

it had been. On these points we are willing to accept Mr. Townsend Trench as an infallible authority, because he knows his facts. He speaks with the authority of personal experience. He has evicted wholesale for Lord Lansdowne. He has got his land. There is no man in Ireland has so large a menagerie of "white elephants" on his hands; there is no man in Ireland that can speak with more authority of the expense and burden of their keep.

There is comfort and encouragement in this frank confession of the enemy. If the evicted farms are a grievous burden to wealthy Lord Lansdowne with all appliances and means to boot, they will infallibly break the back of the ordinary pauper rack-renter with no means or appliances at all at his disposal. We thank Mr. Townsend Trench for the confession, and we offer him a word of caution in return. He should be careful about declaring publicly that the League is not "a thing of the past." It is for proving this that Mr. O'Brien is about to be sent to gaol in Loughrea. The greater the truth the greater the crime under the Coercion Act.

Mr. Wilfrid Blunt is back in Ireland once more. He was present at the meeting of the Central Branch of the National League last Tuesday, where he received a magnificent ovation. Mr. Blunt took advantage of the opportunity afforded him to thank the Irish people for their kindness to him. Any trouble he had suffered was fully compensated by the thought that he might have done something to put an end to the old secular strife. Mr. Blunt, furthermore, very wisely remarked that it depended very much on the Irish people whether they should overcome the Tory Government or not; for here the people had what the English people had not—political faith, which, as they knew, moved mountains. The more he saw of Ireland the more he was convinced that coercion had no disastrous effect on the League. Mr. Blunt purposes making a tour through Munster before returning to London.

Balfour is taking a leaf out of the book of Signor Crispi, of Rome. Like the Italian Premier, he, too, has his penal code cut-and-dry for Catholic clergymen. Mr. Balfour through the medium of his accommodating instrument, Dr. Ebenezer Webb, Q.C., has struck a blow at the priesthood of Ireland in seeking to punish and degrade Fathers McFadden and Stephens of Donegal. These two devoted clergymen were guilty of the abominable crime of standing between their flocks and the wolf at the door; of following in the footsteps of their Divine Master, who preached the cause of the poor and the disinherited; of striving to save a hard-working peasantry from utter ruin; and for such a palpable outrage on the moral law they are branded as criminals, and locked up in convicts' cells. The Irish priesthood, however, will not be deterred by such proceedings from doing its duty. In far darker days than the present it stood by the people against the people's oppressors, and many of its members sealed their devotion to the popular cause with their life-blood. Today the Irish priest can wear a felon's cap and justly consider it the proudest crown an Irishman can wear. *Ce n'est pas l'échafaud qui fait la crime!* Mr. Balfour's ukases honour the Irishman against whom they are directed. His criminals are the beloved of the nation and his prison cells are our Sinai mountains. Fathers McFadden and Stephens may well rejoice at the proud position which they have attained, for they are the worthy successors of those valiant churchmen who battled at such fearful odds for the cause of Ireland throughout the Penal Days.

The news that the stormy petrel of Radical Disunionism is shortly to be the quiet cage-bird of the Tories is too good to be true. Mad and blind with anger as Mr. Chamberlain is, he is hardly going to write the decree of his political extinction immediately. No better fortune could befall the Home Rule cause than that Mr. Chamberlain should become its salaried enemy; and no better fortune could befall the cause of Radical Reform than that it should be saved from the false friendship of Mr. Chamberlain by his absorption to Toryism. The ever-stronger growing determination of the Liberal party with regard to Ireland is Mr. Chamberlain's despair. The stronger and honest the determination, the worse for the jockeying politicians.

The question now is, will the English Local Government Bill receive the Queen's sanction in 1888, even though an autumn session be devoted to it? Up to the present no less than 369 amendments are to be moved in committee, and have already been set down on paper. Of these 297 stand in the names of Liberal members; 96 in the names of Conservatives; and 66 in the names of Liberal-Unionists. Unless Mr. Smith performs with the Local Government Bill, the remarkable feat that carried the Irish Coercion Bill through, he cannot expect to see the measure take its place on the statute book this year.

The proceedings against Mr. O'Brien at Loughrea, have been upset by an incident that looks extremely suspicious. It was well known that the two Removables who sat on the bench were sadly muddled as to the law of the case, and the depositions would probably have disclosed serious informalities which on appeal might have been sufficient to quash a conviction. Mr. Healy had been obliged to leave Loughrea, and Mr. Harrington could be badly spared for an indefinite period from the central offices of the League. The investigation had already reached a stage when it was hoped that the formal testimony of large numbers of witnesses would have amounted to an irresistible defence, and, certain principles have been conceded, there would be no necessity for profound legal arguments. Just at this point, however, Mr. Paul, R.M., declared from the Bench that the depositions had been stolen. The Court-house was in charge of the police, acting under the direction of the Crown, yet the documents were removed, and Mr. Carson came into court with a look of virtuous indignation so well carried, that one would think he was personally a loser by the transaction. Of course, the recommencement of the proceedings implies a protracted trial, renewed fees to the well-paid Castle lawyers, and continuous expense to the police officials and all other persons engaged in the prosecution. The gain will be theirs, but the loss will be the public's. We do not for a moment impute to the lawyers engaged in the prosecution any personal knowledge of the theft; but they would be more than human if they were grieved at an occurrence from which they will derive

such golden gains. It is possible that the act may have been committed by an amorous constable who may have matrimonial designs on a fair denizen of Loughrea, and would consider that his prospects might be increased by a prolonged stay in the neighbourhood of the beloved one's home.

There was a very picturesque and graceful scene in Loughrea on Tuesday, May 1, just before the opening of the court. It consisted in the ceremony of the presentation of two addresses to Mr. O'Brien by the ladies of Loughrea.—one from those who had formerly belonged to the Ladies' Land League of that place, and the other from the ladies in general. Miss Ellen Kennedy read the former; Miss Nora Kelly the latter. A very large number of these fair dames and demoiselles were present at the ceremonial. With the addresses were presented two bouquets.

Think of sending an old man of eighty and his wife to gaol for crawling back to the ruins of the home from which they had been evicted! Such a decision has been given at Skibbereen. The victims were Samuel Paul Kingston and his wife, of Meevies, Drimoleague. They were evicted in February, and when cast forth crawled into an outhouse, as they had no other place to go but the roadside. The landlord, Dr. Lewis, J.P., was present, and even his heart smote him when he saw the aged pair subjected to the cruel sentence, and he begged that it might be reduced—but in vain. Mr. Warburton, ex-constabulary officer, whose services to the Castle are held in such high esteem that he receives the maximum salary of £675 a year, was inexorable, and this aged couple were hustled off to gaol—the husband to be imprisoned for a month, and the wife for a fortnight. Their respectability and life-long patient inoffensiveness may be inferred from the pathetic pleading of the wife not to send the old man to gaol for the first time in his long life. It must have been Dr. Lewis who instituted the prosecution, and we wish him joy of the results of his invocation of a Coercion Court against the hapless pair.

Mr. F. A. Dickson is coming forward as the Nationalist candidate for the St. Stephen's Green Parliamentary Division. Mr. Dickson has for years been a staunch advocate of tenant-right in the House of Commons, as the representative of a Northern constituency. A devoted follower of Mr. Gladstone, he advocated the Home Rule cause, but at the last general election that advocacy cost him his seat. Mr. Dickson's sacrifices deserve ample recognition, and we have no doubt that the electors of St. Stephen's division will return him not only at the head of the poll, but also with an overwhelming majority over that dull respectability, Mr. Robert Sexton. Mr. Dickson's election would be the best possible guarantee to the sturdy Presbyterians of the North that, instead of bearing them any ill-will or animosity, we would do all in our power to make them our brothers in the one National cause. The Presbyterian farmers of Ulster, ground down as they are by the system of landlordism, are keenly discerning the *pros* and *cons* of the present political situation. They are learning the sad but at the same time wholesome lesson, that the Tories will never settle satisfactorily the Irish land question, and that consequently the only hope of their salvation lies in the return of the Liberal party to power. As Mr. Dickson, who is a Presbyterian himself, comes forward on the broad Liberal Home Rule platform, his return by the Dublin Nationalists would be an omen alarming enough to strike terror in the hearts of the most callous and bigoted Orange Lodges of the North. Such is the aim of the coming contest and such the aim that will be attained.

Mr. Balfour is sustaining his reputation as the first liar in Europe. His excuses are generally more false than the original falsehood. He impudently declared in the House of Commons he considered that the sentence of Mr. Blane, M.P., had been diminished instead of increased, because, though the time was doubled, hard labour, which had been added to the sentence in the court below, had been removed on appeal. Everyone who knows anything about it knows that hard labour or no hard labour makes scarcely a pin's point of difference. The plank-bed and the skilly, and the solitary confinement, and the degrading garb appertain to both forms of imprisonment alike. Prisoners frequently ask to have hard labour added to their sentence for the sake of the better food and exercise it entails. All these circumstances were known to Mr. Balfour. If the fact had been as he stated his comment was deliberately misleading. But his statement itself was false. Being hard pressed by questioners he was compelled to confess that in neither court was hard labour added to sentence of Mr. Blane.

Meaner still, if that be possible, was his falsehood concerning Mr. Hill, the reporter of the *Liarist Times*, who had been murderously attacked at Ennis. He declared on his own responsibility in the House of Commons that the doctor in attendance on Mr. Hill had reported his injuries were not of a serious kind. Dr. Murphy, of Harcourt street, who was the only doctor in attendance, wrote a prompt and emphatic contradiction. He had made no report, he declared, to any one on the subject. Mr. Balfour's explanation is that a doctor in Ennis told a removable magistrate, who told him. He is very virtuously indignant that the strict accuracy of his statement should be questioned, but curiously enough he accidentally omits to give the name of the doctor or the name of the removable through whom the news permeated to the House of Commons.

The Port Elizabeth correspondent of the *Somerset E. Budget* says:—Diogenes, who has been on the prowl, tells me his story as follows:— "And I asked a bystander a standing by whose meeting it was and he said they was the Free Thinkers a-havin' a Convention." And I sez "How free?" And he sez "There was great cause to doubt everything; they doubted whether they wuz or not, and if they wuz or when; and if so why?" And I sez, "What are they going to teach to-night," and he sez "The whyness of the What." And I sez, "Don't they believe anything easier than that," and he sez "They don't believe anything—that is their belief is to believe nothing." "Nothing?" sez I. "Yes" sez he; "nothing," and to-morrow they are a-goin to prove beyond any question that there ain't anything and never wuz anything." "Be they," sez I "Yes" sez he, "and won't you come and be convicted?"