

day. That Spain would consent to the exchange is improbable. Even granting that the Canaries are a source of trouble and expense rather than of strength or gain to her, the historic pride of the Spaniard would still forbid the admission of weakness which such an exchange might seem to imply. Moreover, Spain is said to expect, perhaps not without some reason, that Gibraltar may one day be handed back to her on easier conditions. On the other hand, the retirement of Great Britain from the position which has so long made her a power and given her an influential voice in the affairs of the nations bordering on the Mediterranean, to say nothing of the surrender of the "coign of vantage" which now enables her to prevent Russia from obtaining access to that sea, would be an act of self-abnegation from which a large class, at least, of her statesmen and citizens would recoil with a shock of indignation. Many, even of those who pride themselves on their freedom from any touch of the jingoistic spirit, might seriously question whether she could, without disregard of high moral obligations, withdraw from the responsibilities involved in her presence as a great power in the Mediterranean. It may, of course, be said that all this is not necessarily involved in the surrender of Gibraltar, but to most of those who look before and after it would be regarded as at least a first step in that direction. Still it is possible that the proposal thus boldly made by a prominent naval officer may come up for serious consideration some day when the Home Rule question and other great problems of immediate and pressing interest shall have been settled.

If recent cablegrams may be relied on, some of the friends of Home Rule for Ireland are becoming rather discouraged in view of the slow progress of the Bill through Committee. Two or three of the Gladstonians are said to be wavering in their loyalty, or to have quite gone over to the enemy. There is, however, no sign of faltering on the part of Mr. Gladstone or his chief supporters. The very fact that the leader resists the pressure which is being put upon him to adopt sterner measures may be accepted as an evidence that he has confidence in his ability to carry the Bill through without resort to means which are still alien to British traditions and instincts. The one question which, it might be supposed, would be foremost in the thoughts of those who are striving so earnestly to defeat Home Rule, viz., "What shall we put in place of it?" does not seem to trouble them. And yet it is a tremendous question. The nation having gone so far, can never go back to the old odious coercion. A suggestive incident in this connection was the visit of a number of Gladstonian delegates to Belfast, carried thither at the expense of Mr. Albert Grey, M. P., who hoped thus to convert them. The effect seems to have

been just the opposite of that anticipated. "I have returned a seventy-five times better Home Ruler than I went, because I found it was a struggle between the democracy and the upper class," said one of the delegates. Another said that "the men he saw were J. P.'s and the like, and they showed a tremendous amount of bitterness and religious intolerance." As a body the delegates were entertained at a dinner, which they wound up by passing a resolution "that our experience during our stay in Belfast confirms our conviction that Home Rule is necessary for the better government of Ireland, and anything we have learned by our visit goes to prove that the objection of the people of Belfast is one of religious intolerance." At the same time, they passed another resolution thanking the Unionists of Belfast for the entertainment provided.

Are we really living in a degenerate age? Is meanness on the increase among us? Is there still some radical deficiency in our educational methods which accounts for the apparent failure of so many to retain and develop those old-fashioned traditions of honourable dealing on which our fathers prided themselves? These questions must sometimes force themselves upon the thoughtful as they observe, not merely the great cheats and defalcations and embezzlements and betrayals of trust, whose records occupy so much space in the newspapers, but more particularly the petty meannesses which abound in daily life. They are suggested to us at this moment by a column in an American paper before us which shows that American ingenuity has utterly failed thus far to prevent great incongruities between the daily records of the numbers admitted to the World's Fair, and the receipts at the gates. It is found impossible to balance the accounts of ticket-sellers and gate-keepers. It is natural to suppose that special pains would be taken to engage for these positions only men with reputations for honesty. Yet the facts are said to show that many of them must be systematically cheating their employers. This is but a specimen fact from the column, but it is painfully suggestive. Were such things confined to the United States we in Canada might congratulate ourselves. But unhappily there is but too much evidence of a similar lack of a nice sense of honour in small things amongst our own people. We sometimes fear that the "transfer" system on our street cars, though a great convenience, is a bad training school for the weak. We have heard within a few days of a little boy being taught by a larger one to steal a ride by a lying use of the word "Transfer," and of several young ladies, or those who deem themselves such, entertaining their friends, and apparently without the slightest consciousness of meanness, with an account of the way with which they managed to obtain a two hours' ride by the dexterous use of the

same system. Surely parents and teachers should be able to inspire the "rising generation" with a genuine contempt for the ineffable meanness of such petty dishonesties.

It is, it seems to us, to be regretted that some prominent ministers of one of the largest and most influential religious denominations in Canada should have deemed it necessary to raise the sectarian cry in relation to the distribution of political and judicial offices in the Province and in the Dominion. We think that many of the best friends of the present Dominion Government will agree with us that one of the weakest points in the structure of the Cabinet is that which is the outcome of an apparent attempt to balance religious extremes, so to speak, one against another. But if it is a mistake to attempt such a balancing as between the two great sections in which the whole population of the Dominion may be roughly classed, Catholic and Protestant, it would be a still greater, an intolerable, mistake to attempt to carry out the principle in regard to the subdivisions of the Protestants themselves. Were there evidence that any ministry, Dominion or Provincial, had at any time passed by the best man for a given public position because he belonged to the particular denomination in question, no one could blame the members of that body for protesting in the most effective manner possible. But we cannot suppose that more than a very few besides the two or three clergymen who have brought up the question on the public platform can really believe such a thing to have occurred. Were the Methodists one of the smaller and weaker denominations the thing might be conceivable, and, if it occurred, would afford ground for just resentment. But the strength and influence of the Methodists of Ontario are such that we may be sure the politicians are much more likely to court their favour than to offer them an intentional slight. Any attempt to bring pressure to bear upon either Government to move it in the direction indicated would be greatly to be deprecated, the more so, as the other denominations would be pretty sure to take the cue, and the result would be a series of unseemly struggles for sectarian supremacy in offices in regard to which no consideration but that of personal fitness ought ever to have the slightest weight. Such a rivalry of the sects in the field of political influence would be bad for the State and worse for the Churches.

Professor Drummond's Lowell Institute lectures have revived in a quiet way the old battle of evolution *versus* immediate creation. We say "in a quiet way," because there is now very little of the superciliousness on the one hand, or the indignation and horror on the other, which marked the earlier stages of the discussion. The scientists, on their part, have come to see more