

OUR LONDON LETTER.

(From our own Correspondent.)

It is reported that Mr. Bradlaugh will refuse to take the oath of allegiance which is tendered to every member. That he will refuse to take the oath in the ordinary form on the Testament, of course goes without saying, but the statement which is made goes further than this, and anticipates a refusal even to affirm or declare that he will, in the words of the oath, bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, her heirs and successors. The statement is persistently made, and it has, so far as I know, not been denied, else I should have hesitated to believe it. What will happen on the refusal is variously described, but I think there is no doubt that, among other things, it would render his seat for Northampton vacant. Every member of either House is required by the Constitution to declare on oath, or what amounts to an oath, that he will be faithful to the Queen, and I cannot see what Mr. Bradlaugh would gain by trying to make himself an exception. Even though the statement is persistently repeated by those who may be supposed to know something of Mr. Bradlaugh's inner consciousness, I still hesitate to believe it.

Mr. Morley's apology for the part he took in Bradlaugh's election, illustrates, in a striking manner, the lengths to which some of our public men will suffer themselves to be led in promoting the success of their political party at the expense of their religion. Here we have the very Apostle of Nonconformity in England lending the weight and influence of his name in favour of the return to Parliament of Mr. Bradlaugh, who, as the Vicar of Northampton justly says, is identified "with Atheism and more than Atheism," and all Mr. Morley can say, now the mischief is done, is that he deeply regrets the step which he took, and that he feels sure no one who knows him will doubt that he views, with "intense repugnance, the opinions which are held by Mr. Bradlaugh on religious and social questions."

"Disestablishment" is the word which is now trembling on every tongue. But I hope and believe it is a false alarm, if disestablishment means that thing which, in its fullest sense, it must mean. Injurious in one sense, as I believe it would be to the Church of England, it would, I am confident, be far more injurious to the people of England. Injurious to the Church of England it would be if it diminished in the slightest degree the breadth and freedom of opinion which at present, amidst whatever difficulties, is the glory of the Establishment. Much more disastrous in its action upon the villages of England, and upon the poor of England, whom it must unquestionably deprive of any security or any right to the ministrations of a clergyman, a minister of God in the midst of them.

My opinion is, if I have understood the position of things at this moment, that the consequence of a proposal for the disestablishment of the Church of England would be to break up the triumphant phalanx of the Liberals into two at least, probably into many divided sections. I am quite aware that there are degrees and kinds of disestablishment. Some will say, and to a certain extent it is true, that we have been busy at disestablishment for the last 50 years. The repeal of the Corporation and Tests Act was the first step towards it, because it made it possible legally for a man to be a citizen, to exercise every function of citizenship, and not be a Churchman. The time had come for it, and it could not be averted, and every step which has been taken in the same direction has been taken because the time was alive for it, and because the result could not be averted. From the last consequences of this progressive process I trust God may save what we still proudly call the Church of England.

Should our worst fears be realized, and the "Atalanta" be numbered among the ill-fated ones of her Majesty's ships, it will be a most painful and melancholy coincidence, specially intensifying the grief to be borne by the family of her gallant captain, Francis Sterling, that some few years ago Commander Sterling, a very near relative, should have set sail, with his wife and children, in the steamer "City of Boston," homeward bound from Halifax, and never been heard of more. Both equally good men and true, and such as the Queen's service can ill afford to lose.

The Czar is now, to all intents and purposes, a prisoner in his own palace. Ten

officers of the guard are charged with the protection of the building, and their duty is to keep watch over the inhabitants. Special regulations are issued for the surveillance of each floor of the palace. It is ordered that the officers on guard at the floor where the Emperor and Empress reside shall turn back every one who is found there without special authority, and does not belong to the Imperial family. Between twelve at night and eight in the morning, not even the Czarowitch is admitted without a special pass, to be obtained from the Court Marshal, Von Grote. This regulation is so strictly carried out that Dr. Botkin, the Empress's body physician, had to wait one night for a pass before he was admitted to his patient, and the medicine he had sent for was also kept back until authority for its admission was obtained. The subterranean apartments have all been blocked up, it having been decided that they shall no longer be inhabited.

The death of Dr. Kenaly within a few days of his rejection by the constituency of Stoke, is a melancholy and almost tragic incident of the General Election. The Doctor conducted his canvass under serious disadvantages. He suffered from an abscess on the foot, the painfulness of which, as he told some of his supporters while traversing the borough to address the electors, was often very excruciating. After his defeat he returned to town exhausted and dispirited; and mortification of the foot rapidly setting in, he soon expired. In February, 1875, he was elected as an Independent representative for Stoke upon Trent by upwards of 6,000 votes, mainly as a tribute to his advocacy of the cause of the Claimant. In April, 1880, he polled little more than 1,000 votes. Such is the instability of popular favour!

Our "surplus population" are betaking themselves to other shores at a rate that must, if continued, soon affect the labor market in this country. The flow of the tide is mainly towards the U. States. The return of the Emigration Office at Liverpool shows that during the past month 83 vessels left the Mersey with no less than 16,353 adult male passengers. From these, however, must be deducted 5,614 who were either returning Americans or foreigners of European countries. The destination of 12,167 of the passengers was the United States; only 812 went to British North America. Probably some of the agriculturists who land in the United States will find their way to the Dominion of Canada, from the now corn growing districts of which the most hopeful and cheering accounts continue to come from persons who have already settled there. A farmer of Manitoba is considered here one of the most independent beings in the world.

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