

that measure is still at the top of the Liberal programme, and that any slackness or indefinite delay in carrying out that part of the programme would lead to a wider and more lasting split in the Liberal ranks than the rupture of 1886. Lord Salisbury himself, Mr. Morley said, was about to bring in a measure of local self-government for Ireland, which would inevitably lead to the establishment of a popular central Government. On the other hand, late cablegrams represent Mr. Balfour as having declared at Plymouth, in opposition to Mr. Morley, that the local government which it is proposed to give to Ireland will not be Home Rule, small or large. He admits, however, and the admission, when we come to reflect on it, is seen to be a very large one, that the first results of the new measure will probably be to turn out the landlord party which now controls the counties. This he thinks is regrettable but inevitable. The question then is whether this movement, and that other produced by the Land Purchase Act—whose first operation is just chronicled in the purchase of Lord Lorgan's estate by eighty-six tenants, thus replacing one landlord by eighty-six native landowners—will not both be in the direction of ultimate Home Rule, in the Liberal if not in the full Nationalist sense. Mr. Morley says: "Yes, certainly;" Mr. Balfour says, with equal emphasis: "No. The trend of both these movements is in the opposite direction." In order to form an opinion of any value as to which is right, we should need to know, as a matter of fact, whether and to what extent the heart of the Irish people themselves, as distinct from their political leaders and agitators, is set on Home Rule for its own sake and not simply as a means to an end. On this point the evidence is so contradictory that it seems impossible to decide with any degree of certainty. Time alone can tell. This much seems tolerably clear. If Irish Nationalism is the genuine and intense passion which its advocates would have the world believe it to be, nothing can be much surer than that all such concessions as those under consideration will but feed its flame, while increasing its resources. If, on the other hand, Irish Nationalism is, as many believe, but the outcome of discontent with past physical and political conditions, it is equally certain that it will subside and die with the removal of the causes which begat it and have kept it so long alive.

THE German Emperor and Government seem just now to be on the point of giving the nation an object lesson on the beneficence of high taxation of the necessities of life, which, it is not unlikely, may sink deep into the national mind. There can be no doubt that the Russian ukase forbidding the exportation of rye will prove a very severe blow to the poorer classes in large sections of Germany. It has been hoped that the immediate effects of the measure might be in some measure obviated for the present by the importation of large quantities before the 27th inst., the date at which the ukase goes into operation. But if the latest rumour prove true, as is not improbable, that the Russian railway management is refusing in the meantime to provide facilities for the transportation of grain to the German frontier, that hope will be disappointed, and the results of the edict will be at once felt. In view of the distress and privation sure to follow, it was a most natural thing to expect that the German Chancellor would have yielded to the popular request to reduce the corn duties. Indeed, to one looking at the subject from any abstract point of view, few things would seem more unnatural, or more inconsistent with a high state of civilization, than that the Government of a people supposed to be self-ruling and free should persist in maintaining high taxes upon the food of the people in a time of scarcity and threatened privation. Yet this is just what the German Government is doing and declares its purpose to do. The indications at present are that the Cabinet and the Emperor, who is believed to cordially approve its present policy, will ultimately be forced to give way, and to reduce or repeal the obnoxious taxes, in spite of their present resolves to the contrary. The latest despatches are to the effect that they have now decided, as an experiment, to reduce freight rates on corn and other cereals over the State railways, a partial measure which, while helping a little, may operate as a wedge to cleave the way for the larger proposal. It is not unlikely that the Government's reluctance to reduce the taxes may spring not more from their unwillingness to sacrifice the revenue than from a shrewd suspicion that it will prove much easier to reduce taxes on food in a time of scarcity than to reimpose them when the scarcity is over. But if, on the other hand, it persists in its refusal it may yet have

to reckon with a great anti-Corn-Law agitation not unlike that which swept over England half a century ago.

#### JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

THOUGH full of years and with a more than ordinarily busy and successful life-work left behind him, James Russell Lowell can ill be spared from the great men of America. America's men of letters are few, her men of affairs are perhaps fewer still, and those who combine literature and statesmanship are scarce indeed. Of such men America has had in the past here and there splendid examples, and in a young and vigorous nation inheriting good traits and placed amidst stimulating surroundings this was but natural. In later years the mantle fell upon Lowell. He was at once a poet, a critic, and a politician, and he was these in this order. True, to him was not given a double portion of the prophetic spirit; he was not super-eminent in either poetry, criticism, or politics; but no man in America of recent years so conspicuously succeeded in their combination. In all future histories of New World poetical, literary, and political progress his share in the national development will claim and will receive ample study.

As a poet Lowell is difficult to rank. To name him in the same breath with those whom we regard as supreme and typical guardians of the sacred fire is of course impossible. The divine art of poetry was not his. Brilliant wit, incisive satire, genial humour, and a remarkable and sprightly command of metrical expression—all these were his; and added to them was a sanity, a virility, a humane and wholesome manliness which conduced to elevate lighter graces to a plane which demanded serious attention. Nor was there lacking breadth of view, nor tenderness and human sympathy. If the "Biglow Papers" and "A Fable for Critics" exhibit the first-named characteristics, certainly the Harvard "Commemoration Ode," "Auf Wiedersehen," and "To H. W. L." exhibit the latter. Nevertheless none of these things nor do all of them constitute poetry. Lowell was not a poet in the sense in which Spenser was a poet, Burns was a poet, Keats was a poet. His lips had not been "touched and purified by the hallowed fire"; we cannot assert that he "suggests noble grounds for the noble emotions"; he does not "awaken in us a wonderfully full, new, and intimate sense of things." However, what he did achieve will last long and will deserve to last. What he might have done had he wooed the Muse whole-heartedly it is difficult to say: the brilliancy of the wit, the causticity of the satire, the deftness of the verbal manipulation promise much. Even as it is, it is as a poet probably that the populace will remember him best.

As a critic, too, Lowell succeeded and failed in the same points as those in which he succeeded and failed as a poet. His appreciation was keen and at the same time broad; indeed the breadth of his sympathies was perhaps the dominant note of his criticism: he unfolded Dante in a way his pupils will never forget; he, an American, was the man chosen to speak to Englishmen of Fielding, "the most thoroughly English of writers"; and Shakespeare and Dryden and Wordsworth and Swinburne and Lessing—he had that in him that could discern and evaluate and convey what each of these had to teach. His justice too, and his tolerance, and his cosmopolitanism—without which three essentials no critic can be called great—were his by nature and were by him cultivated as only the true critic knows how to cultivate them. Yet had he one thing lacking. Criticism of the highest type is more than criticism; it does not rest satisfied with interpretation; it goes beyond weighing merits and demerits. Between the critic of the first rank and the critic of the second there is a difference similar to that between the metaphysicians of the school of Locke and the metaphysicians of the school of Leibnitz: those held that there was nothing in the intellect which was not already in the senses; these added, *nisi intellectus ipse*. So with criticism: a Ste. Beuve, a Matthew Arnold, an Edmond Scherer, an Amiel—these add to criticism a positive something, they bring ideas that are new, create that which was not in what they criticized. Criticism for them is but a vehicle for fresh products. It was here Lowell fell short of excellence, but he fell short of excellence only where the greatest have succeeded.

As a politician Lowell's position was peculiarly his own, as might have been expected of a man who was a man of letters first and a politician afterwards. The breadth and cosmopolitanism prominent in his poetry and

in his criticism was, of course, the distinctive feature of his political views also. At heart he was of no party but that of the right, and for that party he fought, and with his own weapons, as determinedly as the extremest follower of faction. The "Biglow Papers" have left an indelible scar on the features of a self-seeking policy, and it will be some time ere such motives as ruled in the time of the civil war dare to show their face again. It is also as United States' representative in England that memory will often and kindly recall him as a politician. If his diplomatic duties were not arduous, nevertheless he succeeded in wondrously enhancing that comity which perhaps does not always overflow between the United Kingdom and the United States, and for this surely both nations owe him much thanks.

We close as we began by saying that it is as a man of at once both letters and affairs that Lowell will deserve to be remembered. That the former attribute preponderated is no doubt true, but that he was both there is abundant evidence: his most popular works, the two series of "Biglow Papers," prove it; his editorial duties on the *Atlantic Monthly* and the *North American Review* prove it; his posts at Madrid and St. James's prove it. Had he been only a writer his writings would have been of quite another stamp; had he been only a politician his poems and his criticisms would not have lived. The combination is rare enough to allow of a high appreciation of one who combined letters and politics even in not a startling degree. For is he not in the same class with Burke and Sheridan, nay with Philip Sidney and Francis Bacon?

#### OTTAWA LETTER.

THE thunderstorm which burst over Sir John Macdonald's funeral, culminating in a tremendous peal just as his body passed the Parliament Buildings, was in truth a portent. The political deluge has followed quickly, and now the first tremours of upheaval are distinctly to be felt. There was not in the darkest days of the Pacific Scandal, nor during the decadence of the Mackenzie administration, more uncertainty, excitement and distrust than now prevail at Ottawa. Sir Hector Langevin's resignation, it is openly asserted, was forced, and now his friends are said to be insisting, not only upon his being "whitewashed," but upon his being retained in the Cabinet, instead of retiring into the seclusion which it was supposed was not only necessary but needed on account of his health. There is no doubt the report of the committee will be framed to exonerate him from Mr. Tarte's charges, but that report will be delayed still longer by the production of evidence in rebuttal, although it was distinctly understood at the last meeting that nothing remained to be done except to hear counsel. These gentlemen have had enough of the proceedings already and will be glad to get back to their homes and usual work. So they announced that they would simply submit written statements, except Mr. Fitzpatrick, counsel for Mr. Thomas McGreevy, who perhaps prefers the blandishments of oratory. Parliamentary Committees, as a rule, prefer to do all the talking themselves. However, Mr. Fitzpatrick will have a larger audience at the Bar of the House, whither Mr. McGreevy is to be brought, in custody this time, having failed to obey the order to present himself there. There was nothing said on either side when Sir John Thompson moved the order for his arrest. Mr. Laurier gave a quiet nod of assent and the motion was carried. Lieut.-Colonel Smith, the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms, will now have the benefit of a trip down the St. Lawrence to find Mr. McGreevy, who is said to have gone to the Saguenay.

Sir Hector's cross-examination did not bring about the surprises which were looked for. Either Mr. Tarte has no more proofs or is not going to produce them. Some people say that they are now withheld to offset the further developments in the Armstrong-Pacaud affair, in which not only Mr. Tarte's associates are concerned but his own name appears. As far as legal proof goes the cross-examination did not change the situation at all, but the effect of his deliberate denial of everything was a good deal weakened by Sir Hector's evident determination to sacrifice everything and everybody rather than admit the least trifle affecting himself, by the inconsistency of the positions he took simultaneously, and by his absolute refusal to attempt to give any explanation of certain embarrassing facts, such as his intimacy with Mr. Thomas McGreevy for so many years and yet being ignorant of that gentleman's dealings as regards election funds. The coolness which he is renowned for became rather taxed towards the end, and under Mr. Davies' reiteration of questions he showed some signs of annoyance, naturally enough. A disinterested onlooker can find much to pity in the position of both accused and witnesses subjected to the inquisitorial processes of Parliamentary Committees, which are apt to go to extremes, and to keep up the torture till something is said as desired to be said. Nobody has any sympathy to waste on Mr. Owen Murphy, however, and his refusal to sign his evidence weakens its force a good deal, while it will only serve as a trivial obstacle to any proceedings instituted against him. If the committee would bring in the Scotch verdict, "not proven," it would about express the view of the case that is generally accepted here.