

strong reaction among the property-holding classes. Mr. Edward Dicey, a political writer of mark, announces in the *Fortnightly* his secession from the Liberals to the Tories and professes to know that a good many other moderate Liberals have made up their minds to do the same. But the stumbling-block with Mr. Dicey is the Liberal treatment of the Egyptian question, about which he is somewhat fanatical; and we must repeat that in general elections, unless the warlike spirit of the nation is actually in a state of excitement at the time, foreign affairs are but a side-show. Mr. Dicey may be easily deceived as to the number of his fellow-seceders: we are all charitable enough in our views of human nature to give a large number of persons credit for having the good sense to agree with us. The cynosure of Moderate Liberals is Mr. Goschen, whom Mr. Chamberlain calls the Death's Head of the Liberal Party, and Mr. Goschen is under the Umbrella. Mr. Dicey professes to think that the Union, of which he is a staunch supporter, will be safest in Tory hands: but such does not appear to be the opinion of the Irish Conservatives, who are reported, and with great probability, to be seceding from the Tory camp in alarm at the antics of Lord Randolph Churchill and at the suspected compact between the Tory leaders and the Parnellites. Lord Rosebery reasserts the existence of that compact; Lord Salisbury denies it; but Lord Salisbury denied the existence of the agreement with Count Schouvaloff and of the agreement with France respecting Tunis: so that, though the veracity of a Marquis cannot be questioned, it is necessary to know exactly in what sense he uses his words. If a report of an interview with Mr. Parnell given by the *New York Herald* can be trusted, the leader of the Disunionists has been showing an inclination towards the Liberals: but this is most likely a ruse intended to relieve the Tories of the odium of the alliance. Mr. Parnell's object manifestly is to render the balance between the parties as nearly even as possible, so as to make him, with his compact brigade, master of the situation; and it seems certain that he has ordered the Irish in England to vote Tory. But when all the known forces have been estimated, there remains in the new constituencies a large element still unknown. Nobody can yet tell how the agricultural labourer will vote. Such signs as there are lead to the belief that Hodge will vote Liberal in the hope that under the party of progress the three-hooped pot will have ten hoops; but certain indication as yet there is none.

ONE point on which Mr. Chamberlain seems clearly to have overshot his mark is Disestablishment. The days probably of all State Churches are numbered, and Churchmen on this continent, seeing how well the voluntary system answers, may accept without pain or even welcome the award of destiny. But in England of late the Established Church has been rather gaining ground; her clergy have become much more active than they were, partly owing no doubt to their sense of the growing danger; while the decay of religious belief has told most severely on the Nonconformist Churches; Agnosticism, especially when it is combined with Conservatism, being rather favourable to a State Church as the easiest and the least inquisitorial of religious organizations. Moreover, in the minds of many even among the Dissenters, Atheism rather than the Establishment is the terror of the hour, and the attack upon the Church of England is associated with the designs of the Atheists. England presents in this respect a qualified parallel to France, where the attack of the Radicals on the national religion has just defeated itself by its violence. Lord Salisbury has swooped upon his opponents' error and is appealing to the religious classes against "the wave of infidelity which is sweeping over the country." That his appeal is not without effect appears from Mr. Chamberlain's attempt to shelve the question by promising that Parliament will not take it up at present. It is to be hoped that when the time for a solution arrives, the decision will be in the hands of some one endowed with more real statesmanship and with a greater breadth of sympathy than the Arch-wirepuller of Birmingham. For good or evil, the spiritual life of the English people has by the events of English history been cast in the mould of an Established Church, and the mould cannot be suddenly or violently broken without considerable danger to the life. Tithe is evidently doomed, and the thought of permanently retaining it must be abandoned: apart from any political question, the landed interest, in the depressed condition to which foreign competition has reduced it, cannot be expected to bear this burden. If the land passes into the hands of small proprietors, tithe will soon become, like Irish rents, impossible to collect. Respect for the life interests of existing incumbents is probably the utmost that can be secured. But a timely compromise may save all the cathedrals and churches, the lands and with them the private benefactions, the amount of which during the last half-century has been so large that, in the North especially, the Church of England may be said to have been supported, to no small extent, on the voluntary system. By way of compensation for the loss of tithe, full freedom of synodical action might be demanded and the Act of

Uniformity might be repealed so as to give the Church entire liberty of legislation. There would then be a free Church in a free State. It would be the part of wisdom, we cannot help thinking, while yet there is time to effect some such arrangement. Nor could any statesman be better fitted by his powers or by his sympathies to frame the measure and carry it through the House of Commons than Mr. Gladstone, who will soon be gone, and for this task at all events will leave no equal behind him.

IN the East of Europe the balance still oscillates daily between war and peace. There can be little use in repeating or commenting upon the flying rumour of the hour. At Vienna, which is the centre of the diplomatic imbroglio, the press is entirely in the hands of the Jews, and the reports are a good deal regulated by the stock-jobbing policy of the financial tribe. Among the people of Servia and Greece the excitement is evidently intense. It reminds us of a Cornish village in the wrecking days when a rich wreck was seen coming ashore. The kinglets, however, both of Servia and Greece, seem less anxious to jeopardize their little crowns. They are probably aware that the Turk, in spite of his bankruptcy, has in him a sufficient remnant of his old military fire and his old Mahometan fanaticism to make the operation of hastening his death-pangs one of some peril. They will hardly advance without the leave of the great Powers. But of the intentions of the great Powers there is at present no trustworthy indication. The occasion is no doubt one which appeals strongly to Russian ambition. If states of sufficient magnitude to be really independent are allowed to form themselves to the north of Constantinople, the road to a conquest of which the Russian people have learned to dream is closed; and it cannot fail to occur to the Czar that he might revive the waning loyalty of his people and give a moral death-blow to Nihilism if he could plant the Cross on St. Sophia. English opposition no longer stands in the way; of this fact the Porte, from its wailings, appears to be mournfully conscious. It is to be presumed that Lord Salisbury, if he had the power, would uphold his own great diplomatic achievement—the Treaty of Berlin—and remain faithful to the Beaconsfieldian policy of "strengthening Turkey." But for this he is powerless; as a Prime Minister he has only one foot in the stirrup, and is waiting for Mr. Parnell to lift him into the saddle. The probability is that some arrangement will be patched up at the expense of Turkey, and that the great Eastern crisis will be once more postponed.

THERE can no longer be any doubt as to the state into which the disturbed provinces of Ireland have relapsed since loyal life and property have ceased to be protected by the Crimes Act. If outrages of the more murderous kind have not again become rife it is simply because the League is so completely master of the country as to find them no longer necessary. Boycotting now suffices. The obedience of the people has been completely transferred from the Imperial Government to the Terrorists, as it was on the point of being when Mr. Forster struck his blow and, for the time, re-asserted the supremacy of the Crown. Even the *Saturday Review*, violently Tory and passionately devoted to Lord Salisbury as it is, now finds itself obliged to condemn in the strongest language the fatal policy—or rather the criminal demagogism, which refused to renew the Crimes Act. The Ministers, after in vain denying the facts, now promise to institute prosecutions against the boycotters under the ordinary law. In these they will inevitably fail. The common jurymen are all under the terrorist influence of the League, nor will any witnesses be found to give evidence when they know that the prisoner will be certainly acquitted and that they will be exposed to his vengeance. The hopelessness of such proceedings had been demonstrated with disastrous conclusiveness before recourse was had to exceptional legislation. If prosecutions under the common law are unsuccessful, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach says something else must be done. The *Saturday Review* is, and may well be, at a loss to imagine what the something is to be. Ireland, says the *Times*, is fast slipping out of the hands of Her Majesty's Government. The fact is that England, in this hour of peril, practically has no Government. There are a set of people who have scrambled into office by intrigue; but they have no power because they have not a majority; and their only hope of a majority lies in the support of the Irish rebel vote. Thus the loyal population of Ireland is absolutely abandoned to the myrmidons of Mr. Parnell. Meantime the amiable person who has been put into the place of Earl Spencer as Lord Lieutenant goes about from one place to another making a series of pretty speeches, in the happy belief that his chirruping will allay the storm, while his consort proposes to save the imperilled State by learning what we suppose she imagines to be the popular language of Ireland. Lord Randolph Churchill, who to the disgrace as well as to the ruin of the country has been permitted to gratify his vanity by involving the nation in these perils, brings forth out of the rich treasures of his statesmanship a proposal to establish a packet station at Galway, which he no doubt believes