

backed by Cardinal Cullen and the priests, and supported, too, by the Castle, an Ulster Presbyterian, sometime editor of the *Irish Felon*, and transported for ten years for treason-felony in 1848. No doubt, Mr. Martin has some of the best qualities to be found anywhere in his violent party, is as gentle and high-minded a rebel as ever rebelled, well-educated, well-read, well-travelled, of good but not great abilities, and in every way as estimable a nationalist as exists. Still his success against a Liberal Catholic of rank is a formidable sign of the times, and is due, we suspect, in no small degree to the disgust with which the country received the act of gracious clemency accorded to the Fenian prisoners.

It is barely possible,—and we sincerely hope it may be so,—that the shuffle of Cabinet offices is intended to render it easier for the Government to retrace their false step in inflicting banishment instead of giving the promised pardon to the Fenian prisoners. We believe that the Government is really reconsidering that very unwise half-measure, at least as regards some of the prisoners; and the advent of a new Minister to Ireland might render it easier to avow a change of policy. It will be a pity, however, if Mr. Chichester Fortescue has to “get up” Trade as a penance for this, perhaps his only serious blunder.

The worst falsehood of the war has, we think, been told within the week from the German head-quarters at Versailles,—the worst, we mean, because the most deliberate, and the most dishonourable, and the least justified by the natural self-love of soldiers. Our readers will remember our summary last week of a French official notification, offering to every French officer who escapes from prison and rejoins the Army 750 francs' indemnity to give him a new outfit, but peremptorily refusing a sou to any officer who had taken any sort of engagement to the Germans. This order, which was in the possession of the German head-quarters, having been found at Orleans on their last capture of that town, and which was printed at length in a letter of the *Times*'s correspondent with Prince Frederick Charles's head-quarters at Orleans last week, has been metamorphosed into the following calumny at Versailles, whence it was telegraphed by Mr. Reuter's agent last Friday, and published in all the papers of Saturday:—“The German authorities declare that according to an official French document which has fallen into their hands, and which emanates from the 6th Section of the 5th Division of the War Department, the French Government, by a decree dated the 10th of November, orders a premium of 750f. to be paid to each of the French officers who have escaped from German captivity in breach of their parole.”—the fact being that it was peremptorily refused to any officer who had given a parole. The same calumny, in the same words, is reported from Berlin, in a special telegram to the *Times* of yesterday, printed in its second edition. We can pardon boastful carnages about victories on either side, but not a deliberate attempt of this sort to befoul the honour of an enemy.

Mr. Russell, the *Times*'s correspondent at Versailles, writes, in the letter published yesterday, “I do not like to say much on what seems to me the inexplicable harshness of Herr von Brauchitsch, prefect of the department, towards the mayor and municipality of Versailles, because it may be explicable, and I hope it is. M. Rameau is in a cell in the common prison here, and has been ill nearly to death. Three of the Town Council have been arrested, and are in prison also for the same offence. That offence is said to be their refusal to pay a fine imposed on them for not opening a store of groceries here on a certain day. The groceries were bought in Germany by the mayor and municipality [of Versailles], but the German authorities refused to allow them to be conveyed to Versailles by the French railways under their control.” If Mr. Russell's account of the matter, confirmed by other correspondents, is true, the German prefect appears to be acting on the ancient principle applied by Pharaoh to the people of Israel, when he ordered them to make bricks without straw, and then punished them for not having made them. No doubt a combination of finesse with violence is far more fascinating to half-civilized taskmasters than violence without finesse. Even Mr. Smeers was subtle in discovering excuses for thrashing Smike, and found his pleasure in that operation enhanced by the subtlety of his pretences.

The London School Board met again on Thursday, and indulged in a singularly unbusinesslike and, as it seems to us, unprofitable discussion. Professor Huxley seems to think that before they can do anything in the way of education for London,

they must *inquire* for a year or so as to the best curriculum to which to submit children. Surely they could get to work “provisionally” as soon as they have ascertained where the destitution exists, and teach up to the Government standards, without satisfying themselves speculatively as to the ideal standard of education. We fear Lord Lawrence has not yet got his Board well in hand. It meets at long intervals, and loses time at a great rate when it does meet.

Mr. Cardwell proves in a letter to Mr. Gladstone, published in the *Times* of Thursday, that he did not make the blunder attributed to him by Lord Elcho, in asserting that the country had in store 300,000 Snider rifles, of which the greater part subsequently turned out to be in store in Canada, and not in England. He shows that there were 231,240 Snider rifles really in store in home stations on the 8th August last, and 53,039 were at foreign stations, excluding India; and more important still, that he was not deluded by his own subordinates into a false impression on the subject. Why Mr. Cardwell will not sooner contradict Lord Elcho's signed statement that he (Mr. Cardwell) had confessed to Lord Elcho that the Sniders supposed to be in store were not really available, because most of them were in Canada, it is quite impossible to say. But as we have no belief at all in Mr. Cardwell as a War Minister,—indeed, the store of breech-loading rifles now proved to exist is ludicrously insufficient,—we are the more anxious to give him no discredit that he does not deserve, and it was a great discredit to lie under the imputation of having been himself deceived by his own subordinates on a matter so important, and of having credulously led Parliament and the country into the same fool's paradise.

A meeting, respectable as to numbers, but of the “miscellaneous” sort as to persons, was held at the Cannon-Street Hotel on Thursday, to express sympathy with France. The audience were addressed by Mr. Merriman, a solicitor who aspires to Mr. Beales' place in politics, and who made rather a clever point in pleading that even Austria had spared Piedmont, after the abdication of Charles Albert, but talked nonsense when he objected to pay annuities to “German princelings engaged in crushing France.” Would Mr. Merriman refuse to pay the interest on Consols to King William? He advocated a summary requisition to Prussia to quit France under penalty of war. Dr. Mackay, author, we suppose, of the song about “a good time coming,” and of the letters which have produced most of the ill-feeling between England and America, advocated the cause of “Napoleon,” “whom it was the fashion to decry, now that he was down;” while Sir H. Hoare asked the meeting to say distinctly whether they meant war or not, which question was answered very decidedly by Dr. Kenealy in the affirmative. Mr. Sidney Smith apparently advocated war—he is either badly reported, or he was not clear—and Mr. Lloyd Jones made the shrewd point that Government, while refusing to recognize the Republic, asked it to help England against Russia. The meeting, according to the statement of the very hostile reporter in the *Times*, was divided as regards war, and as to the claim of Republican France over France under any other form of government. On the whole, the meeting represented pretty accurately the state of English opinion, which is getting angry with Germany, but is not yet resolute enough to bid Germany stop.

The female rhinoceros at the Zoological Gardens has had a narrow escape of being drowned. Turned out on Wednesday week into the paddock during the frost, after snow had fallen on the frozen pond, the big creature, either blundering on the ice by mistake, or bent on a slide, broke the ice with her tremendous weight, and got in beneath it, and by her violent plunges soon broke up all the ice on the pond. The water was nine feet deep, the rhinoceros exhausted, and as it was very difficult to extricate the creature, she was in great danger of drowning. Mr. Bartlett took very prompt measures, letting the water off, getting the sloping sides of the pond strewn with gravel, to give a better foothold, and getting a rope round the creature's haunches, to aid her in her struggles to land. At last she was hoisted up, and then there was a rush to get out of the enclosure, as it was feared she might ungratefully charge her pursuers. The rhinoceros, however, behaved extremely well, and seemed rather quiet than otherwise by her danger, and she soon took to her food as kindly as ever. She seems not to be liable to apoplexy, or the sudden immersion in very cold water would have made an end of her, as it has of late of some much more valuable lives.

Consols were on Friday 92 to 92½.

Y. 29/IX/1910