

## A BRITISH STATESMAN'S MISLEADING ARTICLE.

An eminent British statesman contributed an elaborate paper to a leading American magazine, in which he treated a great historical subject in—to put it mildly—his peculiar manner. To speak masculinely he Gladstonized the facts. With all the documents before him and writing leisurely, he, for party purposes, actually stated the exact opposite of the truth. He repeatedly represented a deceased statesman as having, in a great speech, said the exact contrary of what he really had said. The dead peer's voluminous address and the magazine article, both before me, conclusively prove that my charge is true. The gentlemen referred to excels in giving "tithe of cumin and aniseed." Some votaries of what the *London Times* satirically called the "New Religion" deem it almost a sin to doubt his solemn statements. But such as he dig pitfalls for the unwary and even for historians. We are all too apt to think—notwithstanding the denunciations of the founder of Christianity—that piety proclaimed from the housetops and street corners, is of greater worth than that which goes into the inner chamber to pray.

I propose in a subsequent issue to show the real truth. It would be a public misfortune to permit such gross fabrications to pass unchallenged as reliable history, more especially so on this side of the Atlantic. Unfortunately the public have, without investigation, accepted his statements as being true. One of the labours of the Hercules of the future will be to cleanse sundry historical Augean stables; one being the accumulations of this particular statesman.

## ARTICLES OF EXCEPTIONAL MERIT.

On the other hand there are contributions of great merit which the public often overlook and fail to appreciate. Among many such there was one by a Frenchman which lately appeared in a leading magazine. It was after the best English manner; no rhapsodies, Celtic inflations, or windisms; but giving a simple, clear, and unvarnished account of French rural life. It gave, from various points of view, a really good idea of the modes of living and of thought in the country districts. I doubt if there has been during this age anything of equal value in English literature upon that subject. As somewhat corresponding facts relative to English rural life (although not so full) have been officially published, a reasonably fair comparison can be made between the two countries of great value to those interested in sociology or history. There is reason to believe (subject to further investigation) that, including Protection, farm labourers in Republican France, directly and indirectly, pay in taxes—in proportion to their income—50 per cent. more than the similar class do in Monarchical England. It is a question of great moment to ascertain the exact truth. His valuable article will be quoted in time to come, like Arthur Young's Travels in France are at the present time. He is gifted with the judicial mind, which is exceptional in Britain and America, but far more so in France and other Celtic countries.

There is also a valuable paper by a Hindoo Moslem in the June number of the *Nineteenth Century* which indirectly will have a perceptible influence in the political world.

## SOME EDITORIAL OVERSIGHTS.

There are very few good judges of rough diamonds. Twenty-five years ago a leading London expert stated that there were not half-a-dozen such in the metropolis. I do not, in the slightest degree, insinuate that this ratio applies to magazine editors; nevertheless it is certain that from various causes some either lack sound judgment, or else perform their duties carelessly. Sometimes they accept pebbles for diamonds. When a contributor makes sun-clear deviations from the truth, the editor should reject his article; but if from social, business or political causes, he is not a free agent, he should, at the least, strike out every gross falsehood or slander. For instance in the *Westminster* for April, there is an article entitled "The Rulers of Ireland," written by a Nationalist. It contains many misstatements, and painfully illustrates Archbishop Whateley's sorrowful statement "that the ancients said that truth lay at the bottom of a deep well; but from long experience he had found that in Ireland it lay at the bottom of a deep red bog."

The writer naturally denounced the Crimes Act, which when enforced restrains the terrorising irregulars of the Nationalist host. On the principle of "half a loaf being better than no bread," that act gave half-loaf protection to

law-abiding men. If the sterner French law prevailed and was carried out in Ireland, there would be whole-loaf protection and scarcely any agrarian outrages. For in dealing with organized crime the French law is more searching, far surer and sterner than is the case in Ireland. No clerical in France could do, or would even wish to do, that which numbers in Ireland have done with impunity. Read what the Paruellites—who number one-third of the Nationalists—say of their clerical opponents. Many of the priests have been chairmen of the local branches of the National League, whose gross misconduct has been officially condemned by the Pope.

The Nationalist writer used the phrase, "During the Unionist Reign of Terror." The editor if compelled by the policy of his magazine to accept such a misstating paper should at any rate have interpolated, as was really the fact, "to the village ruffians so sternly denounced by the R.C. Bishop of Cork." It was morally wrong to allow such a sentence to pass. Cattle-maimers and outragers disgrace their country, and all Irishmen, whatever their politics, should unite to bring men guilty of agrarian crimes to justice. Opinions will widely differ upon politics, but there ought to be unanimity in voting for an Act of Parliament, vindicating the work-a-day commandments, by punishing ruffians for mutilating cattle, or outraging law-abiding men. We must bear in mind that the majority of such outraged men are poor Catholics, unable to protect themselves. Let us hope that a time will come when all editors will resolutely set themselves against those writers who pen falsehoods or champion crime.

## PROPOSAL.

I therefore respectfully propose to review four or five magazine-articles which have not had affirmative or negative justice done to them; for my decided opinion is, that among the patrons of *THE WEEK* are to be found those who mould public opinion in Canada, and shine as litterateurs, legislators, or statesmen. It is also of great moment—with reference to the articles referred to—to impress upon the minds of all, Erasmus's warning to the student: "Why learn that which you will afterwards have to unlearn?"

## MR. GOLDWIN SMITH.

Before noticing Mr. Goldwin Smith's article upon the "Manchester School," in the *Contemporary* for March, it is proper to say a few words about the man himself. With the very great majority I have a high opinion of him for his personal and literary qualities. A dozen such citizens as he, and Toronto would not have suffered as it has from civic shortcomings, follies and frauds. There are very few public men on this continent who are his equals in moral courage, and scarcely any in literary gifts. He has the courage of his opinions, and does not, like so many, fish for popularity. If there is any fishing, it is for unpopularity. The painful pondering by so many of our politicians and prominent men, "Will this subject pay in influence, votes or dollars?" is repulsive to straightforward men. I am inclined to think that the one great point where he of late years has run counter to Canadian opinion, is in part a reaction in his mind against the overpraise by some of Canadian and British ways and institutions. In Canada there is sometimes a little of that feeling which in the United States was ridiculed by Dickens, "we must be cracked up." In geographical England it is more often "we must be cracked down." Few outsiders understand the marked difference in character between the three nationalities which together form the United Kingdom.

## ANNEXATION.

Mr. Goldwin has, of late years, propounded opinions directly and indirectly leading to annexation to the States. Annexation is thoroughly repugnant to Canadian public opinion. With 99 out of every 100 I differ from him. During 24 years in Quebec and Ontario I have not met with six native-born annexationists. Apart from all sentiment, the main objections are simple. (1) All intelligent Canadians know that our system of government, including the administration of justice, is vastly superior to that of the States. There has been a barefaced attempt to introduce here that which takes place in more than one of the States, namely, to manufacture and pay for false evidence. It failed to succeed. The crown ought to prosecute. Annexation would mean paid perjury, and its abettors homing here. (2) If we are dissatisfied with our Government we can, as in England,