

# THE WEEK.

Third Year.  
Vol. III., No. 4.

Toronto, Thursday, December 24th, 1885.

\$3.00 per Annum.  
Sin Copies, 10 Cents.

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### MR. GLADSTONE'S SCHEME FOR IRELAND.

THE announcement that Mr. Gladstone had proposed to capitulate to Parnell, to give Ireland a separate Parliament, and if the Conservative Government resisted, to turn it out by the help of the Parnellite vote, appears to have been premature. No wonder that Tories, who had just been lectured by Mr. Gladstone on their intrigues with the Parnellites, should have denounced his proposal as profligate. There are symptoms, nevertheless, which indicate that some scheme of the kind is in course of concoction. Mr. Herbert Gladstone, his father's political acolyte, has ventilated his opinion that if five-sixths of the Irish people want a separate Parliament wisdom and justice require that they should have it. The Unionists in Ireland are not one-sixth, but something like a third, of the entire population, and as they have among them the very flower of the whole, their opinion about the interests of the country is not to be set at naught. But does Mr. Herbert Gladstone think that every discontented province or district has a right to set up for itself? The United States did not act on that principle in the case of Southern Secession, nor did Switzerland in the case of the Sonderbund, nor Canada in the case of the Metis. What security could there be on this hypothesis for any nation of composite structure, or one in which there were any dividing lines of religion or race?

Is it reasonable that the fate of the Union, and all that depends on it, should be settled by the result of a single Irish election, when that election was not free, but coerced by a terrorist organization in the hands of Parnell, with the aid of money supplied by the foreign enemies of the realm; and when most of the people were not really voting on the political question at all, but in favour of unrestricted liberty to strip the landowners of the remainder of the rent? Before the irrevocable step is taken the country may surely be allowed time for deliberation, and for a more satisfactory testing of Irish as well as of British opinion. But Mr. Gladstone is seventy-seven.

The concession of legislative separation would of course be guarded by conditions and restrictions penned by Mr. Gladstone's ingenious hand, and which would not be worth the paper on which they were written. Before the ink was dry the agitation for their abolition would commence. Mr. Gladstone has to deal not with reformers seeking redress of grievances, but with deadly enemies of Great Britain seeking the destruction of the realm. Parnell has never brought forward a grievance of any kind, or sought any reform at the hands of Parliament. His policy from the outset has been that of moral rebellion, and his aim throughout has been disruption.

To talk of "Grattan's Parliament" is absurd. It was kept in practical subordination to the Parliament and Government of Great Britain by a system of the grossest corruption, and its career soon ended in a murderous civil war, resulting in an anarchy which left no alternative but Union. Grattan himself sat in the Parliament of the United Kingdom for the English borough of Malton.

The alleged parallel of Hungary and Austria is equally beside the purpose. Hungary was always a nation in the fullest sense of the term, with a Crown, a Diet, laws, and a language of its own. When it tried to go out of the Empire, the Empire coerced it with the sword. Besides, the Austrian system is as yet far from being an assured success.

Supposing Mr. Gladstone should really meditate crowning his pile of

calamities by a surrender of the national unity, will he succeed in carrying out his design? He can reckon of course on the Parnellites, who will support him with a chuckle and a sneer. He can reckon probably on the Radicals, who are inflamed to frenzy by the recent faction fight, and seem to outnumber the Liberals. But the Unionist Liberals are still strong, and will no doubt support the Government if the Government is true to its trust. Unhappily, the Government in the House of Commons is practically represented by Lord Randolph Churchill, and the Dutch auction of infamy is likely to recommence. Had Lord Salisbury kept the road of honour he might now be standing forth in opposition to Mr. Gladstone as the saviour of the nation from dismemberment.

The House of Lords is too weak to interpose its veto even if it cared much for anything but landlords' interests, while the Throne, round which the nation might rally in defence of its unity, being occupied by a lady, is politically vacant.

The Ulster Orangemen apparently will fight, and, amidst general weakness and cowardice, a small body of men who will fight may do great things.

England has no doubt survived many a perilous hour. That does not prove that the present hour is not perilous, or that the language of patriotic anxiety is a proper subject for derision: at least, if it is, the ridicule must extend to some of the foremost of British statesmen. But the failure of public spirit, we may reasonably hope, is confined to the politicians and their vile and selfish factions. The British soldier or sailor is what he has always been, and so is the Englishman on the common path whether of duty or of enterprise. With Lawrence or Gordon in place of Salisbury or Gladstone, the nation would be in no danger of cowardly capitulation or of dismemberment. Nor need the disaster, if it comes, be final. When the consequences of the surrender of national welfare and honour are felt, patriotism may be reawakened and a strong hand may recover what weakness and treason have lost.

GOLDWIN SMITH.

### LYTTON'S "GLENAVERIL."\*

IT is a little unfortunate for Lord Lytton that the measure, and at times the method, of his new poem inevitably recall "Don Juan." The defiant jauntiness of Byron does not offend, even when it appears most incongruous with its matter, because it has always a meaning—is always representative either of a mood or of an attempt to disguise a mood. But the like attitude in Lytton strikes one as a pose. Byron's jauntiness was an idiosyncrasy, which Lytton, for effect, has borrowed of him. Passages in "Glenaveril," which to one ignorant of Don Juan would seem racy and taking, lose most of their relish when the flavour is perceived to be not fresh. A diminished Byronic note is plainly detected in

Tyranny's motto (learn it, young aspirant  
To freedom!) is *Memento*. Death's a tyrant;

and in the clever saying that

Man is not man's brother  
As woman woman's sister: her vocation  
Begins where ends his aid,—with consolation.

It is Dr. Holland, I think, who has said "Fish is good, but *fishy* is always bad." Sometimes, again, this Byronic off-handedness loses all trace of its origin, and degenerates into a spasmodic attempt at the colloquial and familiar. Lord Lytton can dramatically present the thought and speech of his own class, but in speaking for the lower classes he is at his worst:—

'Then, dear Miss—  
Müller, Sir, Martha Müller, as you see,  
Hearty and hale; and, God be thanked for this,  
A spinster, *Grundbesitzerin*, thank Heaven!  
Residence, Stuttgart,—age, Sir, forty-seven.'

In the six books of "Glenaveril" the passages to which the above censures will apply are not few; it must be said, however, that they grow more infrequent as the tale progresses, and the poet becomes more faithfully himself as the interest of his story deepens upon him. Nevertheless, he has not been able to refrain from introducing a shipwreck midway the narrative, and thus again suggesting fatal comparisons. This shipwreck is a spirited piece of work, more than overreaching a fine height, both in

\* "Glenaveril, or The Metamorphoses": by the Earl of Lytton, "Owen Meredith." New York: D. Appleton and Company.