

would spoil their trade; they will prevent a reconciliation if they can, and the venom of their journals has been everywhere too successfully instilled into the breast of labour.

THESE are troublous times in the commercial and financial world, let the optimistic champions of National Policy say what they will. Times of trouble are also times of temptation, and warnings against looseness of principle are now in season. It seems to be a settled opinion of our social and commercial circles that if wealth is safe all is well, no matter what may have become of honour. Of this prevailing laxity we have had too many proofs in the past. Steal enough and you are honest. Nobody would admit to himself that he acted as a member of society on this principle; everybody flatters himself that he is determined to act on the opposite principle; but when the case actually presents itself, and the question arises how a man who has been convicted of dishonourable practices but has kept his money shall be treated by the community, virtuous resolution oozes away and the knee is once more bowed to Mammon. There is no use in spurring a dead horse or preaching to the utterly apathetic. But if our commercial men shrink from upholding morality and excommunicating knavery in the higher regions of commercial life, they must not expect that in the lower regions the stricter code will prevail, or wonder if their subordinates do on a small scale that which, when it is done on the large scale, the cowardice of society condones. What is the guilt of a single theft committed by a clerk who cannot pay his board to that of fraud systematically practised by a wealthy trader, for the purpose of adding to an already inordinate pile? Equality before the tribunal of opinion is as essential to social justice as equality before the law.

EARL SPENCER, as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, has been receiving the only sort of compliment which honour and loyalty can receive from the lips of Mr. Biggar, who tells him that if he had not derived hereditary wealth from a prostitute, he would probably be a drunken horsebreaker. The historical allusion is enigmatic. Perhaps Mr. Biggar fancies that the Spencers of Althorp are one of the families founded by the mistresses of Charles II. The rest is a gracious presentation of the fact that Lord Spencer is a first-rate horseman, as he is also a first-rate marksman. A Biggarism would not be worth notice, if it did not direct attention to a figure as noble in its way as that of the platform reviler is ignoble. To Lord Spencer, his country house in England, with the sports in which he excels, and his historic mansion in London with the society of which his personal qualities, no less than his wealth and rank, make him a leader, offer all the enjoyments which the lot of man can afford. Nor is his home less happy than his social position. Yet at the call of public duty he is willing to leave all these pleasures, to take the most arduous, anxious, and odious of all offices, and to live not only under a constant storm of abuse but in hourly peril of his life. He needs no addition to his income, and if he did, he would get none by being Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, for the social expenses of the place greatly exceed the salary. It is pleasant to see that not only is his courage unbroken, but that he retains lightness of heart enough still to be the winner in a rifle-match. Amidst all the selfish factions, greedy ambitions, mean intrigues, and canting imbecilities which are dragging England down to the dust, there are still some men whose characters are sound, and whose hearts are true to the country. There are, perhaps, more of these than the exulting enemies of England fancy. The collapse undoubtedly is miserable, but it is chiefly by the stump orators, high and low, that the weakness has been shown. It has not yet been shown by the civil service, by the army or navy, or even by the police of Ireland, who have hitherto been perfectly staunch under great discouragements and temptations. Nor has it been shown by the bulk of British citizens, perplexed and disheartened though they are by the feebleness of their leaders. The life of a great nation does not go out like a lamp-wick, and a crisis sufficiently violent to sweep stump oratory out of the way and propel real worth and strength to the front may even now completely change the scene.

The language of Mr. Biggar is coarser and more brutal than that of his confederates, Messrs. Parnell, Sexton, Healy and the rest, but it is not a whit more venomous. One and all, they breathe an almost delirious hatred of England, the country to which, as their names show, their own ancestors belonged, and in which, at this hour, two millions and a half at least of Irish Catholics are finding employment and bread. One and all avow that their aim is not extension of the franchise, improvement of local institutions or any constitutional reform, but the dissolution of the Union and, if it were possible, the destruction of the British nation. Some of them openly declare that if they had force enough they would raise the standard of civil war. Even the land question, which alone interests the great mass of the Irish peasantry, is, in their speeches, thrown quite into the background, and if they fan the flame of agrarian agitation it is mainly to keep boiling

the pot of political revolution. Can anybody seriously pretend that these men would be turned into loyal citizens of the United Kingdom, or made less dangerous to the State by any measure which would swell the number of their followers and increase their political power? Can anybody doubt that if they had State Right, they would at once use it as a lever for total separation? What is meant by giving Ireland American State Right? How can State Right, on the American footing, be given to a portion of a nation, which as a whole is not, like the American Republic, Federal in its structure? Canadian politicians want the Catholic vote, that is the meaning of all their effusions of sympathy with Disunion. They want the Catholic vote, and to gain it they are willing to bear a hand with savagery and superstition in tearing down the famous polity to which they owe their own liberties and a large measure of their civilization as well as all their historic glory. Once more party shows its meanness, and once more we see the difference between the craft of the vote-hunting politician and the sentiments of the Canadian people.

IN Newfoundland if the fury of the storm is over, the waves are still running high. The exact origin and circumstances of the affray are matters for further investigation, but it seems hardly possible to doubt that an Orange procession was fired on by the Catholics, while the fact of a deadly collision between the two parties is entirely beyond dispute. The conflict is evidently beginning along the whole line, and the responsibility for it rests mainly on the British Parliament, which, divided and enfeebled by faction, failed to show at the commencement of the disturbances in Ireland that firm and united resolution which would at once have quenched the flame. Orangeism has not a record clear of offence, nor is it, or any association of the kind, the sort of agency by which the lovers of law and order would wish to see the Commonwealth preserved. But it is at least superior to an organization, the methods of which are terrorism, dynamite and murder. In repelling Disunionists from Ulster it is not, as the friends of Disunionism pretend, crushing opinion, but barring the gate of loyalty against rebellion and civil war. It is acting strictly in self-defence, for everybody who has read Irish History, or who listens to Fenian harangues must know that from the moment when power passed into the hands of the Irish Catholics, no man of British blood or Protestant religion would ever dwell in safety on the soil of Ireland. Unless its hands are tied by Mr. Chamberlain, Orangeism will hold its own, even against overwhelming numbers, as it has, before this, held its own against overwhelming numbers on more than one terrible and memorable day. A strange turn of affairs has taken place, and an association, which seemed to have sank into a relic of bygone feuds, appears likely again to stand forward as the bulwark of Protestant civilization. Rough is the instrument, but when the regular authorities will not act, and feebleness prevails in quarters where resolution ought to reign, rough instruments may sometimes do good work. If the British Parliament wants the Orangemen to be quiet, let it at once supersede the necessity for their actions, by making it perfectly clear to the minds of the Disunionists that their object can be obtained only by success in a civil war.

ANOTHER attempt on the life of the Czar and the murder of a Russian official show that Nihilism is at work again. The natural effect is produced. The Czar's foot was on the path of constitutional reform. Forthwith he starts back, gathers his guards round him, and entrenches himself once more in the position of absolutist reaction. It will be fortunate for the world if he does not plunge into foreign war as a diversion from domestic conspiracy. He must know too well that the Nihilists would not be satisfied nor his life secured from their machinations by any rational or feasible reforms. Their aim, as they avow with hideous frankness, is the destruction of all institutions, religious, social and domestic, as well as political, and not only of all institutions, but of all principles of morality. The family is the especial object of their destructive hatred. Like the Jacobins, the Communists and fanatics in general, they are exterminating tyrants, and it may safely be said that, compared with the domination which they would set up, despotism itself is liberty. In the meantime, the party of constitutional reform in Russia, fearing lest it should be contaminated by association with Nihilism, ceases to act; the hope of practical improvement is thus quenched; and the unhappy country is left to be the prize of a deadly conflict between the sword of absolutism and the dagger of the assassin. Few of those from whose breasts revolutionary passion has not utterly expelled morality, would hesitate to prefer any government to that of the dagger. The history of civilization seems to be entering on a strange and unexpected phase. Agnostics, when they scoff at the groundless fears of those who apprehend that the collapse of religious belief may be followed by a moral interregnum, do not turn their eyes in the right direction. They look at the gentlemen and ladies seated round some scientific tea