

whiskey, being of less bulk in proportion to its power, will have to be substituted. As a matter of fact, the Scott Act has brought about a great deal of drinking among young men in their own rooms during the last two years, which would not have been if they had been able openly to get their glass of beer at luncheon or dinner.

Mr. Gladstone did a real service to Temperance in England when he made the duty on wine to depend upon the amount of alcohol in it, thus greatly reducing the price of common claret and other wines of the same kind. The fanaticism of our Prohibitionists forbids the hope of anything of the kind being done here. Claret is as dear in this country as sherry, and dearer than whiskey. What hope is there of the weaker beverages supplanting the stronger? Yet one might remember Germany, where there is hardly any drunkenness, and where light beer is drunk, and France, where the drunkenness is found chiefly in towns where the drink is *absinthe*.

Mr. Goldwin Smith dealt fully and effectually with the futility of these measures, and to his speech we may refer our readers as to that point. On every ground we believe that Prohibition would be injurious to the interests of morality and liberty alike.

EUROPE AND ENGLAND.

THE present position of European politics, so ably treated by Sir Charles Dilke in the *Fortnightly Review*, has been made still clearer lately by an article from the pen of the well-known writer, Mr. Edward Dicey, which appeared in the *Nineteenth Century*, and is now reproduced in an abridged form.

The idea of a general war at the present time seems, to ordinary apprehension, inconceivably foolish; this much, however, is certain, that whether we have a war this year, or next year, or not for years to come, war is on the cards, and must stay on the cards as long as Europe remains in a condition of unstable equilibrium. It may therefore be worth while to point out broadly what are the causes which disturb the equilibrium of Europe at the present moment, and how the removal of these causes, either by violent or pacific means, is likely to affect the policy and fortunes of England.

The phase of evolution through which the European world is passing tends to the amalgamation of adjacent States into large commonwealths, and to the obliteration of small communities whose only reason for existence is an accident of race, religion, or language. In any estimate, therefore, of the changes likely to be introduced into the map of Europe, the interests and ambitions of the smaller States—such as Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and Portugal—may safely be left out, and this in no cynical spirit of indifference for the rights and fortunes of petty communities, but simply as a recognition of plain facts.

In the consideration of the possible eventualities which lie before Europe in the remote future, it is the Great Powers—Russia, Germany, France, Austria, and Italy—that will be treated of in the endeavour first to indicate what are the permanent, as distinguished from the temporary, incidents which lead them to desire a revision of the map of Europe, and then to point out how this revision is likely to influence, or be influenced by, the policy of England. Turkey is left out of the discussion, because the plain truth is that in all future European complications the initiative does not and cannot rest with Turkey.

In any investigation of this kind the foremost place must be given to the vast Muscovite Empire. Russia is still, to a great extent, the unknown quantity of the European problem. The growth and development of this country constitutes a standing menace to the tranquillity, if not the safety, of Europe. For good or for evil, any concerted action by the European Powers, to check the advance of Russia, is out of the question. The last real effort to effect this end was made at the time of the Crimean War; the result of the experiment was not such as to encourage its repetition. In all human likelihood, Russia will be left to work out her own salvation without any serious opposition. She has an enormous population, united by a common language and common creed, governed by a paternal autocrat, whose sympathies, ambitions, and interests are in accord with those of the people over whom he rules. She has further arrived at that degree of civilisation which renders a nation apt to carry on war, and indifferent as to its consequences. As a matter of fact, Russia has far less reason to dread war than any other European Power. She has no practical cause to fear the invasion of her territory, even in the event of defeat; she has no trade of any consequence, except in the interior of Asia; she has no manufacturing industries to take into account; she is absolutely self-supporting.

Russia, no doubt, will never rest contented till she has reached the Bosphorus on one side and the Persian Gulf on the other; of these two objective points, access to the former is in her eyes the more pressing and the more important. Apart from the instinct of expansion, which has at all times driven the ice-bound inhabitants of the north toward the sunlit south, Russia is impelled toward Constantinople by her position as champion of the Greek Church and protector of the Slav races. The ambition to extend her frontiers eastward, and to establish her dominion over Central Asia, if not over India and China, is the wish rather of her official, military, and educated classes than of the great mass of her people. In the outset the advance of Russia towards Persia and Afghanistan was made with a view of facilitating the ultimate acquisition of Constantinople, and that object once achieved, her thoughts would, for some time at any rate,

be diverted from India and Central Asia, and turned towards Austria on the west and the Holy Land on the east. It follows, therefore, that there is no such thing as a condition of stable equilibrium possible for Europe until Russia has either obtained Constantinople or been crushed in her attempt to do so.

Germany presents in some respects a much easier subject of investigation than Russia, in others a more difficult one. The German Empire, as is well known, came into existence with the Franco-Prussian War. In the course of seventeen years it has become very strong and very formidable, not only as a military but as a political power. The Germany of to-day is, however, so completely the creation of a few men whose political careers are now all drawing to a close that it is very hard to foresee how far their handiwork may survive their own removal. Still, though it is probable there would not be a united Fatherland to-day without the individual exertions of Prince Bismarck, Count Moltke, and the Emperor William, it is absolutely certain that they would never have succeeded in their task if the desire of unity had not been impressed upon the Teutonic mind. This desire will survive the artificers by whom it was given form and substance, and the general influences which called the German Empire into being will operate to secure its continued existence. The extraordinary martial successes of this country, the immense efforts she has made to maintain her military supremacy, and the exorbitant burdens to which she has submitted for the purpose of keeping up her colossal standing army, have caused the outside world, and especially the English world, to lose sight of the great progress she has made of late as a commercial and industrial community, which has this signal advantage, that it is in the main the result of individual enterprise, not of State initiative and impulse. All that Germany requires to become a first-class mercantile power is free access to the seaboard and the command of a large seafaring population. Sooner or later the Austrian ports on the Mediterranean will probably be made available for the extension and development of her trade; this object would be easily attained if Austria could be induced to enter the German Customs Union. The natural outlets of her trade, however, are the ports of Holland and Belgium, which countries may eventually be annexed by Germany, as their acquisition must be an object of her desire. If this end were achieved, she would be rendered a formidable maritime as well as mercantile power.

As to the relations of Germany with France, it is obvious that the former cannot continue indefinitely the gigantic efforts she is now making to keep herself on an equality with the latter in respect of her military armaments. The German nation is convinced that France is on the look out for an opportunity to attack it, and in order to guard against this danger it is prepared to make any sacrifice; and, if at any time it can see its way to reduce France to a subservient position, it will willingly do so. In the event of a European war, therefore, the objects Germany will have in view, as a compensation for her sacrifices, will be the conversion of Trieste from an Austrian to a German port, the acquisition of the Dutch and Belgian seaboard, and the reduction of France to military impotency as far as her northern frontiers are concerned.

Austria has far more to lose than to gain by any possible revision of the map of Europe; she is nowadays even a "mere geographical expression," as Prince Metternich once described her. There is no such thing as an Austrian nation, or, in the true meaning of the term, an Austrian State. The Hapsburg Monarchy rules over a mass of disjointed and discordant races, united together only by the accidental tie of a common dynasty. Many causes have contributed to this result, the chief and most important being the dual system established in consequence of the successful demand for Home Rule on the part of Hungary. Austria has so much to fear from a general European war that no compensations she could hope to obtain from it would reconcile her to the prospect. The ascendancy of the German element, which forms the backbone of her empire, can only be maintained by the active support of Germany. In consequence, the foreign policy of Austria is necessarily directed by the interests and aspirations of her all-powerful ally.

She is also desirous of extending her territory to Salonica, and, as any disturbance of the general peace of Europe must result in a further advance of Russia toward the Bosphorus, Austria is unwilling, even if she is not unable, to resist that advance, and will strive to counterbalance it by an equivalent advance on her side toward the east. Consequently, Austria, though she will not initiate any European conflict, and will indeed do all in her power to avert its occurrence, yet looks to the expansion of her frontiers to the Aegean Sea as the necessary result of war whenever it may take place.

Italy, happily for herself, is in a position wherein she has little to gain from a European war, except in the highly improbable contingency of such a war restoring to France her lost supremacy. Upon any other supposition, Italy might gain by war, and could not very well lose; she is not likely, under any circumstances, to occupy the front rank among the possible belligerents. Her alliance, however, would be valuable to all parties, and, if, as seems probable, her support should be given to the winning side, there are certain compensations to which she would naturally look as the reward of her services; one of these would be the rectification of the Austrian frontier, so as to bring the Italian Tyrol under the government of Rome. The Italians also cherish a strong wish to acquire territory on the African shores of the Mediterranean; but they have at the same time a large share of caution and common sense, and, though not wanting in martial qualities, they are not by nature a warlike people. Their minds at present are occupied with the organisation of their own country and the development of their commerce, and their influence will be exerted to preserve the peace of Europe; but if war should break out, Italy will be compelled to take sides, and, as the price of her adhesion, she will look first