which is now the object of all that movement which has placed him in his present powerful position? If the rental is to be readjusted, not swept away, to be recovered when due, who can doubt but that, as at present, it could only be done by legal measures, such measures enforced by police action? Our common sense must surely teach us that police put in action by a home Government of Nationalist complexion is, if conceivable at all, likely to have but one end—i.e., open rebellion; the betrayed would rise against the betrayers.

It must be borne in mind that conspiracy against rent is no new thing. I can well speak to the fact that Lord Clarendon foresaw it, and it was a great cause of uneasiness to him. It is quite impossible for any one who has made Irish affairs a study for many years, as I have done—much opportunity afforded me to do so—to under-rate the importance of the present crisis. It is easy on paper to theorize on the value of conciliation or coercion in this or that direction; it is difficult to conciliate where all is for ever in action to aggravate, as it is to coerce where rebellion takes that passive form which, many headed and many handed, so works that in its nature and extended action it can only be met in detail, and that rarely to any good purpose.

The present crisis is one which should put aside the weapons of mere party action and intrigue; it calls for true patriotism outside all mere party feeling. The highest interests of the whole Empire are at stake. It is no season for personal or political ambition on the part of leaders, it is one in which all of true statesmanship which can be obtained from the wisest of all parties is called

for. It will be little short of treason to the Throne if it is to be met in any other spirit.

Lewes.

S. G. OSBORNE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Last month you did me the honour of inserting a letter deprecating the partisan proposal to move a vote of want of confidence in the Ministers when Parliament met. Happily that danger has passed away, and now we are confronted by another in the shape of a bid for popularity in Ireland by yielding to the old and oft-repeated cry of a separate Parliament in College-green. That such a movement is in contemplation by any leading statesman I do not for a moment believe; but so many statements more or less vague and circumstantial have recently appeared in the public Press implying that a section of the Liberal party is inclined to accede to the demands of the the Nationalists that, as a reformer of very advanced opinions, who has had many years' experience of Irish separatists in the House of Commons, I desire, in accordance with your invitation in a leader about a month ago, to express my firm conviction that the great body of British Radicals will not for a moment entertain any such scheme or follow any Minister who would be rash enough to give it the sanction of his name. I have not met a single man among them who does not regard separation as an impossibility, and who would not be prepared, in the event of any plan being set forth which would logically and inevitably lead to it, to take up the same position as that occupied by the Northerners before and during the American civil war.

No minority has a right to dictate great changes in the Constitution in a free State, and with the all-important example of what took place 20 years ago on the other side of the Atlantic, we are not in the least likely to commit the folly of undoing the work of many centuries, and virtually establishing at our very doors a Parliament and a Government hostile to our own. No doubt the policy of

England towards Ireland long before the Union and even after it was in the last degree heartless and insane. Neither commercially nor politically does any one attempt to defend it. At that time we sowed the wind, and now we are reaping the whirlwind. But that is no reason why, when for a long time past we have been pursuing an exactly opposite course, treating Ireland not only with justice, but with indulgence, we should dislocate the Empire at the bidding of men of revolutionary principles, paid by foreign money, and who have established in their own unfortunate country a system of espionage and terrorism far worse than ever existed during the time of Protestant ascendancy, disgraceful to free men and a scandal to the civilization of the age. For the nonce this system of horrible oppression, which prevents the true opinion of the people being known, has been taken under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Church, true to its well-known practice of being all things to all men in order to gain its own ends. Its priests and prelates have met with a severe disappointment in the disestablishment of the Church having strengthened instead of weakened Protestant Episcopacy. Their hope now is, by throwing their weight into the National cause and in favour of agrarian spoliation, to get quit of the landlords, the great majority of whom do not belong to their religious communion. That being done, probably they look forward to their being recognized and endowed as the Established Church of Ireland, and then we should have the same kind of religious liberty in the sister isle as is enjoyed by Protestants in priest-ridden Spain.

There is another consideration which has not been wanting in influence with these ecclesiastics. The ruling spirits in the party which has addressed itself so successfully to the cupidity of the Irish peasants are not by any means true believers. They are friends of M. Rochefort, and incline to opinions which are certainly not those of the Vatican. It was of the last importance to prevent

the masses, who, although much attached to their Church, were more so to their pockets, falling into the hands of such men; and so orders came for the Church, originally hostile, then lukewarm, to throw itself heart and soul into the cause of the well-devised tyranny.

This is no new conjuncture. On June 21, 1846, Sir Robert Peel wrote the following memorandum:—

“There is an Irish party, a determined and not insignificant one, for which British indignation has no terrors. Their wish is to disgust England with Irish business and with Irish members, and to induce England through sheer disgust and the sense of public inconvenience from the obstructions offered to the progress of all other business in Parliament to listen to a repeal of the Legislative Union.”

We know what occurred under his *régime*, but in present circumstances I should infinitely prefer in the interests of the Empire and of that grand old Constitution which has survived so many shocks, that the leaders of the two great parties, laying aside for the moment all thoughts of conflict, should take counsel together and come to an understanding as to what should be done in relation to Ireland, and if such an arrangement were loyally carried out I am sure that their supporters would as loyally follow the lead and deliver the British Parliament from the tender mercies of Mr. Parnell. All Europe looked on and admired last year when they met and came to an agreement regarding the heads of the Reform Bill; and the same Europe, especially the sensible people of Germany, expect the same thing to be done now. The *Neue Freie Presse* writes:—“The two parties together should concert measures for Ireland that would be much more beneficial to that country than any framed under Mr. Parnell's dictation.” The *Presse* says:—“Great Britain is now going to be plagued with the calamity of Nationalist strife, and nothing but concord and abnegation among her leading statesmen can conjure it.”

What is wanted appears to me, not disintegration, or separation, or Home Rule, or whatever you may choose to call it, but a closer union between Great Britain and

Ireland. History by no means bears out the advantage of leaving the latter country to her own devices. The consequences of having virtually done so in several memorable instances have been insurrections, civil wars, and conquests. Many very well-informed and thoughtful people are firmly of opinion that the events of the 12th, 15th, 17th, and 18th centuries would simply be repeated if the present agitators got their own way.

The first step to be taken is to abolish the Lord Lieutenantcy, with the Castle and all its appendages. In 1850 Lord John Russell carried the second reading of a Bill to do so by a majority of 225, and why no further progress was made with the measure *quien sabe*; in 1858 I had the honour of seconding a motion made by Mr. Roebuck for the same purpose. Archbishop Whateley wrote in reply to Mr. Senior:—“The abolition of this phantom of independence is the first step towards the consolidation of the two countries.” And during the illness of a Lord-Lieutenant Lord Melbourne expressed his opinion thus:—“The man is so near his end you may let him expire in peace, and if his office could expire with him so much the better.”

What Ireland really wants is British capital, the development of its resources, the re-establishment of its industries, the placing of its roads, railways, and fisheries on a better footing, and the dealing with the land question by men of high capacity, courage, and independence, having no political object in view, and determined to do even-handed justice without respect to persons, despising to be influenced either by social considerations on the one hand or the clamour of the mob on the other. A Royal Commission composed of well-known men of both parties, chosen for their high character and impartiality, might inaugurate a new era of improved trade and general prosperity. The effect of a Nationalist Parliament in Dublin would be precisely the opposite. Capital, commerce, and manufactures would flee from its touch, credit would vanish, bargains could not be enforced,

if we may judge from what is now going on under the directions of the very men who would be in power in Dublin, and what designing schemers have persuaded the credulous masses to regard in the light of a national resurrection would most certainly, in the absence of everything which conduces to wealth and power, bring about national ruin.

On one other subject permit me a word before closing. Undoubtedly something must be done to relieve the House of Commons of that part of its business which would be much more appropriately and better performed by district councils, but I submit that it is premature to bring out a scheme with that object in view in the first session of the new Parliament. We must not go too fast and try too much, or else we may get nothing. What is wanted at present is councils in each county in England, Scotland, and Ireland, as we have in each town—local self-government all over the land; and when they have been set to work satisfactorily we shall be able to find time for the consideration of a kind of federalism which will have the effect of saving the time of the Imperial Parliament without throwing into confusion the finances, the legislation, and the general policy of the United Kingdom.

I am Sir, respectfully yours,

Kincaldrum, Forfar.

W. E. BAXTER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—There are unmistakable signs that Her Majesty's Government are about to lend themselves to the delusion that there is a patent way of governing Ireland and of evading the stringent issues which must be faced. It was under this delusion that the supporters of Liberal Administrations in 1870 and 1881 were inveigled into voting for Land Acts which were admitted by those who framed them to violate the recognized laws of political economy and the hallowed principles of free trade. The results predicted were content, restored order, and loyal submission to

the Crown. The results which followed were an outbreak of outrage and bloodshed which, culminating in the murder of Lord Cavendish and Mr. Burke, has no parallel short of open rebellion, and a refusal to pay even the rents adjusted by the Land Courts. Recourse was had to special legislation which has no parallel in severity short of martial law.

This legislation has lapsed. Once more the Ministry is in a melting mood and propose to approach the savage populace with nothing in their hands but a Local Government Bill, embodying a scheme which one of its most experienced advocates (Lord Cowper) says "may possibly (the adverb is surely redundant) be to make Mr. Parnell even more powerful than he is now."

The question I would ask is this—Does any one capable citizen of England, Scotland, or Ireland believe in his heart that the most symmetrical measure of local government that can be devised will tend in the slightest degree to appease that fury against the British Government which has lately found utterance at the polls? Grave doubts exist in the minds of most of those conversant with the local administration of rates as to the advantage which can be expected in discarding a machinery which, whatever be its theoretical incompleteness, has given to this country at a *minimum* cost a *maximum* of sanitary comfort and public safety. But I do not wish to enter on that question just now. Let it be assumed that what you term "an unusual consensus of opinion between the two parties" is about to be given effect to, and that the local affairs of English and Irish counties are to be administered under an extension of the elective system which has been established for some time in Scotland.

Be it so; but let us not be such blind fools as to imagine that the avarice and racial hatred, which has been heated to whiteness in Ireland, will be in the least degree abated by thus beating about the burning bush. Mr. Parnell has not yet put on his coat.

I have, among other bibliographic curiosities, a pamphlet

published in 1880, and largely circulated in Ireland, part of the literature which, emphasized by plentiful bloodshed, created the terror under the influence of which Parliament was coerced into passing the last Land Act. That Act pretty well settled the troublesome Irish landlords by depriving them of all discretion or power in the administration of their properties. But it may be suggestive, even instructive, to peruse at the present crisis a sentence or two from this pamphlet entitled "Revolution," and to remember that the scope of the movement includes far more than mere landlords:—

"Do not imagine that the present landholders alone are to be held finally liable. All who have been voluntarily accomplices with them. . . your great manufacturers, merchants, bankers, shipowners, moneylenders, everybody in fact, high or low, who has voluntarily been part and parcel of the British Government. . . their property may as rightfully be seized for purposes of reparation as may the lands of the landholders themselves."

This is a little, a very little, more advanced than Mr. Chamberlain's doctrine of "ransom;" but let us rest assured it is the doctrine which will influence the electors in choosing, and the representatives on the local boards when chosen.

Sympathy, a sympathy akin to that felt for the Poles and Hungarians, is sometimes expressed for the aspirations of the Irish Celts. But what do we know of their origin? Enough to tell us that they are not, as is claimed for them by their leaders, the original possessors of the soil. The aboriginal inhabitants were the despised Firbolg, the long-headed (dolicho-cephalic), low-statured Iverians, whom the invading tribes of Gaels drove from their forests and fens and exterminated or absorbed. But the conquerors were not a homogenous people. They occupied the country, and as soon as they were numerous enough set up petty regalities of their own, and conducted an almost perpetual internecine war of appalling ferocity. The English came among them as they did among the Red Indians. Fortunately for the Celts of Ireland they adapted themselves to civilization (in virtue probably of the Christianity

which they had previously embraced) with a readiness which was totally wanting in the red men. But it would be equally feasible at the present time to restore his institutions to the Red Indian as to confer independence upon the Irish Celt. There never was in either Ireland or America (until the advent of the English) a central Government or dynasty such as existed in Poland and Hungary. We cannot restore that which we never took away. Yet we have had it announced repeatedly and unmistakably that the present agitation will not be allayed until the Irish people make their own laws on their own soil. Not before the British Government lets it finally be known that not even by the vagaries of a senile politician will it be persuaded to attempt to gratify the aspirations of the Parnellite party will confidence be restored, capital be re-invested, and honest men be able to pursue their callings in peace. There is nothing in what is known of the proposals for local government which presents this prospect.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

HERBERT EUSTACE MAXWELL.

Carlton Club.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—As various opinions have, through your indulgence, been allowed ventilation in *The Times*, I trust I shall not be deemed an intruder in adding to them.

That generally expressed is that "something must be done," and that "something" should be the establishment in Ireland of local self-government, either in the form of Home Rule or of county boards or councils.

With this opinion I join issue, as I consider we have already had too much sensational legislation, and that what Ireland really requires is rest. This can only be obtained by good, firm government, with a determination to enforce the law.

I may at once dismiss the discussion of Home Rule as being beyond the limits of practical politics, and as regards the extension of local self-government, however

desirable such might be in a civilized and law-abiding country, it is, in my opinion, altogether out of the question as regards Ireland as at present circumstanced. I would ask, Are there any with a real knowledge of the case who can deliberately say that a country in which the law is not observed, in which the Queen's writ is not allowed to run, in which communism and repudiation of all engagements are openly advocated and practised, in which mutilation, arson, and murder are as nothing when considered necessary to attain the desired end, is one in a condition to be intrusted with increased privileges?

Again, let me ask whether, if Ireland were a Crown colony, any Home Government responsible for the welfare of its people would consider it in a state for self-government?

What has the remedial legislation of the past 17 years done to prepare the people of Ireland for self-government? Measure after measure has been passed, the result being to deprive the Irish tenant of freedom of action, which in a free country should be the first inheritance of man on coming to man's estate. This, accompanied by a feeble and halting administration, has handed the tenant over and left him helpless in the hands of the National League with its unwritten though well-understood law.

Capital and confidence, with attendant industry and prosperity, have, in a great measure, been driven from those parts of the country where the League flourishes. Public revenue has decreased, public expenditure has increased. Every day the power of England is becoming more and more despised, the lower orders are becoming more and more demoralized, and the upper and commercial classes more hopeless of escaping beggary, and yet England is asked to afford further facilities for aggravating the situation.

I, Sir, was brought up in a school where it was laid down that before being qualified to command one must learn to obey. Apply this principle, give the country rest in the manner suggested, encourage the return of capital by the

establishment or confidence and security, and when tranquillity and prosperity are restored and the people show themselves law-abiding, then, and, in my humble opinion, not till then, will the time have arrived for the consideration of the question of the extension of local self-government.

There is no doubt that there is much of centralization in the system under which the business of the country is at present conducted; but it is carried on under a most able, devoted, and conscientious body of public officers. No one can deny that the work performed under their administration is well and economically done, and singularly free from jobbery.

Is it wise to destroy this system before we are assured it will be replaced by something better? We know what agitation and remedial legislation have done for private property. Is it wise to make experiments with public property by handing over the local taxation and expenditure to men who make no secret of what their line of conduct would be?

No doubt good intentions underlie the various suggestions for local self-government, as I believe they did the conception of the ideas of the great theorist whose measures have brought things to their present climax; but I would urge the necessity for the exercise of common sense, caution, and patience, and of not allowing ourselves to be hurried further on the road to ruin.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

W. LE POER-TRENCH, Colonel.

Carlton Club.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, and TUESDAY,
JANUARY 12.

AN AMERICAN VIEW OF THE IRISH QUESTION.

(BY A NEW YORK CORRESPONDENT.)

No Englishman will need to be assured that

Americans look at the treatment of the Irish question by the English Government with a very vivid interest, and one in which an intelligent study of the Irishman and experience of his qualities enter to add a personal colour. So far as I can see there is, outside of the Irish part of our community, no sympathy whatever with Irish agitation for separation. We have too lately been brought face to face with the question of separation of the State and the consequences of unsound decentralization to have any admiration for measures so utterly retrograde in State organization as the division and weakening of the organ of paramount authority which must be the end of the Nationalist movement in Ireland. We know the advantages as well as the disadvantages of a federal system, and I am of the opinion that most thoughtful Americans favour rather the strengthening of the centralizing tendency than the contrary, and recognize that the general prosperity of the country and efficiency of our Government would be promoted by the Federal authorities taking over to their control some prerogatives still retained by the States. Brought face to face with all the consequences of a great scission, we were obliged to study its probable effects with all the concentration a nation is capable of, and the result was, as you all know, that we decided at any cost of blood and money to prevent it; and time has shown, I believe, that we were right. Therefore, on general grounds of State policy, having at great length and with great gravity discussed the question of separation or extension of decentralization in any shape whatever, we, just in proportion, I believe, to our individual interest in the well-being of England, deprecate any concession to the Irish separationists. And the Irish we have ever with us, and we are not, as some of you seem

to be, blinded by apprehension, interest, or any party animosities to the fact that the Nationalist movement means a total and definite separation from England and the formation of an independent State, necessarily a hostile State, and, being weak, necessarily always on the look-out for some foreign Government with an interest to sustain Ireland as against England. This we conclude, knowing the Irishman familiarly and to the core. We know him to be unstable, inconstant, and inconsequent; quarrelsome, given to demagoguery and faction; an excellent servant or soldier, but a detestable politician, whether as boss or rank-and-file partisan. He is constitutionally disloyal, and even under a Government which has, like ours, given him the fullest rights and all the privileges which any American has, except that of becoming President, he has no conception of loyalty towards the country which has adopted him and which he has professed to adopt, but, individually and collectively, habitually regards it as only a machine for his private emolument and advancement, and an outside base of operations against England—operations in which he ardently hopes, at whatever loss to America, to compromise the Republic to which he has sworn allegiance. *Velum non animam mutat*—he hates England and does not love America, and he considers his substantial treason to the latter quite justified by his animosity to the former.

This is a curious position and well worth the reflection which probably no Irishman has ever given it. The German Republican refugee comes to America and becomes an American; even the Pole when he settles ceases to wage war in his heart on Russia, and considers his new home as the object of his labours, if not at once of his affections. The Irishman comes from a land which, perhaps, whisky and ignorance oppress as much as

the landlords, and where the Government has certainly made concessions which no other would have made, and which, as we fully understand, have not been accorded to the English population, and, coming from that land to one which instals him in all the dignity of a citizen invested with plenary political powers, from the day in which he becomes a voter he is no more concerned with the political issues vital to the United States than with those at stake in Turkestan, but beats his brains to find some way in which he can lend his new allegiance to some intrigue against England, or help some party which will, as he hopes, adopt a policy offensive to the mother country of most Americans, at no matter what sacrifice or danger to the United States. He is always an Irishman—always an enemy of England, and coolly calculates the adoption of any measure, however ruinous to America, provided it will pay a part of the debt of revenge he fancies he owes to England. Venal in the last degree on all ordinary questions, and holding his vote at the command of the highest bidder, he will forego his five dollars for it if his head centre says that Brown must be defeated because he voted in the House of Representatives for a resolution which expresses sympathy with the Queen; or that O'Reilly must be elected because he is ready to vote for a resolution to withdraw the American Minister from London because the English Government have imprisoned an Irish American agitator, a fellow who emigrated for his safety and, having made his preliminary declaration of his intention to become a citizen, runs back to continue his plottings under cover of the new nationality. In these cases the Irish vote goes solid where it is told to go. In short, Paddy is never an American—he is but one of a band of political freebooters encamped on American soil pre-

paring for a raid on England which they will never have the courage to execute, and using the rights they have acquired as Americans to help their countrymen in Ireland to carry on the war on landlords and the English system.

Our politicians, cowardly and corrupt, stand always ready to purchase the Irish support at the polls by voting for any buncombe resolution about the oppression of Ireland or against any measure which is supposed to be for the good of England, and bury out of sight the moral obligation of the country and international good faith by an alliance with what they know to be practically political brigandage, and, party against party, outbid each other in wordy promises which they know the law will not permit them to fulfil, or in sympathy expressed or implied with acts which they know to be of the grossest political immorality, quite heedless of the fact that they are strengthening every day the hold of this old man of the sea on their political independence, so that no party in the Northern States, at least, dare revolt against the Irish dictators or attempt to throw off this substantially foreign balance of power held and wielded in all the elections without the slightest regard for the interests of the United States.

If this is a fair picture of the Irishman in American politics (and I challenge the expression of honest American opinion to the contrary), it is easy to conjecture what will be the result of his introduction into English politics as a Home Ruler. The first consequence would be the restoration to Irish politics of all the heroes who now send dynamite and dollars, extorted from Irish servant girls and labourers, for the war against English civilization. Nobody here is ignorant of the intention of these veiled patriots to use every appliance and facility granted them for the establishment of the Irish

Republic, and that every concession granted by the English Government is so much more vantage towards their supreme purpose. If anybody in England doubts it, it must be through wilful blindness or incapacity.

Some of your publicists are, we see with not a little surprise, under the impression that the principle of confederation, of which the United States is, on the whole, so successful a result, may be applied to the kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. They do not apparently know the history of our Constitution or the difference between it and the English. They are not aware that the Constitution was a compact between a number of free and independent States formed subsequently to the recognition of American independence, and submitted to by several of the States with hesitation, if not reluctance, but which, once accepted, was a clear and unequivocal written agreement to which any refractory State would be held by the will of the majority, and to which, in more than one case, a dissident and would-be revolting State was held by force (for the great Slave State revolt of 1861 was not the first attempt to throw off the yoke of the Federal Government), and which is now from time to time made more strenuous and centralizing by general consent. What federal law or sanction has England which will command this respect or justify such measures of compulsion? The English Constitution is the will of Parliament, and, with an Irish Parliament accorded, what but bayonets would enforce an English acceptance of any Federal obligation in the United Kingdom? If there is an English statesman who doubts the result of the concession of home rule to Ireland his equal in blindness cannot be found on this side of the Atlantic.

Again, the case of Austria-Hungary is adduced to show the possibility of a union with mutual

independence of two nations, but the example seems to be equally ill-chosen with that of the United States of America—considering that the Austrian Government is to-day in a position on account of the Hungarian connexion which, to a great extent, paralyzes its action in matters of the most vital importance to the Imperial well-being. If any English publicist will examine the history of Austria-Hungary since 1849—including the internal dangers due to the Magyar-Slav feud, which are growing greater at every development of Balkan politics—he will recognize a position which he cannot desire for England.

No doubt, the position is—for a people like the English absurdly devoted to the principle of individual liberty—a hard one, because there are a certain number of Englishmen ready to advocate absolute freedom to govern themselves to all men, irrespective of general interests; but in the United States nobody longer accepts such admirable theories, and nobody, except Irishmen, I may say, accords common sense to projects of Irish home rule. Give Irishmen the liberties you give Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Welshmen—so much and no more—and there is no race in existence competent, as sinning less, to throw stones at you.

The frequent use of the United States as furnishing an illustration of the proper method of solving the Irish difficulty induces me to attempt putting that illustration in a clearer light than some Englishmen seem to have studied it in. The most familiar epoch of the history of the United States to them—viz., that of the great war of secession—is clearly enough in the nature of a warning against separation; but there is nothing in the earlier periods of that history which can in

any way be said to inspire sympathy with the Home Rule experiment or serve as precedent to the practical revolt of the Irish Separatists.

The revolt of the colonies in 1775 was simply a practical protest against "taxation without representation." The colonies had no desire to avoid their share of Imperial burdens or to assert their independence of the King's Government, but it was considered high injustice that taxation unaccompanied by civic rights should be laid on Englishmen in America, and the colonies be thus compelled to support a Government which had become by its own policy a foreign Government. The King and his advisers could see no *raison d'être* for a colony unless it were to serve as a milch cow and furnish sustenance to the Crown. It was the refusal of the Crown to accord a share in Parliamentary control over the taxes levied which separated the colonies from the mother country. This ground of complaint is not furnished to Ireland, which has an undue share in representation, and, as we all know, has practically exercised it in hostility to England for several years. With the Irish nature, to possess this power for annoyance is to exercise it. The sole American cause of contention was that the colonies were not included in the Empire, but made such dependencies that they had no right even of appeal to the Crown, except as petitioners for grace. The Irish ground of protest is that Ireland is included in the Empire. The colonies boycotted people who bought taxed tea because they claimed that the taxation of the tea was unconstitutional; they put this motive in the forefront of all their complaints. The Concord resolutions open with—"Resolved, that these colonies have been, and still are, illegally taxed by the British Parliament, as they are not virtually represented therein." The Irish, on the contrary, boycott people who re-

cognize the obligation of a tenant to his landlord—i.e., the payment of a form of debt which is inextricably mingled with the constitution of society, and which has no political significance whatever; and, so far as indifferent people can see, the whole Irish agitation grows out of rent.

The colonial revolt was founded on a feeling which is admittedly so just that it is now taken into consideration in the entire colonial system of England, while the Irish is based on a denial of the rights of property in a form which, if sometimes questioned in philosophy or political economy, is in no civilized community where it has once been recognized permitted to be abolished without process of law; and a community which might start with the confiscation of property as its basis is to be feared as a neighbour by all honest and peaceful people.

This suggests another parallel—that between the two attempted secessions, which also illustrates the difference of both from the American revolution. The Southern secession was founded on slavery, and the Irish would-be secession simply on spoliation. All the pleading of State rights in one case and national rights in the other were, and are, simply masks to the real motives, which are no more entitled to sympathy in one case than the other. One thing is certain, that as every foreign sympathizer with the Southern secession was so because he was unfriendly to the North or its policy, so every foreign sympathizer with Irish Home Rule is so because he is an enemy to England. There seem to be Englishmen who do not realize the true meaning of the Home Rule movement, just as there were in the United States publicists who openly declared that if the Southern States wanted to go we had no right to prevent them, or ought not if we had a legal justification. "Wayward sisters, go in peace," was

the expression of more than one loyal and patriotic man, and it is highly probable that if the leaders of the South had been more cautious, and had avoided violence and open declaration of their ultimate intentions, there would have been no military resistance to the secession until it was too late; but, like the Irish leaders, they felt too confident in their success, and talked of the secession as simply the first step to a reconstruction of the Union on a slave basis, from which, however, they determined to exclude New England as inconvertible. Having been allowed to complete their State organization for Separatist purposes, as the Irish would be by their Home Rule Parliament, they commenced serious operations by demanding the delivery or taking possession of the national fortresses. It was only the firing on the national flag that broke the apathy of the North, and made it understand that a great controversy which had been ripening for years, and by the culpable or mistaken complicity of Northern men allowed to take that final form, was to be fought out *vi et armis*, as the Irish question will have to be if allowed the same vantage.

The leaders of the Separatists had been, as in Ireland, for years firing the Southern heart by declamation against wrongs suffered at the hands of the North, of commercial advantages dishonestly taken, of equality (in matters of slave-holding chiefly) denied, and pretensions too absurd to be now credited, until a distinctly nationalistic feeling had been created, and the masses in the South hated the Yankee far more than the Fenian does the Saxon. In the beginning of the acute stage of this agitation the majority of the Southern people had no desire to separate and saw no reason for separation, and a large minority remained loyal in spite of what they had to endure—certainly more than the Loyalists in Ireland have had to

suffer so far, but no more than will be their share if a Separatist organization is permitted to complete itself. This is not a question of American or Irish, but the logical consequence of such a position and the most painful element in such a contest is the suffering which the loyal population must undergo when the Separatist tendency dominates the masses. If the Government of the United States had been from the beginning, as in the case of the attempted secession of South Carolina a generation earlier, in a position to repress the first overt acts of the Separatists, the great majority of the Southern population would have remained loyal; but the Government was so weak that more heroism was required for Southerners to desert the secession tendencies than to go into the Southern army. Just as in Ireland now, it was the lawless who laid down the law.

Americans do not, probably, appreciate all the details of difficulty which the English Government has with its much more complicated manner of administering public affairs, but it is to us impossible to escape the reflection which the parallel between our secession and your separation suggests. And your Government seems to be blundering just as ours did in permitting tendencies to grow decided and formidable which hardly recognized themselves at first and which are not the result of injustice, but of impatience of restraint and the innate lawlessness of the Irish character, and allowed to develop by mistaken indulgence. We have continually to experience this lawlessness on a small scale. Our draft riots during the war of secession were, with Southern instigation, mainly the work of Irish immigrants—it is not fitting to call these people Irish-Americans, for they have nothing American but residence—and in the absence of any military force they grew, from a beginning of gangs of men merely butchering the

negroes they met, into an incipient sack of the city by a multitude of malefactors developed suddenly by the opportunity. A single battalion would have kept the peace the first day; on the third or fourth we had pitched battles in the streets, and the authorities buried, or permitted to be buried by their friends, above 800 of them. The Irish quarter of "Mackerelville" had to be carried, house by house, at the point of the bayonet. Conflict seems to intoxicate the Irishman; but, unfortunately, so do the liberty of revolt and the exercise of brutality. The Chinese massacres and similar outrages are mainly the work of the Irishman, whose hatred of the Chinese, the Italians, the negroes, or any race of competing labourers is demonstrated on every occasion, and, if not checked, at once runs into riot and brutality. But these excesses, if met at once, subside instantly. Pat, like a child, sees how far he can go, and only tries it a step beyond, and then a step beyond that. If any Englishman doubts that Irish separation would run to excess, he has only to reflect that the first consequence of it would be the recall of Egan, Rossa, Pat Ford, &c., who, as the organizers of the Transatlantic support to the movement, have been its indispensable chiefs, and to whom Parnell and Co. must defer or go overboard. We know these men and their works, and the chief American interest would be to get them out of the country.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13.

THE IRISH QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I agree with your correspondent, Mr. Brett, in thinking that in the arguments against

Home Rule too much stress has been laid on the mere question of machinery. If Scotland, where there is no disloyalty or very little class warfare, desired a separate legislative system, I have no doubt that it could be made to work, though I do not believe that it would be for the advantage either of Scotland or of the Empire. But the essential fact of the Irish question is that the party which demands Home Rule, the party which has won 85 seats in the present representation of Ireland, is a party which is animated by two leading ideas—a desire to plunder the whole landed property of the country and an inveterate hatred of the English connexion in every form. No one who has read the speeches of the leaders of that party in Ireland can doubt it. The party in America who are the paymasters and the real directors of the whole movement have openly, uniformly, and ostentatiously avowed their objects, and if any English politician has still illusions on the subject he has an easy way of dispelling them. Let him read for only three months *United Ireland*, the most accredited organ of the party. Belonging to its leaders, edited by one of its most active members, and intended exclusively for Irish readers, it has from its foundation preached the new Nationalist doctrines with conspicuous ability and with the most uncompromising frankness. I will venture to say that any English statesman who reads that paper and then proposes to hand over the property and the virtual government of Ireland to the men whose ideas it represents must be either a traitor or a fool.

On the subject of Irish landed property there is little more to be said. Irrespectively of the enormous sums of English money that have been invested either in the proprietorship of Irish soil or in mortgages upon it, the obligation of honour,

as well as of interest, which rests upon the English Government is of the most overwhelming kind. There is, in the first place, the general duty of every Government to protect property which has grown up under its rule. There is, in the next place, the notorious fact that a chief cause of the unpopularity of Irish landlords is their attachment to the English connexion, and that the agrarian agitation is well known to have been begun by the Fenian or Separatist party chiefly because they found that without holding out some prospect of direct pecuniary advantage they could not enlist the farmers fully in their cause. There is, in the third place, the fact that about £52,000,000 have in the lifetime of a single generation been invested under the Incumbered Estates Act in the purchase of Irish land at the invitation of the Government, and that all that land is held under a distinct Parliamentary title. There is, in the fourth place, the fact that Parliament has just established a new Court for the express purpose of regulating the conditions of Irish property, and has exacted large sacrifices from the Irish landlords for what was supposed to be the general benefit of the country. If obligations of honour so strong, so clear, and so accumulated are neglected, no property held under the guarantee of the English Government can be permanently secure.

On the political question, I would observe that it is perfectly idle to argue from the old Irish Parliament to any Parliament that could now be established. Those who have done me the honour to read what I have written on Irish history are aware that I am far from taking the wholly unfavourable view of the Irish Parliament in the 18th century which is common in England. But whatever dispute there may be about its merits and demerits it is at least absolutely certain that

a Protestant Parliament, consisting in one of its branches of the Irish peers and in its other branch of the leading landlords and lawyers of the country, was utterly unlike anything that could now be set up. There is, indeed, one body in Ireland which in its general character and composition bears a considerable resemblance to it. It is the Synod of the Disestablished Church. The Irish Parliament had many faults, but it contained no element of disloyalty, and it was always prepared to make large and sometimes even exaggerated sacrifices in defence of the Empire. Whether it was a wise thing to abolish such a body may be a matter of controversy. It is certain that it can never be restored. To set up in Ireland a democratic Legislature which would inevitably fall under the guidance of the bitter enemies of the Empire; to surround it with paper restrictions which it would be its very first act to discard with the full assent of its constituents; and to give it all the influence of a representative body and all the power of a great administrative body would be an act of fatuity or wickedness unparalleled even in Irish history. The wit of man could devise no more efficient agent for organizing and preparing the disruption of the Empire. The seed which such a policy would sow would assuredly ripen speedily into a harvest of blood.

The fundamental condition of the situation in Ireland is not difficult to understand. A third of the population are thoroughly loyal to the Union and the connexion, and that third constitutes what till a few years ago would have been generally considered the natural governing body of the country. It comprises almost all the Protestants, the Catholic gentry, the great majority of the Catholics in the professions, an important section of the Catholic middle-class as well as those

numerous Catholics who in the Army and the constabulary have shown themselves on so many trying occasions the most devoted servants of the Crown. Two-thirds of the population, on the other hand, have supported the disloyal side; but among them are the poorest, the most ignorant, and the most dependent in a country where extreme ignorance and poverty are much more common than in England, and this party has been mainly supported by foreign subsidies. Much of this disloyalty is due to genuine political or religious animosity, but much also to intimidation, to hopes of plunder, or to a belief that the disloyal side is the winning one. No foreign statesman, no English statesman of a former generation would have thought tolerable government under these conditions impossible. Nor did it formerly prove so. But since the death of Lord Palmerston, or at least since Mr. Gladstone became the supreme influence in English Liberalism, it has been a main object of the English Government to take political power in Ireland out of the hands of the classes attached to the connexion and to place it in the hands of the classes who are opposed to it; and the new franchise—unqualified by any provision for the protection of minorities—has so swamped the scattered loyalists that a party which in mere numbers forms a full third of the population commands less than a sixth part of its representation. Some English Liberals are astonished that this conciliatory policy has not proved a success. I confess that few things appear to me more astonishing than their astonishment. As long as English statesmen assume as their first principle that a country where two-thirds of the population are disloyal must be or can be governed by the same institutions and on the same plan of democracy as a country which is essentially loyal, so long, it may be safely predicted, will Irish anarchy

continue. It is now rumoured that we are to have a great extension of representative local government, but of exactly the same kind as in England. Within narrow limits changes in local government may be improvements; but in general what can be expected from this policy? The proposed bodies will certainly not conciliate the disloyal. They will almost certainly increase their power, and they are much more likely to lower than to raise the standard of administration. It is not a popular thing to say, but it is, I believe, the simple truth, that wherever good administration is found in Ireland it may be nearly always traced either to Government officials or those much despised bodies the grand juries. What is now wanting in Ireland is not an extension of local government, but a restoration of the liberty of the people—of that first and most fundamental condition of liberty, a state of society in which men may pursue their lawful business and fulfil their lawful contracts without danger or molestation. Representative institutions, newspapers, public meetings, and juries are all excellent things, but the liberty of the individual is more precious than any of them, and there is far more of it at the present time in Russia and in Turkey than in Ireland. Unless there is sufficient patriotism in the English parties to combine, and that very speedily, to restore the empire of the law industrial ruin must speedily follow, and with it a state of anarchy that can only be quelled by the sword.

One other most difficult but most essential task lies before the statesman. It is to create a new social type in the place of that which has been destroyed, by buying out the landlords at a reasonable rate. The class warfare has now so nearly assumed the dimensions of a civil war that nothing less can appease it, and until it is appeased there can be no hope of a permanent

amelioration. A Celtic proprietary will not bring the millennium, but if it is established on reasonable terms it may at least give some security to property, create a class with some real conservative instincts, and put an end to a struggle which is threatening the country with the most absolute ruin.

Your obedient servant,

Athenæum Club.

W. E. H. LECKY.

THE LORD LIEUTENANCY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—With reference to the various letters and leading articles which have appeared in *The Times* respecting Ireland, I think it would be very desirable if some of our statesmen would look into their "Hansards" and read the debate in the House of Commons on May 17, 1850, on the Bill introduced by Lord John Russell for the abolition of the Lord Lieutenantcy of Ireland, which Bill was carried in that House on the 17th of June, 1850, on a division of 365 members, by a majority of 225—295 having voted for and 70 against.

This Bill dropped in consequence of the opposition of the Duke of Wellington in the House of Lords.

If such an Act had been carried the so-called "Irish Government" and the whole machinery of a separate Government establishment would have ceased to exist, and the English Parliament would have been supreme *de facto* as it is *de jure* throughout the whole of this part of the Queen's dominions, and the Home Office or some similar department of the State would have been as responsible for the orderly government of Ireland as it is now in Yorkshire or Lancashire. That such a measure will at no very distant period be passed by Parliament I have not the smallest doubt, but the sooner it is done the better for all the inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland.

I believe that such a Bill is already to be found in one of the public offices, and I also believe that it would have been brought forward this session

had the late Government remained in office. I cannot conceive on what principle such a measure could be objected to by any Conservative, Liberal, or Radical. If the Government of Lord Salisbury were now to undertake it, I believe that every unprejudiced, and indeed every honest, statesman would support it, and I also believe that it would greatly facilitate all future proceedings of the Government respecting Ireland, although I admit that the whole question is fraught with great difficulties.

The admirable letters on the subject of Ireland by Sir James Stephen (which appear to me to be unanswerable), and which have lately appeared in *The Times*, seem to me to suggest this mode of legislation. I admit that it would probably be opposed by the 80 or 90 Irish members who appear to me to have determined to oppose every measure which is not based on the complete separation of Ireland from England, as far as legislation is concerned; but I cannot believe that a minority of 80 to 90 members could prevent the enactment of such a measure as the abolition of the Lord Lieutenantcy of Ireland, if it were brought forward by a responsible Government, who believed it to be beneficial for the welfare of this part of our country, and that it would tend to prevent the dismemberment of any important part of the Queen's dominions.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

THOMSON HANKEY.

Shipborne, Tunbridge.

THE "IRISH FARMER'S" LETTER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I trust the letter of "An Irish Farmer" which appeared in your issue of the 9th inst. will have received the attention it deserves. If any Englishman wants to understand the Irish question, he cannot do better than read and re-read that letter until he has entered into the mind of the writer. It expresses with great force and remarkable accuracy the feelings and views of the best and most intelligent of the Irish tenant-farmers and their con-

nexions among the priests, local shopkeepers, solicitors, &c.; and it would be a serious mistake to suppose this class to be either small or unimportant. It already has great weight, and is probably destined to be the chief power in Ireland.

I should not presume to bear testimony to the value of this letter were it not that I may, perhaps, claim to speak with knowledge and impartiality on the subject. On the one hand I am a landlord and an active opponent of Home Rule; on the other, I am an old advocate of drastic land reform and have had a considerable experience of county business in Ireland. I have the good fortune to know many men of the class whom "An Irish Farmer" so ably represents, and some of them are among my most esteemed friends; and I venture to claim for their views when expressed with the good sense, temperance, and candour which mark his letter, the most serious consideration of our politicians.

I am, Sir, &c.,

Athenæum Club.

EDWARD W. O'BRIEN.

LEAGUE TYRANNY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Enclosed you have a letter recently received from the only one of my tenants who has paid me any rent for many a day.

Comment is unnecessary. It might be dangerous to publish names and addresses, as the local land leagues are well informed. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

COUNTY CORK LANDLORD.

Dear Sir,—My self & My famiely or not sleeping aney Night We or afraid That our Hay & our Cattle Will Be Burned We have Too Bad nebours They all says That i have My Rent Paid i hope You Wont Refuse me in asking you to send me a Letter Calling for Rent The same as You or Dooning for The Rest of Them.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—As Lord Cowper seems to think that Irish land-

lords make no sufficient effort to bring home to the English mind the full extent of their losses, I write to say that on casting up my accounts for the past year I find that not a single farthing has reached me from a place I own in the west of Ireland. It contains above 7,000 acres, and used before the Land Act to return a modest three per cent. on the capital invested in it by my predecessor on the faith of a Parliamentary title. Moreover, I was on good terms with the tenants and there were no ejections. True, matters might even now have been worse; as but for my luck in letting a sporting lodge on the property to an Englishman, whose rent helps to meet the general outgoings, I should have had to record, not merely zero, but a positive loss.

I enclose my card, inscribed with the name of this enviable estate. Your obedient servant,
VACUUS.

THE ECONOMIC ASPECT OF HOME RULE. TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—You were lately so kind as to allow me space for some observations on the financial aspect of Home Rule, which evidently have been unanswered, no one having contested them. I venture again to ask you kindly to give me space for a few observations on another factor in the question—the economic one.

It is strange that in the fierce light which beats upon the Irish question this factor is so much ignored. Statesmen of the highest position, economists of the greatest ability, political empiricists of the most ambitious order either are or affect to be oblivious of it. The Irish question is being discussed from political, religious, national points of view, but from an economic point of view not at all. And yet it is not too much to say that economic causes and effects have been a most important part of the Irish question. They in their silent but imperative way have been at the bottom of agrarian changes, movements, and disturbances which have so deeply agitated the country during the present century.

They still exercise powerful sway; and the certainty of their continued operation is one of those elements of the future which must always be reckoned on.

A brief historic *résumé* of their action during the last 100 years or so is both interesting and instructive.

Deeply as the fact is to be lamented, in the middle of the last century Ireland was bound hand and foot by the cruel commercial laws of the English Parliament. Irish industries, with the exception of the manufacture of linen, had been crushed out of being. Towards the end of the century those laws were relaxed, but it was not till 1825 (25 years after the Act of Union), when the commercial union took place between Great Britain and Ireland, that absolute freedom of trade was inaugurated. Long before that event, however, English industries had got the start, and when Irish trade was at last unshackled competition with Great Britain—so far as manufactures were concerned—was hopeless.

Ireland's resources and wealth were agricultural, but owing to a pernicious system of land laws, and to other circumstances, her agricultural condition at the close of the last and beginning of the present century was eminently unsound. The great war with France had made the prices of agricultural produce exceptionally high, and agricultural pursuits consequently very remunerative. But in 1815, when peace came, there came a great fall in prices; the occupiers of land were no longer able to pay the rent they had hitherto done, the high prices that had rendered them comparatively prosperous had passed away, but they had not passed away, and the land was crowded to such a degree that in many places the population had reached the limit of what the soil would only in favourable years support. With the fall of prices began the necessity for each occupier having a larger quantity of land to enable him to raise produce which he could exchange remuneratively for other products; and so began that practice of consolidating farms which has been the origin of nearly all the agrarian crime and disturbance in

Ireland, for there was thus brought into the most direct and violent antagonism the two most powerful motives of human nature—the one the motive or instinct of self-preservation, evinced in clinging to the land as the sole means of maintaining life, the other the motive of gain or progress, which could not be compassed or gratified except by farms of increased size. It has been this struggle which has been waged in Ireland for the last 60 years—this struggle which, under the existing land system, has been the abiding cause of agrarian crime. Political agitations such as Repeal and Phoenixism blossomed, matured, and died down after an ephemeral existence, but this agrarian strife, having its origin in the action of economic laws, has gone on to the present day.

It would not be right to omit the fact that the process of consolidation was to some extent accelerated by political causes. The enfranchisement of the 40s. freeholders in 1793 by the Irish Parliament had given a great inducement to landowners to increase the number of their tenantry for the sake of political power; their disfranchisement in 1828 took away this political inducement, and landowners quickly learnt that an impoverished tenantry was a source of poverty rather than wealth. Thus the consolidation of farms was on the one hand desired by the landowners for the sake of getting a more prosperous and solvent tenantry; on the other hand it was desired by those of the people who saw the advantage, indeed the necessity, of increasing the size of their holdings if they were to prosper. When rents were not paid, or indeed often without such excuse, landlords evicted the tenants, and the vacated holding was usually thrown into the neighbouring ones. Neighbouring tenants were glad enough to get the opportunity of increasing their farms, and so the process of consolidation went on.

Against that process, however, was arrayed the great bulk of the poor, who clung to the land as their sole means of existence, scanty and bare, but still in a sort of way keeping them from absolute starvation. The change

to the new state of things entailed sufferings, throes, and convulsions. Declaim against it the people might; combine against it, as they did in their secret societies; even fight against it, with blunderbuss or the more primitive weapons of bludgeons and stones, it was resistless, inevitable as the hand of fate. Landlords or no landlords it must have occurred, though had the people been freeholders or peasant proprietors their sufferings would not have been so great, nor would those who had to leave the country have left it with such embittered and hostile feelings against England.

It was an unavoidable necessity that, once rapid and unrestricted intercourse was established between Great Britain and Ireland, Irish agricultural industry must assume that form for which the natural resources, soil, and climate of the country best fitted it. It was sad indeed that the consequences should have been so grievous.

The last stroke, however, had not yet fallen, for in one respect Ireland's position was still exceptionally favourable, and continued to be so until 1846. The Corn Laws, which protected English agricultural produce against foreign imports, gave Irish agricultural produce free admission into the great English consuming markets, and Ireland had not to compete in them with foreign produce. Corn was in great demand in England; corn therefore was extensively grown in Ireland. Suddenly those fatal successive failures of the potato crop occurred with the fatal famine; the anti-Corn Law agitation in England became irresistible, the Corn Laws were repealed; English markets were thrown open to foreign producers, the advantage which Irish agriculture enjoyed was lost; and once more Irish agriculture was affected to its very base. The production of corn ceased to be remunerative; the production of live stock was the only resource left. To carry this on, even larger farms were required than previously, and so the repeal of the Corn Laws gave a fresh impetus to the process of consolidation.

A few, very few figures will show the changes which have occurred.

NUMBER OF AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS IN IRELAND.

Year.	Above one acre to five acres.	Above five to 15 acres.	Above 15 to 30 acres.	Above 30 acres.
1841	310,436	252,800	79,342	40,625
1851	88,033	191,854	141,311	149,090
1861	85,469	183,931	141,251	157,833
1871	74,809	171,363	138,647	159,303
1881	67,071	164,045	135,793	159,834

Such then, shortly stated, has been the course of economic events in Ireland during the last half century. The more closely they are examined the more fully is brought into view the deep-meaning fact that the cause of so many of Ireland's sufferings, and of so much Irish crime has been economic, and not political. Whether Ireland was united to Great Britain or not made no difference. The adoption by Great Britain of free importation of food supplies from any part of the world must have revolutionized Irish agriculture and vitally affected the circumstances of the Irish, and it is not on the political connexion between the two countries (which the Nationalists are now trying to break) but it is on the economic dependence of Ireland on England (which is unbreakable) that must be thrown the responsibility.

The powerful economic forces hitherto at work are still existent. Irish agricultural interests are inseparably bound up with England's interests. Whatever depresses the price of produce in England acts at once and directly on Ireland. The price of cattle in the Liverpool and Manchester markets sensibly affects the Irish agriculturist in his pocket and in his plans, and is felt in the remotest part of Ireland. Union or no union, the contiguity of the great consuming markets of Great Britain must obviously ever affect Irish producers. Whatever articles are found to have the most remunerative sale in those markets will be those which the Irish agriculturist will try to produce; and whatever process of agriculture, or size of farms the realization of that object entails, will be adopted by the

Irish agriculturist despite all politics. Where there is such easy intercourse between the two countries, things must and will work to their own natural state, just as inevitably as water will seek its own level, and there is no permanent power of stopping them. The economic dependence of Ireland on Great Britain is absolute and unavoidable.

Would Home Rule alter this to the advantage of Ireland, or could an Irish Parliament adopt any measures for the special advantage of Ireland which could not with an equally good or better prospect of success be adopted by the Imperial Parliament?

To each of these questions there is but one true answer, and that is "No."

The Irish Home Rule idea is to foster the native industries of Ireland by protection, and it has more than once been avowed that an Irish Parliament would protect Irish industries, as against English, by the imposition of protective duties. The Dublin Corporation have already given an illustration of this policy of encouraging Irish industries by taxing, or in other words levying a compulsory poor-rate off the citizens of Dublin for some Irish quarrymen.

The objections to such a policy are overwhelming. A system of protection would not enrich Ireland; it would simply result in the creation in Ireland, at Ireland's own cost, of certain forced industries, which whenever they were exposed to free competition would only result in loss and suffering. It would be reverting to a system condemned by economic science as injurious to the true interests of a country; it would be the substitution of an unsound and fictitious state of affairs for a natural one; and last, but by no means least, it could only be carried into effect at the expense and cost of the working classes of Great Britain—for the protection of Irish industries would mean the exclusion of English goods from Ireland, and the consequent restriction of the market for English produce and manufactures. I think it would certainly be

very difficult, if not impossible, to persuade the democracy of Great Britain, particularly in these times of depression, that they should agree to a diminution of markets for the produce of their labour—agree too, not for the benefit of Ireland, but for her ultimate impoverishment.

Then as regards the encouragement of Irish industries, such as the opening up of districts or fisheries by improved communications, or improving districts by arterial drainage, that can be done by the Imperial Parliament far better than by an Irish Parliament. The former has money and credit, the latter would find it difficult to raise money at any reasonable rate of interest.

On economic grounds, therefore, it would be an error of the greatest magnitude to give to any representative body in Ireland the power of imposing taxes on imports.

But if we declare that the Imperial Parliament is in a better position to deal with the Irish problem than an Irish Parliament would be, I think it is all the more imperative that a genuine effort should be made to deal with it.

I will once more beg for space to state what appears to me to be the line which should definitely be adopted in dealing with Ireland.

I am, yours faithfully,
HENRY JEPHSON.

THE STATE OF IRELAND.
(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

Little, I think, in the shape of argument remains to be added to the many excellent letters and articles which have appeared in *The Times* in connexion with the Irish question; but some of my experiences gained during a recent visit in company with an Irish landlord to his property may serve to illustrate the present state of the country and the feeling of the people. I gave some account in *The Times* of the payment of the

September rents on the same property, and the present visit had for its object the collection of those rents which were then unpaid. The estate lies in a fairly good part of the country, where boycotting has not made much way, and there is no repudiation on the part of the tenants.

On our way from the station we met a large farmer, who had paid part of his rent with a considerable reduction, and now sought a further abatement on the remainder. He had been a prominent member of the Land League, but was now, such is the irony of fate, beginning to find himself hoist with his own petard. The Nationalist guardians were trying to put labourers' cottages on him, though he had some half-dozen thatched cabins, which were, he said, amply sufficient for the purpose. The proposed cottages were to cost about three times as much as they need, and each of them was to have half an acre of his best ground attached to it, which would claim the attention of the labourer just when he was wanted for the farm. To crown all, an adjoining herd had threatened that he would soon be living in his house. In fact, as our carman remarked, the large farmers are all "afraid of their lives." The next tenant we saw was also a substantial man, and received a good abatement. "Long life to your honour," he said, "I'd like to be paying you money, but its hard to make it." "Well, will they give Home Rule?" he continued. "I hope not; for if the landlords go, the farmers will go next, and if they elect the guardians and grand juries they'll ruin us all." After him came a man who had purchased his farm from an outgoing tenant under the Land Act, and had paid for it a sum equal to nearly ten years' purchase on the rent, which he might, therefore, have

been fairly expected to pay in full. The landlord, however, offered him a reduction of 15 per cent. "Five pounds more," he said. "I'll lave it to yerself." That is your Irishman all over, the more they get the more they want.

Our carman, who was himself a small farmer, but a Protestant and loyalist, discoursed with considerable wisdom on the state of the country, as he drove us to visit some of the outlying tenants. "There was the greatest work ever ye seen about that bit of grass," he said, as we passed a certain tract of land, "Two Land Laguers biddin' agin each other, and the priest had to come in and settle it between them, and if they get Home Rule, which I hope and think they never will, it's only then the raal fighting 'll begin." "And if they got Ireland to-day," he said, "they'd want England to-morrow." "Gladstone's the worst man that ever lived for this country," he went on, "and his Land Act is no good to any one but the lawyers; and it's my opinion these 86 members 'll be kicked out in a couple of months. Sure the man they've put in for this part isn't fit to spake at all. I heard him one day down here, and an ould woman 'ud do better." "They don't mind their land at all," he said, "since this agitation began, and it's too much concession they've got. What this country wants is industry, and to lay themselves down to work." His simple truths might well be laid to heart by wiser men.

One of the tenants, a shrewd but honest looking man, who had settled his rent before, but came to ask a favour, inquired of the landlord how he was getting on. "Middlin', I suppose, middlin'," he said, "I think we'd be better to ye if ye were harder wid us." And he went on to tell of an adjoining landlord who had been waited on by a deputation with a lengthy petition. "What's

that ye've got there?" he said. "A memorial, yr honour, with the abatement we want ye to give us." "Take it out of that," he said, "ye might as well be pouring water on a duck's back. I'll see any one individually, but I won't see two together, and I won't be dictated to." "With that," said our informant, "they were frightened out of their lives, and went in and settled one by one, and some came out praying that God might bless him, and some that he might die before he left the room." But that is the whole secret of dealing with Irishmen—firmness.

The impression I gathered from going among the people is that they are heartily sick of the agitation, the continuance of which they see is ruining the country, and that they would gladly be delivered from the tyranny of the National League, which they find becoming intolerable. As to a remedy, from what I have seen of their helplessness and dependence upon others, I cannot think it lies in the direction of peasant proprietorship. The idea of 600,000 such sheep without a shepherd is something too terrible to contemplate.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14.

THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER ON IRELAND.

Late on Tuesday evening the DUKE of WESTMINSTER rose at the Mayor's banquet at Chester to respond to the toast of "The Lord Lieutenant of the County." In the course of his speech his Grace said:—I wish for a moment to touch upon one controversial point in connexion with that question which darkens our horizon, and which absorbs the thoughts of so many people at the present time—namely, the state of Ireland. What do we find there? We find a body of men called Parnellites, who have obtained

a most powerful hold over the people of that deluded and unfortunate country. They have, I think, obtained that position by the aid of the most intense cruelty and the most extreme extortion, by money raised out of the pockets of those who could ill afford it, by the aid of assassination and murder, and, to their shame be it spoken, with the assistance of some members of the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church. This is how they stand:—They profess that they wish to separate the island of Ireland from the kingdom of England. They know, for they are not such fools as not to know, that that is a thing they will never get—that they never can get (loud cheers)—and by God's help and our own right arm, which Heaven knows, is powerful enough, they shall never get it. (Renewed cheers.) I am led to believe that the common sense of the country must know that these aims which they profess are absurd, and that their real objects are in their heart of heart, as I believe, that these leaders of their party may go on obtaining money, in order to spend it upon their own selfish ends—upon debauchery and comparative luxury in London. (Cheers.) Those, then, are their professions; but beyond this is that infamous band of Irish-Americans over the water egging them on with no other object than to create a running sore in the side of England. But the Parnellites must have something to show to account for the money they have received, otherwise their game would be up. We can only hope that this game will not be allowed to go on. They have no spark of feeling for the welfare of their own deluded country. That is the last thing the Irish-Americans think of. Their great object is to inflict a deadly wound in the heart and side of England. There is another feature in the state of the country which causes enormous difficulty. That is that the natives, deluded and cajoled, give to these men their support in money. Their main object is the land, but there are a good many objects in various directions creating enormous difficulties for whatever Government may be in power. We all wish well to Ireland. We wish that it may be as prosperous as England or Scotland, and if these miserable adventurers were only out of the way, and Ireland had only common sense and common patience to wait, there is not a man, woman, or a child in England but would do everything possible for the benefit, the happiness, and the peace of Ireland. (Cheers.) I

believe that the common sense of the country will not dream of yielding one inch in the direction of further concessions. (Cheers.) I cannot conceive of any other course being open to us than to revert to those measures of regulation and of law under which the country was brought to some degree, at all events, of order and propriety during the three years in which the Coercion Bill was in operation (cheers); and if any local government is practicable in that country I cannot conceive of its being given without some kind of efficient supervision in some way or other. If the Irish in their present condition are allowed to work their own will without let or hindrance, it seems to me it will be the greatest madness that could be thought of. (Loud cheers.)

The Times this day writes :—

It is no longer a secret that the change which we have demanded in the Irish Administration will take place at the end of this month. But the approaching retirement of LORD CARNARVON from the Viceroyalty does not justify any wild speculations about the Irish policy of the Government. It is directly due, no doubt, to the legitimate claim of LORD CARNARVON to be relieved, according to an understanding with his colleagues, from duties too trying for his physical strength. But we cannot leave out of account the fact, of which, we feel sure, the LORD LIEUTENANT himself not less than his colleagues in the Cabinet appreciates the bearing, that the experiment he was specially selected to try has signally failed. That experiment never appeared to us a hopeful one, and we have always questioned the fitness of LORD CARNARVON's appointment to a post requiring above all things firmness and decision in dealing with menacing agitation and misguiding sentimentalism. But, be that as it may, the failure of

the attempt to carry on the government of Ireland without adequate powers for the enforcement of order and with the National League established as a rival authority to the Executive is no longer to be concealed. It is natural, therefore, that LORD CARNARVON should retire. The task that lies before him is widely different from that which he undertook in the summer with hopes which, though we never shared them, were entertained by many politicians on both sides. It was understood, also, as we have said, that LORD CARNARVON, while ready to assist his party at a critical time by accepting a position of difficulty and even of danger, did so on condition that he was not to be expected to retain the office after the end of the recess. The Irish climate is trying to persons who are not of robust health, and LORD CARNARVON having fulfilled his promise, is entitled to be released from his severe and uncongenial duties. It is to be hoped that his many accomplishments and his political experience will remain at the service of his country and his party. His retirement will necessitate a change in the Chief Secretaryship, for SIR WILLIAM HART DYKE can hardly continue to bear the whole responsibility of Irish affairs in the House of Commons if there is to be no Viceroy in the Cabinet. It will not be easy, as we have pointed out, to find a new Lord Lieutenant, and possibly the arrangement of governing the country by Lords Justices, with the LORD CHANCELLOR of IRELAND as their chief, will be employed to tide over the next month or two at any rate. The

abolition of the office and the recasting of the Executive in Dublin constitute a task too large to be undertaken hopefully, unless the Conservatives can reckon, with more confidence than would be at present altogether justifiable, upon checkmating any hostile combination.

The most sagacious and experienced of politicians would hesitate to venture upon a forecast of the course of events during the next six months, or even the next six weeks. Those who profess to know what the Opposition, or, at all events, its leader, if not its leaders, intend to do are forced to fall back upon the not very daring or pregnant speculation that much depends on the Speech from the Throne, and still more on the attitude of Mr. PARNELL. But, important as it is to know what legislation the Government will propose, and what means the Irish Separatists will adopt for the moment in pursuit of their well-known and plainly avowed objects, the critical point must be looked for elsewhere. Will the Opposition be able to agree upon any policy on which they can take their stand in a determined effort to eject LORD SALISBURY from office? Or, assuming united action for such a purpose to be feasible, will it be possible for Mr. GLADSTONE to secure the co-operation of the Parnellites? It would be even more hazardous now than it was a fortnight ago to answer these questions confidently in the affirmative, and we see no reason to suppose that Mr. GLADSTONE will have triumphed by this day week over the difficulties his own reckless

policy has created for his party as well as himself. Public opinion has been aroused and instructed by a thorough discussion of the questions involved in any form of Home Rule, and from this point of view it is an advantage that the surprise sprung upon the country a few weeks ago was not delayed till the debates upon the Address. Liberals, both moderate and advanced, have learned that if they follow Mr. GLADSTONE in any attempt to concede the Separatist demands they will have to reckon with the anger of their own supporters throughout the country, as well as with a Conservative reaction of greatly augmented volume and force. It follows that, should Mr. GLADSTONE bring forward any scheme for the settlement of the Irish difficulty, it will not be taken upon trust, like the Land Bill of 1881. It will be examined with scrupulous care, and with full knowledge of the arguments arrayed against any movement in that direction. Its author will have to accept the burden of proof in respect of its utility, its stability, and its equity, and this preliminary task must be faced before a single step is taken in Parliament. For Mr. GLADSTONE cannot be prepared to advocate a policy even in general terms, unless he is substantially assured that he will carry with him a majority of the House of Commons, including LORD HARTINGTON, MR. GOSCHEN, MR. TREVELYAN, MR. BRIGHT, MR. CHAMBERLAIN, and Mr. PARNELL. To attack LORD SALISBURY'S Ministry for the inadequacy of a Local Government Bill without some common ground of agreement among its critics would only lead to further confusion and waste of time, and

it would be surprising if either Whigs or Radicals, who are practical politicians, were to show themselves willing to take the responsibility of such a step without seeing very clearly whither it was to carry them. The most remarkable feature, perhaps, in the recent developments of the Irish controversy is the effect produced on Radical opinion. Even MR. JOHN MORLEY, in spite of all his desire to make a pact with MR. PARNELL, has not been able to resist the pressure of the evidence showing that Home Rule would mean the abrogation of contracts and the spoliation of property-owners. His suggestion that Parliament must legislate "to prevent tenants from confiscating the property of their landlords" is sound, though it is hard to reconcile it with his advocacy of Home Rule and his rejection of measures for making the law efficient. But with thousands of Radicals, represented by such men as MR. BAXTER and others among our correspondents, this argument weighs far more decisively than with MR. MORLEY, and it is reinforced by another, on which MR. BRIGHT has often dwelt—the impossibility of dealing upon equal terms and in a liberal spirit with men, avowedly hostile to the English connexion, organized to defeat the working of Parliamentary government unless their demands are granted, and subsidized for their objects by the contributions of alien enemies. This is a state of public opinion which the Radical leaders cannot afford to ignore, and when that is the case we need hardly say that moderate Liberals like LORD

HARTINGTON must show that they are not less careful of Imperial interests or less resentful of injustice than politicians of a more advanced school. The extraordinary energy of conviction and the intensity of feeling displayed in the DUKE of WESTMINSTER's striking speech at Chester, which we report to-day, would arouse anyone except MR. GLADSTONE to a sense of the position into which he has brought his party. It is this stirring of the national spirit that will avert the public danger, whatever may become of party interests and personal ambitions. We believe the DUKE of WESTMINSTER, hitherto a staunch Liberal and loyal follower of MR. GLADSTONE, is absolutely right in saying that "the common sense of the country will not dream of yielding one inch in the direction of further concessions."

The fact is, and it is the most encouraging element in a situation otherwise gloomy enough, that on the Irish question Englishmen are no longer looking for a "lead" to party leaders and the manufacturers of political cries. They have mastered, at all events, the principal points in the controversy, and they will not easily loose their hold upon them. The policy of "public plunder," which MR. GLADSTONE denounced with so much fervour in the autumn of 1881, the passionate desire avowed by MR. PARNELL to shatter the last link that unites Great Britain and Ireland, the dependence upon the Irish-American enemies of England, are now matters of common knowledge. To quote the

words of MR. LECKY, in the remarkable letter we published yesterday, which has produced a profound impression on public opinion, "If any English politician has still illusions on the subject, he has an easy way of dispelling them. Let him read, for only three months, *United Ireland*, the most accredited organ of the party. . . . I will venture to say that any English statesman who reads that paper, and then proposes to hand over the property and the virtual government of Ireland to the men whose ideas it represents, must be either a traitor or a fool." The testimony of MR. LECKY is the more valuable because, as an historian, he has defended "GRATTAN'S Parliament," and has measured swords as a champion of the Irish character and Irish nationality with MR. FROUDE. But MR. LECKY acknowledges that the restoration of GRATTAN'S Parliament is impossible, and that an Irish Legislature such as MR. PARNELL demands would be only an instrument, and a most efficient one, for accomplishing separation. He has no faith in the value of the "paper restrictions" which fascinate speculative persons like MR. BRETT, and amuse political cynics like MR. LABOUCHERE; for he perceives, as clearly as SIR JAMES STEPHEN, that the true remedy for the evils from which Ireland is suffering must be sought, not in elaborate institutions that Irishmen, with all their good qualities, are incapable of working, but in "the restoration of the liberty of the people" by the enforcement of the law. The statement of MR. LECKY that at the present

time there is far more of the liberty of the individual in Russia and in Turkey than in Ireland is abundantly confirmed by the varied and copious evidence published in our columns, and if statesmen have courage enough to tell the whole truth, there is not one in the ranks of either party who could rise to deny the charge in his place in Parliament. The national conscience is slowly awakening, and those who have forced on the Irish question for settlement may, perhaps, have done a service to the State, though not by carrying out their own views. In Ireland, despite an apparent dead level of submission to a hateful tyranny, discontent and disquietude are spreading, as is shown in the very striking letter of "AN IRISH FARMER," printed in our issue of Saturday, even among the classes who have formed the backbone of MR. PARNELL'S agitation. The economical consequences of separation, which have been clearly explained by MR. JEFFSON, are not yet realized by the Irish masses, but there is already a suspicion that Ireland may lose her best markets for agricultural produce while grasping at imaginary possibilities of industrial and commercial wealth. The immediate stress, however, of the despotism of the "village tyrants" is the most intolerable part of the burden, and if there were any prospect that the law would grapple in earnest with the forces of lawlessness, there would be a revolt on a great scale. The facts cannot be concealed, and Parliament will have to look them in the face. It must not be forgotten that when the Land League attempted to defeat MR. GLAD-

STONE'S legislation in 1881 and proclaimed a "No rent" campaign like that which the National League is carrying on at present, it was suppressed as an illegal organization by the Executive acting on its inherent right, and not in virtue of any coercive statutes whatever.

WHAT HOME RULE MEANS.

I.

A most unwelcome surprise has been sprung upon the people of the United Kingdom by the statement, not contradicted in substance, that Mr. Gladstone is prepared to meet Mr. Parnell's demands on the basis of conceding an independent legislature to Ireland. Some ingenuous persons attempt to defend the ex-Premier's conversion by the assumption that the question has taken a new and unexpected shape since the general election. For this there are no grounds whatever, and Sir Charles Dilke's contention, in a recent speech, that his scheme of local self-government, if offered to the Irish people before the appeal to the constituencies, would have been generally accepted is in conflict with notorious facts. Mr. Parnell's policy has been throughout the same since he assumed the lead of the Irish party. In 1880, when by a bold stroke he enlisted the cupidity of the peasants in the Separatist cause, he spoke at Galway words which have been often quoted, though not, perhaps, sufficiently pondered. "I wish," he said, "to see the tenant-farmers prosperous; but, large and important as is the class of tenant-farmers, constituting as they do, with their wives and families, the majority of the people of this country, I would

not have taken off my coat and gone to this work if I had not known that we were laying the foundation in this movement for the regeneration of our legislative independence." Early in the present year, when the extension of the franchise had given him an assurance of a large increase of Parliamentary strength, he reaffirmed his determination to obtain for Ireland "the restitution of her Parliament—her independent Parliament—and all those rights which were stolen from her at the close of the last century;" but he took occasion, soon after, to explain, lest his American allies should take offence at the moderation of this demand, that though he and his followers "could not, under the British Constitution, ask for more than the restitution of Grattan's Parliament, yet no man has a right to fix the boundary to the march of a nation, no man has a right to say to his country, 'Thus far shalt thou go and no further,' and we have never attempted to fix the *ne plus ultra* of Ireland's nationhood, and we never shall." This is also the tenour of the speeches which Mr. Parnell delivered in Ireland during the autumn and which Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Chamberlain, and Lord Hartington have criticized. It cannot be argued that his position has been altered; it cannot be asserted that there was substantially any doubt whatever that a vast majority, variously estimated at from 75 to 90, of the Irish members would be returned in support of his policy. In 1880, under the restricted franchise, more than 60 Home Rulers were elected, and subsequently Mr. Parnell, at by-elections and in other ways, had shown the "Moderates" could make no stand against him. There was not a shadow of hope, and this Mr. Gladstone knew, as well as every other politician in and out of Parliament, that the appeal to household suffrage in Ireland would lead to anything but a large

addition to the Separatist forces and an encouragement of their wildest dreams. So it would have been in 1834, when O'Connell brought the question of Repeal before the first reformed House of Commons; in 1874, when the agitation was revived under Mr. Butt; and in 1880, when it was reinforced by an agrarian cry; but no statesmen were then prepared to admit that the United Kingdom ought to be cut in pieces in deference to the voice of a numerical majority of the Irish people told by the head.

The reasons on which the refusal to entertain the demand for an Irish legislature has been hitherto founded have the appearance of generalities, because the advocates of the claim have evaded the statement of details. Apparently some sanguine people hope that when the details are explained a remedy will be disclosed for the evils which practical politicians have found inherent in the principle. It is worth while, therefore, to examine the different projects suggested under the name of "Home Rule" and the consequences common to them all. The simplest form of the demand is "Repeal of the Union," for which O'Connell agitated, or "the restitution of Grattan's Parliament," which, as we have seen, provisionally limits Mr. Parnell's demand. The various federal schemes devised by Mr. Butt and others differ essentially from Repeal and from one another, and the "colonial position" claimed for Ireland by Mr. T. P. O'Connor is an entirely new proposal. But in all the elements of legislative independence is the master-fact of which the working must be thought out before the safety of the experiment can be pronounced upon.

Neither Mr. Parnell nor his predecessors in agitations have faced the question "What does Repeal mean?" The argument from experience is of no value unless the conditions are

the same. It is true that during the 18th century Ireland had a Parliament of her own and that, nevertheless, it was not impossible to reconcile that legislative power with English supremacy. But what were the conditions? Of course, before 1782, the supremacy of England was secured by Poynings's Act and the statute of George I. "for the better securing the dependency of Ireland on the Crown of Great Britain;" Irish legislation had to receive the approval of the Privy Council in Ireland, and afterwards, having been examined and sanctioned by the English Attorney-General, of the Privy Council in England. These limitations were swept away when England, pressed by the exigencies of a formidable conflict in Europe, Asia, and America, and menaced with civil war by 100,000 armed volunteers, made, as the English Minister declared in Parliament, "a full, complete, absolute, and perpetual surrender of the British legislative and judicial supremacy over Ireland." So far as words could go, "Grattan's Parliament" had thus achieved independence; "Ireland is now a nation" was the boast of its author. But let us look at the facts. Ten years after the Declaration of Rights, a leading member of the Irish House of Commons thus described, with the approving assent of an overwhelming majority, the character of the Irish Constitution:—"A Protestant King to whom only, being Protestant, they owed allegiance; a Protestant House of Peers, composed of Protestant Lords Spiritual in Protestant succession, of Protestant Lords Temporal with Protestant inheritance; and a Protestant House of Commons, elected by Protestant constituents, a Protestant Legislature, a Protestant Judiciary, a Protestant Executive, in all and each of their varieties, degrees, and gradations." So the system remained down to the Union, with the exception that, under pressure from

Pitt, the Roman Catholics were admitted to the franchise, though not to other political rights, in 1793. Clearly it is idle to draw any inference from the conduct of such a Government which can be applied to a Legislature dominated by the nominees of the National League. There is, however, another point of distinction of even greater practical importance. Though "Grattan's Parliament" was theoretically independent in the fullest sense of the word, the Irish Administration from the Declaration of Rights to the Union was, in theory and in practice, dependent. The executive power and patronage were in the hands of the Lord Lieutenant, and the most essential and characteristic features of modern Parliamentary Government—the Cabinet, Ministerial responsibility, the control of Parliament over administrative acts—never came into existence. It was the British Parliament, not the Irish Parliament, which gave vitality to the Cabinet to which the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary were appendages. Mr. Swift M'Neill, in his recent work on the Irish Parliament, has quoted many of the protests of Irish politicians against this system, denounced by Grattan as "a fluctuating Government, a fugacious responsibility." Whatever its vices from the point of view of the Constitutional purist, this administrative isolation of the Executive Government, supported, on the one hand, by Protestant ascendancy in intimate and self-protective alliance with Protestant England, and, on the other, by vast powers of patronage, unscrupulously exercised and fettered by no legislative restrictions, was a security for the maintenance of union with Great Britain which could not by any conceivable expedients be reproduced. Two years after the concession of independence, the Government commanded, among the 300 members of the Irish House of Commons, "86 votes of members for proprietary seats, the

owners of which let them out for titles, places, or pensions, 12 votes of their own, 45 votes of place-men, and 32 of gentlemen who had promises or had avowed their expectations." The House of Lords was equally in the hands of the Government; peerages were multiplied, and had become, it was averred, a common staple of political traffic. Repeal, as contemplated by O'Connell, would have re-established the Parliament in Dublin, but without any of the restraining conditions which prevented a breach between the two countries, Mr. Parnell goes further; he asks for the "restitution of Grattan's Parliament," though he frankly explains that what he wants is not "the Lords and Commons of Ireland," but a single assembly, omnipotent within its own sphere, elected by the widest popular suffrage, controlling every part of the Irish Administration, nominating Ministers and officials of every degree, and "with power to protect the struggling industries of Ireland." "Grattan's Parliament" had no such scope, yet in spite of its restricted means of action, and of the reasons, personal and political, which bound its members to the British connexion, its career was full of peril to both countries. The most moderate suggestions on the part of England that the trade of the two kingdoms should be regulated by a joint understanding led to an explosion of hatred and suspicion that even disgusted Fox, who observed that Irishmen, "next to a job for themselves, love nothing so well as a job for their country," and warned General Burgoyne to be prepared to resist force by force, since in a display of "proper spirit" lay the only chance of saving us from total "separation of civil war." The volunteers assembled a convention in Dublin to overawe Government and Parliament, and Grattan's popularity, for the moment, faded away, because

he refused to recognize the supreme authority of this foreshadowing of the Jacobin Club. Firmness averted the danger and the volunteers collapsed. Again in 1784 Pitt offered Ireland his 11 "Commercial Propositions," which, by establishing complete free trade, would, as in the case of Scotland, have led to a real as well as a formal union. The liberality of the offer was not misunderstood, but there was *amari aliquid* to the Irish taste in the plan. "In return," says Mr. Froude, "for a free, full, and perfect partnership with England, for free commerce with the English colonies, to whose foundation she had contributed nothing, for exclusion of the linen of Russia and Germany from the English markets in favour of the Irish looms, for the protection of the Navy abroad and at home, and the assistance of the English Consular Departments in every part of the world, the Parliament of Great Britain expected Ireland to make some return. The condition required was so mild that it would be inoperative until the Irish trade had become vigorous, and in times of depression would cease to bind. It was simply this—that for the protection of trade, whenever the gross hereditary revenue of Ireland should exceed £60,000, the excess should be applied to the support of the Imperial Fleet." The reception of these proposals was characteristic. One patriot exclaimed, "If the gifts of Britain are to be accompanied with the slavery of Ireland, I will never be a slave to pay tribute; I will hurl back her gifts with scorn." Grattan took his cue from this outburst, and the propositions were so mutilated that the Whig Opposition in England were able to get up an outcry against them; they were modified and sent back to Ireland, and again rejected with more violence. The best hope of conciliation was defeated by vanity and perversity. The Irish

Parliament was confident that it could create manufactures and develop commerce by a system of bounties and prohibitory duties, and some rickety industries were, in fact, set going, which fell at once when the props were withdrawn. But the alleged advancement of Ireland under "Grattan's Parliament," so far as it had any substantial existence, was due to other causes. In 1779 and 1780, before the recognition of Irish independence, Lord North's Government passed a series of measures which, according to Mr. Lecky, a justly severe critic of the earlier commercial policy of England, "exceeded the utmost that a few years before the most sanguine of Irishmen could have either expected or demanded." Prohibitions on export were removed, and the colonial trade was thrown open. Those measures, "largely, wisely, and generously conceived," as Mr. Lecky admits, "were the main sources of whatever material prosperity Ireland enjoyed during the next 20 years."

There remains one question of the utmost political gravity which almost brought England and Ireland into open conflict during the brief life of "Grattan's Parliament." "Before the Irish Legislature had been six years independent," says Macaulay, "a collision did take place, such a collision as might well have produced a civil war. In the year 1788 George III. was incapacitated by illness from discharging his regal functions. According to the Constitution, the duty of making provision for the discharge of those functions devolved on the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland. Between the Governments of Great Britain and Ireland there was, during the interregnum, no connexion whatever. The Sovereign who was the common head of both Governments had virtually ceased to exist, and the two Legislatures were no more to each other than the House

of Commons and the Chamber of Deputies at Paris. What followed? The Parliament of Great Britain resolved to offer the Regency to the Prince of Wales under many important restrictions. The Parliament of Ireland made him an offer of the Regency without any restrictions whatever. By the same right by which the Irish Lords and Commons made that offer they might, if Mr. Pitt's doctrine be the constitutional doctrine, as I believe it to be, have made the Duke of York or the Duke of Leinster Regent. To this Regent they might have given all the prerogatives of the King. Suppose—no extravagant supposition—that George III. had not recovered, and that the rest of his long life had been passed in seclusion: Great Britain and Ireland would then have been, during 32 years, as completely separated as Great Britain and Spain. There would have been nothing in common between the Governments, either Executive power or Legislative power." The whole transaction showed a spirit which, taken in connexion with the clamour of Irish patriots for extended privileges, and their complaints that Ireland was still "without pride or power or name, without army or navy," was ominous of future trouble. But the disappointment of absurd and impossible hopes, the disgraceful anarchy into which the country lapsed, the contagion of the revolutionary frenzy hastened the catastrophe. The Rebellion of 1798 led directly and inevitably to the Union.

II.

We have seen that, in spite of some restrictions which were at the time very real, but which it would be now impossible to revive, and others, such as the veto of the Sovereign, which, though they excited the alarm, real or feigned, of Irish

patriots, never were and never would be exercised, "Grattan's Parliament" was potent for mischief, if impotent for good. O'Connell knew that its restoration was impossible. What he aimed at, so far as he had defined his aim even to himself, was a Catholic and Celtic democracy ruling in Ireland, with only "the golden link of the Crown" to bind it to England. Mr. Parnell's ideal is substantially the same, substituting a cold-blooded, agrarian Jacobinism as the motive force for the fervid Catholicism of O'Connell. Now, as in 1782, the wildest hopes are fixed upon independence; the wilderness is to blossom as the rose, manufactures are to spring up in a country destitute of coal and iron; a mighty commerce is to be developed. Here are the words of a patriot priest at an ordinary Nationalist meeting in the autumn. Let them get Home Rule, and their country would prosper; "their barren mountains would be cultivated; their marshy swamps would be drained; they would moor their vessels in their ports, and their rivers would carry their goods backward and forward; they would unlock the treasures of their country, open their mines, make provision for the bone and sinew of their land, give employment to willing hands, have no one exposed to idleness or the temptation to become idlers." When it is asked how the Government of a poor country, with little capital and, apart from England, little credit, is to accomplish all these wonders, we find a certain reluctance to part with a profitable connexion. To this mixture of motives we probably owe the concoction of the federation schemes which, in one form or another, have been before the world for several years past. Federal-

ism was at one time thrown out as a suggestion by O'Connell, and the idea was resuscitated by Mr. Butt for the benefit of the discontented Protestants whom Mr. Gladstone's disestablishment policy had alienated, and who, shrinking from Repeal in O'Connell's sense, ingenuously imagined that the "final" settlement of the land question in 1870 left them in a position to secede safely. They soon discovered their error, and now we believe hardly one of the recruits whom Mr. Butt brought over from the Conservative side 15 years ago has not repented in sackcloth and ashes.

The plan of the "Home Government Association" adopted in 1870 embraced the following objects:—

(1) To obtain for our country the right and privilege of managing our own affairs by a Parliament assembled in Ireland, composed of Her Majesty the Sovereign and her successors and the Lords and Commons of Ireland; (2) to secure for that Parliament, under a federal arrangement, the right of legislating for and regulating all matters relating to the internal affairs of Ireland, and control over Irish resources and revenues, subject to the obligation of contributing our just proportion of the Imperial expenditure; (3) to leave to an Imperial Parliament the power of dealing with all questions affecting the Imperial Crown and Government, legislation regarding the colonies and other dependencies of the Crown, the relations of the united Empire with foreign States, and all matters appertaining to the defence and stability of the Empire at large; (4) to attain such an adjustment of the relations between the two countries, without any interference with the prerogatives of the Crown or any disturbance of the principles of the Constitution.

A couple of years later the Home Government Association had become the Home Rule League, and at a conference held in Dublin resolutions were adopted which introduced some material changes, the most important being the reservation to the Imperial Parliament, with the matters above recited, of "the power of granting and providing the supplies necessary for Imperial pur-

poses." Under the latter plan the Customs and Inland Revenue Departments would remain, presumably, in the control of the Imperial Parliament; under the former they would, with the other "revenues and resources of Ireland," have passed to the Irish Parliament, in consideration of a contribution for Imperial objects. Now, it appears, there is another proposal going still further. Mr. Parnell, speaking at Arklow in the autumn, "gave it as his opinion, as a practical man," that his party would be content with nothing less than "a free-elected National Assembly, with power to control all the affairs of Ireland, and with power to protect her struggling industries." Mr. Justin M'Carthy, who in 1880 ridiculed the notion that Home Rule included any pretension to a separate commercial policy, admitted the other day that under the scheme now proposed "Ireland would be perfectly entitled to impose any tariff she thought fit." This scheme may be thought to be identical with that which Mr. T. P. O'Connor explained in a letter printed in *The Times* of Dec. 19; but while Mr. M'Carthy says that, in return for "the control of Irish affairs within the line that divides Ireland from the sea," he would agree to "any fair contribution" for Imperial purposes, Mr. O'Connor, claiming for Ireland the position of Canada, argues against any such tribute. "To give Home Rule," writes the latter, "accompanied by large fiscal burdens, would be to mock Ireland with a legislative whited sepulchre."

Whatever obscurity there may be about views so variously stated, there is no ambiguity about Mr. Parnell's main position. He said a few weeks ago:—

Nothing in the world would induce me to accept on behalf of the Irish people anything but the fullest and completest control over our own affairs. What we want for Ireland is that she shall have control over her

own destinies. What we want is that Ireland shall have the power to make her own laws, without the bungling and fumbling and obstruction of an Imperial Parliament, and that to our people at home shall be handed over the right of attending to their own concerns and managing their own business.

And, in reply to Lord Hartington's demand for guarantees for the unity of the Empire and the protection of minorities, Mr. Parnell's answer was that nothing of the kind could exist or be devised except "the armed forces of the Crown," and that "it was not in his power to add to the strength of that guarantee by any promises." In this we entirely agree. If a Home Rule *concordat* had been arranged six or eight years ago, when Mr. Shaw, then the Irish leader, offered it to "the Liberals in search of a policy," it would be now repudiated and denounced by Mr. Parnell, and a compromise settled by Mr. Parnell to-day would six months, not to say six years, hence be the object of a hostile agitation led by Mr. Davitt or some more furious fanatic. As judicial rents are now as bitterly assailed as unlimited rack-rents were before the Land Act, so it would be with any conceivable compromise short of complete separation; "the armed forces of the Crown" would remain, as Mr. Parnell candidly points out, the only guarantee against further revolutionary movements, while not even these would secure us against a prolongation of the Irish troubles. Under all the federal schemes, as well as the offers of local councils and so forth, put forward by Mr. Chamberlain and others, the Irish members would keep their places in the Imperial Parliament to control the working of the check upon Irish administration and to paralyze measures for the protection of the minority, and the Irish voters in Great Britain would be organized, as at present, to co-operate with them.

Lord Salisbury, in his Newport speech, spoke sympathetically, though cautiously, of Imperial federation embracing the colonies and remote dependencies of the Crown; "but," he added, "with respect to Ireland, I am bound to say that I have never seen any plan or any suggestion that will give me at present the slightest ground for anticipating that it is in that direction that we shall find any satisfactory solution of the Irish problem." Mr. Chamberlain has assured us quite recently that the Liberal party will "allow no temptation and no threat to check the resolution to maintain unimpaired the *effective union* of the three kingdoms."

In 1880 Lord Hartington said, in his election address, "I believe the demand (for Home Rule) to be impracticable; and, considering that any concession, or appearance of concession, in this direction would be mischievous in its effects on the prosperity of Ireland as well as of England and Scotland, I have consistently opposed it, in office and in Opposition, and I shall continue to oppose it." And in 1885 his language is substantially unchanged. He said, in his address:—

I am convinced that *the legislative union of the two countries* must, in the interests of both, be maintained, and I will give no support to any measures which directly or indirectly menace its existence; but, with due precaution for the protection of the rights of the minority, I am prepared to support *an extension of the powers of local self-government in Ireland*, and to undertake *large reforms in the structure of the Executive Government*.

As might be expected, Mr. Gladstone's views are less clearly defined than Lord Hartington's; he does not draw, as Lord Hartington does, a broad line of distinction between the concession of legislative power, on the one hand, and on the other the extension of local self-government, as hitherto understood, or administrative reforms in Dublin Castle. He has not, like Lord Hartington,

demand, in his election address or his platform speeches, "guarantees for the preservation of Imperial unity and the protection of the loyal minority against oppression and rapine." He has not, like Lord Salisbury, declared that, as a nation, "we are bound by motives not only of expediency, not only of legal principle, but by motives of honour to protect the minority, if such exist, who have fallen into unpopularity and danger because they have maintained, either as champions or as instruments, the policy which England has deliberately elected to pursue." But, so far as generalities go, Mr. Gladstone's treatment of the Irish question has been such that the project lately attributed to him and inadequately disavowed would be plainly a new departure. In his address to the electors of Mid Lothian he wrote :—

To maintain the supremacy of the Crown, the unity of the Empire, and all the authority of Parliament necessary for the conservation of that unity, is the first duty of every representative of the people. Subject to this governing principle, every grant to portions of the country of enlarged powers for the management of their own affairs is, in my view, not a source of danger, but a means of averting it, and is in the nature of a new guarantee for increased cohesion, happiness, and strength.

Even Mr. John Morley, who seems ready to go a long way to meet Mr. Parnell, tells his constituents at Newcastle that concession must be "subject to the limits that are imposed by the safety, the integrity, and the honour of the Sovereign realm as a whole."

How are these conditions laid down by the leaders of English opinion, Conservative, Liberal, and Radical, to be reconciled with Grattan's Parliament as conceived by Mr. Parnell, or with any of the federal schemes, or with such development of local self-government as Mr. Cham-

berlain and Mr. Childers have tentatively suggested? The answer, so far as Mr. Parnell is concerned, is very simple. He will admit, as we have seen, no conditions, he will offer no guarantees. Ireland is to "manage her own affairs," which include, as Mr. Justin M'Carthy tells us, taxation and tariffs, and, as Mr. O'Connor avows, the tenure of property and the terms of expropriation. She may establish churches and create or destroy educational institutions. She may, indeed, engage (though Mr. Parnell warns us that he will not set bounds to Ireland's "nationhood"), not to meddle with foreign policy, and not to aspire to an army or a navy; but, should the engagement be broken, how is the Irish Government to be called to account? Were it to be discovered that Ireland, while laying prohibitory duties on British manufactures, had entered into commercial conventions with France or the United States, that by passing thousands of men rapidly through the ranks of a purged constabulary an army was being created, or that a customs preventive service was made the nucleus of a navy, what would be the duty of the Imperial Government? Troops might be sent to occupy Dublin Castle, and English squadrons might anchor in Cork Harbour and Galway Bay; but when once the administrative machine had passed into the hands of the Separatist party it could not be wrested from them without a war and a conquest, in which both the majority and the minority would suffer cruel hardships. It is idle to tell us now, as the advocates of Home Rule told us half-a-dozen years ago, that a self-governing Ireland would not dream of touching any man's property without ample compensation, that the hatred with which England is regarded is a thing of the past, or that the Saxon and Protestant part of the population have nothing to fear from the anti-

pathies of their neighbours. The anti-rent campaign has only opened the first parallel in the attack upon capital, with this result already—that since Mr. Parnell's agitation assumed serious proportions credit has been shattered, trade and industry have dwindled, bankruptcies are multiplying, and agriculture, notwithstanding the reduction of its burdens in the shape of rent, is more depressed than ever. The denunciation as "Shylocks" of those who have, unluckily for themselves, invested their capital on the security of Irish land, including the principal insurance companies, is now a commonplace of Parnellite controversy, and the landlords are invited to protect themselves by joining in a plan to squeeze the "London Jews." The *Freeman's Journal* a few weeks ago published the following significant remarks:—

More than half the land—two-thirds we believe—is out of the hands of the landlords, and is the property of London usurers and money-lenders. If the landlords are holding out against the tenants for the rents, it is because the Jews are holding out against the landlords for their "per-shentages." The landlords, consequently, are in a bad way, but they are not wholly without a remedy. It has been suggested that they should copy the no-rent manifesto, and substitute for the words "no rent," "no mortgages," and "no incumbrances." Our contemporary *United Ireland*, in an able article, has offered them a word of wise counsel on the subject which they will do well to take to heart. . . . If the landlords would boldly declare their inability to maintain their present action, if they expressed a desire to have the land question finally settled, if they set out by acknowledging that the tenants cannot pay their present inequitable rents, and bid the usurers do their best, we believe they would have the entire strength of the people in Ireland with them. As between Irish landlords and Jewish skinflints we think there can be no difficulty in choosing, and if we had a tribe of the latter over here for a brief season, attempting, in the absence of the landlords, to take their pound of flesh—well, it would be made pretty hot for the skinflints. We hold that the landlords can break their fall to their great advantage by taking some such step as has been suggested.

It is in this spirit, undoubtedly, that questions affecting property would be dealt with in an Irish legislature, unfettered by guarantees. And even if we could have any assurance that oppressive and rapacious legislation would be kept under control, what possibility would there be of controlling the administrative acts of the Irish Government? Yet upon administration the whole social order depends; if the executive Government is unwilling to enforce the law, if the judges and the magistrates and the police are chosen for their sympathies with the majority, and if they are encouraged not to act when "the people" disapprove of action, every man will hold his life and liberty and property at the mercy of popular caprice, and will be reduced to a condition more miserable than that of the basest of slaves. The history of the struggle with organized crime in Ireland during the last ten years, and the experience of Lord O'Hagan's Jury Act, warn us of the consequences of trusting to the popular sense of justice. The fact which lies at the root of the difficulty must be faced. Mr. Gladstone cannot expect the country to tolerate his astounding refusal to recognize the distinction between the loyal and the disloyal in Ireland. The Dublin correspondent of the *New York Nation*, a journal of the highest character, lately told the story of a conversation with a Roman Catholic priest on the causes of the strife. "I'll tell you what," said the priest, "there is no use in your talking of moderation or reconciliation with England. They hate us and we hate them. So long as I have the power I'll work, and I'll work for Home Rule; and then I'd work and I'd strive for separation; and then I'd strive and I'd work for the destruction of the British Empire." But all our statesmen are agreed that separation must not be. It remains to be seen whether the federal schemes

and minor developments of local self-government, though rejected by Mr. Parnell, afford any promise of political foothold. We must bear in mind, however, that, as Mr. Morley says of one of these plans, "If the Irish party will not consent to work it, there is an end of it."

III.

The question whether a federal union may not be established between Great Britain and Ireland, to the advantage of both parties, is not one to be concluded by any authority, however eminent. Still, it is worth while to refer at the outset to the fact that the most adventurous of political speculators who have touched on this subject have come to the conclusion that the experiment cannot be tried with any regard for common prudence. John Stuart Mill, who was not disposed to underrate the force of national aspirations, and was by temperament and training hostile to Irish Conservatism, examined the problem with laboured impartiality, and pronounced an emphatic judgment against Home Rule. "It is my conviction," he said, "that the separation of Ireland from Great Britain would be most undesirable for both, and that the attempt to hold them together by any form of federal union would be unsatisfactory while it lasted, and would end either in reconquest, or in complete separation." He discussed, and dismissed as inapplicable, the analogies of the Canadian and Austro-Hungarian constitutions. Again, Mr. Freeman, a warm, almost a fanatical, advocate of federalism, acknowledges that "no one could wish to cut up our United Kingdom into a federation," or to give back to Scotland and

Ireland the qualified independence they possessed before the Unions. In truth, it must be admitted that federalism is in its place when it draws closer communities previously disunited, as was the case with America when the United States were established on the ruins of the impotent confederation of 1776, with the constitutional changes in Switzerland in 1848 and 1874, and with the formation of the Dominion of Canada, but that it is a retrogression when it disintegrates and gives effect to what is called in Germany Particularism.

Assuming, however, that the objections to the principle of a federal union were waived, two practical questions arise:—(1) how it is to be worked, and (2) how it is to be made to include such guarantees as Lord Salisbury and Lord Hartington have declared to be indispensable. The former is a most formidable difficulty. A partition of legislative functions between an Imperial Parliament and a local legislature, however ambitious or however humble, involves a series of far-reaching and hitherto unconsidered changes in the English Constitution. The advantages of an unwritten, and, therefore, an elastic constitution must disappear; there must be an instrument—a charter or a number of charters—accepted by the communities interested, and defining, on the one hand, the powers conceded to the local legislatures and, on the other, those reserved to the Imperial Parliament. But this is not all. When there is such a partition of legislative power, it is evident the one party or the other may step beyond its proper limits; there must be some authority to end disputes, some "final interpreter," like the Supreme Court of the United States, of constitutional law. "The usual remedies between nations, war and diplomacy, being precluded," says Mill, "by the federal union, it is necessary that a judicial remedy

should supply their place." For this change much may be said, but it must be understood that with it vanishes the historic independence and the boasted omnipotence of the Imperial Parliament. To an external judicial power must be referred the question whether this or that Act, be it imperial or local, squares with the limits laid down by the Organic Federal Statute. Without some co-ordinating authority of this kind there must be conflict and confusion. Yet so little did the original promoters of the Home Rule scheme understand what they were proposing that they adopted a resolution, apparently in good faith, at the Dublin Conference of 1873, affirming that the proposed federal arrangement "did not involve any change in the existing constitution of the Imperial Parliament, or any interference with the prerogatives of the Crown, or any disturbance of the principles of the Constitution." It may be added that the multiplication of legislative bodies presents peculiar difficulties in a country like Ireland, in which men of character and capacity fitting them for Parliamentary service are admittedly rare, and in which the intelligent, the industrious, and the well-to-do would either be unwilling to act as delegates of a democracy saturated with communistic ideas or, as is still more probable, would be distrusted and proscribed. Mr. Parnell has been obliged to hunt up recruits for his present army of 86 patriots in very curious quarters, and, if in addition to these he had to provide 300 members for a College-green Parliament, to what depths would he not have to descend? We are not without experience, as a New York correspondent has lately reminded us, of the practical results of government by a "Boss," dependent on the organized voting power of the lower order of Irish, nor is there anything in what

has been revealed of the working of the municipalities and poor law boards in Ireland, even in the case of the Dublin Corporation itself, to justify the belief that Home Rule would rise above the level of Tweed's administration of the Empire City.

These, however, are consequences which Englishmen and Irishmen might make up their minds to endure. It is otherwise with the second difficulty, the impossibility of giving, under any form of Home Rule, satisfactory guarantees against attacks on Imperial interests, and unfair treatment of the loyal minority. Mr. Parnell has himself admitted, in replying to Lord Hartington, that the demand for such guarantees is "not unreasonable," but he has added that neither he nor any one else can promise them in the name of Ireland, and that any conditions intended to secure them must be rejected. Great Britain and the loyal minority in Ireland must look, according to Mr. Parnell, for their guarantees in part to the military forces of the Crown and in part to the tranquillizing effect of liberty on the Irish nation. But it may be said that this position has been taken up only to secure a margin for bargaining. Mr. Parnell might, perhaps, be induced to accept—at least provisionally and with reservations as to future advances—a compact like that drawn up at the Home Rule Conference of 1873, surrendering the claim to impose customs duties, pledging the Irish Government to adopt no legislation "establishing any religious ascendancy in Ireland," or "subjecting any person to disabilities on account of his religious opinions," and declaring that "no change shall be made by the Irish Parliament in the present settlement of property." Would restrictions of this nature, supplemented by a provision that the "constitutionality" of any Irish legislation might be challenged by persons

interested, and pronounced upon by a Supreme Court, afford the guarantees required by Lord Hartington? If not, the object of those guarantees must be attained by other means, even if Parnellism is to be left unsatisfied. That Mr. John Morley admits as frankly as any Whig or Tory, when he says that concession to the Irish demands must be limited by considerations not only of national safety, but of national honour. That, it must be presumed, is Mr. Chamberlain's inner thought, when he reminds the Liberals of Birmingham of the efforts and sacrifices of the people of the Northern States during the war of the Secession—the most telling answer to the unworthy argument that Englishmen, "weary of an everlasting wrangle," cannot resist the temptation of closing with any so-called "settlement" of the Irish controversy.

Home Rule, then, as above defined, would leave an Irish Legislature free to effect indirectly any of the purposes it had formally renounced. Take the first and least important, for it concerns our interests only and not our honour; a renunciation of the right to establish a tariff hostile to English trade would not preclude the Irish Government from spending the taxes which it would be, *ex hypothesi*, empowered to levy and appropriate on a system of bounties upon native manufactures. It is morally certain that this would be attempted. Mr. Parnell has said, "If the woollen industry and other industries capable of succeeding in Ireland were fostered and promoted, the result would be the employment of hundreds of thousands now wasting their lives in idleness and poverty," and this, now as 100 years ago, is the conviction of an overwhelming majority of Irishmen. Home Rule is desired by many simply because it is regarded as a system under which British and foreign competition can be effectually excluded, and the ex-

periment will be tried by means of bounties if tariffs have to be foregone. Yet it was this, and this only, perhaps, which "stirred the hot blood" of the Radical in Mr. Chamberlain's veins when he criticized at Warrington what he called "the unhesitating and uncompromising demand which Mr. Parnell has made with regard to the separation of Ireland from the British Empire." Again, what would be the course of a College-green Parliament, however strictly bound over not to establish "religious ascendancy" or "religious disabilities" in dealing with the claims of the Roman Catholic Church? The appropriation of public money, levied in the shape of taxes, for the support of denominational schools and monastic establishments, and in aid of ecclesiastical purposes generally would be assuredly attempted, and, considering the temper of the Protestants of the north of Ireland, a more dangerous possibility could not be contemplated. The question of property, however, goes deepest of any, and the slightest reflection will suffice to show that no disclaimer of an intention to interfere with existing titles can be of any practical value. Property, in modern times, is not usually attacked by impeaching its title, but rather by increasing its burdens, and the revolutionary party in Ireland have learned the lesson thoroughly. They do not propose to upset the Act of Settlement, but to make the landlords' position "too hot for them," so that they may be willing to sell to "the State"—when the State means the elected representatives of the tenants, actual or expectant—at the State's own price. They do not propose to confiscate directly the possessions of bank shareholders, railway shareholders, and other personalty, but they have so distinctly adopted the principle of "ransom" that at the mere rumour of the acquiescence of Mr. Gladstone in some scheme of Home Rule even

Bank of Ireland Stock, the safest of Irish investments, after a period of steady decline, coincident with the rise of Mr. Parnell's influence in politics, fell heavily. If "Ireland be allowed to manage her own affairs," in Mr. Parnell's sense of that phrase, or even in Mr. Morley's, it is certain that property in every form, but especially landed property, will be subjected to grievous and iniquitous burdens. What remedy would be available even for the grossest injustice of this sort under a federal system? Acts of Attainder or general measures of avowed confiscation might provoke the interference—which could only be effectual as the armed interference—of Great Britain; but the slow process of crushing out obnoxious minorities by graduated taxation or special imposts would produce no crisis sufficiently startling to compel the Imperial power to act.

When Dublin Castle is denounced in Ireland, and when would-be reformers, like Mr. Chamberlain and the authors of the "Radical Programme," propose to transfer the authority of the administrative boards and of the Treasury to an elected National Council, it is convenient to forget that the checking power of the Central Government is exercised to prevent the local bodies from defying Acts of Parliament and inflicting injury upon owners of property or other classes marked out for popular dislike. The municipal councils, which choose convicted felons and professional incendiaries as special subjects of honour, are outdone by the boards of guardians, which habitually combine seditious politics foisted into what ought to be practical business with scandalous maladministration of the rates. Some examples of the working of local self-government in this sphere, in which the people have enjoyed for half a century the educating influences of responsibility, were published last

summer in *The Times*, and the Report of the Select Committee on the Poor Law Guardians Bill from which they were extracted is worth careful study by those who are honestly inclined to think that the condition of the country will be improved by removing the control of "the network of boards," to quote Mr. Chamberlain, "carrying with them the seal of English authority, whose interference has produced so much irritation, so much just annoyance, and even injury in Ireland." Some controlling power was needed when the guardians began to act on the advice of Mr. Sexton, and to administer the rates as "a method of increasing the expenditure of the landlords," with ingenious arrangements for protecting the tenants from their share of the burden. The extravagant out-door relief given to suspects' families, from three to seven times as great as the amounts paid to ordinary applicants, has been lately matched by the administration of the Labourers Act. A County Cork board gave a contract the other day for the repair of cottages to a well-known Nationalist, on the ground stated by the proposer that the board being Nationalist should support its own party, though another contractor tendered at 30 per cent. less. Nothing, however, can rival some of the instances printed in the Report of the Select Committee of the grants under the pretence of "medical relief." In one case a lump sum was given to a tailor for the purchase of a sewing machine, and in another to a blacksmith for the roofing of his forge, the money being presented in the accounts as if weekly payments had been made. Immense sums were borrowed under the Seeds Act, and grants appear to have been made to men who had emigrated or died years before, and to women, in one case to a prostitute, who never had any land. Is it seriously intended, in

these circumstances, to abolish the controlling power of the Local Government Board in Dublin and to leave the guardians free to deal with the interests of the ratepayers and the rights of officials, subject only to the authority of a National Council consisting of Parnellites? It is forgotten that the strongest advocates of local self-government admit the necessity of control by the central power. Mill has shown that it is the duty of Parliament and the Executive, even in a matter so clearly of local concern as the administration of poor relief, "to lay down imperative rules and make effectual provision that those rules should not be departed from."

The right to levy taxes and dispose of the proceeds carries with it the vital functions of government. It is true Parliament has delegated those rights to various elected bodies, but the statutes conferring the authority invariably prescribe the incidence of the burdens and define the purposes for which the revenue is to be spent. A Home Rule Legislature could not and would not be bound in these respects. But, supposing it were possible to do so, the consequences of administrative independence would still remain to be considered. Home Rule implies the management by the elected representatives of the Irish masses of all executive departments of State, the appointment of the judiciary, the nomination of magistrates, and the control of the police; and, as we have already pointed out, it depends upon these things whether the law, scientifically admirable as it may be, works justly or unjustly. It needs no statutory change to destroy property and to inflict the most fearful penalties on an unpopular minority, if the State does not exert its powers with strict impartiality and uncompromising vigour. In Ireland a Government dependent on an assembly elected by the votes of peasants and packed by a

Land League caucus would have to deal with a strike against rent and outrages on persons refusing to join in "the national campaign." Can any intelligent man believe that, under such conditions, a single agrarian crime would be punished or that a penny of rent would be recovered by any legal process, or that eviction for non-payment of rent or indeed for any other debt would be possible? It is, in comparison, a trifling matter, but it may be added that Home Rule would mean a general amnesty, which would let loose on the country a crowd of agrarian and political prisoners, most of whom, if we may form a judgment from past experience, would find places in the legislature or in the public offices.

Much of what has been said of the federal scheme applies to various plans for the extension of local self-government. Mr. Chamberlain, for instance, has offered Mr. Parnell a measure embracing not only County Boards, but a National Council, and others have suggested Provincial Councils. If such Councils, National or Provincial, are to have legislative powers we must face all the consequences of an independent legislature; but even if they are to be purely administrative, which does not appear to be intended, we must take into account the considerations set forth in his Newport speech by Lord Salisbury. He said:—

Our first principle, on which we have always gone, is to extend as far as we can to Ireland all those institutions that we have established in this country. But I fully recognize that, in the case of local institutions especially, there is one limiting consideration which in the present state of Ireland you cannot leave out of account. A local authority is more exposed to the temptation and has more of the facility for enabling a majority to be unjust to the minority than is the case where the authority derives its sanction and extends its jurisdiction over a wider area. That is one of the weaknesses of local authorities. In a large central authority the wisdom of several

parts of the country will correct the folly or the mistakes of one. In a local authority that correction to a much greater extent is wanting, and it would be impossible to leave that out of sight in the extension of any such local authority to Ireland. The fact is that the population is on certain subjects deeply divided, and it is the duty of every Government in all matters of essential justice to protect the minority against the majority.

The most essential point, evidently, is that the local bodies, which are felt to be in this matter untrustworthy, should not have the control of the police, since without the police no civil or criminal process can be of any practical validity in Ireland. Yet Mr. Childers went out of his way, even before Mr. Gladstone's tendencies towards Home Rule had become the subject of discussion, to offer to give up the police to local elected boards, and, after that offer, Mr. Parnell, naturally enough, declared that his party could not "assume any responsibility or take any part in the working of the ineffective central body by which it is proposed, under the name of local government, to meet our demands for an Irish Parliament." "For example," he went on to say, "what Irishman of influence or importance would undertake any responsibility in a local legislature without having the control of the police force? I object to any Imperial controlling authority." The taxing powers of local boards as distinguished from local legislatures may be limited, and the appropriation of revenue regulated according to general principles laid down by statute, but, unless a large share of administrative authority be withdrawn from the elected bodies, the extension of local self-government in Ireland must mean the oppression and spoliation of the minority, as well as the preparation within new and stronger intrench-

ments for attacks upon the connexion with Great Britain.

The concession to Ireland of what is called "the right to manage her own affairs," whether by legislation or administration, or both, would be used, beyond all doubt, to widen the breach between the two countries. The points at which divergence would begin are too numerous to be exhaustively discussed. It is sufficient to mention the questions connected with the claims of the Roman Catholic Church, education, and marriage and divorce; land tenure, expropriation, and the rights of mortgagees and other incumbrancers under existing contracts; the maintenance of the public peace and the repression of crime; the treatment of banks, railway companies, and the like; the imposition of protective duties and the payment of bounties on native manufactures; the exclusion of foreign (including English) competition with Irish agriculture; the "development of Irish resources" by a system of public works to be paid for by the classes deemed to be properly subject to "ransom;" and the acknowledgment of the duty of the community to administer outdoor relief freely and to provide remunerative work for every able-bodied man. A policy embracing these objects and pursued, as it would be, without any desire to conciliate English opinions would inevitably bring about a collision, even if the situation were not complicated by a foreign war or by the impatience of the Protestants of Ulster under what they would resent as an intolerable yoke. Few, indeed, who know what Ireland really is feel any doubt that there would be a resort to arms, or as Mr. John Morley has called it "a reduced and squalid version of the Thirty Years' War." England would be compelled to intervene, perhaps at a moment when she was cruelly hampered elsewhere. But her assertion of

Imperial supremacy would be undertaken with many disadvantages. The Irish Separatists, who would not give up for a moment their dream of complete independence, and who would be exasperated by any efforts to check them in their free career, would have a strong position for resistance, materially and morally. They would have organized the local representative system, on the principles of an American city "Ring," with a "spoils system" to grease the wheels, and with the assurance that the most patent jobbery at the expense of the few would not drive the consciences of the many to revolt. The example of the Dublin Corporation, which had James Carey as one of its members, which entered into a contract for Mr. Parnell's paving stones with a generous contempt for economical considerations, and which has lately nominated Mr. Davitt as its representative on the Port and Docks Board, would be followed on a more ambitious scale. The avowed and irreconcilable enemies of the English connexion would fill every public office, as even at present the names chosen by the municipalities to be submitted to the Crown for the selection of sheriffs are by preference suspects or persons who have actually been in prison for agrarian or political offences. Then, if there should be an appeal to force—and this is the remedy to which we are asked to look should it be found that concession has once more failed to conciliate—England would have to deal, not with an unorganized and ill-equipped rebellion, but with a Government in actual possession of administrative power, with all the machinery of taxation at its command, and, it cannot be doubted, with a military force, in one form or other, ready to obey orders and to join hands with a foreign enemy or a filibustering invasion. The Civil War in the United States would never have assumed serious

proportions if the State Governments of the South had not been centres of organized resistance to the federal power. It must not be forgotten that the choice of an occasion for conflict will not rest with this country. However liberal—nay, however extravagant—may be our concessions, Mr. Parnell has given us warning that we are not to hope for finality. "If our claims are conceded," he has plainly said, "I have no mandate from the Irish people to dictate a course of conduct to those who may succeed us."

In addition to the above, it has been thought desirable to republish the following letters, which appeared in *The Times* on dates prior to the announcement of Mr. Gladstone's conversion to the principle of Home Rule for Ireland, one being written by our respected correspondent "S. G. O." so long ago as October 20, 1849:—

THE IRISH QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Lord Hartington said at Belfast "The people of the United Kingdom will never assent to the practical separation of the two Governments of England and Ireland. They will not tolerate the formation of an independent Government, which may be hostile, which may be unfriendly, which may adopt opposite colonial, fiscal, and even foreign policies with regard to Imperial matters." This is plain and straightforward and will rejoice the hearts of Englishmen. Let me as one, as impartial as one can be, wholly unconnected with Ireland, as much interested in its prosperity as in that of Devonshire

or Yorkshire, say what I believe Englishmen think on this subject.

The people of this kingdom, about 35,000,000, inhabit two islands, Great Britain and Ireland, with some small ones adjacent. Of these thirty-five millions, some three or four, inhabiting a part of one of the main islands, are desirous of parting from the rest and setting up for themselves a State which might "be hostile, unfriendly, and adopt opposite colonial, fiscal, and even foreign policies with regard to Imperial matters." I say that is their wish and intention. Home Rule, local government, Irish Parliaments, all mean the same thing—"practical separation of the two Governments." The minority, the three or four millions, do not deny that this would be injurious to the majority of thirty millions, while they (the thirty) are certain that it would be. Self-preservation, then, the first law of nature, necessitates their refusing to allow the separation, without regard to the wants and wishes of those who desire it. Must not this consideration govern us? Suppose Cornwall, or the counties south of the Thames, or the Isle of Wight wished to part company with the rest of us, should we allow it, even if it would be for their good to do so? What difference does it make that a few miles of sea separate the island in part of which the wish is entertained from the one which would be injured?

If the whole of Ireland wished for the separation, and though English and Scotch thought it would be for its good, we must refuse it in self-defence. But we do not think so. On the contrary, we are satisfied that the worst thing that could happen to that country would be to separate it from the rest.

But, further, it is not the whole of Ireland which wishes for this separation. A third of it, or

nearly so, its most prosperous, orderly, civilized part, earnestly desires to preserve the connexion. To them, who have trusted to us, we are bound by every consideration of justice, honour, and expediency to maintain it. And maintain it not merely by refusing a direct attempt at separation, but by sternly resisting all indirect attempts such as Home Rule, local government, handing over the police to those who would use them not to preserve but to destroy order. Resistance, too, must be offered to those practices which have in many cases banished the well affected from boards of guardians and enabled the commission of gross breaches of the law and plunder of the landowners. Let those Irish who wish to go know that the rest of their countrymen and the English and Scotch say that they shall not. If they have any wrong let it be remedied. They never specify any. But let them understand that they will not worry us into doing ourselves grievous harm by putting first one and then the other of the two great parties in a minority.

Your obedient servant,

BRAMWELL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I hardly think that Great Britain has, even yet, grasped the position which Ireland is now in, and what, at the present rate of going, must inevitably be before our island for the future.

Facts are thus:—Mr. Parnell is master of Ireland. No amount of argument or wilful blindness can prevent any individual of even ordinary intelligence from seeing this. The country has spoken by no uncertain sound through its elections. The voters appear in an appalling majority Nationalists. The elected members are all under

pledge to support Mr. Parnell. Mr. Parnell has most honestly and clearly (he always speaks plainly) stated that he will take nothing short of separation, or "Ireland a nation." He will have no "rule," even as means to an end, without having the control of the police.

Under present circumstances of party rule at Westminster, the new Parliament, under any circumstances, as appears now from the elections, will be unworkable unless Mr. Parnell is either agreeable or given in to. What does this mean? Looked at in common sense, it means Ireland for the Irish on Mr. Parnell's terms; perhaps not all his terms at first, but his terms of a Home Rule in Dublin, with control of the police.

With this card in his hand the game is his. Irish-Americans, with their thousands and hundreds of thousands of pounds, are his trump cards; control of the police now his leading card.

We over here all know—perhaps some Englishmen may have thought—that had Ireland been armed they would have rebelled and fought for its nationality years ago. Without arms they have fought by other means. They have advanced, more rapidly than any could have dreamed of five years ago, towards their desired end—Separation, or Ireland a nation.

Now, in the name of common sense, let us look at what all this means. Simply, Mr. Parnell's toast, "Ireland a nation." Granted rule of the country, with control of the police—if he gets not afterwards what is wanted—Ireland will become armed. Means and money will be his, and an eager and willing following of some three-fourths of the population to back him up. The conclusion seems simple—bloodshed, a pandemonium, and massacre, perhaps only for a time, then Ireland reconquered, and martial law. A cheerful prospect this. And why? Because Ireland has but been a football in the political game for generations. Because the canker of disloyalty was not burnt out by a steady hand at the first, the disease has spread and the country is rotten.

What, then, is now to be done? We, a little band of

Loyalists, as leaven through the land, have fought bravely of late to keep back the tide at the elections, but, alas! have absolutely and altogether failed. It rushes on in a flood. "We have no might against this great company." We appeal, with what almost seems our last cry, to the heart of Great Britain, to its Liberals and Conservatives, to join their hands and protect us. Look to your own future, as well as to ours, and be firm; one false step now may ruin all. To stave off an inevitable conflict by giving in is cowardly. To suffer a knave to bully is more cowardly still. We appeal, Sir, to Imperial England not to cast us to the wolves. Our Church has been cast out for them. Our property is being devoured by them. Leave us—at any rate leave us—our liberty and our lives.

As one of thousands of Irishmen who are gagged by a mob, I ask you, Sir, to assist our cause by inserting this letter, and remain,
 Your obedient servant,
 Dublin, Dec. 3.
 AN IRISH ELECTOR.

THE STATE OF IRELAND. TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Will you allow me to send you an extract from a letter received from my agent in Ireland—from a man who thoroughly knows the country, and who is very popular with all the tenantry? He writes as follows:—

"No man would suppose that things would come to what they are now; some twelve months ago the country was in as bad a state as in the days of the famine, now it is in a worse condition. There is universal repudiation on the part of the country people of their just debts, and it is utterly impossible to get any money from them. The Land Act, which was to be such a blessing to the farmers, might as well have never been passed. Tenants, whose rents were fixed at the Land Court now refuse to pay, and are demanding 30 per cent. abatement on the judicial rents. I may mention that your tenants have asked for an abatement of 25 per cent., and the application was before the Judge. He refused to grant it. Mr.—'s tenants came to the agent, headed by the priest, and demanded a reduction of 30 per cent. on the judicial rents, and, as it was

refused, they went away without paying, and still refuse to pay. You can imagine the position of affairs."

Sir, this is but an ordinary case in Ireland during these times, and matters are going from bad to worse. There is a strike against all rent. Those who are in a position to pay will not do so, and in many cases dare not. And this is the outcome of Mr. Gladstone's celebrated Land Act, which was to have brought happiness to all. Unless English statesmen will open their eyes they will find themselves before long in such a network of difficulties in their dealings with Ireland that they will fail to extricate themselves. Meantime, we find two parties in England whispering as to the best method to obtain the votes of Mr. Parnell and his band of brothers. It is a sad sight to see two great English parties truckling to sedition and treason. I believe if the statesman on either side who leads his party would but speak out boldly and in no ambiguous language, and would say straightly and honestly how far he is determined to go and leave it to the sense of the nation to judge of the the fairness of his policy, that the leader who thus spoke would have thousands of Englishmen, be they Liberals or Conservatives, who would range themselves under his banner and give him their strong support. In a great crisis like the present why should either the Liberal or Conservative party be seen wrangling for office? Is it patriotic? Is it honourable? If England would at last speak out with no uncertain voice, and would see justice done to those people in Ireland who are borne down by numbers, persecuted and starved out by a combination of the National League—formerly called the Land League—there might yet be time to give a helping hand. Will no statesman rally round him the two great English parties? And can it be said that Englishmen, for the sake of a brief term of office, its emoluments, and position, will sacrifice all the true interests of their country and hand over to the sworn enemy of England and her Constitution the small band of Loyalists who still find a precarious existence in Ireland and on Irish soil?

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

London, Dec. 3.

AN IRISHMAN.

THE PRIEST AND THE BALLOT. TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I have read a letter signed by Mr. Edward Herries, which appeared in *The Times* a few days since, in which he assumes that the law has been broken because at many Irish elections "the priests were standing by the side of the ballot-boxes during the operation of polling." The priests stood there, certainly, and not only they, but in most polling places in Munster there stood beside them the local presidents, secretaries, and other officers of the branches of the National League. But the law was not thereby broken, for these personages occupied their commanding positions by virtue of their appointments as polling clerks or personation agents for the League candidates. In one of the divisions of a Munster county I acted as election agent for a Loyalist candidate, and had ample opportunity of observing how the system worked. About 25 per cent. of those who voted were unable to read, or so declared. The presiding officer with ballot-paper and pencil in hand, asked each independent elector, "For whom do you vote?" At each side of him, with watchful eyes and *auribus erectis* a League official waited the reply. Did the voter know they were sworn to secrecy? Did he gather any confidence from the fact even if he knew it? There was his priest, there was the farmer who, perhaps, employed him (if a labourer), or dealt with him daily (if a farmer). There was the shopkeeper, in whose books he was deeply indebted for clothing, for food, for seed, or for patent manure. Too well he knew that though their pledge of secrecy might be literally kept, his vote would not be forgotten. Was he then independent? Dared he vote against the dreadful League whose powers and tyranny he knew too well? What was the result? Some voted for Mr. Parnell's nominee with well-acted readiness, some declined at first to answer the question, and then reluctantly gave a vote which it was easy to see they did not wish to give; one

or two whispered to the presiding officer that "they would come back and vote when he was by himself," and others again stated that after all they could read and would vote in the ordinary way, which clearly accounted for the large proportion of spoilt or unmarked papers found in the boxes.

No, Sir, it was not of breaches of the law, but of the law's defective machinery that anti-League candidates have had to complain. The law, so far as relates to the voting of illiterate persons, and so far as relates to personating agents, must be amended and some better system devised, otherwise voting by ballot in Ireland will remain, as it has proved in the late elections to be, a farce.

Yours truly,

A CONSERVATIVE ELECTION AGENT.

Dublin, Dec. 11.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—As having had wide opportunities of knowing the influences operating among the Nationalist voters in the northern portion of Ulster during the recent elections, I am able fully to endorse the very pertinent statement of your Dublin Correspondent, published some days ago. These revelations have not unnaturally attracted considerable attention, and their absolute truth can be attested by thousands in Ulster. Your Correspondent gave instances of the clerical influence exercised over illiterate voters in Donegal—a county which, with a population of between 200,000 and 300,000 people, of whom less than 50,000 are Protestant, showed, according to the last census, something like 60 or 70 per cent. of illiteracy. Even in the contiguous county of Londonderry, which is more largely occupied by Protestants and further advanced in education and—shall I add—civilization, the Nationalists, who are grouped together in certain districts and who voted in the same servile manner as their brethren in other parts of the country, likewise displayed a lamentable amount of ignorance in exercising the franchise.

More than one-half of the entire Nationalist population "declared" their illiteracy, and not a few of them were so hopelessly ignorant that they were not able to tell the name of the candidate for whom they had been directed to vote. In these cases they generally indicated their preference by saying that "the priest had told them to vote for the gentleman with the longest name of the two"—in the instance to which I refer the Conservative candidate. The presiding officer was then asked to read over the names of the candidates, and by this means the "capable citizen" was enabled to record his vote. I leave all impartial people to judge whether Nationalist successes gained in Ulster or elsewhere by such aid can be claimed as "expressing the voice of Ireland constitutionally ascertained."

Yours obediently,

A NORTHERN LOYALIST.

WHAT IS THE STRENGTH OF THE DEMAND FOR HOME RULE?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—When Mr. Herbert Gladstone speaks, and still more when he writes from Hawarden Castle, he is supposed by many, probably erroneously, to express the opinions of his father.

It may therefore be pardonable to offer a note on his letter to Mr. Frank Miles.

In this letter he writes "if five-sixths of the Irish people wish to have a Parliament in Dublin," &c.

What is the reason for suggesting that five-sixths of the Irish people have this desire? He basis it apparently on the return of 85 Parnellite members in Ireland.

If this reasoning were sound it would follow that as no Conservative county member has been returned for Durham and Northumberland, there was not a single Conservative elector on the re-

gister for these counties—nay that there was not a single Liberal elector in the whole of Ireland.

If we turn from members elected to voters, I have before me a calculation which shows that the Parnellite voters in the elections were 292,895, the Conservative 109,393, and the Liberals 35,713; or the Disunionists 292,895, against Unionists 145,106, a proportion of just two to one instead of five to one.

It is true that many Parnellite seats were not contested, but it is equally true that those that were contested did not bring out the Unionist strength. I have seen a calculation, which seemed carefully made, resulting in an estimate of Disunionists of 55 per cent. against 45 per cent. Unionists.

Whatever we are about to do let us at least proceed upon an accurate statement of facts.

Your obedient servant,

December 12.

M.P.

THE IRISH QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Liberals as well as Conservatives will thank you for your article warning the more impetuous among English politicians that anything which shall encourage the Nationalist Irish party to believe in the possibility of separation and secession will not be tolerated. It is surely strange that during the whole of the recent election hardly any one has dared to look the Irish problem in the face. Some of Mr. Parnell's friends know well enough what they want—namely, a separate Government ruling over a country which has been called a nation, but has never had the political autonomy entitling it to that name. They desire to control its finance and its armed force, and, by the creation of a dangerous neighbour, to keep England weakened and irresolute

Their aims are those which cannot be attained, for the more powerful people would not allow them, and they would be fatal to the welfare of Ireland. It is the peculiarity of Mr. Parnell's position that he cannot hold back the extreme men of his party. He is driven to demand "more than Grattan's Parliament" now, and if he got a Parliament representing not the minority as did that Parliament, but one representing the whole of the Irish people, he would again be driven, cool and calculating as he is, into demands intolerable and conflict-provoking to the English people. The so-called desires of the people of Ireland are only the blind imaginings of an ignorant majority that independence will bring fortune, that the earth hunger of many will be satisfied, that rent paying shall cease and Irish manufactures be protected. As soon as the full machinery for the pushing of these demands is constituted by the reinstatement of an Irish House of Secessionists, the things which England cannot grant will be preferred in the name of a majority of the Irish people, and it will become more and more difficult to prevent the suicidal tendencies they exhibit to cut their own throats that they may breathe more freely. Why focus the heat of desires which may not and cannot be satisfied, when all legitimate demands may be met by such arrangements as have been successfully worked in America and Germany? In America the Irish have their fair share in the Government of the autonomous States, as they have in the British provinces throughout the colonies. They are contented there. But would they be so if they were all thronged into one State or colony and were there encouraged to insist on a separate tariff and a separate control over armed forces? No American or Colonial Government would desire to have its valuable but volatile Irish element so focussed and favoured. They take their share

under general laws, and are made to obey them. No population sooner learns contempt for a Government which cannot enforce its laws. But let us see what laws they might be made to obey while making their own for local purposes. They are only two—respect for life, respect for property. These are the vital laws which can alone attract capital and prevent ruin. Therefore the Imperial Government must keep all armed forces under its hand, and maintain the titles to property sanctioned by its decrees. All else can be relegated to provincial governments, and of these Ireland, using her own divisions, could have four. They would control all assessments for education, roads, and railways, and might, after Imperial titles have been bought out, be possessed of power over property so purchased. And why, when advances from the State could be safely made through a Rent Bank system in Germany, should not a similar machinery aid the Irish peasant to purchase his holding where such may be held for sale?

No Irish Government constituted by the present Irish electorate would dare to do justice to Irish landholders. If separate from England they could not get the money, even if they desired to give them justice. By the maintenance of the Union they can alone negotiate loans. Mr. Parnell favoured the first attempt made in the recent £5,000,000 loan. In doing so he went as far as he could venture against the wish for the general repudiation of all agrarian obligation which is the mainstay of the present agitation. Let the British Treasury co-operate in redeeming Irish obligations, and let force go hand in hand with fairness. The truest kindness will be shown in this. Ireland of herself can have no credit in the money market for any purpose, and repudiation of rent would only be the sign to capitalists that none

could trust her. Mr. Parnell can make no satisfactory promise as to the limits of the action of an Irish Legislature. Once given, such a body would be his master, and the most grievous injury ever inflicted by England on Ireland. With free local Provincial Parliaments Ireland would have what contents Irishmen elsewhere, and they would not prove a danger for either country, because leading to no temptation of secession,

I am, Sir,

AN EX-OFFICIAL.

THE NATIONAL LEAGUE AND THE COMMON
LAW.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Now that the elections are over, perhaps I may be allowed to return to this subject. Ireland has to be governed somehow until the meeting of Parliament, and during the triangular or quadrangular duel which may possibly follow. At present, by far the most visible authority is the National League.

The most heinous crime just now is the payment of rent, and every effort is being made to turn the judicial awards under the Land Act into waste paper. The posting of threatening notices is frequent, and regular summonses are sent to tenants who are suspected of having paid their permanently and judicially reduced rents. A mock trial takes place, and if the accused fails to clear himself he is expelled from the local branch of the National League. Boycotting is the usual consequence of this, and boycotting means social ostracism, endless vexation, and obstruction in business, if not total ruin. If, as is very probable, there is private spite in the matter, outrage and even murder may follow. Labourers have been deprived of all employment merely because they have worked for boycotted people. Heavy pecuniary fines have been inflicted by the National League courts. English people can have little idea of the horrible tyranny that is

exercised here in the name of liberty. Some of the worst stories cannot be told, for I have known irreparable injury done by drawing attention to particular cases. The last state of the victim has been worse than the first. Here, however, are three resolutions of National League branches which have been published in local papers. They were all passed within the last month.

"That we congratulate our hon. secretary, Mr. H. Walsh, on his manly conduct in refusing to supply meal and bran at his mill to that obnoxious landgrabber ———, and hope that all surrounding branches will follow suit."

"That any landlord who refuses to grant to his tenants the abatement they require should be left without rent until forced to act honestly, and then the tenant should take the advice of John Dillon—that should any member of our branch visit the office of the landlord or agent, whether summoned there or not, without the permission of his fellow-tenants, he should be instantly expelled."

"That as Parson ——— is visiting and associating with the ———s, we look upon him as being no better than themselves."

The reverend gentleman has done his duty in defying these village inquisitors, and has suffered considerable annoyance in consequence. It has come to this, then—that a Protestant clergyman is to suffer pains and penalties for visiting his parishioners in their sorest need. The worst criminal would be allowed the ministrations of his chaplain, whereas these boycotted people are honest and industrious citizens trying to defend their own.

In one reported case a man was summoned for employing a labourer who was not a member of the League, and who had worked on a boycotted farm. The culprit pleaded that he was not at home at the time and that he would not do it again, whereupon one of the judges said, "You may hire him now; he has taken out his card to-day." Here is the Jacobin certificate of civism in actual play.

I could give many more cases, but the above will probably be enough. A country cannot be in such a state without outrages, and we are not at mid-winter yet. Near the western border of this county a bailiff has lately been

fouly murdered; on the eastern border a process-server was badly beaten, and the police who guarded him were beaten back; but for their excellent temper and wonderful forbearance there would have been terrible bloodshed. In another part of the county a process-server was last week stripped naked and severely beaten. His trousers and boots only were restored, and, thus clad, he was kicked home—and this in December. There is said to be a fracture of the skull, and his body is a mass of bruises. In the same district between 4 and 5 on the following afternoon, a gang of from 50 to 80 men, many of them armed, attacked a boycotted farm, drove off the cattle in different directions, and fired several shots at the caretakers.

The *Freeman's Journal* of yesterday reports a case from Galway in which a process-server was severely beaten and forced to eat his writs, the driver of the car being also beaten. This is how humble ministers of the nominal law are treated. The National League knows how to make its decrees feared.

Mr. James Stephens, formerly central organizer of the Irish Republic, published an article last month, in which he advocates the simple separation of England from Ireland as the object to be aimed at. For his purpose he considers Mr. Parnell far worthier of support than Grattan, O'Connell, or Butt. It is well that the public should understand how it all looks from the Fenian point of view.

It is declared by a cloud of witnesses that the great immediate object of the Parnellites is to get control of the Irish police. I cannot believe that any responsible statesman will propose to part with the law's only really effective weapon, and to abandon loyal people here once and for ever. If the evil day does come property—already terribly depreciated—will not be worth six months' purchase. Owners, mortgagees, and chargees will be involved in a common ruin. For all practical purposes of government the Imperial eagles will have left this island, and all true subjects of the Empire which it contains may hide

their heads elsewhere. The remaining inhabitants will then have full liberty to oppress each other.

If I have spoken strongly I shall be forgiven, for the case is urgent. But there is one bright speck on the horizon. Should the present crisis result in the removal of Ireland from the category of party questions, its miseries will not have been endured in vain.

Your obedient servant,

Clonmel, Dec. 12.

R. BAGWELL.

THE IRISH QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I am one of those who believe that the selfishness and incapacity of both our great political parties has made that inevitable which not long ago was optional only. In other words I am convinced that Parliament will before very long sanction special legislation for Ireland, and will inflict upon that country—for a short time at any rate—the blessings of Home Rule. That being so, I trust that Englishmen will devote themselves to what, in my opinion, is the first and most pressing duty created by the new situation. The two great parties will soon be trafficking for place and peace, and there seems every probability that during this interesting process, the claims of one section of my fellow countrymen will absolutely go to the wall.

At present there are some hundreds of thousands of persons in Ireland whose fortunes are dependent upon the continuance of the life's work which they have undertaken under the faith of English support and protection. In the first place, there are the Irish officials high and low, a body of men who I believe may fairly stand a comparison for honesty and ability with any similar class in the world. There are the police, who through good report and evil, under discouragements of which we here have no conception, and paralyzed by the knowledge that they were liable to be deserted and disavowed any day if party necessities required, have done their duty and served their country with

an unparalleled integrity and courage. There are the magistrates and their assistants, who have fought inch by inch the various forms of organized cruelty and knavery which have succeeded each other in the Land League campaign. All these men are to be liable to instant and unconditional dismissal. That is part of the Land League programme.

After all, however, we have not yet been beaten at the point of the bayonet, and I trust the English people will have a word to say before they allow their faithful servants to be thrown on the world like so many butlers out of place. But there is a class which is even in greater danger than the official. I allude to the whole body of loyal and honest men whose lives and fortunes are at this moment at the mercy of the Parnellites, and who apparently are to be delivered up body and soul to the tender cupidity and cruelty of the National League.

It will be said that there is no chance of Parliament allowing these persons to suffer. I am not so sure of that. I know that at this moment many of them are exposed to treatment which combines every refinement of suffering with the most sordid and cowardly motive. I know that in Ireland there are gross and continued acts of dishonesty being committed under the very eyes of the authorities; and that the English people, purposely kept in the dark as to the true nature of these crimes, does practically nothing to relieve the sufferers or to punish the criminals. I have perfect confidence in the readiness of Englishmen to stand by their friends if they only know the dangers and humiliations to which they are exposed. The danger is that in the din of the Parliamentary huckstering which we are about to witness the voice of the weak may not be heard.

Again it will be objected that the late elections have shown the utter insignificance of the loyal element in Ireland, and that the anti-Parnellites are few enough to be safely disregarded. To this I would reply in the first place that after five years of conspiracy, murder, and plunder,

men are careful how they give their support to a Government which shows neither power nor ability to protect them. In the second place, I assert, and I believe nine Englishmen out of every ten will agree with me, that the question of numbers is in no way relative to the issue.

A great country deserts its subjects either because it has been crushed beyond hope in the field of battle, or because it has ceased to be a great country and is travelling fast down the road of national decay.

Remember, it is not a question whether those who have dared to remain honest and loyal shall submit on equal terms to the new Government which we are about to give Ireland for the next year or two; but whether they shall continue to be robbed and persecuted in the future as they have been in the past, simply and solely because they are honest and they are loyal. Personally I would shake Ireland from Cork to Cavan rather than that a single man or woman should suffer for having relied upon the honour of England. Judging the future from the immediate past, I see no guarantee for the safety of my countrymen in Ireland—and by countrymen, of course, I mean all Irishmen who are not successful rebels—save in the direct intervention of the English people. Mr. Gladstone knows very well to what manner of men he is delivering up the Loyalists, for he and his late colleagues have over and over again described them with an accuracy and a freedom which I scarcely feel at liberty to imitate. He has apparently determined, whatever may be his knowledge of the subject, to hand over Ireland to the rule of Messrs. O'Brien, Sheridan, Parnell, Nally, Egan, and—*id genus omne*. I trust the boon may be appreciated. We can at any rate say to these gentlemen in case of any disappointment *tu l'as voulu Georges Dandin*. But if Mr. Gladstone or Lord Salisbury or any one else fails to take proper precautions for the protection of every man, woman, and child who has relied upon England, then I hope and believe that thousands of Englishmen will join me in insisting that the credit of our country shall not be bartered away for the comfort and advantage of any political party, and will resort to whatever means may be

necessary for the protection and relief of our friends beyond the Irish Channel.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
H. O. ARNOLD FORSTER.

AD LEONES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I crave a portion of *The Times* to present to your readers a few considerations upon the existing political crisis as it affects the condition of Ireland. It will be apparent to every one who has watched the action of Mr. Parnell's followers in the last Parliament that their exertions were mainly devoted to crushing the Irish Executive by reiterated attacks (in most part untruthful) on the individuals composing it, from Lord Spencer down to the humble policeman, with the view of bringing the law into contempt and rendering good government in that country impossible. With this purpose it has been brazenly declared that Lord Spencer sent to the scaffold men whom he well knew to be innocent, and some 47 persons being accused of unnatural crime in Dublin, of whom one only held an unimportant position in Dublin Castle, the National party inferred that Dublin Castle occupied the position of an Irish Sodom. Such courses of action were taken with the object of paralyzing the Irish Executive, and of giving free scope to certain scoundrels in Ireland to terrorize the law-abiding people of that country.

It has been said by Mr. Parnell that were his mission to be merely to better the condition of the Irish farmer, and to obtain for him a tardy but full justice, he, Mr. Parnell, would not have "taken off his coat." He accordingly enlisted the greed of the agricultural population, with the view of having their aid in his ultimate attempt to destroy the British connexion, and his support of Mr. Gladstone's measure relative to Irish land was at the best but half-hearted. This land agitation, however, afforded him the opportunity of creating an organization of the most incisive character, worked alternately by

gifts, threats, menaces, and often outrages, and by its assistance he has got the mass of people in hand, with the ulterior intention of destroying the Empire, and with the present view of despoiling the property classes in Ireland, alike Catholic and Protestant.

This existing agitation differs in this respect from all which preceded it. In O'Connell's time, and subsequently in Isaac Butt's, all propositions for Irish changes were founded upon a strongly-expressed desire that in their efforts for political change and in the results flowing from such enterprises all Irishmen, not alone of different religions, but of different classes, were to participate; that the descendants of ancient Irish chieftains as well as of Barons of the Pale, those whose progenitors were Cromwellian troops or Dutch soldiers under William, were equally to be recognized when the good time should come for whose advent O'Connell and Butt were respectively labouring. Under Mr. Parnell this is all changed. The word landlord is a by-word, the word respectable when applied to a Catholic is used as a scoffing phrase, and to the multitude alone whether of Irish origin, of Yankee blood, Scotch crofter, English artisan, or American loafer, are promised the good things which will be at the disposal of the wreckers of the British Empire.

Let me here observe that while some of the Irish lands are held under tenures arising from confiscations of some centuries ago, a large surface of Ireland has been purchased by Irishmen, both Catholic and Protestant, with the money scraped together by their unflinching industry and bitter toil.

Some members of the Irish Roman Catholic Episcopacy have taken occasion to launch bitter sarcasms at some of those men who at the late election, for a political and honest purpose, joined their Conservative and in some instances their Orange countrymen; but those dignitaries must have known at the time they designated them "Orange Catholics" that they associated with Orangemen for no Orange purpose—they stood

forward, in the face of obloquy showered upon them with no niggard hand, to avoid the alternative of joining the National Land League or of forfeiting their property, their rights, and their liberties. It might have occurred to Archbishops Croke and Walsh that a distinguished Roman Pontiff for a similar reason allied himself with William III., the founder of Orangeism, for an object certainly not anti-Catholic.

I am certainly not of opinion that Roman theology ever has or ever will sanction the wholesale boycotting enunciated by National League branches as fitting punishment for offences against that body. And yet curates, parish priests, bishops, and archbishops are patrons of some of those organizations.

Were an interdict proclaimed from Rome such proclamation might perhaps obtain Catholic defenders; but the days of interdicts are gone, and no president of a Land League, lay or cleric, has the right to revive them.

At present the Queen's writ does not run in Ireland, and the sentences of the Land League are executed with more force and certainty than any sentence of Her Majesty's Courts. At present rent arrangements are made, not by landlord or tenant, but by the League, the tenant, though willing, not daring to pay his rent contrary to the wish of the League. Tradesmen and contractors are informed by Poor Law Unions that to be dealt with it is necessary they should be members of the League. Since the present Government entered on office it does not appear they have troubled themselves to put the existing law in force, but pending the elections have permitted matters to take their course, and the result is a state of things simply deplorable.

I have endeavoured to describe the state of things in Ireland. What is the position at Westminster? The Liberals have a considerable majority over Conservatives, and are in an infinitesimal minority as against a Conservative and Parnellite combination.

Mr. Parnell frankly states that the Conservatives are

not sufficiently strong in numbers to carry out his views; but with the Liberals it is otherwise, as he can give them as a *quid pro quo* some 160 majority, requiring in return that Ireland should be handed over to him "to have and to hold," in the language of the old conveyancers.

No doubt the result of the compromise at present said to be proceeding may for the while modify the proposition. But admitting that the supremacy of Parliament be still nominally maintained, Mr. Parnell will, as I take it, insist on the following proposals:—The whole control of the Executive of Ireland, consequently all appointments to the magisterial and Judicial Bench, entire control of the police (a little army, and, more important, the nucleus of a great army), the power of imposing taxes—*i.e.*, tax property, landed included, till it ceases to be property, an easy settlement of the peasant proprietary question. All this, mark, is but an instalment. What follows? The Executive broken down, the population terrified, the police hostile, what is to prevent the Republic when the good time comes, when England is engaged in foreign or domestic trouble? But then I am told England will assert herself; she will re-enter Ireland in her might and teach her a lesson to be long remembered. Well, and are we to forget the ruined homes of men who believed in England's justice and friendship for Ireland, saw social and religious freedom afforded to their country, supported the Imperial Government; and are they to be ruined despite their loyalty, and to calmly await the rehoisting of the Union Jack on an island where they have been despoiled and on which many of them may salute the British ensign as paupers instead of proprietors?

In the coming struggle between great parties in Parliament there is one consideration which should not be disregarded. In the French Chamber the various parties on the left of the President from the Centre Gauche to the extreme Gauche are all Republican; so in the British House of Commons the Opposition, whether Radical or moderate, bears the common designation of Liberal.

The moderate branch of the party inherit great traditions. They have accomplished much in the past, and if they do not accomplish so much they can at least preserve much in the future. Such a party with such a history are not, I trust, going to be absorbed in a party calling itself alternately Conservative and Democratic, and whose changes within 30 or 40 years have astonished most people.

Let the moderate party and such Whigs as wish to join them above all maintain their autonomy. They have a solid back in the country of all moderate men of all classes, except perhaps the *nouveaux riches*, who seek what they call respectability in Toryism; the party they represent have held the balance of power in Europe for centuries, and it is to their patriotism that England and Ireland have to look in this involved conjuncture.

Let Mr. Parnell destroy the Executive, revolutionize the police, tax property so as to render it valueless, fill the Judicial Bench with his own creatures, and then at a convenient opportunity, *voilà*—Republic and separation.

One word and I have done. All-powerful as Mr. Parnell is in Ireland and may be at Westminster, he too is dominated by a greater power, the American dollar, gathered from contributors often unwilling by men who touch the question alone as a mode of wrecking the British Empire. For them there is but one goal in view, an Irish Republic and concomitant separation.

The events of the present crisis may induce an early dissolution. Does any man believe that submission, say, not to the Parnellite party, but to the American dollars (the lever of Parnellism), would be a good cry for a British Minister? I think not. The British nation, I am convinced, will not submit tamely to be ruled by foreigners issuing their orders to Ireland from American soil.

Yours, &c.,

HIBERNICUS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Will you allow me to put a simple question as to the possibility of Home Rule in Ireland, in the hope that some answer may be given that would allay the doubts of those numerous persons who, like myself, are willing to concede anything that can reasonably be demanded, provided it be shown to be practicable?

Let us suppose that a Council or Parliament is established in Ireland for the management of home affairs, Ireland, however, being taken in an ethnical rather than a geographical sense, so as to allow the province of Ulster a choice as to its destination.

In that case, as all foreign affairs would still belong to the English Parliament, the Irish would, as a matter of course, claim the right of sending members to it. It would follow, therefore, that—to take an instance now in everybody's thoughts—the Irish members could establish the Roman Church in Ireland and then cross the Channel to convert a majority against the disestablishment of the Protestant Church of Scotland into a minority. Is this tolerable?

But it may be answered that the Irish would, of course, have no right to interfere with our home affairs, and that a line must be drawn between things they might vote upon and things they might not. Let us suppose this very difficult feat accomplished, and what would be the result? Why, this absurdity—that the English Prime Minister might have on Monday a clear majority of, say, 50 upon some vital point of home policy, and on Tuesday find himself in a like minority upon some equally vital point of foreign policy. Will any one undertake to show plain people how this difficulty, inherent in the very nature of the case, is to be got over?

I remain, your obedient servant,
Islip Rectory, Dec. 12.

T. W. FOWLE.

PROPERTY IN IRELAND.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—If we employ ourselves, for ever so short a time, in comparing the state of England with that of Ireland at this moment, we are enabled to see at once in what consists our chief happiness—the sister kingdom's chief misery. Men of every class in England look to the night season as a time of peaceful rest and quiet. We go about our daily business or pleasure under a sense of legal protection to person and property from the violence and wickedness of any of our fellow-creatures whose hearts and hands may be set against ourselves or anything which we possess. I do not say that we English know not what it is to be robbed, assaulted,—nay, exposed to the hand of the assassin; but we do know that the law is so upheld among us by the general disposition of the whole community that no countenance is given to evil doers, no pains spared to bring them to justice. We may have our grievances, political and polemical, but we do not suffer our opinions on them, or our efforts for their redress, to lead us to sanction the disturbance of those fixed principles of general protection which give to us a sense of personal safety by day and by night.

The most violent Protectionist magistrate would dare any danger to protect Tamworth from a mob of spoliators, and Mr. Cobden would not hesitate for one moment to seize a Bill Sykes whom he might chance to discover breaking into the War Office. What clerical justice, however dignified with ecclesiastical office, is there, who would not do his utmost to protect a Dissenter,

or any persuasion, in any matter in which the law empowered him to do so? Where have we ever heard of an opponent of the Church so bitter in his opposition that he would look on and see the rector of the parish robbed or assaulted and yet not aid him, simply because he was a State-connected priest?

The fact is, Sir, we have long since arrived at a knowledge of the value of that first element of civilization—protection to life, limb, and property—without a due sense of which daily life is daily pain, the life of night is nightly fear. We contend against every oppression of law and custom, fancied or real, with a determination equal to that shown by any of the injured in creed, in privilege, or in pocket in any country on earth; we give and take every bearable licence of tongue and pen; but before we enter the ring or any contention, public or private, we shake hands on this matter of agreement—until laws are altered laws shall be upheld; for we all know very well if we allow licence to break the laws we object to, we do so at the risk of the breakage of the laws on which all we have depends. We don't read tenant-right to be licensed landlord robbery; we don't understand that landlord oppression justifies landlord assassination; we don't say the hungry cannot be thieves if they only take food; we don't argue that to owe what we cannot pay justifies our plunder of our debtor; we don't justify or connive at the disturbance of all respect for law simply because there may exist some laws which are abhorrent to our creed or our political opinion. Our magistrates could put no sane or honourable construction on any feeling which should tempt them to use, abuse, or pervert their position as dispensers of strict justice to all on any party grounds, even of recent date.

much less or so ancient a date as to have become mere matter of history. It can, then, be no matter of surprise to us that we live under a state of things in England altogether so different from that which now disfigures, degrades, and destroys all that is good to look upon, honourable, and profitable in Ireland.

We for ever hear it said, Why do not the Lord Lieutenant and Government of Ireland force the law into respect there—that part of the law, at least, which preserves to a subject the possession of his property in something like peace and quiet? Alas, Sir, this question is easier put than answered. When a nation is unanimous on a political question, even should the voice that claims that nation's will speak treason, there is the dilemma. How shall a nation be indicted? Where shall be the court? Who shall constitute the jury? It is of no use concealing the fact; there is imminent danger, in a large proportion of Ireland, of unanimity in opposition to the first principles of those laws which are admitted to be for the general good in every nation. What between those who are leagued against the rights of property, those who covertly connive at their league, those who are afraid to oppose it, and those who are careless of everything but the gratification of a spirit of partisanship, the upholders of the law are fast becoming a small minority. Government is not a mere matter of police and military organization. No country can be well ruled by mere stipendiary force; laws require the aid of all well-doers to support them; they claim of every individual, in any and every position of life, that if he be not in heart and purpose dishonest, he be a supporter in heart and hand of the laws which restrain evildoers. The magistrate and the constable are the instru-

ments to carry on and out the common will ; when that common will is opposed to law and order, it becomes a matter either of anarchy and confusion, or of that despotism which secures by paid force, overwhelming in its amount, that forced obedience to law which the help of every civilized society absolutely requires.

Let me ask of those mad, or misguided, or malevolent men who are now fostering by their tongues and pens the present agrarian outrages in the West and South of Ireland, have they looked to what must be the end of this state of things? Having called from the depths of misery and ignorance a spirit of wild, daring outrage, which respects no law, is sparing of no crime—having seen that spirit rise at their call and proceed to work out its crusade of evil—where do they think that it will stay its hand? How shall they chain this monster of their creation, so that he shall only prey on landlords, only steal corn, murder policemen? Do they think that they can still the waves of rapine at any given moment by pouring out on them a torrent of the old oil of political grievance or religious grievance? When all the corn is stolen, all the landlords ruined, every haggard empty, every farm a waste, all industry checked, all capital locked up, the good landlord and the bad landlord involved in one common ruin, do they think these crowds, triumphant in their villany, but starving on their laurels, will at once become again the mere tools of political agitation, shouters of old political war cries, worshippers of itinerant declaimers of sedition. No, Sir; let this system run out its course, encouraged by the faint disapproval of a Press which can indeed boast of talent as great as it is perverted—let the war against rent rend sunder all local ties, destroy all local energy

for good, and though you cast down the Church as a bone to be at once devoured, repeal of the Union as only waiting to be accepted, Ulster tenant-right (interpreted according to Holycross interpretation) as already prepared for national adoption,—though you offered these a crown to give O'Brien, and power to recall him to accept it,—though you could canonize the late O'Connell, and put the present one into his shoes, all would fail, for I am satisfied the riddle is now being read, the secret of monster agitators is being developed. Monster meetings cheered the repeal orators, but for repeal the peasant reads *land*—land at his own value, on his own terms. It was well understood by those who trained the peasantry for these meetings that their duty was simply to bring them together; how they did it was left to themselves. It is scarcely to be believed how little the Irish peasantry know about the things for which they have been trained to shout; the commonest cant terms of the agitation schools are as algebra to tens of thousands of those whose presence gave life to agitation. They know little of their national history so far as regards its political features; they care next to nothing for any of the men who built a reputation upon their supposed love. They know well the history of their own localities; their traditional knowledge of all matters connected with land, so far as it regards who have held it, who have left it, who have owned, or who have claimed it, is wonderful. From generation to generation they have been bred in a love of the possession of land proportionate to their entire dependence on such possession. They saw that their numbers forced land up to a fictitious value—still it was life to them; they clung to it as their only hope. Close observers of every cloud threatening their

possession of it, they saw the gradual accumulation of debt on the proprietors' estates as a warning of a time when there must be sales, and their holdings might be sold. They felt the increasing pressure of the landlord's debts in the landlord's rapacity, in the shape of increasing rent; still they paid it—it was their life, they knew no other hope of life. They heard the agitator denounce the landlords; they knew monster meetings were so many engines of intimidation as against the owners of property. Repeal was the text from which landlords were to be preached into submissive fear; they were content to gain that end from any text. "Sure, and if we can meet in our blessed thousands to intimidate the Saxon Government, won't it be just telling them that we could meet too to terrify the landlords of us?" The men who taught them to come in their power of numbers, to suit their particular purpose, are dead or transported; their lesson survives. They can now intimidate for their own ends.

An Irish patriot at this moment would feel that the one great question is not whether the Government of Ireland should be vested in the united legislating and executive powers of the two countries of England and Ireland, but whether all government is to be at an end, and every Irish interest left at the mercy of ignorant men, driven by their own want to follow a path for their own purposes, once taught to them to further the mere political ends of ambitious leaders. Real patriotism would, for the present at least, shelve every other topic of public interest but the one, all-pushing one—is mob law to rule?—is all legal right to succumb at the dictation of a desperate peasantry used as instruments by a dishonest tenantry? Are the horrors of another year's

famine to be made more horrible by a present wanton waste of food; by a depression of every energy which could act in its mitigation; by a course of violent outrage which shall steel the hearts of the charitable against a people who so rashly induce the very evils the consequences of which must fall upon themselves?

Let the tradesmen of every town look to it—the owners of every species of property—all who would be saved from the supremacy of a mob tyranny, invading every right and destroying the very base of every interest on which men rely for the security of their possessions, the safety of their very lives. I admit at once that the law of "land tenure" may need improvement—that it has been made an instrument of tyranny; I admit that want is driving many to crime; still this cannot for one moment justify any connivance at those deeds of violence which now prevail. All order is endangered, all law is defied. If the Government is to contend against this outbreak with no local aid given for the good of the commonweal,—if the power of the Executive is to be hampered and hindered by the cowardice of those whose position demands that they should firmly assist it,—if the priesthood choose to look on with arms folded and mute tongues,—if magistrates choose this season of common danger to show their sense of offence against the Government by adding their share of indecorous discontent and giving none or a mere cold service to the State,—if the Press is still to keep irritating old sores, and giving out daily new causes of irritation, it is clear what the issue must be. Force must meet force. There will be a cost of life dreadful to contemplate, and that, too, at a cost to every acre of Irish property which will lead to one common ruin. But the law will

prevail; the Irish will be saved even from themselves. The very men who now connive at or encourage lawlessness will be the most suffering of its victims. To their own ruin will be added the shame of having, under the false plea of patriotism, been the betrayers of that ignorant, hard-driven class, whose bad habits they made worse; whose prejudices they fostered into hate; whom, starving from scarcity, they yet taught to make still more scarce all means of obtaining bread—whom they irritated into rebellion, and then left them to meet all its awful consequences. Let those who now sneer at the evil of evasion of debt to the landlord look to it. Repudiation is a very catching disorder; there are few debtors who do not look on creditors as oppressive in their claims. Anarchy will heed figures on red-ruled paper quite as little as it heeds a bailiff's process.

S. G. O.

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