

in appearance seems to be one of the gravest and most perplexing that can be laid upon official shoulders. The last gun in defence of British dominion on this Continent, it has been said, will be fired by a Frenchman, and the last person presented at the British Court will, perhaps, be a citizen of the American Republic. Mr. Bayard is not likely to be wanting in personal magnanimity, and he will most likely allay the storm which begins to agitate the tea-cup by sending directions that the presentation shall take place.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE'S paper in the *Nineteenth Century*, on "The Liberal Split," is a curious embodiment of the true Machinist spirit. Its author is the most respectable of Radical politicians, yet, in discussing the conduct of men struggling for the integrity of the nation, it does not seem to occur to his mind that they can have been, or ought to have been, swayed by a paramount sense of duty to the country. He thinks of nothing but the Liberal Machine, which, if it can only be preserved from the disturbing influences of conscience and mental independence, will put his party into power and keep the Tories out. He regards with perfect complacency the action of the local caucuses in "bringing dissentient Liberals back to the fold," that is forcing them to vote against their consciences on a question involving not only the most important interests, but the very life of the nation. What shocks him is that the Conservatives should have so far forgotten the rules of political poker as to promise their support to Liberal Unionists in resisting the dictation of the Liberal caucus. "The Liberal Party could not have returned to power at the beginning of 1886 without the support of the Irish Party. If an agreement had not been come to with Mr. Parnell, a Liberal Government could not have been formed; the Tories would have remained in office, and would have proceeded with their policy of coercion." The words about the Tory policy are surplusage or a mere phrase of conventional disparagement: the rest of the passage gives the caucus justification for a complete change of front on the Irish question, and an agreement with an Irish leader whose objects had been pronounced those of a traitor and a marauder, but who commanded the required number of votes. The alliance was immoral and unpatriotic, but it was necessary in order to turn the Tories out and get their places. This is plain, business-like, and, in our judgment, less injurious to public morality than the fabrication of "histories of ideas," which not only violate truth, but legitimize dissimulation. Only, Mr. Shaw Lefevre can hardly be allowed, at once, to maintain, on behalf of his Party, that the change was made necessary by lack of votes, and, on behalf of his leader, that there was no change at all. Mr. Lefevre evidently feels confident that the Machine will crush out of existence Liberal Unionism, which, as it is based upon nothing but conviction, he naturally regards as a most offensive anomaly in nature. We only wish we could persuade ourselves that his calculations were unfounded, and that the one body of public men on which experience has shown that the nation can rely for self-sacrificing patriotism was not in serious danger of elimination. When bye elections come on, it will be seen, we fear,—indeed it has been seen already in the case of the election for King's Lynn,—that between the two Machines no Liberal Unionist can ever be elected. The Conservatives will grudge the sacrifice of a seat, and the Radicals who have possession of the caucus hate an Independent more than a Tory. As soon as this becomes apparent Lord Hartington's following must inevitably be weakened, and he will not find it easy to hold together, even within the House, a body of men who are to be entirely excluded from the hope of office and to have little prospect of re-election. He ought to have recognised the verdict of the election, taking the hand which Lord Salisbury in perfect good faith held out to him, and given the nation in its hour of peril a strong Government, of which, whether ostensibly its head or not, he would have been the most powerful member. As it is, all party relations must remain unsettled so long as Mr. Gladstone remains at the head of the Radicals. That he shall not return to power is the fixed determination of a body of men strong enough to bar the way, and who will not allow themselves to be lured by any bait into a Radical trap of any kind. Nobody can now foresee what will happen when he goes. A reunion of the Hartingtonians with Mr. Labouchere and the extreme Radicals seems out of the question. But the assumption upon which Mr. Shaw Lefevre builds, that all the Gladstonians are sincere Separatists, is, we have said before, unfounded. Not a few of them would be only too glad to follow Lord Hartington or Mr. Chamberlain if the screw of the caucus were removed.

THE sinister passage of Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet in which he threatens to punish England for her rebellion against him by stirring up Home Rule movements in Scotland and Wales as well as in Ireland has been followed up by a letter to one of his Welsh partisans announcing the

approach in Wales of "a new political development." Wales is not an Ireland. She is not separated from Great Britain by the streak of sea which seems so insurmountable a gulf of national division to Home Rulers, who at the same time propose to unite Crete to Greece; and her mountains, which once barred the march of the Norman cavalry, are no boundaries now. Yet there are in her seeds of mischief which, if Mr. Gladstone lives, may by his fostering hand be made to spring up and bear fruit. There is a religious division, a division of race, and in some districts a division of language between the gentry and the mass of the people. An anti-tithe movement is already on foot, an anti-rent movement is apparently commencing. The Irish agitators will, of course, do their best to kindle disaffection in Wales, and the Principality, without actually attempting to break out of the Union, may be brought into such a state that government will be very difficult. Among other things, recruiting for the army might be arrested. And this is at a time when, between the Egyptian complication and the Bulgarian question, the country, largely from the effects of Mr. Gladstone's own policy, is in great difficulty and peril. It is barely possible to believe that a politician may be conscientious in flinging himself suddenly into the arms of men whom he has just been describing as marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire. It is surely impossible to believe that he is conscientious in behaving as Mr. Gladstone is now behaving to his country, except upon the supposition that the idea of duty to his country has never found entrance into his mind.

WE almost despair of seeing the Irish Question understood or fairly treated by Americans, when we find a journal of so high a class as the *Chicago Current* believing that the Irish have to cross the water in order to obtain a voice in the making of the laws by which they are governed. Ever since the Union, Ireland has enjoyed her full share of representation, and her people have had as much of a voice in the making of their own laws as the people of any other part of the United Kingdom. If her representatives choose to filibuster and obstruct instead of legislating, whose fault is that? The Scotch members lay their heads together on all Scotch questions, and Parliament almost invariably does what they advise. There is nothing whatever to prevent the representatives of Ireland from doing likewise. The law is the same for England and Ireland, and is administered in Ireland by Irish judges and juries. The municipalities in Ireland, as well as in England, are elective, and are being freely filled with Nationalists at this moment; and, if the counties are governed by non-elective boards, so are those in England, and Parliament in both cases was preparing to introduce the elective system when this rebellion broke out. There is no inequality of any kind between Irishmen and other citizens of the United Kingdom. The Irish have the full run of the Empire, with all its honours and emoluments; and Irishmen are now actually occupying high posts in every department of the Imperial service. The sole political grievance is the Union; just as the Union was the sole political grievance in the case of the seceding South.

THE tidings that a body of tenants on an Irish estate have purchased their holdings under the Ashbourne Act promises better than anything we have yet heard for a peaceful settlement of the Irish problem. The real question, it cannot be too often repeated, so far as the masses of the people are concerned, is not political but agrarian. The politicians, especially the politicians at Chicago, want a Parliament and Government of their own in College Green, with all the offices, patronage, and political plunder thereto annexed, and with unlimited power of taxation. But what the people, except the populace of two or three cities, want is not a Parliament in College Green, but a fixed tenure of their land. The politicians, well aware of this, have always striven to prevent a settlement of the land question, which they know would shut off the steam from the engine of political agitation. They have done their utmost, and hitherto with fatal success, to prevent the people from taking advantage of the Ashbourne Act. The land law in Ireland, like all other parts of the law, has been the same in Ireland as in England, but its practical operation has been worse in Ireland than in England, because it has led to more absenteeism. Long ago Mr. Gladstone ought to have done what he has not done even now; he ought to have abolished primogeniture and entail, and to have swept away the cumbrous and costly system of conveyance. The relation between landlord and tenant has now unquestionably become in Ireland very full of bitterness, and very difficult to maintain. Legislation regulating rents like Mr. Gladstone's Land Act is sure to be a failure, because the legislator cannot foresee the fluctuations in the price of produce which are always altering the value of land. To facilitate the purchase of the land by the tenant is the only hopeful course; and when this has been done with effect, the political agitation will be deprived of fuel, and