

preference though his goods were positively inferior or dearer? We can hardly believe that Sir John will resort to that peculiar logic, for he is shrewd enough to perceive that, if such is the spirit which prevails after so many years of drill in the school of protection, the National Policy must have been a huge failure as a mode of teaching patriotism.

THE LORDS AND HOME RULE.

As the Home Rule Bill was passed by the British Commons by a majority which was known within a fraction before it had been introduced, so now it has been rejected by the Lords by a majority equally predictable many months ago. These facts are strongly suggestive of the uselessness of debate in either House, so far as the chief ostensible purpose of debate, the influencing of the opinions of individual bearers is concerned. True, the discussion in the Commons was not wholly useless for another of its purposes, that of improvement or amendment of measures whose passage is a foregone conclusion. Yet, even in this respect the discussion was of comparatively little service, because the bulk of the hostile criticism aimed at obstruction, or destruction, not at amendment. So far as can be judged from the meagre and, Lord Salisbury's clever and incisive speech, which was of course the chief one against the Bill in the Upper House, was, in addition to its keen criticisms of the speeches of leading Government supporters of the Bill, directed largely against the clause for the retention of Irish representation in the Imperial Parliament. "Much had been said," he is reported as urging, "of the benefits of autonomous government, but had there been for a century a statesman bold enough to propose that an autonomous colony should send eighty members to the Imperial Parliament, representing no interest in England, and bound by no responsibility with respect to the possible application of the laws that Parliament had passed? The absurdity of such a position was enough to drive a man to bedlam."

We have before commented on what must seem to a Canadian to be the inconsistency of this argument. The great objection to Mr. Gladstone's former Home Rule Bill, and one that always seemed to be well taken, was its failure to provide for the representation of Ireland in the Imperial Parliament. The absence of such representation must mean either that total separation of Ireland from the Empire which is deprecated by all, or the introduction of a principle of responsibility without representation, to which no spirited people would submit, and which could not fall to be a fruitful source of future trouble. The obvious flaw in such reasoning as that of Lord Salisbury is that it assumes, in

spite of the protestations of its framers and friends, that the Bill is a measure for the dismemberment of the Empire, and then condemns it for that very provision which is the corollary and sign and seal of the retention of Ireland as an integral part of the united Empire. If the words "representing no interest in England," which the ex-Premier is said to have applied to the eighty Irish representatives, are correctly reported, Lord Salisbury has in them unwittingly betrayed that tendency to regard England as synonymous with the United Kingdom, which is not without reason sometimes complained of by other members of the Kingdom besides Ireland. The same tendency appears in other parts of Lord Salisbury's speech, e.g., "If England had told their lordships that she wanted this horror," etc. "As long as England was true to herself she would never allow," etc.

"What appears to shine visibly through all arguments" of the supporters of the Bill, said Lord Salisbury, "is that Home Rule is a policy of despair." This is undoubtedly true. It is the product of a despair of producing peace and content and loyalty in Ireland by any other means. As Lord Rosebery said, it is supported as simply the best of the three courses open, of which the other two are the perpetual coercion of Ireland and her disfranchisement. Would Lord Salisbury approve the latter? The remark in which he speaks of the Irish representatives as men who would be sent by Archbishop Walsh and "seeking to make themselves marketable wares in negotiations with the Ministers," might be so construed, for if the Archbishop would send the representatives under the new arrangement he would do so under the old, and if they would be marketable wares in the one, so would they in the other. And yet one noble lord, if our memory is not at fault, described the Irish Home-Rulers as rebels against the authority of their ecclesiastical leaders. If this discrepancy shows that the ecclesiastical leaders themselves are divided on the question, the force of Lord Salisbury's objection, and of the well-worn epigram that "Home Rule means Rome Rule," is surely broken. But Lord Salisbury's description of Home Rule as a policy of despair is especially suggestive taken in connection with the pessimistic, not to say contemptuous tone in which he, in common with most opponents of the measure, speaks of the Irish people. They seem to regard the latter not only as utterly incapable of self-rule, or self-restraint of any kind, but as utterly destitute of the sense of honour which would make it safe to trust in the most solemn compact made with them as a guarantee for either the rights of the minority or the national integrity. If this means anything it must mean that the Irish are unworthy of even the rights of representation they have hitherto possessed in the British Parliament and are fit only to be ruled as

a conquered and degraded race. That is, it strikes us, the doctrine of despair with a vengeance. If, as Lord Salisbury further informs us, seven centuries of English rule have rather increased than diminished the party conflicts which unfit Ireland for representative government, the only policy, so far as we can see, which his argument would warrant as a solution of the problem, would be that which some of our American neighbours have from time to time advocated as the only successful mode of settling the Indian question, the policy of extermination.

A noteworthy feature of the discussion both in Parliament and in the press is the plainness of speech with which the growing political power of the democracy is deprecated and sometimes denounced by conservative statesmen. There is undoubted force in the arguments which are urged against a state of things in which the opinions and prejudices of the uneducated and ignorant may at any time become the weight to turn the scale in deciding the most momentous questions—questions affecting it may be, not only the greatness and prestige but even the very existence of the Empire. But of the modern democracy it may at least be said that they are undergoing a process of political education and that many of them are very apt and attentive students. And the latter are they who, as a rule, become the natural leaders of the voters of their own classes. In fact, it is every day becoming more and more the fact that a man's position and occupation in life can no longer be relied on as data by which we may form a correct estimate of either his education or his intelligence. But admitting that a real danger lies in that preponderance of the masses in government towards which Great Britain is so swiftly moving, what is the alternative? Could the destinies of the nation be more safely entrusted to such a body as that whose votes last week threw the Home Rule Bill out of the Upper House of the British Parliament. We will be slow to accept such descriptions as those cabled across the Atlantic by Harold Frederick and other American or Radical correspondents as fair pictures of the British hereditary rulers. But after making all due allowances for the exaggerations and caricatures of prejudiced observers, can it be doubted that, so far as either a broad, all-round knowledge of political questions, or an ability to rise above the prejudices of education and caste, is concerned, a large proportion of those pleasure-seeking peers are really inferior to many a man who earns his bread in the sweat of his brow? We do not of course forget that there was in that illustrious Chamber on that memorable occasion with which we are dealing a considerable sprinkling of men who are both intellectually and morally the peers of any of the legislative halls the world can produce. But what of the many who, though