

scope of regular operations, into which his heroic lunacy had hurried him. But the press insisted on the expedition, and the Government allowed itself to be coerced. One journal especially, which has been labouring to increase its circulation by sensationalism of every kind, played a leading part in the fatal decision. If the Government cannot keep the reins in its own hands and those of its commanders, the Khartoum catastrophe is likely to be neither the last nor the worst. There is plenty of opinion independent of the newspaper press, if the statesmen would only trust it and appeal to it.

ALREADY a rebuke has been given by events to the exaggerated panic which followed the fall of Khartoum. General Wilson's detachment has been rescued, and in the operation the superior qualities of the British soldier have been once more decisively displayed. The spirit of the English people appears to be fairly aroused, and there seems to be a general disposition to lay faction aside and support the Government in the crisis. That French criticism of the performances of British generals should be adverse is a matter of course. Pessimism is also the natural tone of the veterans of the Senior United Service Club, who think that nobody can do so well as they once did, and are, moreover, both somewhat jealous of Lord Wolseley's cheaply-earned reputation and strongly opposed to the new military system which is largely his work. There is no manifestation among the powers of Europe of any intention to take unfriendly advantage of the difficulty in which England is placed. France, whose designs there is the most reason to suspect, has her hands full with her own war in China. The war will, of course, be protracted; no doubt it will be costly; but we may feel confident that civilization with its disciplined armies and its inexhaustible resources will, as usual, prevail. The wild prediction of an impending mutiny in India, which some English member of Parliament has been wise enough to communicate to a reporter for transmission to this side of the water, is, so far as at present appears, the offspring of his own hysterical and ignominious panic. Gordon's death is indeed sad news; but it can be no surprise; and perhaps his captivity, by compelling operations to be directed to his rescue, might, in a strategical sense, have been more embarrassing than his death. The atrocities committed by the Mehti and his hordes must deprive them of all sympathy.

THE political consequences of the disaster in England will depend on the effect which it may produce on the health and spirits of Mr. Gladstone. If he has strength to go on, he will hardly resign while his reputation is under a cloud, and there is little chance of his being turned out by the Opposition. Discontented as the nation may be, it can hope nothing from a change of Government. The Conservatives have at present no man who possesses anything like the confidence of the country. The Beaconsfield era has bequeathed to them a total dearth of first-class statesmanship. Lord Salisbury has acquired a fatal name for precipitancy combined with irresolution, to say nothing of the stain which his character contracted by the Schouvaloff agreement and the affair of Tunis. Sir Stafford Northcote has become a melancholy jest, and Lord Randolph Churchill is at present repairing by an Oriental tour the mighty genius for statesmanship which he has exhausted by delirious vituperation. With Mr. Gladstone and his divided Cabinet then the nation will probably stumble on for the present as best it can. But if in the effort to repair the disaster in Egypt the war spirit should be roused, and patriotism should be reawakened, a change might come over the political scene. Mr. Chamberlain's influence might decline; there might be a demand for men of a different stamp; and if the Irish Disunionists should provoke the nation in its angry and resolute mood, and perhaps in an hour of serious peril, they might find themselves and the Irish question handled in a style very different from the philanthropic sensibility and hesitancy to resort to force for the suppression of rebellion on which they have hitherto been enabled to presume.

THE brightest spot in Mr. Gladstone's horizon at present is the alliance with Italy, which promises to be hearty and lasting. This is the more cheering to the aged statesman because he may fairly ascribe it to his own exertions in the Italian cause. Diplomacy was scandalized at the time by his ringing appeal to the conscience of Europe against the tyranny of the Neapolitan Bourbons. Even to the kindly and sympathizing Lord Aberdeen it appeared an alarming escapade. But the chivalrous daring which inspired it has been justified by the event. The Liberal Party in England would have done more for Italian Independence had it not been held back by its Irish wing, which was raising subscriptions and levying soldiers for the defence of the Pope, and with which Mr. Disraeli, himself a bitter enemy to the Italian cause and a devout worshipper of the Bourbons, was always trying to effect a strategical junction. Enough, it seems, was done to win the Italian heart. The debt of Italy to France

might appear greater; but it was largely cancelled by the murder of the Roman Republic and the annexation of Savoy and Nice, as well as by general manifestations of a selfish desire to keep Italy divided and under the domination of France. Italy is severed from England by no antagonism of interest; she has aspirations which there is nothing to prevent England from seconding; stimulated perhaps by the memory of Venetian and Genoese glories, she has made extraordinary efforts to become a great naval power; and there is not the slightest danger of her espousing the Irish cause.

THE coming Session of the British Parliament will probably, in addition to the great questions which are pending, bring a debate on a minor question of a most acrimonious and indecorous kind. A marriage portion will be proposed for the Princess Beatrice and an allowance for the eldest son of the Prince of Wales. It is curious that, while the democratic masses in England acquiesce in Monarchy, which has never been seriously assailed, nothing influences their wrath more than a grant of money to any member of the Royal Family. The sum which, compared with the national revenue and expenditure, is a mere dribble, to their imagination seems enormous as a gift to a mere pensioner of the State, and each of them feels that what is thus lavished is the sweat of his own brow. It is as much as the life of a Radical member of the House of Commons is worth to vote in favour of one of these grants. Brave was he who, having been guilty of that act of apostasy, told his irate constituents that he hated shams, but a mean sham most of all. Yet the members of the Royal Family have an indisputable claim upon the State for marriage portions at all events, since the State, for purposes of its own, puts a restraint upon their liberty of marriage. By the Royal Marriage Act no descendant of the body of King George II., others than the issue of princesses married to foreigners, can marry before the age of twenty-five without the consent of the Crown, or after that age without a year's notice to the Privy Council and the tacit assent of Parliament. If this Act were repealed, the Princes of the Blood might choose among the heiresses of England: at all events they might have the wives that they liked, whereas at present their choice is confined to a cruelly narrow circle. If some Radical member would move to repeal the Act as an unnatural sacrifice of affection to policy, which has in more than one case produced unhappiness or worse, he would do more honour to his principles than by disputing an obligation of which equity will prescribe the fulfilment while the present law remains in force. In the Middle Ages, when monarchy was robust, affection was left comparatively free; but in recent times the chapter of Royal Marriages has been unedifying. The Queen of George III. was apprised for the first time of the disposition to be made of her heart when she found herself in the presence of the ambassador who, as the King's proxy, was to receive her hand. In condemning even George IV. justice requires us always to remember that he was prevented by law from marrying Mrs. Fitzherbert, who would have made him a good wife, and compelled to marry a woman whom he had never seen, and the first sight of whom caused him, with too much reason, to call for a glass of brandy. It is true that the Court is at present in bad odour. The social duties of Royalty have been shirked, and as everybody in England believes, for the unprincipled purpose of hoarding money. In the indulgence of a mere whim, and in defiance of faithful advice often repeated, Ireland has been neglected and the love of the Irish people has been criminally and disastrously flung away. England indeed has of late had too much reason to doubt whether the chosen seat of duty is an hereditary throne. But these are sins which ought hardly to be visited on the head either of the daughter or of the youthful grandson of the Queen, and to make a fuss about a petty item of expenditure, which is a necessary incident of existing institutions, is surely beneath the dignity of the nation.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN is a commercial millionaire whose wealth was made in a manner by no means socialistic. But he is an eager, not to say voracious candidate for power, and he evidently believes that Socialistic Democracy is the Coming King. Accordingly he proclaims a crusade of Socialistic confiscation. His denunciations, however, are strictly confined to those whose property happens to consist of land or houses, leaving unassailed the sanctity of those commercial investments from which his own vast income is derived. But while he is sounding his agrarian tocsin the clang of another tocsin strikes ominously upon his ear. Mr. Hyndman, who, being probably not a millionaire, preaches the gospel of spoliation without limit, addresses to the apostle of limited plunder a criticism on his shortcomings the logical edge of which Mr. Chamberlain will find it difficult to turn. You do nothing, says Mr. Hyndman, by attacking Land alone; no real advantage can be reaped by the people without first taking possession of Capital, the interests of which are so ably represented by Mr.