

working changes the end of which is not yet predicable. While the followers of Mr. Gladstone have developed an earnestness which certainly has in it the ring of a greater reality, there have been many points on which Lord Salisbury barely succeeded in carrying with him the adhesion, not only of his Liberal-Unionist allies, but even that of some of his proper party. There are Conservatives, who, while shying at Mr. Gladstone's hasty and crudely considered propositions, are yet in favor of any just and prudent measure of Home Rule. Coercion is a heavy handicap, and there is always about Lord Salisbury a suspicion of the want of grasp which has indeed long characterized the whole Conservative party.

There have not been wanting from time to time signs that the yoke of the coalition is here and there somewhat galling to certain of the Liberal-Unionists, and the defection of Sir George Trevelyan, though it derives no justification from any ground of consistency, has probably not been without its effect. On the whole, though there cannot exist a doubt that the sudden fervency of affection for Ireland of Mr. Gladstone's following was almost entirely a party bid for power, yet there is apparent, at all events at present, some augmentation of strength, and, possibly, as we have hinted, an increased self-persuasion of sincerity. On the other hand, it is rumored that secessions from the ranks of Mr. Gladstone are more numerous than the public thinks; and if this be the case, little will be positively known about them till the re-assembling of Parliament.

But perhaps the most serious menace to the alliance lies in the weakness of Mr. Parnell's health, and in the increasing conviction that his relations with the Leaguers are daily becoming more strained. If, for the imperturbable and reticent guidance of Mr. Parnell, whose peculiar qualities of self-command have constituted him the most successful Nationalist Leader Ireland has ever boasted, should be substituted the mere violence of such men as Healy and Harrington, the hands of the Government will be strengthened just in proportion to the abandonment of the party to rowdyism. This we should regret; for, though we hold decided views as to some of the methods by which her cause is sought to be advanced, and are well convinced, that if terrorism were abandoned Home Rule would gain ten friends where it now has one, Ireland has no more sincere well-wisher.

Whatever the upshot may be, it may pretty safely be predicted that the existing party elements are undergoing a precipitation which will probably reduce the next meeting of Parliament to a very fiery chaos, out of which it is only to be hoped something may be evolved besides Nox and Erebus.

#### POT AND KETTLE.

One of the most curious features of human nature, as exemplified in the average newspaper reader, is the singular patience it exhibits of the process of being gulled. It is indeed more than patience; people seem to like it. Nothing is more transparently clear, nothing is more widely and certainly known, everywhere acknowledged, and everywhere freely commented on, than the utter unvaracity of the political partizan press. No credit is ever given to a political opponent, however fair his action or enunciation may have been. In the so-called Liberal Press every Conservative public man is a wholesale public robber, a first-class Ananias, and a general deceiver and promise-breaker, and these graceful compliments are duly returned by Conservative sheets, so that the only conclusion at which an unprejudiced stranger arriving in the country could possibly arrive, would be that Canada is a nation of scoundrels. There may indeed be a trifling difference in the rankness of the abuse, the party in power, whichever it may be, being generally, perhaps a little less virulent and venomous, than the party which is out.

If this disreputable spectacle were not so melancholy, it might sometimes be amusing in spite of its vulgar depravity. Thus it is in a certain way entertaining to find a party which, when in power for five years, could find no policy more definite than that described as "the fly on the wheel" assuming to-day a sagacious premonitory tone, and warning the innocent and unsuspecting populace that Sir John Macdonald, in the exercise of his diabolical ingenuity, will stick at no iniquity to prolong his lease of power, and may even go the wicked length of raising the cry of Imperial Federation to that end. We all know that there are no soundings to the depths of the flagitiousness of this crafty and Satanic Machiavel, and even this baseness might be possible to the combined incarnation of Mephistopholes and Reynold the Fox. But it may lie with the Kettle to retort upon the Pot that that useful but homely utensil has been for many years, like Satan, "going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down it," seeking its particular idea of rest, and finding none; and has only succeeded, in all its weary peregrinations, in raising cries (such as Secession, Rielitism, Anti-Vetism, and Commercial Unionism) instinct with hatred to the Canadian National Sentiment. We may be pretty sure, that whenever the Pot succeeds in attaining to the comfortable warmth of the top of the fire, there will presently ensue a considerable cooling off of the anti-patriotic patient, whose temperature would be found to sink rapidly from fever-heat to nominal blood-heat.

This chance of rest to the much vexed and worried country does not, however, from present appearances, seem to be very imminent. What mischief the agitators may succeed in doing to their native land before the vexatious and unnecessary questions they have raised come to the arbitrament of the polls, it is impossible to say. Everyone of the agitations is supererogatory, unreal, hypocritical, and flagitiously raised for the merest party purposes.

But, having been raised, and seriously disturbing the national mind, we should be glad to see the most important of these issues brought to the test as soon as possible, that we may be enabled to see beyond a doubt whether

we are to retain our national self-respect, or be given over to the vassalage of Annexationism. Meanwhile, whether this take place in a year or two, or whether the fads die a natural death, which is a possibility not altogether beyond speculation, and be the time long or short, Pot and Kettle, we may rest well assured, will not fail to flaunt their blackness in the face of a public, too sensation-loving to set its foot down on the perennial falsehood, ribaldry, and corruption of the professional politician.

#### CIVIC DISTRAINT FOR TAXES.

Again recurring to the subject of the Act in relation to the City of Halifax, we would like to dwell for a moment on the power to distraint for taxes, which the city collector now has at his command. Distraint is one of the harshest of legal remedies, and in many parts of the United States it has been entirely abolished. There are wise exemptions under executions, but the bailiff, armed with his warrant of distraint, has the power, with very few exceptions, to seize and sell everything upon the premises. Our Irish citizens very naturally are incensed at the frequent harrowing accounts of distraints and evictions in Ireland, and yet we have known landlords in Halifax, in the coldest winter weather, to distraint upon the poor tenant and clear the premises of all their contents, not leaving him a stove to warm his family, or a single bed to lie upon. Human nature is the same the world over, and we are prone to weep over distant ills, while we pass unheeded the misery that immediately surrounds us. That the enlightened city of Halifax should employ a remedy so obnoxious in the collection of its taxes, is hardly comprehensible. With a lien upon the real estate, the power to distraint is unnecessary, and in all cases where the taxes are thus secured, the right of distraint should be annulled. Very few men who are able, will neglect to pay their taxes, and where a man is struggling to provide food for his family, and barely succeeds in doing so, it is the height of cruelty and folly to swoop down upon him and deprive him of the means of living. He should be given the utmost limit of the law, and it will generally be found that before the three years are up he will have overcome his poverty, and be in a position to pay his taxes. The poor citizen who has had his home invaded by rough and not always sober bailiffs, who has seen his household goods sacrificed to pay a civic tax, which has been largely increased by the costs of process, is almost justified in forming a loathing for the place, and departing for some more liberal locality as speedily as possible. Then again the power of distraint is liable to abuse. Collectors are but men, and they are not likely to swoop down upon the wealthy and powerful, but to pick out the man with few friends and little influence, and make a victim of him. We are far from implying that the present most efficient collector of taxes would be affected in this way, we only desire to show that the power of distraint is open to this objection. It is so patent, and places the collector in such an embarrassing position, that we believe were he to be consulted he would recommend the abolishment of distraint where the lien law took effect. We are not enquiring into the law with any captious intent, but solely with the desire to suggest emendation in the general interest of the public.

Even now the dawning of a great future is before Halifax; it is the part of wisdom to eliminate from the civic laws any enactments that are unnecessarily severe, or behind the spirit of the age, and as the law of distraint combines both these most objectionable features, the sooner it is repealed the better.

#### FARMER AND MANUFACTURER.

Our Industrial Notes are suggestive beyond the scope of the particular information conveyed in them as to the nature and extent of the several businesses from time to time mentioned, the number of persons to whom they give employment, &c. They stand as evidence of the extent to which manufacturing industry has been developed in Nova Scotia; and we all know that Nova Scotia does not stand first of the Provinces in its representation. If Nova Scotia alone can make so fair a show, we should probably be somewhat astonished, if, week after week, continuous lists were published of manufacturing establishments throughout the Dominion. Among other points, such a list would demonstrate with unmistakable force the great strength of the manufacturing interests, and, in view of the insidious attempts which are being made to set class against class in the prosecution, for mere party purposes, of the Commercial Union agitation, it is perhaps as well that the Annexationists should be to some degree impressed with the strength of the forces which will naturally array themselves against a second destruction of Canadian industries by American slaughterers. Agriculture is, undoubtedly, the first of Canadian industries, and none can be more alive to its importance, none more desirous to promote its welfare, or more anxious to inculcate respect for it, than ourselves; but we hold those counsels to be wicked which seek to persuade it that it should dominate, and if it choose, suppress the development of our country in any and every other direction, especially in the direction in which her great water powers and her vast supplies of timber and minerals, fit her to hold her own with any nation on earth. There are no reasons, but such as shameless political partizanship finds to its hands, why Canada should not be one of the first manufacturing countries in the world. A country can scarcely in these days be a nation of farmers, and nothing else; and it is certain that increase of manufacturing population, earning good wages, must ensure a larger home market for farm produce. It is characteristic of the recklessness of the politicians to aim at the utter destruction of the native industries which nine years of protection have fostered into strength; but the politician cares for nothing but power—which to him means his hands in the public pocket to feather his own nest and corrupt others. Before this grand object all other considerations dwindle into significance.