A TRIPLE ALLIANCE.

The struggle for the elementary right of freedom of speech, of which the events of Bloody Sunday formed such a dramatic episode, is taking a new development. The police onslaught of November 15th, and the subsequent resurrection tyranny of the Government, came as a surprise on the genuine Radicals who took part in the proceedings of that disastrous and shameful day: and it can hardly be doubted that the orthodox Liberals were also surprised at it; but their surprise took the form of striking them dumb as well as needless. Comment has been made in these columns on the dauntlessness of their behaviour, which, all things considered, was not astonishing, as well as on its stupidity, which really was almost astonishing. For here had the Tories and government troops shown such courage and determination as if they were using so eagerly in Ireland, and yet they let it tumble to the ground and lie there; thus practically admitting their real alliance with the very men they are formally contending with in the Parliamentary game. So much for Mr. Gladstone's British following, and so likewise to say it, his Irish allies behaved no better. Here one has some right to be surprised: how could it be that they did not see the force of the argument ready to their mouths, "You English men, you Londoners, have coerced and gagged Ireland, with the result that you are coerced and gagged; join you with us, as we will with you, to get rid of coercion and gagging altogether, or else you will suffer along with us"?

And moreover, in joining heartily in our protest they would have been even formally pushing their own cause; the meeting on Bloody Sunday was called to protest against the wrong done to an Irishman and Ireland, and every man in that audience the proceedings were an enthusiastic Home Ruler. Yet no one spoke or stirred, except, to be fair, Mr. Bradlaugh, mindful of his old struggles in the Square. It was left for the Socialists only, helped in the press by the professional democratic and worker's paper, The Rebel, and the Pall Mall Gazette, which for the time at least became almost a Socialist journal.

Nevertheless, so flagrant was the case, so open was the intention to thrust forward the most absurd, so diagnostically unfair was the conduct of the courts that tried the "rioters," and so savagely was the dictive the sentences passed on them, that the conspiracy of silence has failed as least as far as London is concerned; and the Southwark election, which otherwise would have been a matter of little importance, showed, as it is admitted on all sides, that the London workmen understand the subject of Trafalgar Square much better than their so-called "leaders."

This fact has at last penetrated the numskulls of the orthodox Liberals, and it said that the wily old politician who "leads" them is going to contribute his "old stage" wisdom to the debate on Trafalgar Square, which is (perhaps) to come off on Thursday: nay, that the very dissentient Liberals themselves have taken the alarm, and are meditating a little dishing of the Gladstonians.

Meanwhile, the meeting of Monday 20th, which was called to welcome Burnouf and Graham, became under these circumstances the beginning of a triple alliance for freedom of speech between the Irish, the Radicals, and the Socialists. We are bound to hope that this alliance will give back Trafalgar Square to the people, and put the whole matter of open-air meeting on a better footing than it is at present; but it will only do so if the rank and file of the Irish and Radicals are determined to make a genuine alliance with their Socialist brethren, whatever the leaders may do; it is their business if they are in earnest in upholding freedom of speech throughout the country to make sure that the Liberals do not use it merely as a good electioneering cry for London, to be cast aside on the first opportunity. At the meeting of the 20th the Radical part of their audience were loud in their boasts that they could win the right of free speech from the reactionists by the ballot box. So be it! They are certainly not prepared to win it by physical force or the threat of it; though for my part I must think that when they show the shame that they are in to cry out to such an enemy as they are facing (if they are in earnest) "Do what you will with us, if we cannot out-vote you, you are safe."

However, let that pass; they are not prepared to carry the matter by force, and they think they can by voting. Well, then, at least let them vote hard and not soft; let them exact a pledge from every candidate to support the freedom of speech in Trafalgar Square and open spaces generally, and refuse to vote for any man who will not give this pledge unreservedly, whether he calls himself Liberal, Radical, or Home Ruler. If they do less than this they may be sure of one thing, that the attitude of the Liberals when they come into power will be pretty much that of the Tories; and they will find after all that they will be driven to use force if they really want to speak out their grievances in public. For after all, it will one day be just as inconvenient to the Liberals as to the Tories that the people should claim what they want by means of public meetings; and whatever topic is in the majority in the House of Commons may profess, the Executive will always do its best to silence the people, unless it is repeating parrot-fashion the words put into its mouth by its masters.

As to whether the mass of the Radicals are prepared to assert themselves, and will pluck up heart of grace to hear their leaders, from all that is past one cannot help being very doubtful about that. If they are not, they are excusing themselves very unnecessarily about getting rid of the Tories, who will in that case answer all the possible suits as well. They may make use of the Liberal party to carry democracy to the point when it must melt into Socialism; if they do not, they will be made use of to get a party into office, which, as far as any practical purpose is concerned, is composed of leaders who will not lead, and of followers who have got nothing to follow.

W. M.

ANOTHER GREAT RAILWAY STRIKE IN AMERICA.—The engine-drivers and firemen have struck all along the entire Quincy system, comprising 6,000 miles of road in Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, and, Wisconsin, both the freight and passenger traffic being paralysed.

SOCIALISM IN LONDON.—The Socialists seem to be making headway in the local Parliaments. There has been a Socialist, Mr. Richardson, at Cranes Cross, and now the Battersea Parliament has followed suit, and is led by a Socialist Minister. We notice that at Battersea, as at Charing Cross, the first measure he has brought forward is one for the enlargement of the principal municipal franchises, and prominent among the projects of legislation is "a bill to increase and amend the powers of local authorities." It looks as though the "Socialists of the municipality" in the ascendant. —Pall Mall Gazette.

THE TITHE ROOTS AT LANGLEY.—Eight men, including the Rev. Edward Robinson, Wesleyan minister, were indicted at Rushin assizes on the charge of "they, with other evil-disposed persons to the number of three hundred, did riotously assemble armed with sticks, and further did wound George Thos. and others." They were found guilty by a jury of a crowd of twenty-seven men were originally convicted for trial, but the Attorney-General interfered a notice to the Crown to disallow the indictment; Mr. H. M. Q.C., opened the case for the Crown, and described in detail the riot; but subsequently the defendants were liberated on their recognizances in £20 each to appear, if necessary, on March 29th.