

MR. MORLEY

NOT the least interesting administrative appointment in the autumn of last year was that of the foremost living man of letters—a philosophic Liberal, a Little-Englander, the ardent advocate of Home Rule, the persistent foe of war and coercion—to the government of our great Asiatic dependency, the child of Clive and Hastings, the creature of strife and fraud, the seat of benevolent despotism, and that a despotism imposed and maintained by an alien race. The political and parliamentary history of the century will certainly not be the poorer for the singular presence of Mr. Morley in the world of affairs. And at the present juncture his figure is more than usually interesting. For those who are not deceived by appearances are well aware that the school of thought which Mr. Morley embodies more fully than any living man is fast dying out. Liberalism in any intelligible sense will not last another generation. In a score of years the strange adventure upon which the nations of Europe embarked in 1789 will be concluded, and we shall revert, doubtless with many and formidable changes, to an earlier type. The principles of unchecked individual liberty and unrestricted competition have, to use the ancient phrase, been tried in the balance and found wanting. The golden dreams have proved elusive, and the golden hopes have ended in disappointment. Yet, whilst English Liberalism is flickering with all the power of the expiring candle it is worth examining the opinions of its