

MR. GLADSTONE'S case is a hard one. Subdued at last by age and toil, struggling against disease, harassed night after night in the House of Commons by Lord Randolph Churchill and his crew of aristocratic ruffians—there is no ruffianism like the aristocratic—with the set purpose of breaking him down, and at home guarded by policemen against the knives of the Irish, for whose sake he has been encountering a storm of odium and deeply imperilling his reputation as a statesman, he is at the same time carrying a load of care which would crush any ordinary man, and to which every day seems to add fresh weight. That he was not the man to deal either with the Irish or with the Egyptian question, both of which required a coarser fibre and a more military cast of mind, may be admitted without being unmindful of the high tone of morality which in both cases he has preserved, and which, with regard to the Egyptian question at least, has perhaps done the country a greater and more far-reaching service than would have been done by a policy more immediately successful but less moral. Shrinking from territorial aggrandizement and determined to keep the path of righteousness, he has evidently been very unwilling to accept at the hands of destiny the protectorate of Egypt. He has desired, apparently, to find a middle term in the rule of Gordon, with whose religious enthusiasm he is also likely to have great sympathy, for in his own character there is a great deal of the Puritan mingled with the High Churchman, and it will be observed that he gets on extremely well with the Presbyterian clergy of Scotland. He has, at all events, made it manifest to all but the frantic enemies of England that she is not rapacious but sincerely disposed to moderation. He has done this at the expense of, at all events, temporary embarrassment and miscarriage, with which, however, Parliament has no right to reproach him; for Parliament itself, torn with selfish and anarchic factions, has not only been able to lend no steady impulse to the government but has rendered it almost impossible for government to take a decided line. Vacillation and inconsistency have not been confined to the Cabinet. The *Pall Mall Gazette*, it seems, is now vehemently denouncing the Ministry for not promptly declaring a protectorate; but Mr. John Morley, who was the editor of that journal only a year ago, is not less vehemently demanding the evacuation of Egypt in the House of Commons. France, after having been treated by the English Government with the utmost cordiality and frankness, and having, nevertheless deserted her diplomatic partner, and left England to contend single-handed with the insurrection of Arabi and all the difficulties which ensued, is now, as might have been expected, showing her jealousy, and apparently inclined to take a hostile course, though it is doubtful how far the Government shares the feelings expressed by the journals. That Bismarck is in actual league with her is unlikely, but his object throughout has been to divert French enmity from Germany to England, and he will no doubt do, without scruple, whatever may further that end. There is, however, nothing for it now, so far as can be seen, but to go forward, establish, with all possible courtesy towards other powers and consideration for their reasonable claims, a Protectorate, or an effective control of some kind, and face the risk, whatever it may be, setting it down, with many other risks, and with much blood shed, and treasure spent, to the account of the Indian Empire. French ambition may be satisfied with the prospect of annexing Syria when the Turkish Empire breaks up, and it is fortunate that the filibustering propensity which has led France to extend her dominions in the remote East will, at the same time, bind her over to keep the peace towards maritime Powers. Yet there is, perhaps, more danger now of a collision between England and France than there has really been of a collision between any two Powers since the Congress of Berlin, incessant as the rumours of war have been. War is so unspeakable an evil at all times that it seems treason to humanity even to suggest that there are times when it is less an evil than it is at other times, or circumstances in which it brings with it some sort of compensation. But France, by forcing war on Germany, made Germany a nation. If she should now force war on England, she may re-animate British patriotism. The unstrung sinew of national vigour may be braced again; faction, demagogism and cant may be swept aside; the course of political dissolution may be arrested; anarchy, in Parliament and elsewhere, may be repressed; and perhaps genuine worth, at least of a military kind, may be called by stern necessity to the front, while stump oratory is sent to the rear. The nation may find a leader, and the insoluble Irish problem, real danger pressing, may find, like the problem of South German Disunionism, a swift and decisive solution.

"THE Church has done more to degrade woman than all the other adverse influences put together." Such, according to the *New York Times*, was the declaration with which the Nineteenth Century Club was greeted by Mrs. Cady Stanton, a leader of Female Suffrage, Co-education, and the Woman's Rights movement generally in the United States. We have

long ceased to be shocked by anything that can be said against the Christian Church or Christianity, and have made up our minds that they must stand upon their own merits, tested by free discussion, or fall. But surely nothing could mark more distinctly than this utterance of Mrs. Cady Stanton, the radical character of the sexual revolution, or more thoroughly justify those who have tried to awaken public attention to its gravity, and to enforce the necessity of forecast and deliberation, instead of light gallantry, and careless acquiescence. The Christian Church may be, as Mrs. Cady Stanton appears to think that it is, the organ of a debasing superstition; but it has, beyond question, been the life and the formative force of Christian civilization, that is of all that has hitherto been worthy of the name, except the short-lived, narrow, and morally questionable civilization of Greece and Rome. Notably, it has determined the relations of the sexes, the law of their union in marriage, the special functions of each in the double life, and the special excellences, distinct though co-equal, to which each is to be taught to aspire. To denounce it, therefore, as a greater source of degradation to woman than all other adverse influences put together, is to sound the trumpet of doom to the family, to home, and to social arrangements generally, as they now exist. Mrs. Stanton would hardly aver that the lot of her sex within the pale of Christendom had been worse than without that pale, even taking into account those privileges of women under the Roman Empire which embodied in the code of that time are now held up to us by the lawyers as the model of conjugal jurisprudence. What she and those who agree with her mean, probably, is that the Christian Church has upheld the distinctions of sex, at the same time that it has maintained the moral equality of the sexes, and that it has confined the duties of women to domestic and private life; and this cannot be denied. Christianity does not care very much for power, whether material or intellectual, seeing that the force of the mightiest of mankind compared with the force manifested in the universe is that of a mere pismire; but it cares much for pure affection, self-devotion, duty, holding them to be, if anything is, divine. It sees nothing degrading to man or woman in obedience where obedience is necessary, in respect for the headship of the family, in acknowledgment of the guardianship of affection. It holds up not intellectual ambition, or commercial success, but maternity as the crown of woman. The Christian Church may, at any rate, say for itself, that of all the nations given into its hands not one has perished, though some of them, Greece for example, and Spain, have been brought to death's door by conquest or mismanagement. We are not without the means of conjecturing what the efforts of the Woman's Rights theory when put into practice are likely to be upon the vitality of the Anglo-American race. What is now most wanted is a distinct programme of the new sexual dispensation from the Women's Rights point of view, dealing plainly with the questions of maternity and of the family. We shall then be enabled to choose deliberately, and with our eyes open, between the system of Christianity and that which is tendered to us in its room.

It might have been supposed that American journalists, when they discovered that the supposed criticism of Matthew Arnold on American character was a hoax, would have been glad to withdraw the foul abuse which, in their paroxysm of wounded self-esteem, they had poured not only on Matthew Arnold himself, but on all English visitors to America, and even on the British Government and people. At least it might have been thought that they would mark their sense of the position by their silence. Instead of this they "cheerfully reiterate" what they call their "denunciation of distinguished English beggars" and desire us to believe that it was written with full knowledge of the hoax, and as the expression of a deliberate opinion. Perhaps, indeed, it was too much to expect that those who, after receiving eminent men with every outward mark of respect and hospitality could turn round and revile their late guests as "beggars" and "tramps" would have the grace to retract injurious utterances, or to wish to undo a social wrong. Emerson lectured in England, received "the recognition of private hospitality," and afterwards wrote freely about English character, habits and institutions. Was he a "tramp" and a "beggar"? Is hospitality shown to men of eminence only that it may be repaid by them in flattery? However, all this is of little consequence. What is of more consequence is that the moral drawn by THE WEEK from these revelations of American feeling at the time of their occurrence should be laid to heart by those who are concerned, and that English "tramps" and "beggars" when engaged in "replenishing their exhausted purses" in the States, instead of "receiving the recognition of a private hospitality," to which apparently somewhat onerous conditions are attached, should henceforth pay their own hotel bills. Then they will be at liberty to say what they think true. At all events they had better keep clear of the "irritable race," and choose the hospitable roof of the American man of business, who is not rendered preternaturally sensitive by rivalry with English