

only by his practice sanctioned the use of wine but by his ordinance has enjoined it forever. The Archdeacon makes a great deal of Mohamet, but he will hardly assert that Mohamet has been successful on the whole in curing men of sensuality, much less that he has been equally successful with the teacher whose system is not asceticism but genial innocence.

A PAPER by a correspondent at Washington, given in another column, refers to a coming event which has for some time been casting its shadow before it. The people of the United States cannot be justly accused of a thirst for territorial aggrandizement: they refused St. Domingo; they would not have accepted Alaska if they had not been almost entrapped into it by Mr. Seward; they have allowed to pass fair pretexts for annexing Cuba and for invading Mexico. In truth their prevalent feeling is rather a fear of over-extension, engendered by their experience of Secession, than a desire of further enlarging their vast domain. But Mexico is sliding into the Union. She is being commercially annexed by the progress of railways built by Americans, by American investment in her industries, and by the necessary tendency of the commercial element in her to place itself under the protection of a regular and stable government which respects and maintains the rights of property. She will be a perilous though a rich acquisition. The Indian is a bad citizen; the degenerate Spaniard is not much better: in some respects perhaps he is worse. The rule of Diaz enforced a certain measure of order; it could not infuse political life. Commerce, perhaps, may manage to exercise a political control. Of mere territorial extension the Federal system is capable almost without limit, so long as the whole territory is still within a ring fence and there is no departure from that Federal principle which allows each State, so far as internal legislation and development are concerned, to be in itself a little nation. However numerous the States in a federation may be, not one of them is likely to rebel against a Union which simply affords them external security and internal peace, with freedom of trade and intercommunication. Cuba is separated from the Union by too wide a sea: she would be beyond the reach of the assimilating forces; politically she would be a paradise of carpet-baggers, and would be sure to send to Congress the most corrupt and corrupting of delegations. St. Domingo would have been equally a nuisance though on a smaller scale. We need not fear that the addition of Mexico will any more than the addition of Texas or of the new States in the West make the Republic a conquering power or a dangerous neighbour. The character of the people, now that the Southern aristocracy has ceased to trouble, is essentially commercial and unaggressive. To Mexico herself and to the world at large, so far as it is interested in the development of Mexican resources, the change will be an immense gain.

THE *Fortnightly* arrives with Mr. Joseph Chamberlain's proposal to institute National Councils, as he calls them—in effect, Parliaments for England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. The editor of the *Fortnightly* assures us that this is the Radical programme, and that the scheme will infallibly be moulded into a legislative form by the hands of Mr. Gladstone himself. Has Mr. Gladstone consented at the same time to mould a scheme for compelling all owners of property to pay a "ransom" to the political retainers of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain? He has run a splendid course, but if he allows himself to be made the instrument of sacrificing the unity of the nation to a shallow and greedy ambition, he may yet cancel his illustrious services, and stand in history beside the miserable politicians who at the Restoration undid, for the purposes of their wretched game, the work of unification done by the great Protector. How dangerous it is to revive, in a political sense, ancient lines of national division with which so much of historical animosity as well as of historical pride is connected, nobody whose vision is undimmed by faction or selfishness can fail to see. Every good object which this perilous archaism could serve may be served equally well by improved local institutions of the ordinary kind, in conjunction with a concerted action of the members of the Scotch, Welsh or Irish delegations at Westminster on local questions, of which the members of the Scotch delegation have long been setting the example. No real line, social or commercial, such as ought to form the boundary between separate institutions, now severs North from South Britain, either of the two from Wales, or any one of the three from the Protestant and Teutonic North of Ireland. There is more of a basis for a political nationality in the contrast between the Agricultural South and the Manufacturing North of England than there is in any difference between Kent and the Lothians, or between Manchester and Glasgow. The divisions of the Hiptarchy would really be found more natural. For a Federal union, as has been said before, a group consisting of one large and three small States does not afford a suitable basis, and the working of such a confederation would be fraught with difficulty and danger, even if it were not, as in the present case it would be, baptized in mutual jealousy and strife. It is needless to

say that the idea would never have entered the head of anyone who was not bidding for the Irish Vote. But the masters of the Irish Vote tell Mr. Chamberlain frankly that it is not to be had at that price: they see the advantage which his impatient thirst of power and the bidding of the Tories against him afford them, and mean to rest satisfied with nothing short of "a sovereign assembly" for Ireland and a despotic control of that sovereign assembly for themselves. If they accept the National Council at Mr. Chamberlain's hands, it will be with a determination at once to make it the organ of Irish resistance to the Imperial Legislature, and thus to bring about Disunion.

In one respect Mr. Chamberlain's manifesto is memorable. It shows how little there is to justify Irish rebellion apart from the existence of the Union. Though padded with rhetorical forms and phrases, the revolutionary case, as stated by Mr. Chamberlain, comes to little more than this, that into county government in Ireland the principle of representation has not yet been introduced; and precisely the same thing may be said, Mr. Chamberlain himself being witness, with regard to county government in England. In both countries the United Parliament, if Mr. Parnell had not obstructed its action, would by this time have remedied the defects. Education has been more centralized in Ireland than in England for the very obvious reason that amidst the war of religions, and in face of the hostility of the Catholic priesthood, the system could not have been organized or administered without the aid of a moderating power. For reasons equally obvious, it has been necessary to keep the police, upon which the safety of loyal life depends, out of the hands of local Moonlighters. The appointment of the Fishery Commissioners by the Crown figures in the list of grievances, but it may be doubted whether better appointments would be made by a Dublin Tammany. As to the Viceroyalty, it is, we repeat, hardly ingenuous in Mr. Chamberlain to suppress the fact that forty-five years ago the House of Commons passed by an immense majority a Bill abolishing the office and substituting for it an Irish Secretaryship, which would certainly have become law had it not been for the hostility of the Irish members. "What," asks Mr. Chamberlain, "is the root of Irish discontent? The tithes have been abolished, Catholic Emancipation has been granted, religious disabilities have been removed, the Irish Church has been disestablished, and lastly, and most important, the Land Laws have been reformed. In addition, there has been a large use of Imperial funds and Imperial credit. Yet still the Irish people are discontented: and probably there is more deep-rooted dissatisfaction with the English connection at the present time than at any previous period in the history of the Union." The chief roots of Irish discontent are three, not one of which is likely to be visible to the eye of the mere politician. They are political demagogism; economical distress, caused by overgrowth of population, which no political revolution can cure; and the depressing influence of a sacerdotal religion, which is equally beyond the reach of statesmanship. Acts of Parliament may make institutions, but they cannot make political character. The peasant who falls on his knees before a priest will not rise up a freeman, or be able to use free institutions to his profit, give him what National Councils or elective Fisheries Commissions you will. The municipal elections will be dictated, the Fishery Commissioners will be nominated by the priest or Mr. Tweed. The reason why concessions to Ireland have not been met with gratitude, Mr. Chamberlain says, is that they have all come too late. Parliamentary and Municipal Reform came in Ireland at the same time as in England: National Education came earlier, and the Disestablishment of the Church has not come in England yet. Is Mr. Chamberlain quite sure that his own concession has not come too late, and that when it has been granted Irish incendiaries will be contented and renounce their trade?

In fulfilment of their compact with the Parnellites the Tories have abandoned the Crimes Act. Whether exceptional legislation should be prolonged was of course a question for serious consideration; but it ought to have been determined not by intrigue, but by the judgment of those who understood and were responsible for the condition of Ireland. The things at stake are not of an ordinary kind, or such as can safely be made the sport of gambling politicians; they are the lives of all the loyal people in the Island and the existence of moral civilization. That the Crimes Act has answered its purpose well is proved by the reduction to a single case of the murders which a few years ago were numbered by scores. But only those who are concerned in the administration of the law and have access to the secret archives of the police are able to tell whether the winter can safely be faced without any special safeguard. It seems that Lord Spencer deemed it necessary to renew the Act; and whatever hideous fables Nationalist mendacity may concoct about the late Lord Lieutenant, everybody who knows anything about the characters of public men in