

WHAT is the political outlook in England? That it is dark is certain; but who can venture to say more? In the immediate future much depends on the personal action of Mr. Gladstone. Strenuous efforts are evidently being made to persuade him to remain in public life and retain the leadership of the party. Sir William Harcourt proclaims that the Liberals are going to fight under the old man and for the old cause. If Mr. Gladstone consents, and his strength does not fail him, the party will probably hold together, in spite of the heterogeneous character of its elements, and the almost open antagonism between its Whig and Radical sections, both on the subject of social legislation and on that of Ireland, while its policy will remain a compromise between the tendencies of the sections, the line of which Mr. Gladstone's authority as heretofore will trace. But if Mr. Gladstone retires, a split seems inevitable between the Whigs as they are now called, or the Liberals as they are likely henceforth to be called, and the Radicals. It is impossible to believe that such men as Lord Hartington, Lord Spencer and Mr. Goschen will allow themselves to be drawn into a propaganda of socialistic plunder and a surrender of the legislative unity of the nation for the purpose of making Mr. Chamberlain Prime Minister, while, on the other hand, it is evident that the Radicals are exulting in a catastrophe which delivers them from the control of their more moderate colleagues and enables them to "sweep the Prairie." The upshot apparently will be a struggle for power between two desperate and equally unscrupulous factions which will bid against each other for the suffrages of the newly enfranchised millions at the expense of the real interests of the community. In this calamitous auction the Radicals can hardly fail to be ultimately the winners. Tory Democracy, supposing the Conservatives to embrace it, must be limited by the interests of landlords and capitalists; it is in fact adopted only as a mask behind which those interests may be defended, while the Radicals are not only ready but eager to fling the heads of landlords and capitalists to the populace. The Land Question in England is evidently coming, and here the Radicals in the present state of opinion will have a crushing advantage over the upholders of Primogeniture and Entail. Between these two organized factions the country is likely to be divided; for the inherent tendency of party, in proportion to its intensity, is to drive moderate men from public life. Moderate men there are, such as those whom we have named, and if they had among them one commanding figure like that of Mr. Gladstone, they might possibly, in some deadlock of the same kind as that which has just occurred, step between the two factions, grasp the helm, rally industry and commerce to their support and recall the nation to that course of steady progress to which rather than to revolution or reaction the bulk of the people still incline. But they have no such figure among them, though they have men of acknowledged ability as administrators and great Parliamentary influence as well as of the highest character. Nor have they any hustings cry or any special bribe to offer. The probability is that in the coming election they will be ground between the upper and the nether millstone, and that though personal eminence may secure the election of the leaders, they will return to Parliament with a scanty following. The field will then be divided between the party of Tory Reaction, more or less in alliance with a mob and that of Revolutionary Democracy, in which the ultimate triumph of Democracy is ensured by all the tendencies of our age, but in the course of which Ireland may be lost and the foreign policy of England may be totally ruined by the reckless hands of contending factions.

WHEN Pulteney took a peerage Walpole cried, with an expressive motion of his hand, "Now I have turned the key on him!" The attempt to turn the key on Mr. Gladstone has failed; so apparently has the attempt to impair his popularity with the masses by inducing him to accept a peerage for his wife. The fact is the more remarkable, because, strange to say, this great popular leader, amidst all his political changes, has continued to set great value on social rank. At his departure he showers peerages and baubles of all kinds on his followers. It is curious to see Robert Lowe, now disguised under the title of Lord Sherbrooke, a man who has always professed the loftiest contempt for all aristocracy except that of intellect, pleased, in the last stage of life, with the ribbon of a Grand Cross of the Bath. Other men, the sand of whose life is almost run, are made happy by the thought that they will be addressed for a few years as "My Lord" and read their names in a few numbers of the Peerage. Tories will point with complacency to these proofs of the influence of title. Nobody doubts the influence of title. It will expire only when human vanity ceases to exist. But is vanity a guarantee for superiority or a sound basis for a legislative institution? The ridiculous assumption by these modern Barons of a territorial appendage to their names, when they often have not a rood of land in the place named, or

perhaps in any place, constantly reminds us of the fact that the Barons of the Feudal Era were territorial officers who, in order to keep their offices, had to show force and to lead laborious lives. People in the Middle Ages were rough, but they were not drivellers. Their institution was as well suited to the needs of their days as the ghost of it is ill suited to the needs of ours.

WHILE there is no ground for saying that there is an actual coalition of the European powers against Great Britain, and while the meetings of Emperors, which are always regarded as ominous of impending war, have really the very opposite significance, it cannot be denied that the aspect of the diplomatic horizon as well as that of the political future is anything but bright. There are appearances which remind an English observer on the Continent of the coalition of France, Spain, the German Empire and the Papacy against Venice known in history as the League of Cambray. Jealousy of the Republic, which stood apart in her commercial prosperity while they were ruining themselves by wars of ambition, was probably the main motive of the powers which conspired for the ruin of Venice. A similar jealousy is excited at the present day by the spectacle of Great Britain, exempted through her insular position from European wars, free from the conscription, and profiting apparently by the embroilments among her neighbours, though she really profits far more by her immunity from a Protective tariff. But the feeling is no doubt inflamed by the offensive rhodomontade of the Jingo and the silly boasts of Imperial Federationists that they will turn all seas into water streets of the British Venice. The bitterest enemy of England is still France; and the party of Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, which has been sedulously courting the French alliance on the ground of political sympathy, is obliged to own that approximation of institutions does not extinguish treasured hatred. In the old German Emperor, England will lose a true friend and one who would have always prevented quarrels between Germany and England from coming to extremity. If Lord Salisbury possesses the qualities of a good Foreign Minister he is likely to have a field for their display. But his violent manifesto against Russia and the secret agreement with Schouvaloff by which it was closely followed are pledges neither of moderation nor of firmness.

THE publication of Gordon's Diary seems to confirm the view which has always been taken of his character in these columns. Beyond doubt he had some of the qualities of a hero; a worker of miracles he might well be in the East, where madness is revered as inspiration; but perfectly sane he certainly was not. With perfect sanity his religious hallucinations were incompatible: hallucinations they were, not momentary transports of religious exaltation or depression such as we find in the history of Luther or of Cromwell. The belief in a special mission and in the distinguishing protection of Providence was in this man, as in other men, excessive self-consciousness in a religious guise. He was also vexed, as the insane often are, by the demon of morbid suspicion, and was capable of imagining that his death was desired by Mr. Gladstone—Mr. Gladstone who of all men was the most likely to be fascinated by such a character even to a dangerous degree. A fatal error was committed when the nation was in any way identified with Gordon's enterprises, and when the scope and extent of the operations in Egypt were made dependent on his erratic movements. We have always felt a doubt whether he was, up to the time of the catastrophe, really master of Khartoum, or was only allowed by the Mahdi to remain in possession of it in order that the British army might be lured across the Desert and exposed to what the Mahdi hoped would be a fatal blow. It appeared strange that the Egyptian traitor who in the end delivered up the city should have conceived his treasonable design for the first time after the victory of the British army, the very event which, under ordinary circumstances, would have determined him to remain faithful. Gordon's reputation was inflated by the breath of a political party which wished to inflame popular feeling against the Government, to the tardiness of which he was represented as being a martyr; while the other party joined in the inflation that it might put away from itself the reproach of coldness. The truth is now seen, too late, unhappily, to save the gallant men who perished by the sword or by hardship in an ill-starred expedition, and whose valour, discipline and endurance form the only redeeming part of this miserable history. But we have been taught what it is to allow diplomacy and war to be conducted by popular impulse.

CHICAGO *Herald*: "Prohibition is a good thing," remarked a business-like passenger; "I believe in it, and would like to see it adopted in every State of the Union. It's good for my business." "What business are you in?" "Manufacturing pint and half-pint flasks."