

you to institute an inquiry in order to decide whether there may be a political remedy.' This seems to me a perfectly request, and were it granted it would probably prove a death blow to demagogues who trade upon the angry feelings aroused by a *non possumus*. It is not many years since we were in a fervour of admiration at the Hungarians demanding Home Rule, and when they obtained it we were effusive in our congratulations. Even now we occasionally point out how wise was the policy which has made Austro-Hungary a strong and formidable Empire by permitting the Hungarians to settle their own local affairs as they best pleased. Neither centralisation nor decentralisation is a principle, but rather a matter of expediency. Where the sovereign, as with us, reigns but does not rule, one Parliament in which matters of Imperial interest are decided is necessary, but I cannot for the life of me see why we should not seriously inquire as to how far the Irish may be left to settle purely Irish matters."

A new movement is on foot on the part of the Roman Catholic Church. For a long time past it has been content to hold its own, so far as its own work was concerned, simply not rejecting the few converts that occasionally dropped in from the High Church party in England. The Church has been rather opposed to free discussion of philosophy and science. But Leo XIII. is a scholar and—on the whole and for a Pope—a liberal-minded man. Awhile ago he put out an encyclical letter which contained a great deal of good advice, and some good and some indifferent arguments about the interest the Church has always taken in the promotion of popular education. Remembering that letter, it is not a little significant to find the Roman Catholic clergy, in almost every centre, preaching on the relations which ought to exist between philosophy and Catholicism. Père Dèdeon is attracting immense crowds in Paris, where he is advocating a compromise and harmony between the opposing systems of Positivist Rationalism and Christian doctrine. The Père is an eloquent man and liberal-minded, and possibly will do something to convince the educated French that religion is not in reality divorced from human reason.

The Belgian missionaries now visiting Montreal are moving in the same direction. Having preached for several days to women, doing their best to frighten them into a wholesome dread of death and the Judgment, unless they meet each with the blessing of the Church upon them, they have turned to the men and to the intellectual side of religion. The sermons now being preached in Notre Dame Church are devoted to discussions of the harmony between philosophy and religion. This is good; and I hope the preachers will have crowded and attentive audiences, so that we may hear all that can be said from the intellectual standpoint of the Church. But this idea of keeping the women away from hearing such discourses and inviting only the men, is proof that the Roman Catholic Church is behind the age in its estimate of women's culture.

The Earl of Beaconsfield is as cautious in his old age as he was reckless in years gone by. There can be no doubt that he suggested the giving of Herat to Persia. It was a timid move, just to make a show of doing something, but stopped in answer to public opinion as soon as it was made known how imbecile and licentious is the rule of the Shah, and how satisfied Russia would be to see Herat in the possession of a power whom she can always easily control.

General Roberts has found it necessary to abate a little of his rash zeal in Afghanistan and try to bring the Afghans to terms of peace by more pacific measures. A letter to Mahommed Jan has notified the malcontent leaders that the Government is ready to accept as ruler of Cabul any Sirdar, with a certain few exceptions, which the assembled representatives of the nation may choose. General Roberts must have changed his ideas somewhat since the days when he went shooting and hanging with neither care nor mercy. Probably instructions from "home" have taken a different tone, for the Government has found that the glory got of gunpowder is of a doubtful kind. The Earl of Beaconsfield is casting about still for a new policy with which to go to the polls. "Peace with honour" served for a time, but it was duly discovered to be only a hollow phrase; now that he has changed his tactics he will surely find a new sentence to express it. "Peace with prosperity" would be very suggestive.

Sir Stafford Northcote proposes to take vigorous measures with the Irish Obstructionists. During the last Session they played their peculiar game most successfully; they managed to bring Parliamentary business to a standstill and threw the House into a state of discreditable confusion. To meet any further attempts of the same kind Sir Stafford has moved a resolution to the effect that whenever any member is named by the Speaker, or chairman of committee, as disregarding the authority of the chair or abusing the rules of the House by persistently obstructing business, the Speaker shall put the question, without amendment, debate or adjournment, that such member be suspended during the remainder of that day's sitting; and that if any member be thrice suspended in one Session the third suspension be for one week, after which a motion may be made for a continuance of the suspension, but the suspended member will have the right to be heard.

This is strong ground which Sir Stafford is taking, and if he can carry it through the House obstruction of the kind practised last Session will be impossible. But is the Chancellor of the Exchequer considering the best interests of his party in thus resorting to extreme and effectual measures for putting down the Obstructionists? They want some good reason for dissolving the House and making an appeal to the country: what a splendid chance for letting the Irish force the elections! The country must be governed—that is to say, Parliament must be allowed to get through with its business; and if the Irish make it impossible, what easier than an appeal to the country with the charge against the Liberals that they have sided with the Biggar and Parnell party, and a demand for a renewal of popular confidence and power to squelch the Impracticables? The affairs of Zululand, Afghanistan and other quarters whence complaints have come could be conveniently passed by for the discussion of the greater question of how to rule the Irish members in the House of Commons.

The Nihilists are working in Russia with a courage and perseverance worthy of a better cause. Perhaps the eagerness with which they prosecute their plans for the assassination of the Emperor does more than anything else to defeat their purpose. Every attempt has been clumsily made, and the Czar lives in spite of all. Will he continue to hedge himself round with good fortune as a defence? It is hardly likely. Persistent effort must break a gap through sooner or later. Each time the Emperor has escaped it was by the intervention of some lucky but unexpected incident. The time may well be at hand when lucky incidents will fail; and then, what will the infatuated Nihilists have accomplished? The Czar dead, his son will reign in his stead. Have the people of Russia any reason for imagining that he will institute a more liberal form of government? No one believes that Russia is not capable of great reforms in its political and civil institutions, but the students and professors and other educated classes who seem so determined to bring about revolution instead of reform should look ahead a little and forecast the probable results of their deadly work. The murder of an Emperor or two cannot do much toward helping the cause of liberalism. Private assassination has never been friendly to public reform. Despotism can only be effectually put down by popular growth in intelligence and industry. Nihilism is at best but one form of tyranny arrayed against another.

It cannot even be demonstrated that Nihilism is the product of a despotic government. Communism, Socialism, &c., are but different names for the same thing, and they abound in France, in Germany and in the United States, as well as in Russia. They are different names for the same spirit of discontent which prevails among all the lower and working-classes of Europe and America. They are dissatisfied with themselves, with their condition, with their governments—no matter what may be the nature of them—they are possessed with a restless and unreasoning desire for the power and property they would deny to others. The way out of the difficulty is not plain. We can only do our best to improve our institutions and wait for further developments of the plan of Providence.

EDITOR.