

female suffrage, well understood his own game. Amidst the general inattention, but under cover of a cloud of vague sentiment, a very small number of enthusiasts is sufficient to carry on the most fundamental of revolutions. In our own country we see recurring in every list of the movers, with kaleidoscopic variations the names of two or three ladies devoted to Woman's Rights, of the husband of one of them, and a few other gentlemen generally prominent in the championship of political and social innovation. A little personal wheeling and a few sentimental phrases are enough to prevail with Aldermen and members of Local Legislatures who like to show their gallantry and have never studied any social question. It is indeed rather appalling to think to what hands subjects affecting the very dearest interests of society are entrusted. "The Bystander," as he has said before, does not close his eyes to the possible advent of a great change. For the advent from time to time of great changes, every student of history must be prepared. It may be, as some speculators seem to think, that like the Clan, the Tribe and other primeval phases of society, the family is now about to pass away, or to undergo fundamental modification; though it must be owned that nothing in the Clan, the Tribe or any other primeval institution seems so deeply rooted in human nature as the relations of man to wife and of parent to child. That on which "The Bystander" insists is that the sexual and domestic revolution is of all others the deepest, and that the community cannot afford, abandoning itself to supine negligence or superficial sympathy, to leave the question to be decided by such agencies as those which are now at work. Women are much mistaken if they think that their interests will ultimately be less affected than those of the men. The man's turn for emancipating himself from irksome ties and obligations will come. Desertion, Mr. Dike intimates, is growing common among the working men. Contract may, as all publicists trained in the legal school think, be an improvement on status, but to make it as sacred as Christian wedlock has been in the eyes of man or woman is impossible.

SOME exceptionally moral person writing in the *Witness* the other day about the Charlton Bill exercised the privilege of exceptionally moral persons by using uncivil language. The Charlton Bill had been brought by its framer somewhat more within the lines of common sense; the insult to the educational profession had been struck out, and the "Bystander," not at all liking that class of subjects, had refrained on this occasion from saying anything about the matter. The reason why people have opposed the Bill was not that they approved seduction or wished to commit it, as from the tone of the writer in the *Witness* might be supposed, but that they thought Mr. Charlton's remedy not the right one. To be operative, especially on questions into which sentiment enters largely, law must be just, and it is not just when two have sinned, to treat one alone as a sinner. In most cases, no doubt, the advances are made by the man, whose passions are the stronger; but this cannot be always assumed to be the fact; and Mr. Charlton would punish a foolish boy for falling into the arms of an adventuress, while he would treat the adventuress as the passive victim of a wrong. The writer in the *Witness* says that "a ribbon" is often enough to do the seducer's work. Why is a sin committed under the weak temptation of vanity less heinous than a sin committed under the strong temptation of lust? This admission shows how dangerous it would be practically to preach to women through the law that they were not responsible for the keeping of their own honour. The writer in the *Witness* wants it laid down as a principle "that the chastity of a girl shall be protected against fraud by the same means and to the same extent as her chattels." Against fraud by all means as well as against force; let drugging, if it is ever practised, be punished as the worst kind of rape; but law cannot protect either a woman's chattel or her chastity if she chooses of her own free will to give it away or barter it for a ribbon. We are all as convinced as the writer in the *Witness* can be, that as pure affection is the highest source of happiness, so impurity is the ruin of happiness, not less than of character. We all condemn as miserable and vile the man who misleads and betrays a woman. But there is no use in legislation which disregards sense and justice, any more than in the unmannerly effusions of an angry pen. The remarks of Chief Justice Hagarty on the case of the plaintiff in the seduction case of Baird v. Sweetman and on the policy of Mr. Charlton's Bill may be instructive to the writer in the *Witness*.

It looks as if the titular and the actual throne of England were about to become vacant altogether. Mr. Gladstone's strength seems to be at last giving way under his immense burden of toil and care. Any amount of parliamentary work, and anything in the way of framing legislation, would be play to him; but such questions as those of Ireland and Egypt are out of his natural range, and sorely they must task him. He has not the cynical levity of Palmerston, who when his invasion of Afghanistan

had brought down an avalanche of disaster and disgrace, felt not a twinge of remorse and thought only of getting himself personally out of the scrape, which he did by coolly mutilating the despatches of Sir Alexander Burns. Few things are more tragic than this end of Mr. Gladstone's career. This statesman, whose foreign policy has been righteousness and peace, finds himself in his last days drawn into a bloody war of aggrandizement which we may be sure is not the less hateful to him because he is but the instrument of fate; while the framer of the Land Bill and the Arrears Bill, the great author of the policy of conciliation for Ireland, when he drags his failing frame to a country retreat for an hour of repose, is guarded by police against the knives of Irish Thugs. This last is, at all events, a black tribute to Mr. Gladstone's patriotism. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain needs no guard. Mr. Gladstone's retirement, by arresting the legislation which is in his hands, would at all events give the country a respite from political change and a little more time for the consideration of the Franchise Bill. The advocates of extension point to the success of universal suffrage in the United States. In a certain sense they are right. The breadth of basis which enables government to claim allegiance as the complete representation of the national will, is unquestionably a great advantage, as appeared on that most trying occasion when the American Government appealed to the loyalty of the people in carrying the country through a desperate civil war. But it must always be borne in mind, in the first place, that the masses which form the basis in the United States are superior both in intelligence and diffused wealth to those on which the polity of England rests; and in the second place, that in the constitution of the United States, which was framed in full view of democracy and its requirements, there are real conservative safeguards, whereas in the British Constitution, which in theory and in popular conception is monarchical, there are none. The American Executive is a real government, elected in an objectionable way, having but an existence independent of the fluctuations of party in the Legislature, and clothed with an actual authority of its own which it does not shrink from exerting. This is true not only of the Federation but of each State. The veto of the President and that of the Governor of each State is real, and has been used in momentous cases as a check on rash or unscrupulous legislation. There is a Federal Senate elected, not by popular suffrage, but by the State Legislatures, conservative in its tendency and strong in the confidence of the nation. There is a Senate in each State which at all events forms a real second Chamber, dividing power with the more popular house and not unfrequently modifying its action. There is a written constitution, clearly defining the limits of all authority, legislative as well as executive, which is graven on the hearts of the people and is in the keeping not of party but of a supreme court of law. There is the system of submitting all constitutional amendments to the people, a strong barrier against hasty innovation, and one which has of late been preserving more than one State from the spread of social revolution. In place of these safeguards England has nothing but the dead and ineffectual forms of what Mr. Gladstone calls an "Ancient Throne." There is no real veto; there is no written constitution; there is no submission of constitutional amendments to the people; the elections to the Central Legislature are all direct; there is no Second Chamber but an old feudal estate of the realm, as odious as it is obsolete and weak. The only government is a committee of the dominant party, dependent for its existence from hour to hour on the support of the majority in a legislature which is becoming every day more factious, more split up into sections and more difficult to control. The Federal system itself also is strongly conservative in its tendency, inasmuch as it puts bounds to the spread of revolutionary movements, and localizes a multitude of questions, political, social and economical, which, if made national, would bring on fatal storms.

THE re-election of Mr. Marriott, after his vote against the Government, by an increased majority at Brighton, and the election of a Conservative in place of a Liberal for Cambridgeshire by a majority of a thousand, seem to show that, in constituencies widely different in character, there is equally a Conservative reaction. Three influences are manifestly at work: fears for the Union, which Mr. Chamberlain and his section have shown a disposition to betray for the sake of gaining the Irish vote; alarm created by Mr. Chamberlain's breathings of social war; and impatience of the domination of his caucus, which is naturally suspected of serving his personal ends. But to these may probably be added, in the case of Cambridgeshire, the unwillingness of the existing county constituencies to be swamped by an extension of the suffrage. This last feeling is one which Parliamentary Reformers are sure to encounter, and which is likely to be fatal to them except when there is a prevailing enthusiasm sufficient to lift people above the motives which rule their actions in ordinary times. In 1831 proprietors of rotten boroughs voted for Reform, but at that time the spirit