

The Colonist.

FRIDAY, MARCH 20.

A PARLIAMENTARY STRUGGLE.

The origin of the trouble in Chili has, until very lately, been a mystery. All that was known was that the disturbance was serious, and that it had thrown business into confusion. Even though there is telegraphic communication between Chili and the countries east of it, it is a very long way off, and it is difficult to find out how its affairs are progressing.

A document lately received by the New York Herald throws a good deal of light upon the struggle in Chili. This document is a manifesto issued by Balmaceda, the President of the Republic. It is in the form of an address to the people, and is his defence for the course he has taken.

From this address it appears that the civil war now going on had its origin in a dispute between the President and Congress. The representatives of the people did not approve of the course which the President was pursuing, and as he did not alter his policy to suit their views, Congress had recourse to a measure that in similar cases has proved effective. It stopped the supplies. Having the power of the purse it refused to pass the Appropriation bill, and the President was left without funds to pay the army and navy, and to maintain the civil service. How President Balmaceda regarded this extreme, but according to British ideas, constitutional procedure may be seen from the following passage from the address:

"The majority of Congress has been enabled to violate the constitution; they have been enabled to excite the army to disobey their natural chiefs and excite the people, indifferent or disdainful, to start a revolution to save themselves from the moral and political situation to which they have been dragged by their own errors; they have been enabled to say that the President of the Republic assumes the dictatorship because he declines to submit to a Parliamentary dictatorship and surrender the reins of government to those who devour him of his rights and traduce his purposes; they have been enabled in their misconduct to proclaim the revolution from the very legislative halls. Their voluntary omission of their aggressions, bringing opprobrium on themselves, and their assents will not deter me from my inexorable purpose to discharge my duties."

"I am in duty bound to maintain the constitution. As I must adjust my conduct to it, I will not allow my fellow citizens to be made a prey to anarchy, and therefore I shall enforce and never permit Congress nor any one else to set at defiance my lawful authority or to assume an exclusive sovereignty, even under the plea of the representation of the people, while in violation of article 150 of the constitution, which considers such a conduct as an act of sedition."

"The majority of Congress has not discharged, nor had the will to discharge their constitutional duty of approving the Appropriation Bill, nor that of the standing army and navy. It has thrown the institutions into the perils of excited animosities of political circles, divided among their members, and holding opposite views among antagonized and irresponsible chiefs, influenced by their exaggerated ambitions."

"We should like to see what the members of Congress have to say about the constitutional duty of approving the Appropriation Bill. Other Parliaments, at other times, and in other countries have considered it their constitutional duty to refuse the Head of the Executive the means to carry on the Government, in opposition to the will understood wishes of the people, and even Sovereigns have been known to lower their tone very considerably when they were convinced that the representatives of the people were in earnest when they threatened to refuse to pass the Appropriation Bill. But this President of the Chilean Republic is made of other metal. He considers that he has a right to have his own way, let the representatives of the people do or say what they may, and he evidently regards their refusal to supply him with money, to carry on the Government, in a manner opposed to their wishes, as an unpardonable piece of presumption. This is what he says:

"If, in the judgment of the majority of Congress, their duty consisted in failing to approve the bills affecting the national existence, brings to the President of the Republic an irregular state of affairs, nobody in Chili has any right to appeal to a revolution, nor the public powers, either."

Even in the event of the chief of the nation being liable for the shortcomings of the majority of Congress, a revolution can not be proclaimed as a remedy. The constitution has provided the case in which the President of the Republic, or his ministers, may violate the constitution and laws, and in such an event establishes the only manner and form in which to make effective their responsibility."

"Any other conduct is subversive and revolutionary. In obedience to the constitution I am bound to administer the affairs of the State, to preserve the public order at home and provide for the safety of our country abroad; therefore, I will keep the army and navy, and pay the service required for the protection of society and for the existence of the Republic."

Balmaceda clearly considers that the state was made for him and not he for the state, or, rather, he is ready to adopt the language of the French King who, in a fit of modesty, said, "I am the State." Perhaps, the Hampdens and the Cromwells of the Chilean revolution have a very different story to tell. It is evident, from the following extract from the manifesto, that Balmaceda is not very well acquainted with the most interesting period in the constitutional life of Great Britain, for he says:

"The parliamentary coalition suspended in July the collection of the contributions, converting this law of national life into an offensive weapon, wielded in a manner never before known to any congress in the world."

Historical parallels are, we know, often illusory, but it does seem from Balmaceda's own address that there is a rather striking resemblance between the struggle now going on in Chili and the long and most memorable contest between Charles the First, of England, and his Parliament. There is, however, not much fear that Bal-

maceda will meet the fate that overtook the gallant but misguided King of England. The Nineteenth Century differs in many important respects from the Seventeenth. Balmaceda, when he finds that the tide has not in against him, will most likely step into a railway carriage, take a safe and easy journey to Europe, where he will live the remainder of his life, comfortably, if ingloriously, on the boodle he has accumulated during his term of office.

BLOOD, THICKER THAN WATER.

It has been said that the people and the Parliament of Great Britain are wholly indifferent as to the commercial arrangements which Canada makes with other countries. Englishmen do not want to be bothered with Canada, some people say, and they care very little whether Canadians remain in the Empire or join the United States. There were at one time Englishmen who thought it clever and statesmanlike to say that the Colonies are a nuisance, and that the sooner they set up for themselves the better. But that school of politicians has entirely disappeared in England, although the sayings of those who belonged to it still linger in the memory of Canadians, and are reproduced when politicians have a purpose to serve.

To-day, the people of Great Britain and her statesmen set a very high value upon the Colonies. They believe that they add materially to the strength and the greatness of the nation. Instead of trying to drive them out of the Empire, many of the most eminent men in the three kingdoms desire, and strongly desire, to see them more closely connected with the Mother Country. To effect this, the scheme of the Federation of the Empire has been mooted, and has many enthusiastic advocates, both in the Old Country and in the colonies. No definite plan has yet been decided upon, but the idea is working in the minds of many men and may, before long, become both definite and practical.

The interest with which the late election has been watched, in Great Britain, shows very clearly that the intelligent part of its population is far from being careless as to what policy Canada adopts or into what alliances she may enter. As we have seen, English journalists knew perfectly well what was the real issue to be decided at the polls. The issue of unrestricted reciprocity was so exceedingly thin and gauzy that they clearly saw amputation behind it. They therefore concluded that if the Liberals and Unrestricted Reciprocity should triumph, the severance of the tie which connects Canada with Great Britain would soon follow. It was very evident from the tone of the newspapers of both parties that they did not contemplate this result with cynical coldness or with philosophical indifference. They were not prepared to see Canada drift, they did not want to see her absorbed by an alien and not too friendly nation, they were not prepared to see her prefer a stranger to the mother who had cared for her so long and so solicitously. The messages of congratulation sent across the ocean to Sir John Macdonald by Lord Salisbury and the Princess Louise and Lord Lansdowne, and no doubt by many others, were not the mere expressions of personal friendship and good-will. They had a far wider significance. They indicated the pleasure with which the English nation heard that the people of Canada have chosen to continue their connection with Great Britain rather than unite with their big republican neighbor.

There are people in this world who learn nothing and forget nothing, and among them are the Canadians who have not learned that the tie which connects Canada with Great Britain is still as strong as ever it was, and who have not forgotten the foolish and shallow utterances of the Manchester school of politicians who disliked the colonies and regarded them as expensive and unnecessary appendages to the nation.

NOMINATION OR ELECTION.

The chief objection raised against the School Bill, so far, is making the Trustees nominative instead of elective. We do not see that the arguments of those who condemn the system of nomination are very strong. They have not shown that the people would be likely to elect better men than their representatives in the City Council would appoint. We rather think that the opposite would be the case. The City Council, having all the competent persons available to choose from, would be more likely to select men and women well qualified to perform the duties of Trustees than the electors, to the greater number of whom the candidates would, necessarily, be almost perfect strangers. The system of nomination has worked well in the Maritime provinces. The city councils and the governments have generally chosen good men who take an interest in education and who were willing to devote a part of their time gratuitously in order to keep the schools in a state of efficiency. There being no emoluments attached to the office of school trustee no favoritism was shown by the City Fathers. The men they selected were generally noted for the interest they took in the cause of education and for their ability to perform the duties of the office satisfactorily. And, as we have said, they, as far as we know, seldom made a mistake.

There is a good deal of diversity in the manner of choosing the men who manage the schools. In the cities of the maritime provinces, and in those of the provinces of Quebec, they are nominated. In the Ontario cities they are elected. In England, School Boards are elective, in the city of New York, and we believe other cities of the States, the school commissioners are appointed by the civic authorities.

We do not know that one system is very much superior to the other. The rights of the citizens do not, in our opinion, enter into the subject at all. The question is merely one of administration, and the chances of getting a good school administration are, we believe, greater by appointment than by election. The system that has worked well in the maritime provinces will, we submit, be likely to work well in British Columbia. People may attach too much importance to a particular system. In school matters the saying, "What's best administered is best," applies with peculiar force. We are pretty sure that when the people of Victoria, and the other cities of the province, have had a trial of the nominative system they will be two well satisfied with it to ask for a change.

NOT SATISFIED.

The News-Advertiser, on Thursday, contains an article on the School bill which may be described as two-thirds denunciatory, one-sixth vituperative, and the remaining third descriptive and argumentative. This is a style of discussion which may be approved in the Legislative Assembly but we can assure our contemporary it looks very bad indeed in a newspaper. The intelligent reader when he sees the greater part of an article on an important subject devoted to vilification of those who differ from its author, is very apt to conclude that he resorts to abuse because he cannot support his views by facts and arguments.

In the very small proportion of the article in which the News-Advertiser discusses the School bill, it suppresses facts and misrepresents the measure. It says: "By the new measure the Government proposes that the cities shall provide the larger portion of the money required for school expenditures." What are the facts? The Government hands over to the municipalities, for the maintenance of the schools, the whole of the provincial tax, and it puts them in possession of the school buildings and grounds and furniture without asking a single cent for their use. We do not know how it is in Vancouver, but in Victoria, if the provincial tax is at all carefully collected and the Government is credited with a fair rent for the school buildings and half the salaries of all the teachers, the balance which the city will be required to pay out of its ordinary revenue, for the support of the schools, will be very small indeed. The Advertiser's way of discussing a subject, while keeping out of view very important facts, is most unfair as well as very foolish. Sooner or later the public will know the whole truth, and then it will be in a position to make a true estimate of our contemporary's fairness and its intelligence. Let the News-Advertiser draw up a fair debtor and creditor account, between the city and the Government, with respect to the maintenance of the schools under the system proposed by the Government, and then let the citizens judge whether or not they have been liberally treated.

Our contemporary argues, and, as we think, fallaciously, that, by giving the City Council power to appoint a majority of the Board of Trustees, the new bill takes from the people the power of electing those who shall manage the schools. The City Council represents the people of Vancouver, and what the City Council does is considered as done by the citizens. It is only the form of choice that is proposed to be changed. The citizens now directly choose the school trustees by election, in which but comparatively few take part. Under the new measure the citizens, through their representatives, will select and appoint the Trustees. The Trustees are under both systems the choice of the citizens, and, in our opinion, giving the City Council the power to select the majority of the Board of Trustees is a good deal the better way. But to say that the choice is taken from the people, when it is given to representatives whom they elect, is not true.

The News-Advertiser contends that the City Council may be utterly incompetent to select those best qualified to manage the public schools. We ask any impartial man, who are more likely to select capable trustees, the aldermen who have all the available men and women in the city to choose from, or the electors who must elect the candidates who offer themselves for the office? The great bulk of the electors can know very little about the capabilities of the candidates, and the candidates themselves are not always the best judges of their own fitness. It seems to us that the chances of getting good men when they are appointed by the people's representatives, are far greater than when they are elected directly by the people.

A little while ago, the News-Advertiser was most desirous to have the schools placed under the control of the municipalities, but now, when the Government has gone a very great way towards meeting its views, it is not satisfied. It has its misgivings. Municipal control does not appear nearly so attractive when it is near as when it was in the dim distance. Our contemporary says:—

"Indeed, the natural anxiety of the City Council to keep down all kinds of municipal expenditures to the lowest point would necessarily tend to hamper the efficiency of the school system."

This is exactly what we thought when the News-Advertiser was agitating for a change of the law. The schools are well maintained under the present law, and the administration is careful and efficient. We considered that it was wise to let well enough alone, but the News-Advertiser was of a different opinion, and now that it is about to get what it wanted, it evidently does not like the prospect. City councils will, no doubt, meddle with the schools more than the Government does, and they will not be nearly so liberal, but our contemporary should have thought of this before. It wanted local control, and it is going to have it; and if it is disappointed and looks back with regret on the "centralization" which it condemned, it will have itself only to blame.

MR. BLAKE'S LETTER.

Mr. Blake's letter to his constituents is published in the Toronto and Montreal papers of the 8th. It is very long, but, long as it is, it does not contain any satisfactory reason for his silence at a time when every patriotic Canadian should be at his post and, if his position required it, should give a reason for the vote he intended to poll. Mr. Blake was in such a position. He was a leader of the people. Many looked to him for counsel. He has abilities which but few possess. If it was anyone's duty to speak during the crisis through which Canada has just passed it was the Hon. Edward Blake's. But he was silent, not because the public welfare required him to refrain from expressing his views, but because he did not wish to embarrass the party to which he belonged. He effaced himself for the sake of his old friends, who he believed were in error, and who, in his opinion, were going to the country under false colors. It is evident from his own letter that Mr. Blake preferred his party to his country.

Mr. Blake takes the same view of unrestricted reciprocity that Sir John Macdonald did. He saw that it involved discrimination against Great Britain, that it would require an assimilation of the tariffs of Canada and the United States, that it would make direct taxation necessary, and that it would lead to political union with the United States, but he did not, like Sir John, raise the note of warning, or ask the people of Canada whether they preferred the Stars and Stripes to the flag of Old England.

Mr. Blake's reasoning is clear, and the conclusions at which he arrives unavoidable. He says to the electors of West Durham: "Assuming consent on the part of the States, our financial difficulty is to be considered." "Obviously, any practicable plan involves differential duties against the United Kingdom and the rest of the world."

"But, even with such duties, the gaps in our revenue, due to the loss of present taxes on imports from the States, and on imports from Britain to be replaced by home and United States manufactures, would be very great, incapable of being filled by a tea and coffee tax, a bill tax, and other available taxes of like nature, and by practicable economies."

"Direct taxation, even in its most promising form, a succession tax, is, I regret to say, at present out of the question. And of the financial problem presented by unrestricted reciprocity I have seen no solution which would leave us without a great deficit."

All this was in effect said by the opponents of unrestricted reciprocity during the campaign, but emphatically denied by the Liberals. But Mr. Blake goes further. His logic is inexorable. He does not shrink any conclusion which is warranted by his premises. He shows that any arrangement made with the United States must have in it the element of permanency. It would never do to establish reciprocity this year and to abolish it three or four or five years hence. The longer it continued the greater would be the disturbance which its discontinuance would occasion. All this and more is set forth in the letter.

"Our neighbors, instead of engaging in manufactures here, would take our markets with goods manufactured there."

"And our raw materials, instead of being mined on the ground, would be exported to be finished abroad."

"Uncertainty would alarm capital and paralyze enterprise, and therefore I repeat that permanency is essential to success."

How is this permanency to be secured? It does not require a skilled legislator to anticipate the conclusion to which Mr. Blake is leading his readers.

"The tendency in Canada, he goes on to say, of unrestricted free trade with the States, high duties being maintained against the United Kingdom, would be towards political union; and the more successful the plan the stronger the tendency, both by reason of the community of interests, the intermingling of population, the intermingling of business and social life, the intermingling of trade and social relations, amounting to dependency, which it would create with the States, and of the greater isolation and divergency from Britain which would result from the loss of the special advantages experienced in the maintenance and apprehensions entertained as to the termination of the treaty."

"Our hopes and our fears alike would draw one way. We would then indeed be 'looking to Washington.' Nor is there any fair comparison in this aspect between the new and the old reciprocal arrangements."

Near the conclusion of his letter Mr. Blake is more explicit still as to the unavoidable tendency of free trade with the United States. He says:—

"Assuming that absolute free trade with the States, been described as commercial union, may and ought to come, I believe that it can and should come only as an incident, or at any rate as a well-understood precursor of political union, for which, indeed, we should be able to make better terms before than after the surrender of our commercial independence."

"Then so believing—believing that the decision of the trade question involves that of the constitutional issue, for which you are unprepared and with which you do not even conceive yourself to be dealing—how can I properly recommend you now to decide on commercial union?"

It is plain from this letter that the late Leader of the Liberal Party saw very clearly that those who advocated unrestricted reciprocity were, whether they knew it or not, advocating political union with the United States, and this is why he refused to be nominated and to take part in the election. He could not reconcile it to his conscience

to pretend to be upholding unrestricted reciprocity when he knew that he was working for annexation. In the following paragraph he utters the most sweeping condemnation of the men of his own party, who were not deterred by his scruples from fighting under false colors. This is it:—

"But it is to our own convictions, right or wrong, that we must after all be true. To put forward opinions we do not hold, or ignore difficulties we cannot solve, or deny or conceal the tendencies and results of policies we undertake to propound, would be dishonest and unworthy. And therefore I could not address the electors of West Durham without speaking my mind freely on the points I have advanced."

Mr. Blake tells the electors of West Durham that he was "unable to fight under false colors," but is free from blame for allowing others to fight under false colors, and to inveigle loyal men into their ranks by false pretenses without uttering one single word of warning?

FOOLISH AND USELESS.

The Nanaimo Free Press of Thursday contains an article, no doubt intended to be very smart, on the women's procession at Wellington. We do not think it manly or creditable in any way to persuade the women to do what the men dare not attempt. We are not a little surprised that our Nanaimo contemporary does not venture to exercise a little more independence in this matter of processions and other demonstrations which are both useless and injudicious. It surely ought, once in a while, to pluck up courage enough to advise the strikers and other Union men for their good. It cannot but know that no one can possibly be benefited by these irritating processions, and that they may any day lead to lamentable results. Men who are really in earnest do not waste their strength and weaken their influence by vain and meaningless brag and bravado. It is not business-like to worry and annoy an opponent. On the contrary, it is too childish for even school boys to persist in it. If the Union wishes to be regarded as a business organization, established and maintained for the benefit of its members, it should condemn methods and practices which cannot be productive of useful results.

It is necessary that the Union should cultivate the good opinion of the community generally. Those who belong to working-men's organizations know now that the good will and the good wishes of the community are, in the time of need, a tower of strength to them. But how can the sensible men and women of the country respect people who persist in a practice which, while it may lead to mischief, cannot possibly be productive of good results? We, for our part, feel sorry for the misguided women whom the Free Press encourages to walk in procession at Wellington, and we believe that, if our contemporary did its duty, it would, at the risk of offending a few impulsive people, do its best to deter them from making humiliating and wholly useless demonstrations. If the Union men allowed themselves to think coolly over the matter, they would see that the men and the newspapers that encourage them in doing what is foolish and, perhaps, unlawful, are their worst enemies. The Free Press professes to be the friend of the Nanaimo Union men. Why does it not, then, endeavor to restrain them, when it knows that they are doing what is wrong and what is hurtful to their own cause? A little plain speaking, now and then, would be kinder and more friendly than this everlasting flummery.

WILFULLY BLIND.

Parnell's last manifesto is a good example of the way in which men who have ruined themselves, and those connected with them, by their vices and their follies talk. Every one is to blame but themselves, and their fall is attributed to every cause but the right one. Parnell tells his American compatriots that victory was snatched from his grasp by meddlesome politicians, by raw recruits, by malcontents, by office-seekers and by envious persons. He does not say as much as hint that his own vice and hypocrisy had more to do with placing the cause of Irish Home Rule in the low and almost hopeless position which it now occupies than all the treachery of false friends, and all the hostility of open enemies. The Irish in America know, or ought to know, that if Mr. Parnell had been a moral man, if he had lived a decently virtuous life, if his open and shameless wickedness had not shocked and disgusted hundreds of thousands in Europe and America who sympathized with the Irish people, he would to-day have been the honored head of his party, and the prospects of the cause of Home Rule would have been brighter than they had ever been since the agitation commenced. This is undeniable.

It may seem singular, and perhaps deplorable, that a national cause can be brought into disrepute by the misconduct of one man. It may be said that Parnell's wickedness does not affect the merits of the Home Rule cause, that the Irish have as good a right to self-government now, as they had when Parnell was believed to be a good man who lived a pure life, and that it is unreasonable to punish a whole people for the offence of one man. All this may be true, but it does not alter the fact that Parnell's evil conduct has done irreparable injury to the movement of which he still claims to be the head. The world is not now, and it never has been, governed by pure reason. Men are everywhere actuated by feeling. Sentiment is a very powerful factor in the management of the world's affairs. And it is not a good sign that men still admire moral excellence and that they require in their leaders, at least an outward regard for the proprieties and the decencies of life.

The way in which the British people have turned their backs on Parnell shows that in the Empire to which we belong the public conscience is yet tender. There was no hypocrisy in this change of attitude with respect to Parnell. It was spontaneous, and it was general. Men did not wait to be told that they were wrong, they felt it. They felt that it was wrong to keep in the place of honor an open adulterer who appears to glory in his shame. He was deposed in their esteem at once, and the cause which he represented, for the time at any rate, also fell into disrepute.

Since Parnell's fall the conduct of the

questions about which the communicative gentleman speaks were brought into a court of law would his evidence be taken as to the truth of any of the statements he makes? After a question or two sufficient to find out that all the information he had to give was acquired in the way he states, by hearsay, he would be asked, and that perhaps not very politely, to step down. If people in authority were to listen and to set upon such stories as Mr. McDonald tells there would be no end to the mischief that would be done and the injustice that would be inflicted. Mayor Grant placed on McDonald's statements their true value when he said that the whole thing was the frivolous emanation of the brain of a disappointed man.

We did not think that a Council composed of business men who are supposed to have some idea of the nature and value of testimony would waste their time in considering such a palpably unreliable declaration. How would any of them like to have his character for open and fair dealing called in question on such testimony as is contained in this precious declaration? What would he think of the man, or men, who would entertain a charge against him based upon the report of a report repeated by a person whose motive in traducing him was open to question? We think that when the Council have given themselves time to examine this document coolly they will wonder why they did not throw the trash at once under the table.

SIR CHARLES DILKE.

Sir Charles Dilke has evidently decided to re-enter public life. There are those among his fellow-countrymen who believe that his retirement has not been long enough. Mr. Gladstone is said to be one of these. But the electors of Forest Dean think differently. They believe that the nation needs the services of such men as Dilke, and they have asked him to represent them in Parliament. Sir Charles, while accepting their offer, has thought fit to publish a pamphlet in which he tries to show that he was not guilty of the offences laid to his charge. This, in the opinion of many, increases the objections to his reappearance in public life. They say that he has added falsehood to his crime; and even if he is, as he declares, innocent, it does seem that it would be better if he had allowed bygones to be bygones. The electors were willing to accept him as he was, and we do not see how any denial that he could publish would put him in a better position than he was when they offered him the nomination. Denials of that kind go for very little. Those who believed him guilty before he published his defence, are most probably, of the same opinion still, and those who, while he was silent, considered that he had brought forth works need for repentance, may, when they see him repeating his denials in the face of such terribly strong evidence as was brought against him, regard him as hardened and impenitent, and unfit to be raised to a position of honor.

NO EVIDENCE.

We are not a little surprised that the City Council considered the declaration of Mr. J. G. McDonald worthy of a moment's consideration. When the members of that body saw that the document consisted of a number of hearsay statements, concerning persons, most of whom have no connection whatever with the Corporation, it might be supposed that they would throw it into the waste basket without the slightest hesitation.

It is not customary for even private individuals to pay attention to charges preferred against servants or neighbors in this loose and indirect way. When a man commences his story in such a way as this: "Mr. Blank told me that Mr. Dash had said to him that your servant, ———, a man of sense and principle, would not wait to hear any more. He would ask the telegraph what do you know yourself about the man? and when it was found he knew nothing, except what he had heard, a speedy end would be put to the interview."

Now, this Mr. McDonald's tale are precisely of this nature. According to his own declaration, he knows nothing whatever about the letting of the contract for the sewers, or the action of those who proposed to bid for the contract, except what he alleges he heard from Mr. H. F. Keefer and Mr. J. W. McFarlane. All that the City Council therefore are asked to take action on are the reports of conversations twice repeated. Some one says something to M. H. F. Keefer, if Mr. McDonald tells the truth, that conversation is repeated to Mr. McDonald, who repeats what he considers the substance of it to the City Council. McDonald himself, it is to be observed, knows nothing whatever of the matter which he repeats. He is not even certain that the conversations which he reports ever took place, neither can he tell if they did take place, that they have been reported to him faithfully.

We do not for the moment make any enquiry as to who this Mr. McDonald is, or what object he had in repeating conversations which he says he heard. What we desire to direct attention to is the manifest unreliability of such second hand stories as Mr. McDonald tells. If any of the

Home Rule agitators has not been such as to raise their cause in popular estimation. They have wrangled and squabbled and have exhibited none of the elevation of mind, nor the self-sacrifice which patriots are supposed to possess. Neither Parnell nor any of the men whom he led, has shown any disposition to sacrifice his personal ambition and prospect of aggrandizement for the good of the cause of Ireland. They have appeared to be a number of self-seeking politicians who had made agitation their profession. And they have not shown that if Home Rule were achieved Ireland would be safe under their guidance. Altogether, the Irish agitators have not, since Parnell's fall, acted in a way to recommend their cause to the world and we are very much mistaken if the mission of the Home Rulers, who are now on their way to America, does not prove a signal failure.

A NEW UNION.

The Australians have commenced to dig the foundation for a Confederation. The work is not so easy as they anticipated. There are many conflicting interests to be reconciled and some difficult compromises to be made. The trade question appears just now to present the greatest difficulty. Some of the colonies affect free trade, and others are strongly protectionist. The free-traders want to have their principles embodied in the Constitution of the Confederation, and the protectionists fear that their interests will not be safe in a Confederation in which free-traders will have a voice in framing its trade policy. It seems that some of the colonists find it difficult to reconcile themselves to the principle of even provincial free trade. At present each colony has its own tariff against the neighboring colonies as well as against the rest of the world. Victoria, for instance, protects itself against the industries of New South Wales and Queensland and New Zealand, as well as against those of Great Britain and the United States. It is exceedingly exclusive in all matters relating to trade, and some of the provisions of its tariff appear singular to persons who have become so habituated to interprovincial and interstate free trade as to find it difficult to realize how any other state of things could have ever existed. But Canada and the United States had the same difficulties to meet as the Australians. They are now endeavoring to surmount, and they, after a sharp struggle, got over them, and we have no doubts but that the patriotism of our fellow subjects at the antipodes will enable them to overcome the obstacles which just now seem so formidable.

The Australians have the example of Canada before them, and it appears that they have studied the Constitution of the Dominion very carefully—have, in fact, made it their model. This is only natural. The situation and circumstances of the Australian colonies are, in many respects, similar to those of the British American provinces previous to Confederation. Those provinces, in spite of interests that appeared diverse at the time, united and have lived and prospered for nearly a quarter of a century under a constitution which was framed by a conference of their leading men, and it would be indeed singular if the public men of the Australian colonies when contemplating a similar federation, did not enquire closely into the nature and the operation of the Constitution of the Dominion of Canada. That they have done so appears from the outline of the new Australian constitution, and so far as Sir Henry Parkes to the Conference now being held at Sydney. Here it is a nutshell.

"That a federal parliament be established, composed of a senate and house of representatives; that free trade be adopted throughout the federation; that authority to impose custom duties be vested in a federal government and its parliament, and that the military and naval defences be entrusted to federal forces under one command."

A confederation formed on these lines will have a very striking resemblance to that of Canada. The Australian colonies may find some difficulty in coming to an agreement, but that they will, and that too before very long, form a compact and united commonwealth may be regarded as certain.

PLAQUES OF CHINATOWN.

There are a great number of plague spots in Chinatown that the occasional visitor as well as the general public know little, if anything, about. The cess pits under the living rooms, in which the degraded residents pack themselves like cattle, are in places, and so situated upon the sewer out in the Colonies, now days ago, Sanitary Officer Bailey is now saying active war against these enemies to the public health. Yesterday the sanitary officer, Dr. Milne, A. H. Holland and Munn, and a Colporteur invaded the Chinese quarter, the primary object of the trip being for the purpose of having a Chinaman who had just died, examined by the doctor. When the party reached the cabin in which the deceased was lying in state, a hearse was found standing at the door, while, within, the undertaker's assistant was driving the last nails in the coffin. The funeral ceremony was rudely interrupted, the coffin lid was removed, and the doctor proceeded with his necessary examination. The dead man's friends said, had he been sick for a year or more. The real fact was that he smoked himself to death, sitting in his opium den until the very hour that it terminated his existence. Only a few yards away, in another cabin, was a second gaudy, wild-eyed victim of the drug, whose friends said he would be all right in a day or so, but, over whom the doctor shook his head—opium will finish him in the course of the next week or so. The leper house was the next place visited, one of the On Hing brothers caring for the wretched specimens of humanity in a little shack back from Figard street, between Government and Douglas. The typical Chinese treatment of greasing had been adopted in dealing with both patients, who were produced for the inspection of the doctor. He decided that they were in reality suffering from Oriental leprosy in its incipient stage, and instructions have been given that the lepers be sent away from the city without delay. The day that their friends here wish them a safe trip to China will be a good day for Victoria.

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE.

THIRTY-SEVENTH. The Speaker read the chair. After prayers by Rev. Dr. Hon. Mr. Robson presented a bill to amend the law relating to certain properties in New Westminster.

HON. MR. DAVIE submitted the bill of the Lieut.-Governor for consideration by the Committee House—Carried. The House went into Committee on the bill, and read the bill, and reported it to the House. The bill was then passed.

PETITIONS.

MR. SMITH presented a petition from John Miller and other residents of the District re residence of a bill for a wagon road from Queen's Head to the coast.

MR. MARTIN submitted the Standing Orders and Private Bills respecting the incorporation of Mountain and Nelson Tramways. Adopted.

MR. BAKER handed in the Railway Committee, asking that the bill for the incorporation of Kamloops and Similkameen be recommitted, it being believed that evidence which may affect the public can be submitted in support of the bill.

MR. SMELLY hoped that he might be given to all parties to be interested in the bill. He said that it was the duty of the committee to hear the petition on Wednesday next.

MR. MARTIN thought the bill altogether inadequate, owing to the fact that some of the provisions were not in accordance with the question of principle. He said that it was a question of principle.

MR. MARTIN said that, through the Chief Commissioner of Works had received a telegram from them to oppose a portion of the proper stage he should be left over.

MR. KELLY presented the bill for the incorporation of William Hunter and others, and Mr. Forth Sheppard R.R. bill. MR. MARTIN said the petition received; it was a member of this House.

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