

out of the commercial unity of the Empire, and how wide her departure may be is to the English a matter of small concern. Her friendly vote in the councils of her own continent is on any question worth more to them than her nominal dependence on themselves; while the idea that they, with all that they have upon their hands, can undertake the protection of our fisheries, or of our commercial interests generally, is, as we have said before, a mere delusion. That freedom of commercial intercourse with our own continent must compromise our political independence is an objection which has been sufficiently met. That must be a weak nationality which depends upon the existence of a Customs Line. If a partial measure of Reciprocity did not impair nationality, why should a more complete measure destroy it? Canada would be as much mistress of her own political destinies after the abolition of the Customs Line as she is now. What more can she desire?

HERE is a question profoundly affecting all the material interests of the country, and at the same time clear of political party. Why should not the Boards of Trade take it up? They are the true representation of Canadian commerce: their voice ought to be heard and their influence ought to be felt. Commerce is not represented at Ottawa, because its chiefs generally have little taste for party politics, and they cannot afford to leave their business for four months in the year. Nor are they usually the sort of men for the machines. The imposing assemblage of commercial wealth and intelligence which, at the Rossin House Banquet, the other evening, paid well merited honour to Mr. Darling, and listened to the vigorous and high-spirited speech of Mr. Wiman, is the real organ of our great interests, not the wretchedly inadequate representation which party conventions and wirepullers send to the merely political capital of the Dominion.

WHAT is to be done with the surplus? is the question which American journalists have been asking. The answer is that nobody has a surplus till he has paid all his debts. What would be obviously true in the case of a commercial man is equally true in the case of a nation. But supposing there were a surplus, President Cleveland has already told us what ought to be done with it. No government, he most truly says, has any right to take from the people in taxes more than is necessary for economical administration. If the revenue exceeds what is required for this purpose, it is the plain duty of the government at once to reduce taxation. If, however, the Americans are resolved to maintain unnecessary imposts for the purpose of Protection, and thus to produce a needless amount of revenue, we can tell them without hesitation the best way of disposing of the surplus. Let them fling it into the sea. If it is spent, it will most certainly be spent in corruption, as in fact up to this time it has been. After army pensions will perhaps come labour pensions, for which, in truth, there would be almost as much to be said. Jobbing of some kind on a colossal scale will at all events be the inevitable result, and a party in power getting hold of this enormous fund may inaugurate a reign of corruption as enduring as it will be profound. It is surely strange that after all their experience the Americans should not be more alive to this danger.

It must surely be regarded as a new departure in public life, whether for good or evil, when a statesman, having taken in hand the most momentous of all questions, instead of confining his utterances to the Legislature or the Cabinet, takes to writing "Notes and Queries" in a magazine. In Mr. Gladstone's Notes and Queries on the Irish Question, in the *Nineteenth Century*, the leading argument advanced in favour of his proposed revolution is the expensiveness of the present system. "Ireland," he says, "is governed at a cost, civil and military, which, if applied to the Empire generally, not even the wealth of Great Britain could sustain." Possibly, but what is the reason? The reason is, that British faction, for its own selfish purposes, foments Irish disaffection. If the parties in the Parliament of Westminster could for a few months lay aside their unpatriotic rivalries, and make the Irish understand that while every constitutional demand for the redress of grievances would receive full attention, rebellion and lawlessness would be promptly put down, there would soon be an end of political disturbance. The rebellion has no force which could stand for a moment against a single brigade of regular troops. The strength of the insurrection lies in the support which it derives from English agitators, who are not ashamed, in pandering to Irish passions, to traduce and malign their own country. "We have banished the sons of Ireland wholesale," says Mr. Gladstone. Have all the sons of England who people our colonies and dependencies been also "banished"? Have all the Germans, Scandinavians, and Italians in the United States been "banished" by iniquitous Governments? Has the Government of Canada "banished"

all the French-Canadians who have swarmed over the line? There must be in the United States, in the British colonies, and in England herself, who has opened to the labour of the "sons of Ireland" the best of markets, a considerably larger number of Irish than in Ireland itself. What would have become of these millions if they had not been "banished" from an island which was utterly incapable of supporting them, and which is incapable of supporting in the comfort and decency of civilised life even the population which remains?

For the first time it seems to have occurred to Mr. Gladstone that there is something rather ambiguous in the position of a British statesman who is acting in alliance with foreign conspirators against the unity and greatness of his nation. He seeks to justify American intervention by reference to the precedent of the *Alabama*, and to the example set by Englishmen in contributing to revolutionary movements in Spain, Italy, Greece, and Poland. The less Mr. Gladstone, as a member of the Government which allowed the *Alabama* to leave a British port, says about that matter the better. That Englishmen have meddled in the affairs of foreign countries when they had better not have done it, and have thereby established an awkward precedent against themselves, we are ready to admit. But international history presents no parallel to the subscriptions for the massacre of Englishmen and women with dynamite, or to the conduct of the British politicians who have not scrupled to accept the aid of the subscribers, as Mr. Gladstone and his party did in the last election. The aim of the Fenian is not, like that of the English sympathiser with Continental struggles for freedom, the political regeneration of the country to which he sends his subscription: what he seeks is the destruction of Great Britain. To combine with him, and accept his aid, is nothing less than treason, however sanctimonious may be the excuses made for it; and the nation, if it fails to reprobate such conduct, must be deaf alike to the dictates of self-preservation and to the voice of honour.

NOTHING is more remarkable about Mr. Gladstone's utterances than the coolness with which he divests himself of all responsibility for the acts of a Government in which he has taken part for the last fifty years. Not only does he regard himself as having had no hand in what he all of a sudden represents as the cruel misgovernment of Ireland, but he seems to fancy that he has all along been on the side of Irish independence. So completely has the History of an Idea taken possession of its inventor's mind. He talks of the resistance to the increase of the Maynooth grant and to the foundation of the "Godless Colleges," as the acts of bigots with whom he never had the slightest sympathy, forgetful of the facts that he protested against the increase of the Maynooth grant by resigning his place in Peel's Government, and that the principles on which the opponents of the "Godless Colleges" took their stand were precisely those most solemnly laid down by himself in his book on "The Church in its Relations to the State." To honest and avowed conversions, such as those of Peel, respect and even honour is due; but it is difficult to award the same meed to one who simply shuffles off his past, especially when he reviles the partners of his former opinions and policy as exclusive "classes" and inveterate enemies to justice and humanity.

In England the Government has opened the Session well. Its majority is large and staunch. Lord Randolph Churchill's petard has evidently exploded without injury to the colleagues against whom he conspired, if it has not "hoisted" the engineer himself. The Liberal and Radical Unionists, including Mr. Chamberlain, continue to show that they are determined to bar the way against Mr. Gladstone's return to power with Dismemberment in his train. Yet no reflecting man believes that the struggle for the Union is over, or doubts that the decisive battle is still to be fought. The settlement of party relations and of the positions of public men is suspended by the disturbing influence of Mr. Gladstone, which must before long be withdrawn. But amidst the confusion the line is growing visible which in the near future will divide the party of revolution and anti-nationalism from that of order and nationality.

THE plan of the Government for the political settlement of Ireland, though not yet promulgated, is, we believe, settled. The necessity of coming for all private bill legislation to Westminster is acknowledged to be a grievance, and this grievance it is proposed to redress by instituting some sort of commission to take the evidence on the spot, without bringing the applicants or contestants to Westminster, and to report to Parliament. This, in itself, would no doubt be a wise measure; but we venture to doubt