

## CURRENT EVENTS AND OPINIONS.

IN Mr. Blaine's letter of acceptance the Tariff overshadowed everything else. But there was another point in his response which was awaited with interest, and, by those who desire the peace of this continent, not without apprehension. As Secretary of State he had earned for himself a reputation for Jingoism; some of his proceedings undeniably had that air; and his name was accordingly welcomed with riotous acclaim by all the spirits of turbulence, especially by all who wanted to quarrel with England. His language, however, is not only unexceptionable but reassuring. While he gratifies his supporters by descanting on the national duty of protection to all American citizens abroad as well as at home, in the strain with which Lord Palmerston made us rather too familiar, he is careful to introduce the saving proviso, that the person claiming protection shall be pursuing a lawful calling. His words therefore are rather a rebuke than an encouragement to those who wish the Republic to hold its shield over the dynamiters. In the way of active interference with dynamite much is not to be expected: England and other European nations will have, in case of need, to defend themselves against these miscreants by stringent alien acts, and possibly in time to enter into some league for mutual protection against Thuggism. Nor on the broader question of foreign relations are Mr. Blaine's words less satisfactory. He breathes peace with all nations, and in accents which we cannot help feeling to be sincere. He is no doubt aware that commerce is becoming a distinct power in American politics, that it looks to its own interests, that it supported Mr. Arthur on account of his conservative and pacific tendencies, and that it would oppose itself with force to any one who threatened to pander to the passions of rowdiness by dragging the country into quarrels. The bitterness of war has not yet been forgotten by the Americans; and the Germans in the United States are refugees from the military system. With the nations of this continent Mr. Blaine purposes to cultivate more intimate relations, both commercial and diplomatic, while he plainly abjures any designs against their independence, dwelling strongly upon the fact that Mexico is separated from the American Republic by Radical difference of race. That the United States are the great power of this continent, and that to him it naturally belongs to take the lead in any arrangements for the settlement of differences by arbitration, or for the extension of continental Free Trade, it would surely be preposterous to deny. Mr. Blaine's utterances on this subject may be reasonably welcomed by all who do not set geography at defiance, and are prepared to admit that this western continent with its hundred millions of people, its numerous communities, and its boundless future, has interests of its own. Perhaps the great fact has dawned upon the mind of Mr. Blaine that the "peaceful conquests" to which alone he proposes to aspire can be more easily made by cultivating the good will than by provoking the enmity of Great Britain and any other powers which have colonies or connections on this side of the Atlantic. By hostile critics Mr. Blaine's moderation is represented as a mask worn only for the purposes of the election, and with a whispered intimation to his supporters that it will be dropped as soon as the election is won. Supposing this to be the fact, it is gratifying to know that the temper of the American people requires the mask of moderation to be worn. At all events a Jingo would be practically less dangerous as President than he would be as Secretary of State.

GENERAL LOGAN'S letter of acceptance is in the most essential respects a counterpart of that of his chief, though in a ruder style. In selecting the Tariff as the main issue, and throwing Reform into the background, the two candidates have no doubt acted in concert. Mr. Logan's protectionism goes the length of contemplating not without complacency the suggestion that the nation might "build a wall round itself, live upon its own resources, and deny communion to all the world." The ports would of course be closed against ideas as well as against goods. The American people, says the General, "stand alone in their circumstances, their forces, their possibilities and their aspirations." It is to be feared that he might truly add, in their craving for the incense which he and his compeers offer them. There is little use in scrutinizing the arguments of an economist who fancies that he can produce plenty, happiness, and even virtue by taxation. Like Mr. Blaine, General Logan would encourage by legislation the mercantile marine; both of them, thereupon, must think that the rest of mankind is unworthy of the blessings of commercial isolation. They are agreed also in proposing that in the interest of the dollar of the fathers, and of the producers of that venerable nuisance, governments shall be called upon to fix a ratio between the values of two metals, the price of each of which is being constantly changed by circumstances peculiar to itself and such as no

government can possibly control. Of the topics specially put forward by Mr. Logan the most salient is the protection of the negro against political oppression, his burning words on which have a peculiar interest, since he is understood to have himself wavered considerably between the cause of the slave-owner and that of the North. His language on this subject will scarcely help to win over to his ticket the vote of the Southern manufacturers. Of the Chinese question he speaks only indirectly, feeling perhaps that it is undesirable to provoke a direct comparison between his ardent advocacy of the political rights of the negro and his denial of the right of labour to the Chinese. Perhaps the Chinese may plead that they are not the only class of immigrants who do not very readily "comprehend American institutions," or "embrace a civilization higher than their own." General Logan must be a truly stalwart partisan, for he calls polygamy as well as slavery a Democratic institution. It is to "Stalwarts" in truth that the Republican party is now reduced; the Half-breeds and Reformers have departed for a season, as they think, but in reality never to return.

Now begins the regular process of coercing the Lords by abuse, menace and physical demonstration. It is opened by a monster procession of the London Trades. Surely this is sorry work, and not only sorry but pernicious. Passions are aroused inferior in malignity only to those which are aroused by civil war, and the people are habituated to overawing lawful authority by threats of violence, even supposing that no actual outbreak should take place. This is not the way in which a civilized community ought to be governed or in which the political character of a nation can be rightly formed. By law, and according to the theory of the Constitution, the House of Lords is a coördinate branch of the Legislature, bound in duty as well as invested with power to exercise an independent judgment on every measure brought before it. To leave it this duty and this power, and yet to say that whenever, upon any important subject, it takes its own course, it shall be bullied and coerced, is absolutely fatuous. Let it be reformed or abolished. That, being what it is, it should behave as it does is what common sense bids us expect, and the expressions of surprise and indignation at its conduct are hypocritical or preposterous. Gravitation itself is not more certain in its action than the bias which inclines the collected heads of a set of privileged families, whose power rests upon entailed estates, to vote against all political change. What reason tells us historical experience confirms: not once in the whole of its annals since the epoch of the Tudors has the House of Lords willingly accepted reform of any kind. It has resisted, as long as resistance was possible, the claims of personal liberty and of humanity as well as those of political justice. It opposed the Habeas Corpus Act, the emancipation of the press, and the reform of the Criminal Law, as well as the abolition of Rotten Boroughs. For the notion that it has acted as an impartial court of legislative review there is no historic ground whatever; it is a privileged interest and as such it has always behaved. In so doing the hereditary assembly has obeyed the mandate of its nature just as faithfully as any democratic assembly obeys the mandate of its nature in passing a popular measure of reform. Its usefulness has long departed and the odious remnant of its authority has become a mere provocative of revolution. If under the Tudors and the early Stuarts it can be said to have served a good purpose by lending strength and dignity to Parliament in the struggle against prerogative, that service, since the departure of prerogative, has ceased. Abolition will be found easier than reform. A score or two of life members would be a new patch on an old garment, while the hereditary element, doubly condemned by the contrast, would probably become more reactionary and more odious than ever. It could hardly be hoped that by this change an end could be put to the baneful antagonism of the two Houses. The way to put an end to their antagonism is to turn the two into one. Parliament is now the supreme government, and to divide the government against itself is a mode of securing deliberate wisdom which, if it were not absurd on the face of it, has decisively failed. The good Conservative elements of the House of Lords, which are now paralyzed by invidious seclusion, would if blended with the more democratic elements in the single assembly exercise their due share of influence. That they would find admission under the elective system there can be little doubt; perhaps in a country where social influences are so strong they would find admission even too easily. There is colour for the opinion of those Radicals who wish to retain the House of Lords in its weak and discreditable state as a practical ostracism of the territorial aristocracy. The Prime Minister's proper course is not to take the stump and head an agitation against a legislative decision of the House of Lords which he must know to be the natural and inevitable outcome of its hereditary character, but to amend the legislative machine. His proper course is, instead of forcing a blind extension of the