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Editorial Notes.

POLITICAL PULPITERS.

It is to be regretted that no definite result was arrived at on Monday of last week, when the Ministerial Association discussed the limits of a minister's legitimate interference in politics. There seemed to be a general feeling that ministers should not identify themselves with any political party. This is undoubtedly a sound and sensible doctrine, which should be far more rigidly adhered to by our spiritual pastors and masters than it is. Party politics are preached, under thin disguises, from many Canadian pulpits, particularly about election time. Congregations, being composed of persons of mixed opinions, are set at loggerheads upon the substance of political sermons, and instead of being one in Christ they become houses divided against themselves. With moral and social questions ministers of the Gospel have assuredly the right to deal, and that vigorously; but such questions are not of any party, nor should they be made the means of pulpit canvassing. It is a pity some restraining resolution was not placed on record by the Ministerial Association.

THE IRISH COERCION BILL.

THE measure now before the Imperial House of Commons relative to the government of Ireland is one the spirit of which there is no possibility of mistaking. It is an out-and-out coercion bill, more repressive in its scope than any measure which has been submitted to Parliament during the present agitation. With respect to certain classes of crime it contemplates a virtual abolition of the jury system, and practically places the press under the censorship and control of the local magistracy. In cases of the gravest character it proposes to change the venue from Ireland to England. Purely political offences are excluded from the operation of the bill, which moreover is only intended to apply to proclaimed districts; but these districts are precisely those where the feeling of hostility to the union is

greatest, and where any attempt to remove an Irish prisoner to England for trial would meet with the most stubborn and determined resistance. The bill has set the Parnellite members fairly aflame. They pronounce it to be a measure of unparalleled atrocity, and pledge themselves to fight it clause-by clause to the bitter end. The Government, with the aid of the Liberal Unionists, will almost certainly be able to carry it intact, but its passage will provoke such a storm in Ireland and among the Irish in America as has not yet been heard. It really seems as though hammer and anvil were likely to come into collision at last. There can of course be no doubt as to the immediate effect of such a collision, but it is discouraging to know that all the negotiations and parleyings of the past nine years should have no better issue than this.

MR. GLADSTONE AND THE CLOTURE.

MR. GLADSTONE is certainly tempting his fate to the uttermost in these latter years. His speech on the cloture in the House of Commons the other night must have taken most of the members of that body by surprise. He for the first time posed in the rôle of leader of the combined Liberals and Parnellites, and some of his remarks were of such a character as would hardly have been tolerated from any other member of the House without a reprimand from the Speaker. It is unquestionable that many who have sympathized with him in his change of base on the Irish question, and who were prepared to follow him almost anywhere, will think it time to pause when they perceive the anomalous position in which he has placed himself by his latest utterances. It may be conceded that the stand he has taken of late years with respect to Ireland has been due to a sincere change of opinion, brought about by a fuller acquaintance with the subject, and by a statesmanlike and philanthropic desire to render justice to a long-suffering and much-enduring people. His public repudiation of the self-same doctrines which he was wont to uphold with all the power of his eloquence in the days when he was in office—even this may be accepted as springing from more matured thought and profound intensity of conviction. But it is positively astounding to hear him give open and direct encouragement to the obstruction of public business—nay, to hear him indirectly threaten the Government and the Speaker of the House if they dare to follow the bent of the majority. This from Mr. Gladstone! One would as soon expect to hear a sermon from His Grace the R. C. Archbishop of Toronto in favour of divorce. We refuse to believe that the exact words of the ex-Premier's speech have been reported, and we patiently await further developments before coming to a conclusion.