

plenty of courage, patriotism and moral force; but the habitual practice of demagogism has evidently told with fatal effect on the characters of the public men. Their addresses for the most part are hollow, hypocritical and weak. Evidently, the object is not to tell the truth and advocate what the writer or speaker thinks really for the good of the nation, but to catch votes, to construct a platform on which as many people as possible can stand, or an umbrella which, under a cover of ambiguous and elastic phrases, may unite, for the purpose of an election, factions between which there is no moral bond of union. Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen are exceptions; but there are not many others. Between the state of Great Britain now and that of France on the eve of the Revolution the difference happily is great; but there is also in some respects an ominous resemblance. There is the concurrence, which is so dangerous, of a political with an agrarian or economical movement, and of the two with the breaking-up of religious belief and of those moral and social convictions of which religious faith has hitherto formed the foundation. The weakness which scepticism necessarily engenders is too plainly visible in the attitude and language of the statesmen and of the members of the governing class generally, who seem to have helplessly abandoned themselves to the current and to have allowed their resolution to be paralyzed by a vague feeling of fatalism, which prevents them from making any effort to control events. The community is thus in danger of being delivered into the hands of violent men, who have the inestimable advantage of thoroughly knowing their own minds. The Jacobins were men of very low intellectual calibre, while their leader, Robespierre, was wanting not only in force of character but in common courage; yet they were enabled by virtue of their whole-hearted and unswerving scoundrelism to take the Revolution out of the hands of men of the highest political intellect, and to turn it to their own vile ends. However, the die is now cast. A few months back, a strong, resolute and patriotic man, thrusting his arm between the spokes of the wheel, might possibly have prevented the coach from rolling down the hill; but down the hill, and to the bottom of the hill, it is now likely to roll. The nation has such good stuff in it that, in extremity, the man can hardly fail to appear: but he is not upon the scene at present, and it is difficult to see how he can be brought upon it by anything short of a convulsion.

THE Loyalists in Ireland appear to have taken the field with spirit, and their vigour presents a favourable contrast to the feebleness of the great landowners, who in the beginning of the struggle threw themselves helplessly on the hands of the Government, declining even to aid it with advice. Their credit is the greater because they are fighting under the cold shadow of a Government which has entered into a virtual compact with Disunion, while the conduct of a large section even of the other party has been equally treasonable, and Mr. Gladstone himself, though he has not played such a game as Mr. Chamberlain, has never said one manly word for the Union. Once more those who do not choose to be blind can see that all Ireland is not rebel. The scene of the rebellion is in the three Celtic and Catholic Provinces. The Protestants of Ulster, the very flower of the population, are true to the Union; and not only they, but almost every educated man in the island except demagogues and priests. And what would be the fate of those men and their wives and families if the Union were dissolved and British protection were withdrawn? History gives us no doubtful answer. In 1641 the Catholic Celts set to work to expel all the English and Scotch Protestants from the country. But expulsion soon became massacre and massacre assumed its most hideous forms. That the character of the Irish Celt has not changed since 1641 all his acts and utterances too plainly prove. The dynamiter, the agrarian murderer, the mutilator of cattle in the present day, the man who deliberately slaughters the husband before the eyes of the wife, is the lineal representative of the butcher of Portadown. The same drama would be acted again: there would be a general expulsion of Protestants which would soon end in a massacre. That the Protestants of the North might once more turn to bay and, aided by their friends in England and Scotland, wreak a terrible vengeance on their murderous enemies is not impossible; they are as superior in moral force as they are inferior in numbers; but this could not diminish the horrors of the tragedy or reconcile any friend of humanity to its recurrence. The conflict would very likely extend to the larger island, in the great cities of which there are masses of Irish Catholics surrounded by an English and Protestant population. Demagogues and literary intriguers, whose throats are safe and whose hearts are hardened by their egotistical vanity, may be willing to make political capital by flattering Irish insurrection; but they will carry with them no man who is not deaf to the voice both of statesmanlike wisdom and of humanity.

MR. GLADSTONE, it seems, has been publishing an essay on the "Dawn of Creation," dealing, it is to be presumed, with the question between

Creation and Evolution; and this is taken to be a proof that the force of his intellect remains unimpaired. In a certain sense it may be; but it is at the same time a proof of fatal infirmity in a character on which, at this turning-point of the political destinies of Great Britain, so much unhappily depends. Mr. Gladstone's essays in theology and in classical scholarship resemble those of Lord Brougham in mathematics or in departments of science of which he had but a superficial knowledge, and are the products of morbid activity and discursiveness. In his "Homeric Studies" there is, as might be expected, good criticism on the speeches and on other points of taste; but the general theories are, in the estimation of scholars, mere crudities, the publication of which almost betrays a lack of sense. The theological essays are scarcely of more value; and anything but satisfaction was felt by the members of the Liberal Party when, on the eve of a general election, the programme of a magazine placarded over the streets announced to them that the thoughts of their leader, instead of being concentrated on the political issues and the struggle before him, had been occupied in an article on "Ecce Homo." An article of exceedingly little value it proved to be. Mr. Gladstone's Parliamentary powers are marvellous; so are his powers of work; and they are backed by great moral force and excellence. But he totally lacks forecast: he seems hardly even to know what it means; and between one great Parliamentary effort and another, instead of studying, as a statesman should, the political situation, and considering how the future is to be shaped, he seeks an outlet for his restless energy and another field of distinction in the literary or theological sphere. He gets up a subject for Parliamentary purposes with amazing rapidity; and on this faculty, together with his boundless power of rhetorical presentation, he can confidently rely for a triumphant issue from any future difficulty in which he may personally be involved. Unhappily, his escape from Parliamentary defeat is not the escape of the country from disaster. Macaulay's prophecy that Mr. Gladstone's reactionary tendencies would one day make him the most unpopular man in England has been ludicrously falsified. He is more in danger of standing in history as the man whose want of foresight and practical wisdom plunged his country into a calamitous revolution. Rome is in flames, and the man who has kindled the conflagration amuses himself by penning a treatise on the "Dawn of Creation."

ELABORATE estimates have been formed of the relative strength of the Parties in England. To these we do not attach much value. As to the tendencies of the new electors everybody is still in the dark. That gratitude will make them vote with the Party which gave them the suffrage is an assumption which may do honour to human nature but is hardly agreeable to experience. When men have got power they use it for their own ends. Besides, they know that the Party in enfranchising them had its own ends in view. Demagogism is tacitly rated at its true value even by the ignorant and credulous audience to which it plays. There is, besides, a large fluctuating element in all English elections. There are numbers of political Quietists whom nothing but alarm can send to the polls. Alarm sent them to the polls at the last election to vote against the adventurous foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield. It is a toss-up whether the Quietists will be most repelled by the profligate violence of Lord Randolph Churchill or by the socialism of Mr. Chamberlain; and up to the last moment things may be said or done which will turn the scale. The Tories seem to hope that some brilliant stroke in the Balkans or in Burmah may yet win them the national heart. But foreign or imperial policy will go for little. What the artisan and the farm labourers want, if they can get it, is less labour and more pay. Still, it seems pretty certain that the Liberals will win. Whether they will win by a majority large enough to outnumber the Tories and the Irish Disunionists combined is much more doubtful, and this is the serious question for the country. The rage of these two factions is such that there is little hope of their suspending their strife, even for a moment, to save the country from dismemberment.

If the press of the United States has any regard for its own honour it will lose no time in putting a curb on the "enterprise" of its interviewers. The last victim of the system appears to have been the Governor-General, whom, when he was in the North-West, an interviewer had the assurance to approach on the subject of the sentence upon Riel. The Governor-General, of course, declined to commit what would have been the grossest possible breach of official propriety. Nevertheless the interviewer seems to have concocted a report which appeared in an American journal, and which the Governor-General has been obliged to disclaim. Some years back an English man of science visiting New York was surprised to read a report of an interview in which he was represented as passing a stricture on the New York Fire Department, he never having even alluded to the subject. Not long ago we had a Canadian complaining that an American inter-