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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

WHAT IS TO HAPPEN NEXT?

THE elections are over with the result of a Parliament that comprises a majority of more than a hundred against Home Rule, although the Tories are in a considerable minority as regards a possible (?) combination between the Whigs, Jingo-Liberals, Parnellites, and Gladstonians or British Home Rulers. It would be idle not to admit that this is a success of the Reactionists, and a success unexpected by most persons. Moreover, it would certainly have been a great advantage to the Socialist propaganda if the ground had been cleared of a question which very naturally excites political passions deeply, and at the same time has only an indirect bearing on our great object, the destruction of monopoly and exploitation. Peace with Ireland would not only have forced the consideration of their own economical condition, on the Irish themselves, but would have left nothing for us to consider in England, Scotland, and Wales, except our economical condition: unless some scare of a Russian war could have been set on foot by our "rulers."

But though it is most necessary to face the fact spoken of in our last issue of the powerlessness of the political working-men under our present system, it may not be amiss to emphasise the other point mentioned therein; to wit, the humbug of our electoral arrangements; otherwise, well-intentioned people might be genuinely discouraged at the apparent desertion of democratic opinion by the working-classes in the just past elections. If Hercules is knowable from the sight of his foot, according to the classical proverb, Mr. Dell's figures in the *Daily News* of July 13th, are worth at least something in this direction as to the vote of the boroughs outside the metropolis. According to these figures, 512,415 Home Rule votes produced 50 members, while 512,415 Tory and Jingo votes made 97 members. Every one really knows that this is but a specimen of the juggling of our Representation, and in itself it disposes of the pretence of looking on the elections as they are now conducted as a test of opinion.

Admitting this juggle then, it may be said, for the encouragement of those that are discouraged by the would-be popular vote of the "New Democracy," that even from their point of view it is not so bad after all. Let them further consider the influences brought to bear on the workmen voters, influences which must bear heavily on the average of men. The confusion caused by the desertion of their leaders, Mr. Chamberlain the Ransomer, Mr. J. Bright the Tribune of the People, Mr. Jesse Collings the Allotter; the raising of the No Popery cry; the threat of Irish labourers flooding the English labour market, the mere hint of which is enough to alienate many a voter, who hasn't grasped the idea that one method of keeping the Irish in Ireland would be to allow them to cultivate Ireland. It might surely have been foreseen that such things as these brought to bear upon men forced into narrowness and ignorance by the invariable course of their labour and their lives, would be hard indeed to resist; and that they have been resisted as widely as they have been, should, when we come to look upon the matter seriously, give us good hope of even the average material of the "masses" on whom we depend for the body of assent which must be the first step towards the new Society.

Meantime, the past few days have developed an idea, founded, perhaps, on the considerations above mentioned, that Mr. Gladstone though he is beaten need not resign. The *Pall Mall Gazette* distinguished itself by suggesting that Mr. Gladstone should gather up all the different opinions on Home Rule, and frame a measure which should satisfy everybody from Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Parnell. Mr. Labouchere thought that as the Tories would after all be in a minority, Mr. Gladstone might hold office for the rest of the year, and bring in a Home Rule Bill in the spring session. But as he was clear that such a bill would be defeated, not seeing, as the sapient *Pall Mall* does, how Yes and No could be reconciled, it is hard to see what, from

his point of view, could be gained by merely putting off the evil day, except the satisfaction of appetite for loaves and fishes for a short time. The plain truth is that no mechanical contrivances will hold together even the semblance of a Liberal party. The Whig-Tory party has triumphed, and though probably the name of coalition will be avoided in forming the new government, it will really be a coalition; but this will be a coalition not depending on temporary circumstances, but on the open admission of the fact that Whig and Tory no longer indicate real party differences, much less any ghost of a difference as to principles.

A Whig-Tory Government it will be, then, from the first, and, as to the Irish business, will plainly be inexpugnable. Nay, in other matters also it will be strong, because the fear of playing into the hands of the Separationists will always be present to the minds of the Jingo-Liberals whenever they may be inclined to assert their liberty. They have begun by letting themselves be made the tools of the Whig-Tory party, and they must play out their part to the end,—unless any of them should repent and swallow Home Rule after all, which is by no means impossible.

As for the Irish party, it is difficult to see what amongst ordinary parliamentary tactics they can take to. As long as they are in close alliance with the Gladstonian party their old game of parliamentary obstruction must be in abeyance: nor, indeed, was it ever anything more than a protest against the shelving of the Irish question. The position of tail to the Gladstonian party, or even head of it under Gladstone, would not be a very exciting one for them; but they will have to accept it unless they take one other course. Is it possible that when they see that the Westminster Parliament is determined not to yield to their just demand, then they should leave it to do as it will, and return to Ireland and there sit to give help and counsel, if nothing else, to the Irish people? It may be said that this would precipitate mere violent coercion on the English part; but what then? Are not the English preparing for veiled coercion at least? Will they not be driven to use that? And might it not be well to strip the veil from the ugly thing and show it for what it is? Might it not be well to say, "Since you must govern us, and against our consent; since you can no longer pretend not to know what we want—govern us, then! And take on yourselves the responsibility for the government! We have besought you, argued with you, taught you, warned you—in vain. We will do so no longer; we have no more to do with you. Take your own course, and find out for yourselves that Ireland is not England." Such a voice as this would ring throughout all history, if only it could be uttered. But it is not likely to be. The cause of Irish Independence will most probably have to be dragged through all kinds of pettiness and intrigue before its true aim, the happiness of the Irish people, becomes visible.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

"PUTTING HIS 'FOOTE' IN IT!"

WE have another "able editor" criticising Socialism; a man who has made himself famous by lecturing on Moses and Aaron, and other ancient Jews. Mr. G. W. Foote, in his magazine *Progress* for June 1886, criticises Mrs. Besant's little work entitled 'Modern Socialism.' Mr. Foote begins his article with what he calls an exordium. The talent for reasoning which runs through the whole article is displayed in this exordium. Here is an example: "Institutions do not precede men, men precede institutions. Mind is therefore more important than mechanism." The graceful style of the critique may be appreciated by such an extract as this: "Rain and sunshine blow the grass and ripen the corn through the silent hours, and the very mountains unhurt by avalanches are invisibly decomposed by the air, and carried away by running water. Everywhere the hard is moulded by the soft; and if you want to move the world, don't emulate Napoleon's thunders or Draco's laws, but work with the grey pulp of the brain and everything will yield to its impress."