

with his theory, an open defender. Such are the various sources whence the Half-breeds of to-day have been drawn. The white men imitated the habits and fell passionately into the pursuits of the Indian. Their life was one of excitement and of war. The French Half-breed, as might be expected, is more easy-going and less provident than his Scotch congener. His reputation for gluttony and indolence are well earned—as an employé of the North-West Company six pounds of fish formed the daily ration of each man—though he is capable of great exertion and great endurance. Washington Irving may be suspected of an undue bias of patriotism when he puts into the mouth of a foreigner the assertion that one American trapper is equal to three Canadians. In the recent outbreak the only Half-breeds found in numbers were the French; some Scotch Half-breeds suffered great hardships in their successful attempts to escape the vigilance of Riel's kidnappers. To this extent the insurrection had a semi-national aspect; and this is the explanation of the new outbreak of sympathy with Riel, which once more threatens to overrun the Province of Quebec. As a rule, the ties of race are strengthened by the bonds of religion; but in Riel's case race has proved stronger than religion. When six priests joined in decrying him, the feeling of race fell into a slumber; but coincident with his renunciation of his heterodoxy, whether as a consequence of it or not, he again comes into favour. Mr. Adam had no sooner finished his book than a new edition was required to tell the story of the fate of the insurgents. What is lasting in it is the spirit of judicial fairness with which the subject is treated.

SEVERAL years will probably pass before all the conditions of the navigation of the Hudson Bay and Straits can be learned. This year the *Alert* has been jammed in ice three weeks before getting into Hudson Strait; the stream of ice coming down from the north made it impossible to enter the strait, at the mouth of which, within sight of Revolution Sound, the vessel was imprisoned. This stream of ice, which annually comes down from the north, interferes with the entrance into Hudson Strait, when it would not prevent a vessel penetrating much farther north in Davis Strait. The ice stream follows the ocean currents and leaves the other parts of the Strait comparatively free. There may have been an unusual quantity of ice this year in this Strait; but the ice current so long as it runs, must always impose an obstacle to the entrance of Hudson Strait. The fact that thousands of Dutch and other fishing vessels have for two centuries made voyages far north in Davis Strait throws no light on the navigation of Hudson Strait. On the east side of Davis Strait the current runs northward and is an aid to vessels going in that direction. The *Alert* did not come out of her icy prison uninjured; on the 17th June her stern plate was carried away, and she had to return to Newfoundland for repairs. As she contained a relief party who are to change places with the men on the stations established last year in the Straits and Bay of Hudson, her detention will be a cause of serious anxiety in those desolate regions. The experience which we are getting of this navigation is very far from complete; but so far as it goes it can scarcely be said to be encouraging. The difficulties encountered last year were explained by the alleged exceptional nature of the season; the same plea is being put in again, though it is one the repetition of which must greatly lessen its force.

THAT the Liberal Party in England will win, though probably by a reduced majority, if it can go into the elections a unit, or anything like a unit, seems to be conceded by the most cool-headed of the Tories. But its going into the elections anything like a unit appears to depend on the health of "The Old Man." "Old Cause," to which Whigs like the Duke of Argyll and Radicals like Mr. Chamberlain owe common allegiance, there is none. An "Old Umbrella" may perhaps be said to be supplied by the traditional policy of the Whigs, which has led them hitherto to cultivate a union with the Radicals, and include a Radical representation in Whig Cabinets, not from love of their associates, but in order that they might keep the revolutionary movement under their control. But a condition of this policy has always been the subordination of the Radical to the Whig element, and at subordination the present leader of the Radicals spurns. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain intends to be Prime Minister of England, let that blessing cost the country what it may. Already, while a member of a mixed Cabinet, he has taken up a position of ostentatious independence, not to say of antagonism, to his Whig and Liberal colleagues. In his hands centre all the wires of the great sisterhood of caucuses planted under his auspices and by his confederates over the large boroughs of the Kingdom. In spite of disappointments and rebuffs, he still evidently hopes to capture the Irish Vote, or at least so much of it as Mr. Davitt can give him, and he is ready to pay any price for it even to the dismemberment of the realm. To the populace of the cities he offers the "ransom" of the property-holders and a system of progressive taxation, the proceeds

of which are to be spent for the benefit of the poorer class of voters. That Mr. Gladstone is endeavouring to muzzle him and prevent him from breaking up and ruining the party is a very probable report. If Mr. Gladstone is able to retain the leadership, as condemnation by him would be fatal to Mr. Chamberlain, his endeavours may be successful; otherwise there will be a split; Mr. Chamberlain will go off with the Radicals, and try, as their leader, at the election or after it, to storm the seat of power.

IF the battle in England were to be under the old Suffrage law, with the constituencies as they were at the last election, we should say that the result would depend upon the comparative force of the repulsion produced respectively by Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Randolph Churchill. To every one who has been engaged in British Elections it is well known that beside the active parties there is a large residuum of inertia which can be awakened into activity only by alarm. It was the inertia awakened into activity by alarm at the dangerous foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield's Government that gave the Liberals their immense majority on the last occasion. The Tories polled as many votes as they had polled when they were victorious, so that there can have been no great amount of rattling. But Lord Derby's secession from the Ministry and his letter proclaiming that his late colleagues were bent on perilous adventures were sure to bring, and did bring, all the Quietists to the polls against the Jingo Government. To a dead certainty Mr. Chamberlain's threats of semi-socialistic dealings with property would bring them all to the poll against him and his policy now, if Lord Randolph Churchill were not there to drive them back with Tory Democracy and the Parnellite alliance. To these Lord Randolph appears now inclined to add a revival of Jingoism. He announces on the part of his Government a policy which shall give new strength to the Empire and security to India, security to India meaning, in his mouth, the humiliation of Russia. He is very right in thinking, as he appears to do, that doughty deeds are not to be done with big words, and that he will have to provide himself with "an overpowering fleet," a fleet powerful enough to cope not only with that of Russia but in the end with all the navies of Europe. How the money for its construction is to be found is a question on which he has probably never bestowed a thought. He protests, in the performance of his part as a demagogue, against the taxation of "the poor man's beer," and he will not find that a tax on the poor man's tea or tobacco is more popular. If he means to treble the income tax, he will have to put upon the devotion of his Conservative followers a strain which it will scarcely bear. Not the least of the difficulties of Tory Democracy will consist in the arrangement of its financial system, which it will be difficult to make at once prodigal, popular and conservative. It seems presumptuous to say that a leading English politician is in a fool's paradise with respect to English opinion. Yet we cannot help thinking that London, its clubs and its music halls, together with the haze generated by the heat of faction in the atmosphere of the House of Commons, greatly mislead members of Parliament about the feelings of the country at large. It was quite evident that by the country at large the dispute with Russia was taken with comparative coolness and that the efforts of the Government to preserve peace on honourable terms were viewed with general approbation. What the new constituencies may do, on this as on other points is a matter of the vaguest speculation, though we can scarcely imagine Hodge being a Jingo; but the electoral England of 1880 pronounced decisively and finally that, while it was ready to uphold at need the rights and honour of the country, it would not be dragged for the sake of anybody's ambition, or for the purpose of playing the game of any party, into a course of reckless and immoral adventure which must in the end draw upon the nation which pursued it the enmity, and the deserved enmity, of the world.

THOSE who best know the agricultural labourer in England will be the least ready to risk any confident prediction as to the way in which he will use political power. He is honest and hard-working but his intelligence is low: the little knowledge which he gains at school he generally forgets; the power of writing often totally forsakes his horny hands; and his faculty of reading is not exercised, like that of the labourer in the town, by names over shops, signs, bills and advertisements always before his eyes. Rural intelligence, moreover, has been decimated of late years by the railway service and other employments more highly paid than farm labour, which have drafted away the best educated and the most active-minded men. There are a few boroughs which already include within their precincts a number of farm labourers: Cricklade is one of these, and Woodstock, which Lord Randolph Churchill was fighting the other day, is another; but in these cases the local influences are so special as to forbid a general inference. Sentiment would probably draw Hodge to the side of his squire, at least where the squire is resident and has kept up his personal influence: