

University question was not settled because neither Mr. Balfour nor Mr. Wyndham dared brave their own party. It is this whole policy of sympathetic development that has been renounced, and as Sir West Ridgeway pointed out in the Times, the Government were driven from their policy by the clamour of the Orangemen. Mr. Balfour, in an attempt to beat up his party to an old cry said it was evident that the Nationalists were going to drive the Liberal party forward to Home Rule. The moment of surrender to a tiny faction was not the happiest time to throw this taunt. We should have thought it was less ignominious to be driven forward by a nation struggling for its just rights than to be driven backwards by a faction struggling for its vindictive "privileges." "It is no loss of honour," said Swift, "to submit to the lion, but who, with the figure of a man can think with patience of being devoured by a rat?"

But of course these transactions have a much deeper significance. The treatment of Sir Antony MacDonnell is an important thing. The panic-stricken surrender of the Government's policy to the fury of the Orangemen is an important thing. But much the most important thing is this signal proof of the impossibility and impracticability of Unionism. We now have it on record that the Unionist Government, men who were talking ten years ago of raising Ulster in revolt against Home Rule, deliberately appointed a Home Ruler as Under-Secretary with a free hand as part of a large policy of reform on lines which are certainly at variance with all that Ulster understood by Unionism. The Chief-Secretary was enthusiastic for the policy. The Under-Secretary who was in constant touch with the Chief Secretary,

thought that financial and legislative devolution were not incompatible with the Chief Secretary's theory of Unionism. The Viceroy approved those ideas. This development of Unionism is not less significant than the rise of an Irish Reform Party as a proof that Unionism is crumbling away. The Tory Government have not abandoned their new ideas because they dislike Home Rule, but because they are afraid of the Orangemen. They have thrown Sir Antony MacDonnell to this enlightened set or enthusiasts as they would have thrown Thomas Drummond. But the transactions of the last two years show once again how difficult it is for any man to come close to Irish administration without revolting against the existing system. The inside of Dublin Castle has turned many an official into a Home Ruler of some kind or another. Its lessons are too direct and too poignant to be forgotten. To every man of uncorrupted sympathies it is infinitely more attractive to govern a nation by its better mind than to govern it by faction and clandestine management. It is an unenviable nature to which the prospect of an escape from all the hideous system of government by conspiracy against a people is not something very nearly irresistible. It is easy to understand the eager hope with which Mr. Wyndham caught at the project of a sympathetic development of Irish policy as the alternative to another dismal chapter of coercion. Our disappointment that he was not a strong enough man to defend his policy or his colleagues when they were attacked by Ulster Orangemen does not affect the great truth, to which his deranged career is a reluctant testimony, that no progress in Irish affairs is possible without an elective body in Dublin.