

of. To a few politicians on tour, the cable-man or the Cardinal—whichever it may be—supplied an opening for flag-waving and spread-eagleism that was promptly seized and neatly worked up into the remote preparation for the electioneering tussle that is to mark the close of the present year.

There is a good deal of tow in our composition. We take fire rather easily; but the flame is not hot, and is soon spent. Which latter is at times a mercy to be thankful for. A few days sufficed for press and politicians to burn themselves out over Cardinal Logue—or the cable-man. And looking back over the incident with feet warm and heads cool, it is not so very easy to see what the tow-blaze rose so very high about, after all. The cable message that lit the fire ran thus:—

'The Archbishop of Armagh, his Eminence Cardinal Logue, Roman Catholic Primate of All Ireland, is at present visiting the United States, and was interviewed here yesterday. Speaking of British Imperial affairs, his Eminence declared that he saw signs of the Empire's certain dissolution. "The colonies are already restive," he proceeded. "Australia to-day is practically independent, and every moment the trend of affairs is more and more in the direction of absolute rebellion. New Zealand is indifferent, while Canada is legislating in such a manner as to show that the Dominion desires to conduct its business in its own way." Referring to the agitation at present causing such unrest in the Indian Empire, Cardinal Logue said: "The fires of rebellion are lighted in India, and men and women are hanged for daring to advocate the doctrine of never-dying freedom." "When England sits alone," he concluded, "as the result of misgovernment, it will be the day of reckoning for the children of Ireland!"'

Journalists and politicians alike fell unanimously into two chief errors in dealing with this cable message. In the first place, they gulped down the message without 'nosing' it, as a cautious man 'noses' a suspicious oyster; and, in the second place, they 'went off' too quickly to give their memory time to blow a cool breath upon their super-heated feeling. Pressmen at least might be expected, from a long experience, to distrust American newspaper methods sufficiently to reserve judgment upon the question of fact as to whether Cardinal Logue actually used the words attributed to him, or as to whether these words were given with sufficient context to represent fairly and properly the mind of the speaker. And with this radical and (in the circumstances) prudent doubt, they might be expected to pass a verdict, with grave qualification and with due reserve, not trusting over-much either to the journalism that is 'yellow' or the journalism that is 'blue'. And this on general principles learned by experience, and quite apart from any special knowledge of the character and personal history of Cardinal Logue. He is so noted for his great prudence, his practical wisdom, and his reserve in dealing with questions of party politics, that, on a-priori grounds, those who have the honor of his acquaintance (and we have known him for thirty years) would be less disposed to attribute a blunder to him than to the error of an American journalist—and, above all, of an American journalist reporting an 'interview'. And this a-priori distrust is based upon a knowledge of the notorious errors of the past and of the error-producing conditions of the present. Australian and New Zealand journalists might not unreasonably be expected to know enough of these things to reserve judgment on the question of fact before plying their office flails.

The whole incident furnishes a curious illustration of the old adage that one man may steal a sheep, while another may not look over the fence. The 'signs of the Empire's certain dissolution' have been a political shibboleth or commonplace ever since it became an Empire. The visions of dissolutions are sometimes clearer, sometimes fuzzier, sometimes nearer, sometimes more remote; but, like the poor, they are always with us.

Some (chiefly naval and military alarmists) see the dissolution coming at the hand of the stranger. Liberals find the seeds of the Empire's political death in the application of Tory principles. Tories in the application of Liberal principles. To Unionists, the placing of Ireland on an equal political footing with the Isle of Man, or New Zealand, or the Transvaal, would spell the immediate 'disintegration of the Empire'; to Orangemen, it would furnish a justification for rebellion—perhaps precipitate the crack o' doom. George III. and his plastic Ministers held, as one of the first articles of their political faith, that the dissolution of the Empire would come to pass unless 'the fatal compliance', the Stamp Acts of 1766, were repealed and the discontented American colonists treated as rebels in time of peace. Catholic Emancipation, it was, in effect, confidently predicted, would disintegrate the Empire and shake the very foundation of things; so would Reform; so would the Disestablishment of an alien Church in Ireland; so (as stated) would Home Rule. And to prevent (or, rather, to help on) the threatened dissolution, great bodies of men armed north of the Boyne; at one time (in 1835) 300,000 Orangemen were under arms, the fidelity of forty-two regiments of the line was systematically corrupted, and the legal order of succession to the throne was menaced. In 1868-69 the Empire was again to be 'disrupted'. The brethren armed and organised to save the moon from the wolves—to rescue the Empire from dissolution by kicking the Queen's crown into the Boyne. Again in 1886 they threatened civil war, when Gladstone's first Home Rule Bill was introduced. Lord Randolph Churchill and Lord Salisbury proceeded to Belfast to throw benzine upon the flames and fan them to a higher fury; and a number of 'yellow' papers published the name of a distinguished British general who (it was alleged) had declared his willingness to

'Keep the game alive
By killing all he could'—

to preserve the 'integrity' of the body politic by cutting off a leg, to 'maintain the integrity of the Empire' and to save it from impending dissolution by heading a civil war in Ulster. In like manner, the doom of the Empire was full many a time foretold during the Reform and Corn-law agitations; and there were those who saw, in the breaking down of the Hyde Park railings, the beginning of the end. We have failed to discover that any of our newspapers flared up to any great extent over the threats of armed rebellion, or over these predictions regarding the 'dissuption', 'disintegration', or 'dissolution' of the Empire. And we have a shrewd suspicion that one needs not to travel far back through their files, or through (say) the literature of the Navy League, to find direct or implied predictions of the approaching dissolution of the Empire unless England is prepared to lay down two 'Dreadnoughts' for every one that is laid down by Germany.

As regards India, the unrest does not seem to be much over-stated in the cable message from New York. We are disposed to an optimist view of things in general, but we cannot fail to see there a situation that, in several important respects, looks even graver than that of 1857 to 1860—partly because of its wide extent, partly because of its seeming intensity, as evidenced by the forms that it has assumed, partly by reason of what we may call the Dublin Castle methods adopted for 'driving the disorder in', but chiefly because of the new spirit that has been quietly obsessing the East ever since the series of triumphs over the West that closed with the coruscating victory of Tsushima. Even Egypt has (as recent events and recent cables show) been rocked by the wave of feeling that has lapped all the Orient since the close of the Russo-Japanese war. There was a time when the extension, to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, of the practical