

chance of writing the "great American novel." But may they not let us have a few readable Canadian stories? If they are to be historical, and perhaps historical novels only are demanded, everything should not be sacrificed to dry details. Can any one fancy a more distressing thing than a heavy, over-burdened historical novel, where the characters move like plaster images, and the action halts? From novels of that sort defend us! A *souppçon* of history ought to leaven every hundred pages. But perhaps directions for a Canadian novel are not needed.

GEORGE STEWART, JUN.

### EVENTS IN ENGLAND.

THOSE who do not wish to see the Mother Country dismembered and humiliated may be glad to hear that while cable accounts of what is going on are still adapted to the Fenian taste, private accounts are more hopeful. Thomas Hughes, among others, writes to me very confidently as to the prospects of Liberal Unionism and as to the ultimate issue of the struggle. He speaks very lightly of the significance of the bye-elections. He admits that Mr. Gladstone is doing a great deal of mischief by his appeals to Provincial hatred in Wales and Scotland, but says that there is little chance of his ever being in power again. Another correspondent, who watches events very carefully and is not over-sanguine, after describing a speech of Mr. Morley—who has now evidently sunk to the level of mere demagogism,—expresses his firm belief that the Union will never be in Mr. Morley's hands.

Coalition is probably at hand. This I say on what I deem the best authority. The Government will then receive an accession of administrative force—of which, to tell the truth, it stands in need—and at the same time it will broaden its basis in the electorate. As I have said before, the loss of the bye-elections is probably to be ascribed largely to the votes of Liberals who return to the old party lines now that the great issue of the Union is no longer distinctly before the people. It may be hoped that Lord Hartington's name will attract these electors once more, and finally, to the Unionist and National standard. We must be grateful to Lord Salisbury, who has behaved admirably except in the one fatal hour when, led astray by the shallow and profligate ambition of Lord Randolph Churchill, he accepted office at the hands of the Parnellites, and as the price of their momentary support abandoned the Crimes Act. But he is too much identified in the public mind with the highest and most reactionary Toryism to command much Liberal support except under the most manifest pressure of public peril, and his name, for the same reason, is particularly unacceptable to the masses. His health, it is to be feared, is failing under his immense burden of anxieties, and failing health shatters any nerve which is not adamant. If ever unshaken nerve was required in a British Minister it is now, when to the Irish difficulty there may any day be added a crisis of the most formidable kind in foreign affairs. In case of a war between France and Germany—which in the present temper of both nations may any day break out—it will be absolutely necessary, at whatever risk or cost, to impose neutrality upon Russia.

When the coalition has taken place there will be two parties in British politics. One, under whatever name, will be Liberal-Conservative, and will comprehend all who uphold the unity of the nation and are opposed to revolution. The other will comprehend all the Radicals and Disunionists, whether English or Irish. It will then be seen whether patriotism is in the majority or not. If it is not, the crash must come, and the nation must go through some rough process by which fresh forces, perhaps of a republican kind, will be called out, and a new order of things will be evolved.

Already, in helping the rebel Irish to wreck the House of Commons by obstruction, and in supporting the insurrectionary League against the Queen's Government in Ireland, the Gladstonian Opposition seems to have crossed the line which divides party action from civil war; and calamitous as a resort to force is, worse things might happen than the decision by a trial of strength, which would probably be short, of the question whether the destiny of England is to be settled by her patriotism and her worth or by a combination of lawless Irish and denationalised factory-hands, set on and subsidised by a foreign conspiracy.

One of my correspondents speaks very hopefully of Mr. Balfour, who, he says, is now all that could be desired as a debater and as an administrator, "one who means business, without the least bounce or bluster;" while his health, which was supposed to be weak, appears to have borne the strain well. Mr. Balfour's appointment, it will be remembered, was at first received with mistrust on the one side and with ridicule on the other. Amidst the general failure of statesmanlike firmness and fortitude which is the worst part of the situation, we welcome anything

which seems to show that there is still in the public character of England latent force which may be evoked by national peril. The wonderful manner in which Lord Hartington, who used to be regarded as little better than a lounge, has risen to the needs of the situation, is above all things reassuring to those who tremble for their country.

I would call special attention to the article in the *Nineteenth Century* by Theodore Von Bunsen (the son, I presume, of Dr. Arnold's illustrious friend), entitled, "A German View of Mr. Gladstone." Herr Bunsen declares that notwithstanding many considerations and influences that might dispose the other way, public opinion in Germany has been even quicker and less hesitating than in Great Britain to range itself on the side of the Liberal Unionists *versus* the Home Rulers. A correspondent of the *Times*, whose statement has not been contradicted, deposed the other day to the same effect with regard to the organs of public opinion in Italy. The Italians are Unionists; they have just achieved by a glorious struggle the unification of their own country. They have moreover still a vivid recollection of their encounter with an Irish army, which had come to fight for the Pope and the Bourbon against Italian independence. Mr. Gladstone, who declares that the whole civilised world is with him and against England, will have to put Germany and Italy out of the civilised world.

Mr. Gladstone after capitulating to Mr. Parnell took up Irish history to find justifications for his surrender. A study of history so hasty, superficial, and prejudiced naturally led him into blunders; and these have been exposed, notably by Dr. Ingram, who, in his history of the Union, has scattered to the winds the charge of "blackguardism," levelled by Mr. Gladstone against Pitt, a man with all his faults not less honourable and upright, although considerably more patriotic than the "old Parliamentary hand." Instead of admitting incontrovertible facts and doing justice to Pitt's memory, Mr. Gladstone, if the cable summary of his article is correct, has recourse to the singular expedient of declaring that the history of the Union is lost, a general conspiracy having existed to suppress the documentary evidence. If the history of the transaction is lost, it is difficult to see how Mr. Gladstone can so confidently pronounce on its character. But who believes in this conspiracy so suddenly hatched from Mr. Gladstone's brain? The Union was fiercely opposed by the Whigs in the British Parliament as well as by their allies in Ireland, and we may depend upon it that nothing was neglected at the time which could incriminate the author of the measure and discredit the measure itself. Sir Jonah Barrington laboured with the industry of the most intense hostility to bring to light every sort of scandal. If a conspiracy to suppress evidence had existed, about the first things suppressed surely would have been those letters of Lord Cornwallis, which have been preserved to us in their integrity and upon certain passages in which the imputation of "blackguardism" is largely founded. Mr. Gladstone, according to the cable report, accuses the Home Office of locking up papers which contain proofs of the scandals and not allowing them to be seen. Probably no Ministry of the Interior in Europe would allow its archives to be rummaged, even for a purpose so laudable in Mr. Gladstone's eyes as that of casting a stain upon the honour of the country. But if the authorities of the Home Office had been in a conspiracy to suppress evidence, instead of locking up the papers they would have destroyed them. I have reason, moreover, for believing that none but strictly official papers are deposited in the archives of the Home Office, and it is not in strictly official papers that the evidences of scandals are likely to be found.

GOLDWIN SMITH.

### INDUSTRIAL PARLIAMENTS:

THEIR RELATION TO COMMERCIAL UNION AND TO IRISH HOME RULE.

A LITTLE book, recently reviewed in *THE WEEK*, presented a plea for what might be called an Imperial public opinion. By the courtesy of the editor the author is permitted to continue the subject in these columns.

The English race has great common interests, not limited by mere geographical separations, nor even by political boundary lines. At the bottom of what is known as the "Irish Question," for instance, are larger problems, touching the Colonies and the United States almost as much as Great Britain, and worthy of the earnest and dispassionate study of thinkers in all those countries.

The real difficulty, which has been made prominent by events in Ireland, is the difficulty of doing impartial justice between class interests by Parliamentary action. Far from being a merely local embarrassment, this is a difficulty which finds its parallel in the experience of all modern English-speaking and constitutionally governed peoples.

Every popular Parliament tends to become an untrustworthy and inefficient deliberative body as soon as a question between influential class interests has come to the front. The question is made the football of political parties, and ceases from that moment to be capable of receiving sincere and *bona fide* treatment.

Observe the treatment of the Fishery question in the United States: