

to the Republicans. However, it is plain the Independent vote is growing; in the recent elections it has produced results in most of the States surprising to both the old party organisations alike, returning Democrats where Republicans had formerly held the field, and Republicans for Democrats. It looks indeed as if, as the *New York Times* says, partisanship is losing its charm, and men are becoming more and more ready to vote and to work for their convictions; and if this be true, the candidate who appeals most nearly to the Independent vote has the best chance. And who in public life in the States does this better than Mr. Cleveland? He may, perhaps, have lost his chance of renomination as head of the Democrats, but has he as head of the Independents? The Republican army at any rate are in retreat from the White House, and, we should say, will continue in retreat while Mr. Cleveland stands by Civil Service Reform. This is his strong point, and while he holds to it he may count on the support of an ever-growing Independent vote, besides the rank and file of the Democrats.

EX-PRESIDENT ARTHUR has gone to his grave amidst well-deserved manifestations of public sorrow and respect. The heedlessness with which nominations for the Vice-Presidency are made, with little regard for anything but party combinations, has more than once been punished by the accidental accession of unfit men to the highest place. It was feared when Garfield fell that he would not have a worthy successor; but Mr. Arthur's conduct soon dispelled that fear. He discharged his duties throughout with wisdom, dignity, and simplicity, and showed himself entirely worthy of his splendid trust. Though he was in society somewhat silent and reserved, his manner and bearing, as well as his public actions, were all that those of the head of a great State should be. His portrait on the walls of the White House will always be looked on with respect.

In the trial of the Aldermen of 1884 for corruption at New York, three of the Board are now State's evidence, and the whole scene of iniquity is fully laid open to the public gaze. Two of the Board were honest; two are dead; one is in Sing-Sing; four are exiles; three have become witnesses for the State; twelve, over whom the sword of justice hangs, are left. So corruption did not depart with Tweed, and we have once more occasion to moralise on the working of the elective system as applied without adaptation or safeguard to the government of great cities. By the names of the Alderman, however, we should judge that several of the culprits are not Americans but sons of Erin, driven by British tyranny from their native land, to which they would probably return with joyful speed upon the establishment of an Irish Parliament. Of the exiles Canada has the honour of sheltering three. It is surely about time for the two countries mutually to renounce the privilege of affording an asylum to each other's thieves.

THE *Times* correspondent reports the state of things in Donegal fairly satisfactory, the people well dressed on Sunday, and no visible signs of distress. But he adds that while the population is at least double what it ought to be there must be poverty. There are some wretched hovels tacked on to others, the result usually of a marriage in the family. Another "smoke" is added, and the land is subdivided in spite of the landlord. How can any Government help this, or, where the people raise nothing but potatoes, prevent famine from being the occasional result? Without Imperial aid in famine the Irish race would by this time have been almost swept off the island. The correspondent says, what we are not surprised to hear, that the people have been greatly demoralised by alms. In 1879 and 1880, he says, £40,000 was spent in Donegal alone, and some of those who got relief admit that they were not in want; but when they saw that their neighbors, who were not so much in want as themselves, were getting it, they did not see why they should not. In Gweedore, the correspondent tells us, there are some show houses to which Members of Parliament, newspaper correspondents, and other Englishmen who come to study the Irish question on the spot are sure to be taken, and, if their visit has been expected, will find the family seated round a dinner of seaweed. One gentleman, as the correspondent was informed, spent a day in visiting the houses in one of the congested districts. His approach was signalled wherever he went, and in every house he found the people at dinner with some selected potatoes the size of marbles to eat; and it did not strike him as curious, till his attention was called to it, that the people should be dining from ten o'clock in the morning to five in the evening. This agitation is aggravating the worst vice of the people, their tendency to live by mendicancy, whether of the whining or of the blustering kind, rather than by industry. Italy, which for centuries had been more misgoverned than Ireland, is on the high road through industry to prosperity; while Ireland is trying to subsist by sending threatening letters or exhibiting her historic sores.

MR. CHARLES BRADLAUGH, though his sentiments are not delectable, has a sharp tongue and pen, and in his letter to Lord Randolph Churchill he has only too easy a subject for the display of his trenchant powers. He is able to say, unfortunately, with truth of the leader of the House of Commons, that he who to-day is denouncing the Parnellites was yesterday intriguing with them; that he who to-day is inveighing against Obstruction was yesterday the head and front of it; that he who now, because he thinks the cat jumps in the direction of small holdings, embraces the policy of Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Jesse Collings, was yesterday deriding it as utter, intense, inconceivable folly; that he who is now advocating the *cloture* by a simple majority was yesterday appealing to the Irish to oppose the *cloture* with their whole power; to defeat it if they could; to resort, if they had the courage, to all those powers and privileges which a Parliamentary minority still possessed, in order, if possible, to compel the Prime Minister to abandon his scheme. "On the 27th of January last," says Mr. Bradlaugh, "you voted against Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Jesse Collings on the very question of agricultural labourers' holdings and allotments: now you praise these gentlemen for what they then did to force the subject on the public mind: will your present praise be more durable than your previous storm of abusive epithets?" "Lord Hartington," proceeds Mr. Bradlaugh, "voted against Mr. Chamberlain as you did on January 27; but Lord Hartington does not, as you do, regard his principles as waste baggage, to be abandoned on any troublesome march." There could unhappily be no more accurate description of the present leader of the House of Commons, nor is the absence of integrity, and of the respect and confidence which integrity combined with dignity of character alone commands, compensated in this case by any real superiority of intellect, though "Randy" has a rattling tongue as well as consummate effrontery and great aptitude for intrigue. It is melancholy to think that at a moment of extreme peril the country is in such hands. Mr. Bradlaugh calls Lord Salisbury "the titular head of the Government." It is hardly possible for a Prime Minister in the House of Lords to be more, even if he were a stronger man than Lord Salisbury.

As Harcourt and Morley have, in consequence of the rupture between the Unionists and the Separatists, supplanted Chamberlain, Hartington, Goschen, and Trevelyan in the succession to the leadership of the party, so the lower and more obscure men in all the local organisations are supplanting the higher, who are almost everywhere Unionists, or moderate and inclined to reconciliation. The little Schnadhorst of each town is thrusting himself by the violence of his partisanship into a position which he could otherwise never have attained, and this partly accounts for the uncompromising Gladstonism of the small wire-pullers and their determination to make Home Rule a party test. The operation of this influence was very apparent the other day in the special meeting of the Scottish Liberal Association. The chairman spoke in favour of conciliation, so did other men of mark; but the politicians of a lower class were strenuous and blatant in their resolve to offer Unionists the choice between instant conversion to Gladstonism and perpetual excommunication. The history of the Scottish Association repeats itself in every caucus. Thus the personal ambition of the small local politician, who almost everywhere gets the wires into his hands, is strongly enlisted on the side of a rupture; and this not only renders the reconciliation of the Liberal Party more hopeless, but opens a very serious prospect with regard to the control of a powerful organisation, and the uses which are likely to be made of it for the future.

THERE is another influence which, though unnoticed, may not have been without its sensible effect. Nothing more, perhaps, is needed to account for the sudden conversions of Sir William Harcourt than was needed to account for the sudden conversions of the Vicar of Bray. If he who yesterday was bidding the Tories "stew in their Parnellite juice" is to-day himself a Parnellite, he is only re-enacting, with an equally good reason, the agile gyrations of his clerical prototype. But he is also a man not unlikely to be worked upon by the fear of assassination, and as Home Secretary he was, or believed himself to be, specially exposed to that peril. By Mr. O'Connor Sir William was described, before they were fellow-conspirators, as "dogged, as he believed, everywhere by assassins; attended by a small body-guard of detectives, even in the corridors of the House of Commons; of a temperament at once fierce and timid, and driven well nigh crazy by the events of the last two years." Mr. Gladstone's house also before his conversion was most strictly guarded by policemen and detectives. Some of those who know Lord Spencer well account for his extraordinary change of mind by the effect produced upon him by daily threats of assassination, combined with the unspeakable foulness of the libels with which the Nationalists assailed his character. He had just force