

of the position thus left vacant, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach seems to have the probabilities just now in his favour. Mr. Balfour, by general though not universal consent, cannot be spared from the Irish Secretaryship. Moreover he does not, it appears, aspire to the leadership at present. Mr. Goschen's antecedents are against him in some quarters; nor is it to be wondered at if life-long Tories should object to seeing a recruit from the opposite party promoted to the headship after so short a term of service. In any case it will be difficult for the Government to make a selection which will be perfectly acceptable to both Tories and Unionists. At the same time, in the face of a foe flushed with local victories, it is not likely that the followers of the Government, or the enemies of Home Rule, will permit their objections to carry them to the length of embarrassing the Premier. With regard to the dead leader himself, it may be said that, while all admit his mediocrity in talent, and most are willing to give him credit for tact, temper, and good judgment, it is doubtful whether the critics are not losing sight of one of the chief elements in the very fair measure of success which he achieved. We refer to his sterling integrity. Mr. Smith was strongly entrenched in his respectability; we use that word in a good sense. His character compelled a respect, and carried a power which not even brilliant talents, if divorced from unexceptionable morals, can always command. If we are not mistaken his career conveys a lesson on the influence of high principle as a potent factor in the achievement of success, even in political life. The lesson is one which it might be worth while for young politicians in Canada to study just now with the closest attention.

PARNELL'S sudden and final removal from the arena of conflict leaves room for much conjecture and speculation as to the effect in regard both to Home Rule and to the prospects of the Liberal party. The correct opinion probably is that the result will not be seriously affected in either case. The power of the once great Irish leader for good or ill had already departed. Even should the few who followed him to the last be still prompted by a sense of loyalty to continue the faction struggle, it is in the highest degree improbable, seeing that with him as leader their fortunes were constantly on the wane, that without him they can accomplish anything of importance. Possibly the effect of his death may be more seriously felt in England than in Ireland. It would not be surprising, seeing for how long a time the departed leader represented in his own personality, in the eyes of many Englishmen, the Irish cause, if there should be developed, in consequence of his death, a tendency to relegate Home Rule to a secondary place in order to make room for reforms deemed more urgent. But so long as the Liberal chiefs, especially Mr. Gladstone, keep it to the fore, and persist in declaring that it blocks all other legislation, and that the pacification of Ireland is the indispensable prelude to a host of important reforms affecting other parts of the Empire, so long will Home Rule continue to be the chief battle-ground of British politics and parties. Parnell, personally, was a mystery, which we do not attempt to explain. His character and course were alike full of contradictions. Haughty, and often overbearing, in manner, he for long years had centred in himself such homage as affection only can beget. A Protestant, he wielded a unique ascendancy over almost the whole body of representatives of Catholic Ireland. Cold and reserved, he led by sheer personal force a band of hot-headed enthusiasts, whom he contrived to make by some subtle influence pliant and manageable. Be the issue what it may, it can never be doubted that through his wonderful genius and persistence the very advanced legislation which has already done so much for Ireland was almost wholly gained. No other man, in Ireland or elsewhere, could have accomplished what he effected in the face of appalling obstacles. The success with which he welded by sheer force of intellect, or will, or personal magnetism, or some other occult quality, the heterogeneous and unpromising units which constituted the Irish contingent in the Commons, into a compact body, ready to hurl the resistless weapon of the solid vote against any Government or party which refused to do its bidding will remain one of the marvels of British politics.

THE trial of Professor Briggs, of Union Theological Seminary, New York, for heresy, which is now going on before the Presbytery of that State, is not unlikely to be memorable in the history of Presbyterianism. As our readers will remember, a Committee of Prosecution

was appointed by the Presbytery last spring to enquire into the charges laid against Professor Briggs, in connection with his now famous Inaugural Address, delivered before the Seminary some time previous to that session. This committee, after careful and prolonged investigation, reported last week in favour of prosecution, and the Presbytery after an animated and at times exceedingly heated debate, decided by the narrow majority of 64 to 62 to receive the report. The specific charges are based upon the Inaugural Address referred to and are two in number, viz.: (1) that Professor Briggs teaches "doctrines which conflict irreconcilably with and are contrary to the cardinal doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures and in the Standards of the Presbyterian Church, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the only infallible rule of faith and practice"; and (2) that he teaches "a doctrine of the character, state and sanctification of believers after death, which irreconcilably conflicts with and is contrary to the Holy Scriptures and the Standards of the Presbyterian Church." These charges are elaborated in several specifications each of which is supported with quotations from the Inaugural, and controverted with numerous Scripture references and with citations from the Confession and the Shorter Catechism, the Standards of the Church. It would be, of course, going beyond the sphere of a secular journal, to enter into the merits of the question as between Professor Briggs and the authorities of his Church, even if want of space did not forbid. The only question which may fairly be considered as of general interest is that of the effect of the ultimate decision of the General Assembly—for no doubt the case, whatever the result of the trial by the Presbytery, will be carried before the highest court of the Church—as determining the attitude of this learned and influential denomination towards the spirit of free investigation in the realm of theology which is so marked a feature of the Christianity of the day. As the accused as well as the accuser will, no doubt, take his stand upon the teachings of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which he has, in another document published since the Inaugural, declared himself to accept as "the only infallible rule of faith and practice," it is evident that the decision must really be based upon the "Standards." But to condemn Dr. Briggs by these Standards, revised or unrevised, will be regarded as tantamount to a repudiation by the Church of the legitimacy of the so-called "higher criticism," and of the possibility of a progressive theology. Anxious fears, which the close division in the Presbytery shows to be well grounded, are expressed by many lest the outcome of the trial may be a schism in the denomination.

LABOUR AND WAGES.

THE writer was accidentally present when a deputation of workmen from the city of Toronto, *en route* from their conference at Quebec, and accompanied by several members of Parliament, waited on the Minister of Public Works, the Hon. Frank Smith, a month ago and asked him if he would in future insert a clause in contracts for public works providing that where labour unions had fixed the scale of wages for the current year contractors should be compelled to adhere to that scale in putting in their tenders and in paying their men. Their contention was that in the city of Toronto the Trades and Labour Council fixed the scale of wages at which employers and employees should contract with one another. Their arrangements, however, were interfered with by the power contractors had to bring in cheap labour from abroad to work at a lower scale, which would in all probability displace them in the city in which they had made their homes, without any ultimate advantage to the country at large.

This application on the part of workmen affords a good opportunity to enquire into the justice of the position they have taken and how far it is likely to affect the public weal should it be accorded to them. Education which is the parent of intelligence has worked great changes in the methods of the toilers of the country, and the aims that now animate their leaders are conducive to the best results of good and perfect government, which it is the interest of the public to co-operate with. The first efforts of labour to assert itself were stigmatized as socialistic, and there is no doubt that socialism was the only goal many of the agitators had in view as the result of their agitation; but the struggle of the past quarter of a century has modified their views and their intelligence has directed their minds into business channels in guarding the interests of labour, which by collective efforts can protect the weak from the strong and raise the standard of workmen throughout the country and throughout the world.

A number of workmen are attracted to the city of Toronto, which is becoming a great labour centre, in consequence of the development of industries, incident to the progress of the country. They wish to make it their home, where by industry and sobriety they can maintain their families in comfort and build themselves independent

homes. The labour in the city is organized, and the workmen meet and discuss questions which affect their welfare. They determine the scale of wages for the various trades and callings to which all those who receive the benefit of their protection are obliged to adhere. A contractor who may employ, say two hundred men, who is either anxious to take too large a share of the profit, or has taken his contract too low, may send abroad and bring in a gang of foreign labourers, who will work for ten, fifteen or fifty cents a day, as the case may be, below the scale. They displace the home workmen, and as soon as they have become permanently fixed, perhaps only after a fight for their position on the part of the home workmen, they will, in time, strike for a higher wage, trade becomes disorganized, the country agitated, and waste of capital and labour is the cost to the country. That is the result of refusing to concede the right to workmen to fix the price they are willing to sell their labour at collectively. In the request they now prefer, they only ask that the labourers who come in to work beside them shall be paid by the contractor on the same scale as is fixed by the workmen of the locality where the work is done, and that the Government shall recognize to that extent the co-operation of labour—a recognition that would soon extend to all branches of industry. A case, to illustrate more forcibly the position of the workmen, came under the notice of the writer lately. The Public Works Department determined to build a breakwater at Digby, Nova Scotia. Plans and estimates of the work were submitted by the engineers to cost \$79,000, the sum appropriated by Parliament. Tenders were called for, and the contract was let to the lowest tenderer, at \$43,000 (little more than half the estimate) on the 18th of last November, the work to be finished in eighteen months. The consequence is that the work has not been commenced, and the contractor has been hunting about for cheap material to enable him to have the work done within his contract price. To complete his contract he will either have to scamp his work or not pay his workmen. Either the Government or the workmen who perform the labour will be injured by the eagerness of the contractor to get the job. The contractor having got it at a figure which renders proper performance impossible, and finding himself in this dilemma is nonplussed, and suggestions are perhaps thrown out that the work is located in the wrong place for the most effective service, which, if listened to, would give an opportunity to make up by way of extras, and on an average of contracts dealt with in that way the public treasury is sure to suffer in the long run and workmen be defrauded. How can the prayer of the petition from the labour council be acceded to with justice to contractors and to the public?

The system of tendering in some countries is as follows, and in fact in past days was the system in Canada: The Chief Engineer makes his estimate of the work to be done, basing his calculations upon the cost of material, scale of wages, etc., and tenders are called for, the successful tenderer being the one who approaches nearest to the engineer's estimate, upon the principle that it is not in the interest of the public to let a contract below its value as either the work will be scamped or the labourers swindled. Before making his estimate the Engineer can ascertain the scale of wages for which the labour unions will undertake to protect the contractor from strikes during the progress of the work, and he can place that rate in the contract, the contractor will then be bound to pay this rate to whatever hands he may employ. The details of the system of preparing the estimates and figuring on the tenders could be arranged so as to guard the public interests. The advantage of the Government availing itself of a system that will avoid strikes is manifest. Strikes hinder work, impoverish the men, disturb trade, and threaten the public peace. Strikes are bound to occur as the industry of the country increases, because the workmen are intent upon raising their standard of employment both in its dignity and emolument. They are accomplishing their object gradually but firmly, with due respect to themselves, and to the interests of the public. Their leaders are intelligent and capable of directing; they are working as well for their weaker brethren as themselves; they know the hardships of the sweating system; they know the garrets that contain the toilers who eke out a scanty subsistence in the large cities, under the system of farming out work through a middleman, but they must first secure an acknowledgment that they are working on legitimate lines before they can cast their mantle of protection over all their fellow-workmen. When it becomes an acknowledged principle that workmen are entitled to sell their work collectively and to be protected in their right to do so, before an employee of labour enters on his work he can go to the trades council and ascertain what scale of wages the labour union will protect him in; he will then know exactly what he has to contend with, strikes will not disarrange his calculations or increase his tender to allow for the loss occasioned by them. Workmen are aiming to become the partners of capital instead of its servants, not on the principle that "Jack is as good as his master," but that they may enjoy a greater share of the blessings of this life than has hitherto fallen to their lot. In an enlightened country like Canada, while we are laying a foundation for the employment of industrial labour, we should wish the labourers God-speed, their own intelligence, their own necessities will teach them moderation, and that economy of living is quite as essential to ultimate success and happiness as is drawing high wages. Contented well-paid labour is a blessing to any country; it increases the