

concerns of which that Parliament disposes. And this, at first blush, may look all right.

You remember the old couplet:

"For forms of government let fools contest;
What'er is best administered is best."

I do not agree; because I think forms, especially in the direction of securities for freedom, are often absolutely vital. But it is true that forms, however excellent they may be, are often evaded or perverted; that the working of a system, or the administration of a law, may make it either beneficial or intolerable; that a seeming show of freedom, either in legislation or in administration, may be so managed as to result in slavery. And this we say is, both legislatively and executively, the case in Ireland. The truth is, that Ireland lives under a pretended, but not a real, system of liberty and equal rights; and the Union under a common Parliament lacks the essential securities of freedom. For how does it work? It gives to England, the predominant partner, the power, habitually used, of imposing her legislative and executive pleasure on the weaker island, and of governing her in all local matters as a subject people. What, after all, is the essential element of political freedom? It is this; that a people should be ruled under laws which are made by their own elected representatives, and administered by their own chosen officers; both Legislature and Executive being effectively responsible to the people whom they rule. But the Parliament which legislates for Ireland has for generations systematically refused to listen to argument, and has in the end been forced, not through conviction of its soundness, but only from fear of the consequences of longer refusal, to concede legislation for which four-fifths of the Irish people pressed, while it has imposed on her legislation to which four-fifths objected. We are eighty out of a hundred representatives of Ireland; but there are 570 representatives of Britain. They do with us what they will; and the voice of the twenty Irish anti-Nationalist members is with them more powerful than that of the eighty Nationalists.

REFORMS WON ONLY BY FORCE.

As to the making of laws, judge by the course of events. It took a generation, a tremendous agitation, and the imminence of civil war, to obtain Catholic emancipation; and then it was accompanied by an extensive measure of disenfranchisement. It took near two generations, great violence, and a tithe war to remedy the abuse under which the Catholic majority were forced, out of their poverty, to pay for the luxurious support of the church of the minority, itself rich in all save congregations. It took over two generations, with the same accompaniments—and with dynamite and Fenianism—to disestablish and partly disendow the church of the minority. It took near three generations, with the most tragic national history in the world—with a sad, but yet not surprising record of violence