

that the nation is awaking to the reality and the imminence of the danger; and if the nation once becomes thoroughly alive to the public peril, the Silver Ring and its schemes will be brushed aside like cobwebs.

A CATHOLIC clergyman has been writing to the newspapers to confute the assertion that Catholic countries are behind Protestant countries in popular education. In Ireland, he says, the statistics show that popular education is more widely diffused than in England or Scotland. Ireland, let us take the liberty of reminding him, is not entirely a Catholic country. No insignificant part of it is Protestant, nor can he touch upon the subject without raising in our minds the pregnant question, why it is that the Protestant North is prosperous and contented, while the Catholic South is so much the reverse of both. But why should he speak of Ireland alone? Why does he not venture to extend his vindication of Catholic education to Spain and Italy, which his antagonist appears to have included with Ireland in the disparaging remark? However great his attachment to Ireland, he surely would not contend that the countrymen of Cervantes or those of Galileo were inferior in natural intelligence to the Irishman. The case of Italy is particularly strong, since she has always been illuminated by the actual presence of the Papal Sun. The answer to the query is, that Catholic Ireland owes popular education to her Union with England and Scotland. Left to herself as a country, under the sway of the Catholic priesthood, she would have shared in this respect as in others the lot of all countries under the same sway, both in Europe and in America. The system of national schools was introduced by an Act of the Imperial Parliament. It was introduced in the teeth of the greatest difficulties caused by the jealousy and the opposition, open or covert, of the great body of the Catholic clergy, though a few enlightened prelates and priests, such as Bishop Moriarty, took the more liberal side. If the Union were dissolved it would be likely to go hard with the National School System in the south of Ireland. The priesthood insist on Separate Education in Canada; much more would they insist on it in a community where they would be not only strong but supreme. Nor is popular education the only thing which Ireland manifestly owes to the Union. She owes also to it free institutions and Parliamentary Government. Left to herself she would, in this respect also, have followed the political course of all the other Catholic communities, except the Catholic Cantons of Switzerland, whose freedom is the offspring partly of the mountains, partly of that connection with the Protestant Cantons which, at the time of the Sonderbund, the priests and Jesuits desperately attempted to dissolve. Not the slightest germ of free institutions had become visible in Ireland before the Anglo-Norman Conquest, nor have the Irish Catholics since shown any spontaneous tendency towards self-government. On the contrary, when the ballot has been put into their hands they have invariably made over their votes either to the priest or to the Head Centre. Head Centre Parnell is at this moment treating them like political sheep, and nominating their representatives in the ensuing Parliament without consulting, in the slightest degree, the wishes of the different constituencies. In the matter of political self-government, as in that of national education, Catholic Ireland cast adrift would infallibly retrograde and as the Protestant North would refuse to be dragged back to the Dark Ages, the repeal of the internal Union would be likely pretty speedily to follow that of the Union with Great Britain, while, even within the pale of the three Catholic Provinces, the communistic or revolutionary Fenian would soon be flying at the throat of the obscurantist priest. Far from being deprived of freedom by the Union, the Irish people probably owe to it all the freedom which they possess, as well as the excellent school system, the existence of which is rather a curious result and proof of the ruthless oppression which, as we are daily asked by Separatist writers and orators to believe, Ireland is suffering in her Union with Great Britain.

By a coalition of the Tories with the Parnellites on the question of the Spirit duty Mr. Gladstone's Government has been defeated by a majority of twelve in a full house. We are told, and can well believe, that when the result was announced, Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Parnell jumped upon their seats and enthusiastically waved their hats amidst the renewed cheering of their supporters. The Parnellites pointed at Mr. Gladstone and yelled, "That is the price of coercion!" "Down with Buckshot Forster!" "Remember Myles Joyce!" Comment is superfluous to anyone in whose heart there lingers a vestige of regard for patriotism, consistency, or honour. It now remains to be seen whether the British people will allow the Government to be overturned by such means. If they will, dark days are before them. Mr. Gladstone's plain course was resignation. It will now appear whether Lord Salisbury, Sir Stafford Northcote and Lord Randolph Churchill, with their Parnellite

allies, can undertake to form a Ministry and govern the country. One pleasant feature in this affair there is. Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, who were courting the Irish Vote and were ready to barter for it the safety of loyal lives in Ireland and the unity of the country, must have enjoyed the Parnellite shout of triumph over their fall. Perhaps another little gratification may be in store for us if the Tories get into power, and proceed to deal after their established fashion with the Irish.

No one who looks at English politics quietly from a distance, and is not a thoroughgoing devotee of Mr. Gladstone, will deny that there may be reasons sufficient at all events in the eyes of Conservatives for opposing his Government. His Irish policy, his Egyptian policy, his extension of the Franchise to untried masses without the provision of corresponding safeguards, all are fair subjects for criticism and rational grounds for differences of opinion. But no one who is not rabid with political hatred can imagine that Mr. Gladstone is a proper object of personal contumely and outrage. His character is unblemished, his aims have always been the highest, his vast ability and marvellous accomplishments are disputed by none, he has served England for more than fifty years, his achievements in finance alone would entitle him to the highest gratitude, and if majorities have any meaning, he is the elect of the British people. Yet with personal contumely and outrage he is continually assailed, not only by the Irish members, but by men who pretend and think themselves pre-eminently entitled to the name of English gentlemen. Illustrated papers in general profess neutrality. One of them, however, has an extremely bitter article against Mr. Gladstone on the Russian Question, inspired very likely by Jewish influence, for behind almost every one of those curtains in England as well as on the Continent there is a Hebrew. But in the same columns we find a detailed description by another hand of a "painful scene" in the House of Commons, "in which Conservative gentlemen howled at the Leader of the House with that tone of intense personal hatred which may be noted in the shout of a mob on a racecourse when they discover a welsher in their midst." It is not wonderful that Mr. Gladstone should have assigned as a reason for his speedy retirement, "the blow which has been struck at the liberties and dignity of the House by the modes of proceeding which within the last few years have been introduced into its debates." There is no blackguardism like that of a gentleman when once he forgets himself, because in his case the insolence of class is combined with brutality of manner; though there are some perhaps on the Tory as well as on the Irish benches to whom this reflection need not be extended. As to the dignity of the House of Commons, it has become a legend of the past. But it does not depart alone; other attributes still more indispensable in the case of a governing assembly are rapidly following it to the grave.

To us it has always appeared that the chief danger of England, and the most serious probability of war, still lay on the side of France. It might have been expected that the German invasion would have diverted the animosity of the French people from England to Germany, and that the passion for avenging Waterloo would have been supplanted by the passion for avenging Sedan. But whether it be because the cliffs of Kent and Picardy confront each other, or because the Anglophobic tradition is immemorial and ingrained, certain it is that the new hatred has not cast out the old. "French opinion," says the *Pays*, "is unanimously in favour of Russia. With ill-restrained delight—a delight which for our part we do not endeavour to disguise—would England be seen paying at last the penalty for all her unfairness and treacheries. Whatever may have happened with other nations, the real enemy of France has always been England. Even now we should not be obtaining redress for the outrage of her agents upon our countrymen in Egypt if she were not in a more than perilous situation. She has everywhere and always acted against us in a hateful and persistent way; and every attempt has been fruitless to unite these two nations composed of mutually repulsive elements—France and England. The chivalrous loyalty of the former has always been the dupe of the unscrupulous selfishness of the latter." The chivalrous unselfishness of a nation which invaded the Roman Republic for the purpose of preventing the independence and unification of Italy, and attacked Germany with a similar object, is, no doubt, beyond question. In French history, notably during the age of Louis XIV., there has appeared no tendency to selfish aggrandizement or rapine. In this very Egyptian business the conduct of France towards her partner has been eminently chivalrous. But let that pass. Here is a pleasant piece of reading for the Jingo and Russophobicists, whose type and leader, Palmerston, drew England into an alliance with France against Russia, and who were also eager to close with the French Emperor's proposal for a joint intervention in favour of the Con-