

load of passengers and freight, to the destiny among the nations for which God intended her.

How best an independent press may be encouraged I cannot now discuss. In what way influence may most readily be brought to bear upon our young men must be answered by the thoughtful members of each community. In the meantime I am certain of this—that the time has come when the English-speaking people of Canada should lay aside party prejudices, however dearly cherished, and should consider seriously, as men who have a common hope for their country, a common and great danger.

CYRIL.

BRITISH ELECTIONS.

THE British elections have been watched by me with the feelings of one who is an Englishman first, a Liberal afterwards. The best chance of saving the Government from the dictation of Irish rebels appeared to be a decisive victory of the Liberal Party. In that party, it is true, there was an untrustworthy element. Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke were not less ready to tamper with Disunion for the sake of the Irish vote than Lord Randolph Churchill and his section. But the party as a whole might possibly have been kept in the right path; and, had it gained a clear majority, it would not have been in bondage to Mr. Parnell. Of a clear Conservative majority there never was the slightest chance. I must own that I felt strongly the character of the means by which the Conservatives had acquired power, and the baseness of their conduct both to Earl Spencer and to the loyal population of Ireland, the only security for whose lives and property was the Crimes Act. For an honourable and respectable Conservative Government, at the present crisis, there might be much to be said: it would give the nation time for reflection as well as prevent Dismemberment. But a Tory-Rowdy Government, steered by Lord Randolph Churchill, is a Government of profligate intrigue, hypocritical demagogism, and, in its ultimate tendency, of revolution.

What I wished, however, I did not expect. It was pretty certain that the Liberal majority would be reduced. A great commercial nation is not yet ready for the doctrine that all property is to pay ransom to a proletariat of plunder. The raising of the Disestablishment issue had evidently done the Liberals harm. The Irish vote which Parnell had ordered to the Tory side is strong in some thirty constituencies. But besides all this, the pendulum now swings at each election, especially in the Metropolitan boroughs, the name of which is fickleness. How Hodge would vote was doubtful: he has showed unexpected independence, and has partly redeemed the day for the Liberal cause. The influence of the landowners in the counties has probably received a fatal blow.

Still the Liberal Party is not strong enough to govern in face of the Tories and Parnellites combined. It contains utterly rotten elements, crotcheteers, mere mischief-makers, and Labour Candidates whose Trade Union is their only country. In truth, it is two parties, a Liberal and a Radical; the first faithful to liberty, the second socialistic; the first loyal, the second disposed to court the alliance of rebellion.

To the Liberal Party, Mr. Gladstone truly says, Ireland owes all the measures of reform and justice which she has received, including Catholic Emancipation, which was a Liberal measure adopted at the eleventh hour by the Tories. Such being the case, Mr. Gladstone is surprised that the Irish should have turned against the Liberals. But this only proves that he knows nothing of the character of the Irish, or of that of the priests and demagogues who lead them. With his policy of surrender and soft words he has taken the wrong road to the Irish heart, and the natural consequences are that he is overwhelmed with ferocious abuse, that his Government is overthrown, and that his life has to be guarded against the Irish knife.

It has been stated that English employers are dismissing Irish workmen. Who can blame them? Why should England, of all nations, be expected to cherish in her bosom people who eat her bread, receive her charity at their need, enjoy all her privileges, and yet hate her, curse her, conspire against her, and seek her ruin? Boycotting is a game at which more than one can play.

Parnell has gained his immediate object. But his power is much overstated. It depends wholly on the weakness and baseness of the leaders of rival factions. He has not an ounce of military force: a single brigade of troops would scatter all the powers of his League to the four winds. The Loyalists of the North, in spite of the disparity of numbers, would beat him if their hands were not tied behind them. His eighty Janissaries are not elected by a free vote, but under the pressure of a terrorist organization supplied with foreign funds. He could not stand another election, so that a dissolution would be his overthrow. If the leaders of faction

were to make a treasonable agreement with him, bartering away the Irish Crown, and the Queen with the advice of her Privy Council were to exercise her right of veto, the patriotism of the nation would rally round her and Parnell would find himself powerless. Should he attempt to wreck the House of Commons by obstruction, the House has only to suspend and in the last resort expel him.

Still it cannot be denied that the situation is one of extreme danger. Government is broken up, and it is difficult to tell how Parliament can discharge its functions. It may be doubted whether England has been in such peril since the mutiny at the Nore. In truth, the present crisis, if less alarming in aspect, is worse in kind, since it arises from a total collapse of public character. Lord Salisbury has placed himself on a singular pinnacle of honour. He is, I suppose, the first British Minister who has held office by the grace of an avowed enemy of the country. He dares not protect life and property in Ireland, because if he did the rebel leader who has made him would unmake him. It is idle to pretend that he was not a party to the understanding between Lord Randolph Churchill and the Parnellites, or to the disgraceful concessions by which Parnell's support was bought. He must now wish that he had kept the path of honour, supporting the Executive in its struggle against murderous disaffection, and refusing to tamper with rebellion. He would have gained just as much in the elections, and his position would now be powerful and independent. Why cannot a Most Noble Marquis, with a princely revenue, do what has been done by the humblest soldier whose blood has dyed the sands of the Soudan?

We are told that Mr. Gladstone wishes to come back into power, and to settle the Irish question before he resigns himself to "long-coveted repose." Ignorant of the Irish people, with whom he has hardly ever come into contact, he fomented by his policy a rebellion which he has persistently refused to view and treat as what it really is. In the face of this rebellion he has plunged the nation into a political revolution by a blind extension of the franchise, without safeguards and without any general revision of the Constitution, at the same time immensely strengthening the rebel vote. The result might have been anticipated by the commonest forecast. But the strong point of this great and admirable man seems to be not so much forecast as oratorical presentation. He appears even unconscious of the calamities which his policy has entailed, and in the midst of the wreck sits down to write an essay about the Dawn of Religious Worship. To Mr. Gladstone's marvellous gifts, rare virtues, and splendid services every one must pay homage. Yet of all Ministers who ever ruled England not one has brought more disaster and humiliation on the country. Mr. Gladstone's passion for settling everything before he leaves the scene is now the most dangerous part of the situation.

The best chance of saving the nation from dismemberment, and Parliament from confusion, appears to be a junction, on patriotic grounds, of the moderate Liberals with the moderate Conservatives, throwing off on one side Mr. Chamberlain and on the other side Lord Randolph Churchill. To something of this kind it must come if the country is to be rescued from its peril.

All honour to the brave Loyalists who, deserted and heavily discouraged by both the parties, have made so gallant a fight in the North of Ireland. On them, at all events, amidst all the imbecility and treason, the eyes of all men of their race throughout the world can rest with pride. Let them stand firm and trust that there is patriotism still in the heart of the nation, and that it will come to the front at last.

Mr. Parnell in his election ukase exempted from his general proscription certain British Liberals who had shown "unswerving fealty" to the cause of the mortal enemies of their own country. The distinction had been well earned. Those on whom it was bestowed had laboured from the beginning to foster and abet the rebellion, to cut the sinews of national existence, and to thwart the Executive Government in upholding the law. They had with dexterous pen presented the case between England and Ireland in a form utterly misleading, with a total omission of justice to their own country, and had done all in their power to set foreign opinion against the land which had the honour to count them among its citizens. But the most acceptable of all their services no doubt was the vilification of struggling Loyalism in the North of Ireland, by which they strove to estrange the heart of England from it, and to prepare the way for its betrayal. To move the abolition of the Crimes Act, and thus to launch murder, outrage, and terror again upon Ireland, was a proceeding which cool philosophy might approve, and which the practised man of letters might have made to look beautiful by the magic of his pen. May the order of merit so justly bestowed on unswerving fealty by Mr. Parnell long mark for the homage of every patriotic heart the breasts upon which his hand has placed it!

The new Parliament has been described by the *London Times* as a