

scend to oppose any measure to this effect in any way whatsoever. That would be altogether unwise and impolitic. That might, perhaps, succeed in hindering it by obstructive tactics; but that would mean that they would hinder their return to College-Green. One course only is clear and honorable. They should embody a statement of their convictions in a formal Manifesto—emphatically declaring that the destruction of this stipulation without their consent is tantamount to an abrogation of the Union—and, when the deed is done, they should formally retire from the British Parliament and convoke a Conventional Assembly in the Irish Capital.

It is the misfortune of this country, and, indeed, of most countries so oppressed, that the high lines of statesmanship commands less attention than the more immediate and striking cries of the day. We attribute to this defect the fact that the great question of the international relations between Ireland and England are far less spoken of than the questions of social reforms, which, if urgent, need not be eclipsing.

Of course the orator is tempted to speak that which he believes will interest his audience, to talk education to the clergy, trade to the merchant, land to the farmer—which may each be an excellent topic in its way, and yet be only part of a greater question. This, perhaps, comes of addressing people in sections—for thus a tendency to take merely a class or sectional view is developed. It may be necessary, it may be good to take that view—but it is a grievous fault to take that view only.

The development of the larger view requires a larger platform—Ireland is the audience where the national question is to be discussed, and it would appear that few minds as well as few voices are adapted to so vast an audience. Hence it is that the more easy method is adopted of attending chiefly, if not exclusively, to small fragmentary matters, and evading or deferring the national question.

If it had been otherwise, most assuredly the question of the abrogation of the Act of Union would have been discussed before this. It is a sufficiently impor-

tant one. Take it for what it professes to be, it is a treaty between two Powers; it could not have come into force without the assent of a majority of the Legislature in Dublin and of that in London. According to the British view, it is the legal force.

The Irish view is altogether different, and rightly so, because the members of that Legislature were elected to make laws in Dublin, not to destroy their law-making assembly. They were commissioned to follow a political life, not to commit political suicide. Their act in abolishing that which they had no right to abolish, but which they had been strictly charged to maintain, is therefore plainly null and void. French members would not more clearly go beyond their "mandat" if by a majority they voted the annexation of their Parliament to that of Berlin. They would be guillotined who attempted it. The corrupted Irish members ought to have been executed along with the corruptors. Grattan said only half the truth when he declared:—"There are no good Ministers in Ireland, because there is no axe in Ireland."

But, let us take the British view, and judging Britain by that, let us see how stands the case. Granting, then, that the Act of Union is a legal document, for the sake of argument, does it still exist, and how may it be annulled?

A Treaty of this kind may obviously be ended by the mutual consent of the two high contracting parties. This requires no argument. If America and England had entered into a treaty concerning their international relations they could at any time dissolve their partnership by mutual consent.

But, again, a Treaty of this kind may be annulled by any overt act on either side, amounting to a breach of any stipulation contained in it. A Treaty is like a specimen of the recently invented hardened glass, broken in part the whole of it explodes into powder. It is, of course, incompatible with the very idea of a contract that one party to it may select, at his own wanton will, which clause he will respect and which he will trample on.

Now, any one who takes the trouble to peruse the nefarious document termed the Act of Union will see that it con-