

Cabinet is in any way weakened by the change in its *personnel*, for if the two new members are comparatively young and altogether inexperienced they have not very difficult offices to administer; so they will have ample time and opportunity to learn all the sweet mysteries of place.

M. Chapleau knowing his own value to his party in Quebec, and anxious to keep it in power and carry through some of the undertakings he has entered upon, remains at his post as was to be expected—whereupon some idiot, having no sense but that of favours yet to come has proposed that a subscription of money be taken up as a substantial reward for this piece of party loyalty. No one can suppose that M. Chapleau would entertain the insult for a moment, but the proposal is a humiliating thing to the whole community. But no part of it is half so scandalous as the proposal made by "a prominent official of the Catholic School commissioners"—I wish I knew his name—that the school teachers shall pay ten dollars per annum toward this fund so long as M. Chapleau shall remain in Quebec. The bare proposition is a crime, and any effort to carry it into practice would be a general disgrace.

I am disposed to agree with Mr. Goldwin Smith in the *Bystander* that the question of building the Pacific Railway should be submitted to the popular vote. The scheme is altogether so great—involving a sum of money so utterly out of all proportion with our present available resources—that the country should have an opportunity of pronouncing upon it. As a matter of fact it has never been before the constituencies as a distinct issue, the *Montreal Gazette* to the contrary notwithstanding. In 1872 it was a vision from which nor facts nor figures could be evolved; in 1873 it was a vision from which most ugly facts and damaging figures were evolved, but none of them gave practical ideas concerning anything but the Government of the day; and in 1878 the tumult of the National Policy drowned all other noises. Now the thing is before us in tangible and measurable form. In round numbers it will cost two hundred millions of dollars,—a sum just barely thinkable to financial minds, but terribly real as to the matter of interest each year; and it would be well—at any rate, it would relieve the Government of a tremendous responsibility, if, after the whole scheme has been laid before Parliament and discussed, an appeal were made to the popular vote of the country.

The practical difficulty in the way of this appeal lies in the fact that it cannot well be made a question between the parties. The Liberals when in power had an ill-defined scheme, and a costly way of carrying it out. They blundered in buying stuff for their works, and blundered still worse in beginning to build a line at two ends, and one of them at the wrong place—they had no idea of the cost, and never had a plain word to say to Mr. A. de Cosmos. Sir John knows what he is about and what he hopes to do, but it is very likely that if he make appeal to the general opinion of the people he will have to modify somewhat the magnificence of his scheme.

I called attention a week or two ago to the vulgarity of the *Globe's* advertisements—I mean as to their appearance, of course, and a friend calls upon me to say that the *Mail* is quite as bad. I am bound to acknowledge that the demand is almost justified by the facts of the case. I do not think that taking paper for paper the *Mail* is as great a sinner against good taste as the *Globe*, but even the *Mail* comes out with advertising cuts which no decent Punch-and-Judy showman would allow to have a place on his wooden box. Tradespeople would advertise no less if the papers named would do a feeble little in behalf of art-taste by toning down the vulgarisms in their advertising columns.

The speech of Mr. Gladstone at the Lord Mayor's banquet was worthy of the man—calm, dignified and determined. In dealing with the Irish question, he once again affirmed that the intention of the Government is to deal in a radical manner with the wrongs of Ireland. There will be no attempt to rush legislation, nor to pass laws in the dark, but careful search will be made into the condition of the

land laws, and where they are found to operate against the best interests of the people changes will be made so far as equity will allow. In sight of that we may well ask what good can result to the Irish people from the Land League agitation. The British Government will not be intimidated by Mr. Parnell and his hot-headed following: any commission of enquiry into the operation of the land laws would hardly be influenced in favour of tenants by agrarian outrages and cowardly murders—for when they analyse the working of laws they will probably analyse the nature of the people demanding the change in the laws, and it is quite possible that they might come to the conclusion that the people are not capable of self-government and must, in order to the keeping of peace, be ruled with a firm and determined hand.

For a long time it has been held that concessions should be made to Irish discontent. No man has held that more firmly, nor acted upon it more successfully than Mr. Gladstone, but no sooner has he returned to power, and made an effort to do yet something more for Ireland—struggling as he must do against the landlord interest which predominates in the Upper House—than the Irish, instead of helping him on in his friendly work for them, blaze out in a fury of discontent and lawlessness. This is not exactly the kind of encouragement men want and is more than likely to depress the spirit than to inspire it with zeal and patience. The startling rumours to hand that Mr. Gladstone has resigned the Premiership are not true, of course, but that he does not resign is proof that he can rise above disappointment and maintain a steady purpose to do what he considers his duty.

It must be confessed that Mr. Parnell has achieved some success as an agitator, but as a collector of funds he is an utter failure. His speechifying tour through the United States and Canada was not very productive, and the *New York Herald* fund commanded almost entirely the American confidence. Again he is making most frantic appeals for money, and the response is very feeble. Only three or four hundred pounds have been scraped together yet, and that will not pay many hotel bills and lawyer's fees in Ireland. If Mr. Parnell be quieted and kept at home for want of funds it will be among the very few good things poverty ever did; for it would be a mercy to the Irish and all concerned, if for the present they would cease agitating until it is seen what the British Government intend to do.

Mr. Gladstone is just as firm on the Eastern question as on the Irish difficulty. The Cabinet is united, he tells us, in the determination to uphold the Treaty of Berlin—which means that Turkey shall fulfil the obligations imposed upon her by international agreement. This is for her own good, and the good of all Europe. To the stand taken by Mr. Gladstone and his Government we shall owe the good result, whatever it may be.

M. Jules Ferry is already floundering about in a Ministerial crisis. So far as he is personally concerned it has no significance, but so far as M. Gambetta is concerned it probably means much. The Chamber is weary of having one man wearing the name and another wielding the actual power. They want to see Gambetta take a more decided position and announce himself—but Gambetta prefers to wait. To become Prime Minister would cut him off from the Presidency, and he will be content with no office short of the highest.

Mr. Seward, the Minister of the United States in China, has been removed from his post, and it is said that a Commission is on its way to Peking to modify the conditions of the Burlingame treaty. This, if it should happen to be carried out, will be but a step in the direction of prohibiting the immigration of the Chinese into the United States. The treatment of the Chinese in California is one unparalleled record of crime and injustice, and they were shamefully maltreated within a few weeks at Denver—the mob being incited to their cruel acts by the publication of the forged Morey letter. However, the removal of Mr. Seward has been effected by Secretary Evarts, and Mr. S. naturally feels sore, and has been venting his spleen through the press; his statements ought perhaps to be taken *cum grano salis*. EDITOR.