

the power to do much more. He is being egged on by Mr. John Morley, who shows his conception of his illustrious friend's character by heaping flattery upon him without measure. Mr. Morley has himself, by assiduously fostering rebellion, earned from Mr. Parnell a well-merited certificate of unswerving fidelity to the cause of dismemberment and of the sworn enemies of his country. The Irish question, it seems, can well be settled only by that great statesman "whose life has been devoted to Ireland," though he has barely set foot in the country, and in whose failures at home and abroad, including the failure of his Irish land settlement, the country is now weltering. Mr. Morley wisely urges that the thing should be done at once, and before the nation has had time to reflect, or been distinctly consulted on the issue. To those who know the game and the players, it is painfully apparent that the life of the nation is being made the sport of selfish and hypocritical ambition.

At Liverpool, on the 26th October, 1881, Mr. Gladstone made a speech setting forth his Irish policy, of which a summary will be found in the *Annual Register*. He proclaimed that the real aim of his policy was the vindication of true liberty. He declared the assertion that Mr. Parnell commanded the support of a large majority of the people of Ireland to be a gross calumny. He admitted that there was in that country an organized attempt to override the free will and judgment of the Irish nation; and he averred that the question for the minority to decide was whether Ireland should be governed under laws made by a regularly chosen Parliament, or under laws known to nobody, written nowhere, and enforced by an illegal, arbitrary, and self-appointed association. He denounced the No Rent doctrine as sheer rapine, through which the malcontents wished to march to the dismemberment and disintegration of the Empire. With what facility do this great man's convictions and impressions adapt themselves to the shifting phases of his Parliamentary career!

It is on the gallant bearing and the perilous situation of the Irish Loyalists that the eyes of all who care for the honour of Great Britain must at present be most anxiously fixed. England, like other nations, has suffered her calamities and defeats; but she has not been untrue to friends or to any who were entitled to her protection. The only blot of that kind on her escutcheon hitherto has been the desertion of the Catalans, the work of the infamous Bolingbroke. But what were the claims of the Catalans on her honour compared with those of the Irish Loyalists? Yet there is ground for misgiving; nor is it mere empty brag when one of Mr. Parnell's satellites exults in the prospect of seeing the Queen's troops used to coerce the Irish Unionists into submission to a rebel government; though the mistress of those troops, if she has any Royalty in her heart, rather than send them on such an errand would descend from a dishonoured throne. It is not to the voice of national honour that Mr. Gladstone's peculiar temperament most promptly responds; nor does the opinion of himself, which a position like his naturally generates, leave much room for the claims of those who happen to stand in the way of his schemes. As a Ritualist, he probably does not love Irish Protestantism, while Mr. John Morley has shown his feelings towards it as an Agnostic.

If we may judge by the tone of the Press, the national spirit seems at length to be awakening. It must be sleeping the sleep of death if it does not awaken when, over a large part of the national territory, the Government of the nation is superseded by the lawless tyranny of an anti-national association, and loyal citizens are being daily punished in person and estate for no offence but that of obedience to the law. A few months of fortitude and patience such as are supposed to be not alien to British character, a single effort of unanimous patriotism, would break the back of a rebellion which has no military force, nor any political force except what it gains by combining with revolution the promise of agrarian plunder. But the apathy and pusillanimity which say "Let Ireland go, so long as she troubles us no more," will reap the usual reward of baseness. A separate Ireland will be a hostile Ireland; it will have in England herself a great body of Irishry who will always be conspiring with it against her; its councils will be inspired by American Fenianism; it will seek and find allies in all the enemies of Great Britain.

Were there a Government in England the law would soon be asserted, and rebellion would be put down. This is the duty of the hour, and till it has been performed spasmodic projects of change will be out of place. But the worst part of the situation is that there is now no Government in England except an assembly split into discordant factions, as well as distracted by personal vanity and selfishness, which has usurped the functions of the Executive, and is no more capable of exercising them than a street mob. This again, in its last and most dangerous development, is the gratuitous work of that incomparable statemanship to which alone, we are told, the settlement of any great and difficult question can with safety be confided.

Famine in the West of Ireland calls attention with mournful emphasis

to the fact that the main source of Irish suffering is not political, nor capable of being removed by political change. How could Grattan's Parliament, if it were revived, provide food for an overflowing population, or cure the potato, on which an unthrifty peasantry subsists, of its liability to disease? It could no more do this than it could annul the depressing influence of a religion which has proved fatal to national prosperity wherever its ascendancy has endured. We shall presently be told, as we have been told before, that England organizes Irish famine for the extermination of the Irish people.

What will happen when Parliament meets it is next to impossible to divine. The leading Radicals do not seem to share Mr. Gladstone's desperate eagerness to return to power. They are not in their seventy-seventh year, and can afford to play a waiting game. For the preservation of the country from dismemberment, which all true patriots must regard as the one vital object, the best thing probably is that the present Government should receive the aid of independent Liberals, remain in power, and as soon as possible dissolve Parliament again upon the distinct issue of the Union. If the nation then decides for dismemberment, the question is settled, and the book of British greatness may be closed. The worst thing is the return to power of Mr. Gladstone with a majority of Radicals and Parnellites combined. Sad to say, there appears now to be a mortal race between an old man's life and the unity of the nation.

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#### NOTES FROM QUEBEC.

We have now fairly passed through the excitement of the holiday season. Christmas, with its happy reunions, has "come and gone," and the New Year, with its "calls" and congratulations, has already passed into history. There has been no incident of special importance, and the prevailing apathy has not been disturbed even by the formal dinner party of "long, long ago." Altogether, we have passed a very quiet holiday—for, in the prevailing spirit of goodwill supposed to characterize this season, politics have been for the moment put aside and everybody feels relieved in consequence. Traders have not found as ready a market for their wares as on many former occasions, but on the whole the volume of business appears to have been considerable, and we hear very few complaints; besides, a more hopeful spirit appears to prevail in many quarters, although there is not much prospect of any general improvement in the state of things so far as the trade of the port is concerned. The distress anticipated here, owing to the lack of work during the past summer, has not been seriously felt as yet, owing to the unusual mildness of the winter; but as we have still nearly five months to pass through there is ample opportunity for suffering among our working classes.

It is rather difficult to gauge the net results of last year's timber trade in relation to our local merchants, but, generally speaking, it has been far from satisfactory, and the prevailing depression in foreign markets has seriously impeded our great staple industry, so that sales were nearly always made with difficulty, and not as a rule at anything like remunerative prices. To render the condition of things still worse, the old mistake of overproduction was repeated last year, and, as a corresponding result, heavy losses have been made in several instances. Lumber makers have over and over again mutually stipulated to confine their operations within certain limits, and they have with unvarying consistency broken their engagements with each other, and, in order to rid themselves of their surplus stock, Quebec lumber dealers have had to enter into a ruinous competition among themselves in the European markets, to the great detriment of their personal interests, and, it is to be feared, permanent injury to the trade of the port. Closely connected with this eminently unsatisfactory state of things is another question which, it is to be feared, will be solved when too late to accomplish any good. I refer to the indiscriminate slaughter which still goes on in our forests. The regulations governing this great trade are altogether insufficient, and a remedy ought to be found which would effectually check the lumber maker in his commercial vandalism. And, now that our American friends are likely to have increased facilities for helping the thoughtless among our people to denude our forests, the whole matter ought to be reconsidered by our Government. In the meantime, however, the outlook for the future of our square timber is not reassuring, and to render it entirely hopeless we have only to continue our present reckless course of overproduction.

But, if the timber trade has been unsatisfactory, the carrying-trade has suffered with it, and therefore it may be said of Quebec that, commercially, she sits in dust and ashes. In looking over the published statements of the year, a noteworthy fact presents itself. It is this: the carrying-trade from the port of Quebec appears to be getting pretty equally divided between