

progress is incomplete if it does not embrace mankind. Already finance and trade find it necessary to be cosmopolitan. The precious metals have a world wide range; a scarcity anywhere raises their value everywhere. In a less direct way the same may be said of grain, cotton, sugar and other articles necessary for man's support. National life is more than a question of food and clothing, and until the advocates of a leap in the dark show us that we shall be moving in the right direction, Canadians may be excused if they decline to trade away their birth-right for a mess of pottage, and it cannot be denied that the onus of proof rests upon those who advocate change.

W. H. Cross.

THE IRISH PROBLEM.*

THE Irish Problem has already given so much exercise to historians, politicians, and thinkers in general, that it is no wonder if many should give it up in despair, and that others, of a more hopeful turn, and perhaps with a greater patience learnt from the past of human history, should still attempt to make contributions towards its solution. The latest of these emanates, we are informed, from one who is not only "a citizen of the Empire," but a citizen of Toronto. As, however, he has refrained from putting his name on the title page of his book, we shall not seek to disclose it, and shall content ourselves with giving a special recommendation to his fellow-citizens to make themselves acquainted with his work. Apart from this it is worth reading. It is the work of a calm, thoughtful, unprejudiced mind, of one who is totally free from the provincialism, or almost parochialism, which too often asserts itself in connection with this great subject, and moreover, of one who can express his thoughts in pure, clear, and vigorous English. So much for the general qualities of the book before us.

As regards its special contents—we mean the special opinions of the author, and his suggestions for the solution of the problem—we are, for the most part, entirely with him; and if we entertain certain doubts, it is not so much because we object to any portion of his suggestions, but because we have misgivings as to the possibility of their being carried out. In any case they are worthy of consideration, and most persons will arise from the study of them with somewhat clearer perceptions of the conditions of the problem.

On the general question of Home Rule we are completely agreed with the writer. It is pointed out that Home Rule is not only, by confession of its advocates, a mere experiment—another leap in the dark—but that its tendency is retrograde and destructive in regard to the best interests of the Empire and the people. Towards the end of the volume he remarks: "Nothing could have appeared more retrograde, more like a violation of all consistency on the part of a veteran Liberal, than to lend the high authority of his name and the great powers of his eloquence to so reactionary a task as that of reviving into activity in a great western empire at this date of the world's enlightenment the ancient antipathies of race and the selfish jealousies of local nationalities—baneful and misanthropic passions that might better have been left to flourish in the congenial soil of the east of Europe. History, it may be thought, will find it hard to forgive what must appear as a sin against the very spirit of modern civilisation." The writer points out, indeed, that certain benefits and advantages will accrue from this action on the part of Mr. Gladstone. It may be so. Good does often come out of evil. But at the present moment we are more impressed by what appears to us the irreparable mischief brought about by Mr. Gladstone's headstrong and irrational conduct. If it should result in civil war in Ireland—by no means an impossible contingency, although fighting courage is not perhaps the thing to be expected of dynamiters and their abettors—then, no doubt, the ultimate result would probably be satisfactory. Open war would be far more honourable to the rebels, and far more satisfactory in its consequences to all concerned, than the horrible kind of warfare to which Irish "Nationalists" have recently accustomed us.

The principal sections of the work before us deal with two great questions—a scheme for the purchase of the land by the present tenants, and an industrial parliament. In both of these proposals there is much which compels our assent, and our chief difficulty has reference to the working out of the schemes. With regard to the land purchase scheme, the writer suggests that the medium for conveying the land from the present landlords to peasant proprietors should be, not the Government of the country but a joint-stock company, and that the transfer should not be compulsory but voluntary. He points out forcibly and convincingly that "a proposal to constitute the relation of creditor and debtor directly between the political Government and a large proportion of the people" would "be vicious

and imprudent in the extreme," and he illustrates this statement from an experiment tried in Canada about thirty years ago, when the Provincial Government of Upper Canada assisted the various municipalities in the Province "to borrow money for various local purposes on terms which it would have been impossible for the municipalities to obtain on their individual credit." He sees no reason to doubt that the same mischief which resulted in Canada would follow in any similar experiment in other countries.

The writer then sketches the constitution of what he would call a "Land Loan Guarantee Company," and shows the manner in which he would set it to work, and the results which he would expect from its operations. There is no doubt that such a company, established by business men, on business terms, would be far more likely to prove satisfactory to buyers and sellers than any Government commission—proverbial as such bodies are for their clumsiness, dilatoriness, and costliness. But whether the advantages of such a scheme are sufficient to induce business men to risk their money in it is a different question. The writer believes that he meets this objection when he says that the risk would be no different from that of a loan or investment company, and would depend "upon the management of the company, and its judgment in selecting honest and capable valuers. . . . The shareholders, like the members of any other commercial corporation, would have no right to expect indemnity, except through their own discretion and vigilance in the selection of their officials." As far as we are able to judge, the author's proposals violate none of the laws of political economy. What men of business will say to them remains to be seen.

Perhaps the boldest part of the book is that which contains a proposal for an Industrial Parliament; and here we have certainly some very plain speaking in regard to the incompetency of existing legislative assemblies to deal with industrial questions. They possess none of the qualifications, the author urges, for determining economical and industrial questions, and under this head he gives some trenchant statements of truths which deserve prominent notice. Here are some specimens of the author's candour: "The Senate of the United States at one end of the scale is the most respectable; the city governments are almost Mephistophelian in their cynical disregard of public duties, and in their gross and venal [misprinted *venial*] demagogism. Negligence, if not corruption, in private legislation, and ignorant handling of more general interests—these are too frequently the characteristics of local legislatures. . . . In the experience of the American Continent, morality and commerce suffer from the immense variety of crude legislation. Each locality is a law to itself." Again, "Political parliaments do not sin through ignorance only. *Insincerity* in dealing with public questions—handling them not according to their merits, but with a view to the votes they may bring or lose; this is demagogism—this is the master evil of the day." Perfectly true and most necessary to be said. A remarkable example of the insincerity of both parties in the Canadian Parliament is given in the case of the duty on grain, and the iniquitous refusal to lower it when the supply in Ontario became insufficient for the wants of the Province. The author would have this Industrial Parliament to be chosen not by numbers or by districts, but by classes, industries, trades, and in this, he says, we should be coming nearer to the original English Parliament in which the Barons represented the large landowners, the Knights of the Shire the yeomen, the Borough Members the traders and manufacturers in towns.

How we are to set to work to obtain this Industrial Parliament the author does not clearly show. He thinks the Irish Land League might be transformed into something of this kind. At any rate such an effort must, at the beginning, be a voluntary one. It is not likely that our existing legislatures will make such a frank confession of their insufficiency as our author here makes for them; or that, even if they have suspicions of their own incompetence, they will ask their constituents to appoint another body to do a most important part of their work.

LAW AND RELIGION IN THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.

A RECENT discussion on the exclusion of persons disavowing the existence of a Supreme Being, and of a future state of rewards and punishments, from testifying in a court of justice, introduces us to the consideration of the much broader and important question of the effect of the quasi-religious system of law of our Province upon the status of those citizens who acknowledge no religious belief.

The French code, entitled the Code Napoleon, was adopted as the model upon which our Civil Code was framed, but in many instances, either from design or negligence, innovations were introduced, and departures from the spirit, as well as the text, were made in our codification, which have tended to contrast the latter unfavourably with the universally appreciated code of France.

* The Irish Problem as viewed by a Citizen of the Empire. London, Hatchards, 1887.