NOTES ON PASSING EVENTS.

Mr. Gladstone, in hopes of passing a resolution in favour of the principle of his Bill, did last week, among other devices, the heights of that principle, and at first it was thought that the Chamberlain Radicals would accept the compromise to the extent of remaining neutral in the division; but these hopes have been overthrown, the Chamberlainites decided to vote against the Bill, and on Tuesday night their leader made his manifesto in the House of Commons. So, in all probability, the Bill will be finally thrown out. Will there be a dissolution then?—the question which the Press generally answer- ing in the affirmative; and yet, strange to say, it does not seem quite certain. As things have gone it would be a piece of iniquity to avoid it, which would brand all Mr. Gladstone's proceedings in this matter with the same mark. There would in any case have had to be a dissolution in the autumn had the autumn Session come off; and also in any case the two opposed camps of the once Liberal party would have had to meet face to face. Mr. Gladstone's attempt at compromise will give him an advantage in the struggle, because he can now say truly that what the Chamberlainites object to is real Home Rule.

Mr. Chamberlain's speech makes that clear: the independence of Ireland is a matter against which; and he is not ashamed to emphasise this fact by an outburst of Jingo platitude in the midst of his speech. His disclaimer of stirring up religious animosity between the two sections of Irishmen is futile; for whether he will it or no, the line of conduct is certainly helping to excite this animosity. Mr. Chamberlain must know, one would think, what the Ulster opposition means at bottom, that if civil war has to be in Ireland, though the exponents of it may be the Friends of Catholic Emancipation, the real cause will be Lumberdisism, for and against. If Mr. Chamberlain does not know that, the Tories who cheered him, the Tory press which (sured to theft a grief) praises his "manliness" and his patriotism, know it well enough.

Mr. Acland-Hoodless has, amongst others, written his manifesto on the Irish Question. To the politicians playing the above-mentioned game, for and against, he will be quite insignificant; but he is a straightforward and honest man according to his lights, and wields a somewhat critical pen. It may be worth while, therefore, to call atten- tion to one or two points in his late letter to the Pall Mall, for the advantage of those who may be impressed by his quite genuine concept of the "circular dodgers" of Parliamentary life, and may be truly interested in Irish politics. His anxiety seems to be the only genuine one of Ulster is no doubt genuine; nor perhaps is he disturbed by the obvious question of how to deal with the minority in Ulster when you have settled the matter of the minority in Ireland. He is perhaps prepared with some scheme which does not go as far as free and federated communies, to the consideration of which the difficulty leads us. But after all it is clear that his defence of the Irish minority is based on his assumption of the eternal and indefeasible rights of private property—that is, of class robbery.

His "view of justice and great human rights" does not embrace the freedom of all men to live naturally and without artificial restraints: freedom to freeze and be frozen is all the freedom he acknowledges. Ireland, he says practically, may be free—nay, should be free—if she will but pay for her own land. To whom, we ask, and what for? The answer is clear: "To the rich," so that the rich may still be rich and the poor poor. If Irish independence can mean that—if Ireland means it—she is striking strokes in the water indeed. It is only in the hope that through that independence she is groping her way to Freedom that to us Irish independence is worth thinking about.

So goes on merrily the political disruption of our present system. Far more grim than this bad joke of Parliament and representation is the process of its economical break up. All over the country an attempt is being made to stimulate trade by the large advertisements called exhibitions; and royalty is playing its due part in a commercial country by opening these, and so killing, if possible, two birds with one stone—exciting loyalty on one hand, and trying to get it to spend money on the other. The success on the commercial side is not yet great, and trade is still "dull"—a word which covers something of the same suffering as the conventional phrases used in describing a battle...