

mentary forces are divided into two parties, each having a well-defined policy, and being pervaded by a strong community of feeling. The appearance of the Irish party and the breaking up of the two historic English organizations into smaller factions are rapidly making responsible government impossible, even in the country where it originated. Parliamentary majorities are shifting and uncertain, and a succession of weak and unstable governments testifies to the unsuitability of the system to the altered conditions of public life. How much less is it adapted to a country like Canada, where party distinctions are largely adventitious? The election of the executive for a fixed term by a direct vote of the whole people, free from any interference or control by the legislature, is the only way to prevent the corruption that has made Canadian politics a byword. L. H.

GREYHOUNDS OF THE ATLANTIC.

THERE is more than a little commotion among the owners of the various trans-Atlantic steamship lines just now, and there can be no doubt that some startling changes are about to be set on foot. A mileage record has been published in London and New York, showing the average rates of speed attained by vessels belonging to the principal lines. From this record it appears that there are eleven steamships traversing the Atlantic which average as much as, or slightly more than, sixteen knots a day. Of these eleven, only three are the property of British companies. Nine others, of which only four are British, average upwards of fifteen knots per diem. The best showing is made by the North German line, and the British Post Office Department, upon the impartial principle of getting the best value for the public money, have awarded a proportionate share of the trans-Atlantic mail contracts to that line. This has caused not a little animadversion in the English press, and it is suggested by several influential papers that from patriotic motives, English mails should be sent in English ships. The most marked effect, however, has been produced upon the Cunard line, which is the wealthiest of all the maritime companies, and which, moreover, has the great banking-house of the Barings at its back. For some years past no maritime enterprise has made money, and the Cunard Company has shared in the general depression, but it is financially able to stand much greater strains than any to which it has hitherto been subjected, and is regarded as an easy first. The Government's recent action in withdrawing the trans-Atlantic mail contract from this corporation, and in issuing an injunction against it, was altogether unexpected, and the company, which has carried the mails without interruption for about forty years, feels intense chagrin. It has projected a scheme which, if successfully carried out, bids fair to establish its supremacy among the great maritime companies of the world. It purposes to build a new fleet of steamers, each one of which is to be a veritable greyhound of the Atlantic. In respect of fittings and accommodation, as well as of speed, the new ships are to be ahead of anything now afloat, while as regards size they will be exceeded only by the *Great Eastern*, and perhaps the *City of Rome*. They are to be propelled by gas instead of coal, thus economizing a large amount of space, and each vessel is to be supplied with two screws, so as to obviate or abridge the wearisome delay consequent upon a broken shaft.

All this is significant, but there are other details of the scheme more significant still. The new fleet will sail from London direct, instead of from Liverpool, and will call at Plymouth instead of at Queenstown. This idea opens up endless possibilities

—nay, probabilities. Comparatively few passengers would sail from Liverpool if they had the option of embarking on a first-class steamer at London. London is the real starting point, as well as the main point of arrival, of four-fifths of trans-Atlantic passengers. The railway journey between there and Liverpool is long and wearisome, a thing which most persons would be thankful to avoid. The channel passage, though not unattended with danger, is most interesting, and except in a few isolated cases, the additional peril would really count for little or nothing. In a word, the new route would not only be the fashionable one, but from mere motives of convenience it would be patronized by pretty nearly everybody who had no particular reason for taking one of the old routes.

But a still more momentous result would be the blow inflicted upon Liverpool, with its thirteen miles of docks, its boundless forests of tall masts, and its long prestige as the most important shipping port in the world. Queenstown, of course, would also suffer in proportion, but the proportion would be so small that one almost loses sight of it.

Later developments of this important project will be looked for with interest and anxiety by all who are in the habit of going down to the sea in ships.

NOW OR NEVER—NOW AND FOREVER.

(From the *Toronto World* of January 20th.)

IN the pending contest Mr. Blake must either make a spoon or spoil a horn. With him it is a case of make or break. As one of his followers has said: "What we require is a leader who wins, as Mowat does." Mr. Mowat's phenomenal success as a winner long since excited admiration upon one side and envy upon the other, while Mr. Blake's failures to win have been conspicuous by their frequency. He has never won anything that can be called a considerable victory since the day he ousted John Sandfield Macdonald from the premiership of Ontario. He was not in the country when his party was scattered to the winds in 1878, but he necessarily shared in the consequences of that defeat, even to the extent of losing his own seat for South Bruce. He was badly beaten in 1882, his personal return for West Durham having been a matter of course. In the present contest Mr. Blake possesses adventitious aids such as he never enjoyed before since he confronted John Sandfield with the Scott and railway cries. The repealers of Nova Scotia, the Home Rulers and Rielites of New Brunswick, the Orangemen of Prince Edward Island, the Rielites of Quebec, the Catholic vote of Ontario—most of it at least—are all within his reach. To be beaten again under such circumstances would be to be beaten indeed. We are not now discussing the cost of victory under such circumstances. That will take care of itself should a victory be achieved.

At this juncture defeat would mean to Sir John the winding up of a long and heavy account with a country which is still his debtor. To Mr. Blake it would signify that he had missed his chance and must make way for Mr. Mowat, the man who wins victories.

It is now or never with the leader of the Federal Opposition, and now and forever with the leader of the Federal Government.

Is there anything which is more certain to sap the foundations of morality than the public maintenance of a creed which has long ceased to command the assent and even the respect of its recognized defenders?—*Farrar's Seekers After God*.