

CURRENT EVENTS AND OPINIONS.

If we were to judge by the language of the Republican journals, especially in the Eastern States, we should say that the bolt caused by the nomination of Blaine was very large, and that the party was doomed to defeat. But much of this may be merely the expression of disgust, not a settled determination to bolt. Under the party system names and organizations are more powerful than principles and convictions. We have already seen these two sections of the Republican party, the Reformers and the Stalwarts, which differ from each other almost as widely as it is possible for any two bodies of politicians to differ, after fighting desperately on the questions of substance, turn round, when the hour of battle with the Democrats arrived, and combine their forces as strongly as ever on the name. The same thing will very likely happen again. When the Democrats have nominated, it will be discovered that, bad as Blaine is, the Democratic candidate is worse; upon that point the necessary evolution will be performed, and the whole Republican party, except a few perverse and stubborn consciences, will once more be in line. Something, however, will depend upon the conduct of the Democrats, both with regard to their platform and with regard to their nomination. *Harper's Weekly* reproaches the Democrats with having no distinctive principle except "general cussedness." Barring the hostile phrase, the impeachment so far has been true. The Democrats have hitherto had no good reason to offer to the country for the transfer of power from the hands of the Republicans to their own. But they would have an excellent reason if they would boldly embrace Tariff Reform. That policy would involve the immediate loss of the Pennsylvanians, and possibly of one or two of the new manufacturing States of the South; but unless the nation is in its dotage ultimate success could not be doubtful. With regard to their choice of a candidate, the Democrats have been delivered from the danger of suicide by the positive renunciation of Mr. Tilden. The nomination of a political corpse, which seemed to be impending, would only have thrown into stronger relief, and rendered more popular than ever, the dashing Jingoism and the personal magnetism of Mr. Blaine. Mr. Cleveland would be a very strong candidate, though perhaps the deserved reputation for force of character and integrity which, as Governor of New York, he has established, may be better known in the East than among the Western Democrats, who do not much read the Eastern papers. The best man of all is Mr. Bayard, whose name is again mentioned, and whose character could hardly fail to secure the votes of the Independent bolters from the Republican ticket. But it seems that in 1861 Mr. Bayard made a speech in favour of peace, which constitutes an inexpiable offence in the eyes of an enlightened nation. It is a singular ground, certainly, for ostracizing the man best qualified to serve the country that twenty-three years ago he was opposed to civil war. For such an offence there might surely be a Statute of Limitation.

THE announcement that Mr. Gladstone has promised not to oppose a Bill which is to be brought in by a Welsh Nonconformist for the disestablishment of the Church in Wales, though it comes not in a very authentic form, is in itself perfectly credible. Mr. Gladstone's mind has for some time been evidently moving in the direction of disestablishment, though he retains his High Church sympathies and shows them in the appointment of Bishops. The position of the Anglican Church and its claim to the support of the State are almost as weak in Wales as they were in Ireland. The gentry are Anglicans; but the mass of the people are Calvinistic Methodists. The division is, to a great extent, one of race as well as of religion, and the religion is determined by the temperament of the race. To the fervid and impulsive Celt the extreme sobriety of the Anglican system and ritual has always been uncongenial. In Ireland the Celt is an enthusiastic Catholic; in the Highlands of Scotland he is an enthusiastic Presbyterian of the Free Church type; in Wales he is an enthusiastic Methodist. The congregation which listens to the Rector in Wales is sometimes as scandalously small as it was in Ireland, while that which listens to the Calvinistic preacher in the Nonconformist chapel is as large as that which in Ireland attends the mass. Disestablishment appears to be approaching in Scotland also. In England the cause has of late not advanced, but rather fallen back. The spread of scepticism has told most upon the strength of the Nonconformist Churches, which have nothing to subsist on but conviction. Agnostics, especially of the wealthier class, are rather inclined to support the establishment, both as a Conservative institution, and because they believe, rightly enough, that an endowed clergy and a legal system are the surest antidotes to religious enthusiasm. The State Church has, in fact, received of late years no small accession of strength from this somewhat equivocal source. Instances might even be named of Agnostics or Positivists who have built and endowed churches on sordid and political

grounds. A less questionable pillar of the establishment is found in the hold retained on the feelings of the nation, especially on those of its cultivated classes, by the grandeur, beauty and antiquity of the cathedrals and the parish churches. Architecture in fact has had full as great a share as religious thought in producing the singular reaction towards the faith and worship of the middle ages, which at first bore the name of Tractarianism, and now bears the name of Ritualism. Still an ecclesiastical polity cannot very long outlive belief in the religion. The Ritualists who, Evangelicism being almost dead, and Liberalism being very weak, are now the only active party in the Church, find themselves in perpetual and scandalous conflict with the ecclesiastical law. They would fain be disestablished and set free to legislate for themselves without being disendowed. But the extremely secular Parliament, which is the arbiter of that question, would as easily be persuaded to turn loose twenty thousand cobras with their fangs in as to grant the clergy disestablishment without disendowment.

MR. HENRY GEORGE has received a fatal wound in the house of his Irish friends. The announcement that nationalization of the land had been adopted in New Zealand is positively contradicted by a New Zealand statesman, who observes with obvious truth that such a policy would be utterly ruinous to the colony, inasmuch as the possession of freehold is the one great attraction to the settler. Nowhere had a step been taken in the direction of nationalization, for the Irish Land Act and its supplements, though half socialistic, point entirely the opposite way. Their tendency is, by multiplying the number of private proprietors, to give the system of private proprietorship deeper roots than ever. Still agrarian theories fill the air, and as no rational distinction can be drawn between property in land and property in anything else, a general uneasiness and a sense of coming disturbance pervade the economical world. In England and in every country where Feudal laws or customs linger and the land is kept in the hands of a few great proprietors, there is a serious grievance, and the reason for apprehension is far greater than it is here. Among us, proposals of nationalization or re-division would receive a summary answer. But the way to remove whatever danger of agrarian communism there may be, and to place society on a perfectly sound footing in this respect, is to redress the only real grievance, that is to say: the difficulty and cost of purchasing land which arise out of the irrational requirements of title. When it shall be in the power of every man who chooses, to buy a piece of land as freely as he can buy a loaf of bread, there will be nothing left to assail except the principle of property itself, which in communities in which wealth is tolerably distributed will always have overwhelming numbers as well as morality on its side. The only practicable nationalization of the land and the best security at the same time against Agrarian Socialism is the reform sought by the advocates of the Torrens System. Nor would the benefit of the change be confined to the purchasers of agricultural land. The mechanic who buys a building lot suffers just as much as the purchaser of a farm from the oppressive requirements and liabilities entailed by the present system. If he buys of a land company and takes a conveyance from it without further inquiry, there is nothing to secure him against a subsequent discovery that the land has been encumbered in the company's hands. The only possible losers by reform would be practitioners under the existing system; and the present generation even of these would be compensated by the special work in the ascertainment of titles, to be guaranteed by the Government, which the transition to the new system would necessarily involve.

A BYSTANDER.

HERE AND THERE.

THE "parson in politics" has commonly been sneered at as a fish out of water, though it is difficult to see why. An educated Christian is a desirable unit in any political body, however bad a politician he may be. Christianity and the partizan spirit which dubs opponents, as such, mendacious and dishonest cannot dwell together; there can be no hesitation amongst good citizens which must "go." And so it is a healthy sign that the ministry is awakening to the evils of party politics—which, it was very truly said at the recent Presbyterian Assembly, are "striking at the root of our young nation." Not one moment too soon have ethical teachers made public protest against this crying evil. No good work, no noble purpose, can be attained at the expense of truth and honour; no pure-minded man is forward to attribute base motives to all who think differently from him; no true patriot will put party before the welfare of the state, or even justify the use of questionable means to attain what may seem a good end. Justice must be done, though the heavens fall.

"Noble souls
Still find the base is hurtful, and the good is full of glory."