

Mr. Wyndham's Resignation.

TWO years ago Mr. Wyndham held an admired place in English politics. His Land Act had been carried through Parliament amid the applause and good will of all parties. He was believed to be inaugurating a new and gracious regime of conciliation and friendship. He made eloquent and attractive speeches. Everything about him and around him helped to create a pleasing impression of him as a peacemaker—his charm of manner, his Fitzgerald blood, his genuine, almost ingenuous, enthusiasm for his mission, and the rise of a national effort to recover for Ireland her literary identity on which a literary Unionist might indulge in innocent sympathy. Nobody, perhaps, attributed to him great gifts of mind or too robust or inflexible a will. But his opponents allowed no considerations of party to muffle their praises of his achievements or their hopes for his future success. His attitude to Ireland seemed to them to suggest that he meant to revive all that was generous in the traditions of Conservatism, and if he had left office two years ago he would have seemed a Canning without Canning's power, or perhaps a Fitzwilliam without Fitzwilliam's misfortune. He has now left office with a very different reputation. That agreeable illusion is destroyed. It will be remembered of him that after inviting a distinguished official to act "as his colleague" after making full use of his gifts and ardour to promote those objects on whose successful prosecution his own reputation depended, after living with him on intimate terms for more than two years and borrowing from his great resources of mind and experience, Mr. Wyndham allowed the Cabinet to put a public stigma on that official for an action that was the result of "a melancholy misunderstanding." "he was too great a

man to sit on a stool. He was my colleague. Nothing less would have tempted him from India. We worked together with sincere and cordial enthusiasm. Our relations were intimate. We discussed everything. It is true that for some months we were talking at cross purposes but for that my colossal ignorance of India is alone to blame. I gave him a free hand, and he used it, by a melancholy misunderstanding, in a way I did not approve. The Cabinet put on record that his action was indefensible. What else could be done?" This is Mr. Wyndham's argument, and the answer is simple enough to anyone who will read the letters describing the terms of the appointment. If the Cabinet insists on that public censure, Mr. Wyndham ought to resign.

The position of the Government is really no less ignominious than that of Mr. Wyndham. The correspondence read in the House shows that Sir Antony MacDonnell's appointment meant a new departure of Irish policy. Some of the Cabinet knew about it, others, including Mr. Chamberlain, did not. The Government realized that Unionism was a bankrupt policy. Sir Antony MacDonnell was called on to prepare a new policy—land purchase. University settlement, devolution or co-ordination, or whatever term can cover the vague ideas of administrative reconstruction that were stirring in the minds of the Government, ideas to which Mr. Wyndham gave a kind of expression when introducing his Land Bill. As long as the Government developed this policy they met no opposition from Liberals. Land purchase was carried. What was it that prevented the settlement of the University question? Not the distracted Opposition, to whose weakness and difficulties these gentlemen were always offering their sympathy. The