

of this vote, stated the other day that while some sort of autonomy should be granted to Ireland, it must be on a basis different from that on which Mr. Gladstone's scheme is founded; and therefore it is not likely Mr. Gladstone will be supported even by this vote unless he completely changes front.

THE latest news seems to give assurance of the defeat of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill. It has been thought that the discussion on the motion for the second reading might last some weeks; but so hopeless does the prospect for the second reading now look that it is hardly likely that many of those of the hundred and twenty-five members set down to speak, who proposed to support it, will have heart to talk in a lost cause; and, probably enough, before the next number of THE WEEK reaches our readers the fate of the bill will be officially sealed. With it, too, whenever it happens, will be sealed the fate of Mr. Gladstone's Ministry of doctrinaires, adventurers, and nonentities. Of Mr. Gladstone himself we desire to say no unkind word, as we harbour no unkind thought. He has been guilty of a stupendous error in judgment, and that we believe to be the whole of it; and he will be punished severely by the withdrawal of the public confidence, which he had won in the course of a long life but has now in a few weeks forfeited so utterly that he can never hope to regain it. For he has shown such an utter lack of every quality of a statesman, that he has given too much ground, even to his best friends, for the growing belief that the almost uninterrupted series of failures that have distinguished his conduct of affairs while at the head of Government is due to something else than perverse fortune; and enemies will be too ready to point to the present alliance with the accomplices of rebels and assassins—men who are saved only from punishment for their misdeeds through having outwitted and outgeneralled the party leaders, and deluded the one among them whose judgment is least to be trusted,—this unhappy climax to a public life of half a century will give strong colour to the contention of those who for many years have maintained that the continual failures of Mr. Gladstone in statecraft are due, not to ill-luck, but to the radical unsoundness of one who has never been anything much better than a parliamentary tactician, who has succeeded in talking himself to the top.

MR. GOLDWIN SMITH has engaged passage to Canada for himself and Mrs. Smith by the steamer leaving Liverpool, September 25th.

THE LATMIAN.

ASLEEP on Latmos' top thou liest
Dreaming the daylight hours away,
Till Cynthia's lips again thee wake.
Ah, happy, happy Carian Prince!

Thou know'st not toil, thou know'st not pain;
Earthly cares disturb thee not;
Selene's kiss alone thee wakes;—
Who would not thus forever sleep!

Above—no searching, garish sun;
Around—no prying eyes of men;
Beneath—no foot-worn, dusty path;
Above—the still and silent stars;
Around—the tired and sighing boughs;
Beneath—the scented, sleeping grass.

No fears perturb thee, no regrets;
Cynthia loves thee—that is all
Thou knowest or hast need to know.
Ah, happy, happy Carian Prince,
Who would not thus forever sleep,
Forever and forever thus?

ARNOLD HAULTAIN

THE LAST LESSON.

AS TOLD BY A LITTLE ALSATIAN.

[Translated for THE WEEK from the French of Alphonse Daudet.]

THAT day I was late in starting for school, and I was very much afraid of being scolded, as M. Hamel told us he would question us on the participles, and I did not know the first word of them. For an instant I thought I would miss the lesson and roam about the fields at my own sweet will.

It was such a lovely day!

I heard the black-birds singing merrily in the wood; and in the Ripert Meadow, behind the saw-mill, the Prussian soldiers were drilling. This seemed of far more importance to me than the rule on the participles; but I was strong enough to resist, and ran off to school as fast as possible.

In passing the Town Clerk's office, I saw quite a crowd of people standing near the grating. For about two years now, all the bad news was

placarded there, the lost battles, the requisitions, the commandant's orders; and I thought to myself as I passed on: What has happened now?

As I was running across the square, Wachter, the blacksmith, and his apprentice were reading the placard; he called out to me:—

"Don't be in such a hurry, little one; you will be in plenty of time for school!"

I thought he was making fun of me, and I rushed into M. Hamel's little yard all out of breath.

Usually, at the commencement of the lesson, there was such a noise that it might be heard in the street, the open desks closing, the lessons which we repeated together aloud, shutting our ears so as to learn them better, and the big ruler which the teacher struck on the table:—

"Silence!"

I thought I could get into my place unobserved while all this noise was going on, but just at this time to-day everything was as quiet as if it were Sunday morning. Through the open window, I saw my companions sitting in their places, and M. Hamel, who was walking up and down the room with the ruler under his arm. I was obliged to open the door and enter the room in the midst of this calm. You may well imagine my state of mind!

M. Hamel looked at me, but not in anger, and said very quietly:—

"Go quickly to your place, little Frank; we were about to commence the lesson without you."

I jumped over the bench, and sat down in front of my desk. It was only after I had recovered a little from my fright, I saw our master had on his best green coat, his finely-plaited frill, and his embroidered silk necktie which he never wore except on very special occasions, such as the inspection of the school on the day of the distribution of prizes. Besides this, all the class was very solemn: something very extraordinary must have occurred. But what surprised me most of all was to see the villagers, just as silent as we were, sitting on the benches at the end of the room, which were always empty—old Hauser with his three-cornered hat, the ex-Mayor, and many others from the village. They all seemed to be very sad, and Hauser had an old spelling-book which he held wide open on his knees; he had his spectacles on as he looked over the pages.

While I was taking this in, M. Hamel sat down in his chair, and, in the same tone of voice that he had addressed me in, said to us:—

"My young friends, this is the last time I shall have the opportunity of teaching you. The order has been received from Berlin that nothing but German is to be taught in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. The new teacher will be here to-morrow: to-day you will take your last lesson in French. I hope you will be very attentive."

These few words quite upset me. Oh! those miserable creatures: that is what they had placarded at the Town Clerk's office.

My last lesson in French!

And I, who hardly knew how to write a word properly! I should now never have the opportunity to learn, but must remain a dunce! How I wished for the time I had lost, and the lessons I had missed, hunting for birds' nests or sliding on the Saar! My books which I always found such a bother, so heavy to carry, etc., my grammar and church history, seemed like old friends; it would be very hard for me to have to give them up altogether. It was the same with M. Hamel. The idea that he was going away, and I should never see him again, made me forget all the punishments I had received from him.

Poor man! It was in honour of this his last lesson he had put on his best clothes, and now I understood why the villagers were there. This spoke for itself; it seemed to say how much they regretted not coming oftener to the school. It was also a way to thank our teacher for his forty years of faithful service, and to render their respects to the country to which he was going.

I was thinking of all this when I heard my name called out. It was my turn to recite. What would I not have given to be able to say the rule on the participles in a clear voice and without a fault; but I broke down at the first words, and stood up shifting from one foot to another, my heart in my mouth, not daring to lift up my head. I heard M. Hamel say:—

"I do not intend to scold you, little Frank; your punishment is already more than enough. This is how you managed: every day you used to say, Bah! I have plenty of time: I will study to-morrow. And now you see what has happened. Ah! that has always been our trouble in Alsace: we have always left our instruction until to-morrow. Now those other people will have the right to say to us: How is it? You say you are French, and you do not know how to read or write your own language! For all that, my poor little Frank, you are not the most to blame. We must all reproach ourselves. Your parents have not obliged you to study. They would rather have you at work in the fields, or at the spinning-mill, so as to gain a few more sous by this means. I—do you think I do not reproach myself? Have I not asked you to water my garden very often, instead of making you study? And when I wanted to go trout-fishing, it did not trouble my conscience in the least to give you a holiday. Do you think it did?"

Then, from one thing to another, M. Hamel began to speak of the French language, saying it was the most beautiful in the world, it was the brightest and best, and that we must always keep it among us, and never forget it; for when a country falls into bondage, as long as it keeps its own language it is like holding the key of the prison. Then he took a grammar and read our lesson to us. I was astonished to find how well I understood it. Everything he said seemed easy—so easy. I also believe I never listened so intently before, and that he never took so much pains to explain the lesson. One would have said he tried to impart all his knowledge to us, before he left, by this last lesson.