

of the Leaguer. Local assemblies of any kind would now certainly be worked not for the purpose for which they were intended, but as agencies of disunion. A large measure of local self-government, including Ireland as well as the other kingdoms, had been prepared, and was on the point of passing through Parliament when the rebellion broke out; but this was not what Mr. Parnell wanted; nor had there ever been much agitation on that subject. The grievances, when set forth with all the pomp of language by the literary heralds of the "Irish Revolution," amount to little, and have their parallel in England, where the county is still administered not by an elective council, but by the Justices of the Peace in Quarter Sessions. Nor would the people of the Catholic provinces be likely to make much use of an elaborate system of councils and boards if it were bestowed upon them to-morrow. Many would prefer the personal rule of any sort of local chief. It is not in the political region that the root of the evil lies. The constant growth of a redundant population in an island over the greater part of which wheat will not ripen, is the Alpha and Omega of the sad Irish question. Religious animosity and the memories of historic wrongs are secondary sources of bitterness, but they are nothing more. We have the very thing before our eyes in Quebec, where the French peasants, encouraged by their church, as the Irish are, to marry early and to take little thought for the morrow, having numerous families, living in a poor country, and being deficient in industrial energy, outrun the means of subsistence and are forced to emigrate by thousands to the adjacent States. If Quebec were an Island, the case of Ireland might have a perfect parallel; and the French emigration into Maine and Vermont might just as well be ascribed to the tyranny of Government and styled an "extermination" of the people as the Irish emigration into England and across the Atlantic. Quebec, however, is happily free from the curse of incendiary demagogism, which in Ireland not only diverts the energies of the peasantry from fruitful self-help to barren agitation, but, by rendering all property insecure, precludes investment, arrests commercial progress, and prevents the development even of the limited resources possessed by a country poor in cereals and almost destitute of coal. Were Ireland allowed to be at peace, the beauty of her coast would soon attract a wealthy class of residents, and her rich pastures, restored to their natural use, would supply with meat and dairy produce the manufacturing cities of the sister island, which, in their turn, would furnish employment to the redundant population of Ireland. But this, as well as the depletion of the congested districts, which is indispensable as the first step in improvement, is hopeless, because the country is always in the hands of adventurers who subsist by public discontent. It is called inconsistent in those who have written in a friendly spirit about Irish history and character to withhold their sympathy from the Fenian movement. It would be inconsistent in any true friend of Ireland not to pray, in unison with all the property and intelligence of the island, that agitation may end, and that there may be peace.

THE agitators are now quarrelling among themselves, and there is a revolt against the despotism of Mr. Parnell. This is the invariable course of events. O'Connell, combining all the forces of that day, religious as well as political, under his leadership, was able to preserve his ascendancy; and with him it was possible, after a fashion, to make terms. But the supremacy of all the leaders since O'Connell has been partial and ephemeral; and it has been fruitless to negotiate with the idol of the day, when he was certain, almost before the compact had been sealed, to give place to the idol of the morrow. Had the arrangement styled the treaty of Kilmaham taken effect, the only consequence would have been the dethronement of Mr. Parnell by some "irreconcilable" rival. If there were a definite and, at the same time, a patriotic object, there might be union among these men; but there is not. Some of the insurgents are for complete separation: others are for a Federal union: though the latter class might spare themselves the trouble of further argument, since the solution of the problem to which no British statesman ever can or will consent is the establishment of two independent Legislatures under one Crown. There is scarcely more agreement on the agrarian than on the political question; Mr. Davitt is preaching the extermination of the landlords and the nationalization of the land, while Mr. Parnell is suing a tenant for rent. Mr. Parnell, Mr. Justin McCarthy, and others of the less rabid section probably shrink from contact with dynamite, though they are fain to be beholden to it for their funds; but the more advanced section is now completely identified, not only with Irish dynamite, but with European anarchy; and the Irish priests, who adhere to the Nationalist cause, find themselves practically in alliance with the most furious propagators of atheism and disseminators of the *Comic Life of Christ*. It is not unlikely that with this appearance of the Red Spectre a current of reaction may set in. What sort of government is to be set up in Ireland when separ-

ation has taken place, neither Mr. Parnell nor anybody else has yet attempted to explain. Nationalism embarks on a shoreless sea. There is no native dynasty, there is no available centre or basis of any kind. Monarchy, which is congenial to Roman Catholics, would therefore be almost out of the question. For republican institutions the Celts are suited neither by their natural character nor by their historical training. It was from England, whether under a good or under an evil star, that Ireland received Parliamentary Government, nor is there the shadow of a reason for surmising that she would ever have created it for herself. The political tendencies of Ulster are directly opposite to those of the rest of Ireland, as are those of the priesthood to those of the Anarchists and Atheists. To found a new constitution, even in countries prepared for the process, is the most desperately difficult of all undertakings, and in this case the edifice would have to be built upon a soil absolutely saturated with the blood of historic feuds, and cumbered with the deadliest Upas tree of mutual hatred. Personal rivalries among leaders, not one of whom could have any recognized title to allegiance, would infallibly be added to the other sources of confusion. Distress, and with it discontent, would increase; for England would be at liberty, and would certainly avail herself of her right, to close her ports against Irish immigration, and if Ireland excluded her products, as Nationalists threaten, she would exclude Irish products in her turn. Can any Irish patriot foretell the sequel? "In revolutions," said Danton, in a moment of frankness and resipiscence, "the worst men always prevail." The more violent, at any rate, always prevail for a season. A reign of anarchy and terror, probably accompanied by massacre of land-owners and Protestants, as well as by confiscation and plunder, would probably be the immediate result: the ultimate result would most assuredly be re-conquest.

UNDER the startling title of *The Coming Slavery*, Mr. Herbert Spencer, in the *Contemporary*, once more essays to stem the current of the regulative and semi-socialistic legislation which is setting in, and which appears to him to threaten with extinction individual liberty. He is the surviving spokesman of that old school of Liberalism of which *laissez faire* was the motto, while John Stuart Mill was the oracle, and which has now been ousted from the command of the Liberal party by the Collectivists, as, to add one more uncouth term to the pile of jargon, they style themselves, whose chief is Mr. Chamberlain. Mr. Herbert Spencer would carry his principles a good deal too far, and militarism haunts his dreams. The functions most proper to government no doubt are national defence, the maintenance of public order, the protection of the rights of property and the repression of crime. But its actions cannot be always confined within these bounds; it must sometimes become paternal; it must, as in the case of children employed in factories, take care of those who cannot take care of themselves; it must enforce regulations which, though interferences with private habits, are essential to public health or comfort; it must sometimes interpose to save people even from the consequences of their own misconduct, and prevent them from dying of hunger on the street, though their destitution may be the consequence of their own faults and the penalty affixed to such faults by nature. Strictly to define the duties of a government is impossible; they must vary with circumstances, with the character of the nation and the stage of civilization which it has reached. Government is the organ of the community for such purposes as it may be found, from time to time, expedient to effect by common action. But unless we have renounced our faith in liberty and its fruits we must all hold that the narrower is the range of coercion, the wider that of free action, the better for each man and the community it will be. Mr. Herbert Spencer at all events does us a service by calling attention, as he has done in language of great force and clearness, to the revolution which has taken place in the aims of a large section of the Liberal party, and the growing tendency to revert from liberty and economy to paternal government, accompanied as it must be, with vast expenditure and heavy taxation. Regulative enactments have of late been rapidly multiplied, each in turn forming a precedent for others, and the first impulse of every social or sanitary reformer now is, not to recommend his improvement for free adoption, but to get it enforced by legislation. Candidates for the popular suffrage are fast learning to take this line. With the number of regulations that of regulators increases, and ground is not wanting for Mr. Herbert Spencer's apprehension that in the end a bureaucracy may be formed which will be practically too strong for the community, so that the Arch-Bureaucrat whoever he is, will be master of the State. Attention has been called in these columns to the growing practice of creating boards, such as those for schools and free libraries, with taxing powers not under the control of the citizens or their regular representatives. Often, as Mr. Spencer truly says, the paternal legislator in his "practical"