

not in the service might do, he should be left undisturbed. Any other course will create a precedent which will be followed and enlarged upon by future Governments until we shall have the genuine spoils system in full swing. Every man discharged now by the Liberals will be held to have very strong claims upon the next Conservative Government—he will have suffered in their cause. If the announced policy of the present Government is fully carried out, when the Conservatives return there will be an enormous number of “wrongs” to redress, and no one can doubt but that the work of retaliation will be carried on with vigour, and not without some plausible appearance of justice. If the present Administration is wise it will give no excuse for anything of this kind.

And apart from all considerations of public policy, would not dismissals for political activity in the past be unjust to the individuals affected? Political partisanship, that is, the active support of a political party, is in itself no crime; on the contrary, some measure of it would appear to be the duty of every man whom special circumstances do not debar from it. If, then, it has never been clearly laid down that Civil Servants must be neutral, why punish those who have departed from neutrality? Surely it is not because they worked on the wrong side. Whatever they did (I am speaking always of those who worked honourably) was done with the knowledge and, apparently, approbation of their former chiefs; to dismiss them would savour more of revenge than of justice.

An exception must, of course, be made in the case of those whose work is really of a political nature, who are entrusted with elaborating the details of Government bills, or who in any way come into confidential relations with the political heads of their departments. If these men have actively and openly identified themselves with the opposite party, they are clearly unable to properly discharge their duties, and their removal, at any rate from their present positions, is unavoidable. But to discharge, say, a junior clerk in the Stationery Office, or a trackman on the Inter-colonial Railway because, with the assent of his superiors, he actively supported his party, should surely be beneath the dignity of a Minister of the Crown.

It is, of course, quite possible to take the contrary view: to hold that if a man has identified himself with a particular party, he must share the fate of that party; and so long as all dismissals are made on sufficient evidence, and the accused have every opportunity of defending themselves, there may be something to be said for it. But nothing can justify, or even excuse, the position taken up by Mr. Blair. Here are his words, as reported in *The Globe* of 19th of Sept.: “He had come to the conclusion that if any member of the House whose advice the Government could safely accept, or any gentleman who was a candidate in the country and was defeated, informed him that men employed in a temporary capacity had taken an active part in an election, he would receive the statements thus made, and he would permit his officials to allow changes to be made.” And in the course of a second speech on the same occasion he said: “It was not an unfair thing to say that the Liberals of this country should have some share in the service of the Government. When a responsible Minister was satisfied by the evidence at his hand, or by the assurance which he receives from a man upon whom he could rely, that any employees of the Government had violated the principle of neutrality, had offended against propriety, had been an active partisan, and had actively engaged in the campaign against his opponents, no one could complain, least of all those on the other side of the House, if the Government exercised its undoubted right to dispense with the services of that man.”

We thus learn that Mr. Blair actually proposes to dismiss employees on the mere assurance of a Liberal member or of a defeated Liberal candidate that they have taken an active part in politics. The vacancies thus created will, of course, be filled on the recommendation of the same person. What is this but the spoils system? Is there a Liberal member or candidate (and where is there not) who has active workers to reward? All he need do is to inform the Minister that certain employees in his district have taken an “active part” in politics. No investigation will be held, at any rate in the case of temporary employees, no opportunity for defence given, but on the mere “assurance” of some insignificant and defeated candidate—such another possibly as the man whose letter regarding coal contracts was recently read in the House—their dismissal will be allowed, and their places will be at the disposal of the same candidate.

The matter is made even worse by Mr. Blair's incidental observation that the Liberals should have some share in the service of the Government. In the abstract and in another shape—that no man should be debarred from obtaining a position under the Government because he is a Liberal—the proposition is quite unobjectionable. But taken as it stands, in a speech which advocated the dismissal of partisan (that is, Conservative partisan) employees, it produces a most unpleasant impression. The only meaning it will admit of is, that room for Liberals should be made in the Civil Service.

It is to be hoped that this question will not be allowed to drop, but that independent men all over the country will let their representatives understand that they entirely disapprove of Mr. Blair's position, and that, if his speech is to be taken as setting forth the policy which will really be adopted, there are many men who supported the Liberals in the late election who will have grave doubts as to the propriety of doing so in the future.

G. B.

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### Autumn Thoughts.

From the German of Lenau.

Fairest Spring, thou art not here,  
Nowhere, nowhere wilt thou tarry,  
Where I saw thy flowers appear  
Autumn's blasts the dead leaves carry.

Mournfully the wind creeps by,  
As if wailing, through the hedges;  
Bearing Nature's dying sigh,  
Shuddering o'er the withered sedges.

Once again, so soon, how soon!  
Has a year behind me perished;  
From the woods a murmur comes—  
“Hast thou found the hopes long cherished?”

Forest murmurs, strangely dear,  
My heart's grief have ye invaded,  
Come with each returning year,  
Faded leaves and hopes as faded.

Kingston.

LOIS SAUNDERS.

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### Early Long Island: A Colonial Study.

FOR some years past efforts have been made by a small but select number of writers to collect and arrange all available information relating to the older colonies now forming the United States of America.

The original settlement of these colonies by Europeans is not chronologically so remote that their subsequent history can, in any sense, be regarded as ancient, but various causes have tended to render it utterly unlike that of older communities. The novel material conditions which they encountered, and the variety of the pioneers, regarded from an ethnological, political, or religious point of view, combined with influences often unexpectedly made manifest and constantly changing, but all affecting their destinies, serve to make their story and that of their descendants most in-