

## CURRENT EVENTS AND OPINIONS.

THE nomination of Mr. Cleveland—our neighbour as we may call him, since he is an ex-Mayor of Buffalo—by the Democratic Convention will be welcomed by all the friends of Reform. It is a distinct triumph of the better over the worse section of the Democratic party, and denotes the total discomfiture of Butler and of Tammany. The nomination was in truth carried by the influence of the Independent section of the Republican party, whose vote the Democrats knew could be secured only by an irreproachable candidate. Thus a new line of political cleavage begins to appear, separating the Reform element in both the existing parties from the corruptionists, and practically combining the two Reform elements in antagonism to corruption. It would not be surprising if this virtual coalition should in time become actual, and a Reform party, distinguishing itself by that name and uniting the best of those who now call themselves Republicans with the best of those who now call themselves Democrats, should emerge from the present complications. The question between Reform and Corruption is really the great issue, and there is nothing but a worn-out association and a name which has lost its meaning to link such Democrats as Cleveland and Bayard to Butler and Tammany, or such Republicans as Schurz and George W. Curtis to the corrupt managers of the Republican machine. Tariff reduction, the only issue comparable in importance to that of general Reform, of which in truth it is a most vital portion, happens also to be a cross division of existing parties. The plank of the Democratic platform on this subject is shifty and equivocal, betraying division of opinion within the camp as well as fear of the Protectionists without. It would in truth have been wiser and better in every respect to say nothing about import duties in particular, but to lay down broadly the proposition, which few would dare to contradict, that no more ought to be taken from the people by taxation of any kind, external or internal, than is necessary for the purpose of carrying on the government. Yet it is plain that of the framers the majority is in favour of reduction, while the Democratic manufacturers of Pennsylvania are not less desperately wedded to Protection than the Republican manufacturers of New England. The spell of a traditional name is powerful, but cannot very long survive the demise of all real agreement in principle and of every substantial motive for co-operation. A new page has certainly been turned in the history of American parties. The wish in the case of the present writer may be father to the thought, but he cannot help thinking that a heavy, perhaps a fatal blow has been dealt to the party system altogether; for the conduct of the Republican voters must be regarded as a downright defiance of all party laws and ties. Being nominated, Mr. Cleveland has a very fair prospect of election. By the Republican Seceders his candidature seems at once to be ratified; and these men will feel that their honour is safe in voting for him since it has been made manifest by the proceedings at Chicago that they will be voting not with, but against Butler and Kelly, even though those worthies should continue to be dragged along by the Democratic machine. It is not very likely that Tammany will bolt: its object above all things is plunder, and the chance of plunder is resigned by secession from the winning side. Great efforts are being made on the side of Mr. Blaine to win over the Irish: but the Irish are gregarious and submissive, and unless the Tammany leaders give the word, it is not probable that many of them will desert the party to which, for some mysterious reason, they have always been devotedly attached. Pennsylvanian manufacturers may be lukewarm: they cannot fail to see that their interest, or what they take to be their interest, draws them to the camp of Mr. Blaine; but their lukewarmness will not counterbalance the active support of the Independents. The nomination of Mr. Bayard would have been more gratifying as a tribute to a reputation for unsullied integrity through a long public life; but Mr. Cleveland has shown himself upright as well as strong; and the absence of any proofs of extraordinary talent may well be overlooked if he is resolved to set his face steadfastly against corruption.

IN the question as to the relations between England and the Colonies, there is one point comparatively little present to the minds of Colonists, but always present to the mind of an Englishman, especially if he keeps up his intercourse with any public men in the Old Country. The empire is surrounded by perils with which the strength of the imperial country is barely sufficient to cope. Rome had the world pretty well to herself: all her empire, though vast, lay in a ring fence: that of England is scattered over the globe, and threatened at every point, directly or in its communications, by Powers, any one of which would be a formidable enemy, while with two or more of them combined the conflict would be desperate. At this moment there is trouble with France in Egypt, trouble in West and

South Africa, trouble with Russia on the Indian frontier; and of the four provinces of Ireland three are in a state of smothered rebellion. We are misled by the dazzling recollection of the single-handed struggle with Europe under Napoleon. But the total destruction of the French, Spanish and Dutch navies in the beginning of that war had left England absolute mistress of the seas. She is now only the greatest of several great maritime powers, and since the days of Nelson the conditions of naval warfare have been largely altered to her disadvantage. Her army is not half as large as the peace establishments of France, Germany or Russia: it is not double as large as the peace establishment of Belgium. She has the Sepoys; but without British troops at his side the Sepoy is untrustworthy, and in case of war India would absorb two-fifths of England's present military force. Every colonist must know that the colonies could afford her no effective aid, either on land or sea. They could only cling to her knees and embarrass her in the mortal struggle. That their people are excellent material for soldiers, nobody doubts; but before the material could be worked up, the war, under modern conditions, would be over. Saving the Sepoys, there is not in the whole Empire any available force, either military or naval. True loyalty will not tell falsehoods on this vital subject to the English people. Nor would money be more forthcoming than men: no Colonial Parliament would impose heavy taxes on the colonists for an Imperial war, and in Canada the French and Irish combined would have a veto on the vote. It must be remembered, too, that England herself is changed. She has grown more industrial and less military. She has also become far more democratic. Her constancy in the long struggle with Napoleon was, in part at least, due to the strength of her aristocratic government, which had begun the conflict for its own objects, and cared very little for the opinion or sufferings of the people. Political power is now in the hands of the masses, who may cheer the troops when they embark for South Africa or Egypt, but would not long endure the burdens and privations of a great European and maritime war. In the artisans, especially, millions of whom are now enfranchised, the imperial sentiment is generally weak, the commercial sentiment strong, while such aspirations as they have are usually rather cosmopolitan than national. Compelled to fight for her life, England would, probably, put forth greater force than ever, but if she were compelled to fight for her life she would certainly have no strength to waste on the defence of distant dependencies which were unable to defend themselves. In this rough world power of self-defence is still essential to nationality or Empire, but especially to Empire which is not protected in the same degree as nationality by the moral sense of other communities; and in the case of the British Empire the power of self-defence is wanting.

THE reason alleged by the Lords for throwing out the Franchise Bill would, as was said before, be sound, if only it were sincere. A scheme for the alteration of a polity ought to be complete, so that the legislator may be able to forecast its practical result, and the plan for the redistribution of seats is the necessary appendage to the plan for the extension of the franchise. But everybody knows that in the case of the Lords the plea is hollow. As a privileged order they must be and always have been opposed to change of every kind, and especially to all political change in the direction of democracy. If they passed the Disraeli Franchise Bill of 1867, it was because they were assured by their crafty leader that the low populace of the cities could be drawn by "beer and balderdash" into the Tory camp, and turned against the progressive intelligence of the country. That fact in their legislative records is in every way fatal to their present position, nor can they possibly deny that the peasant, however ignorant, is on the whole a much worthier candidate for the franchise than the denizen of the slums. Still they block the way, and the usual appeal is now to be made from their prejudices to their fears. Such are the perfections exhibited in practice of the Bicameral system which gives to the two Houses of a Legislature co-ordinate power, with the tacit proviso that the less popular House shall not exercise its powers on any important question, or if it does, that it shall be coerced by agitation. It was under the threat of a swamping creation of Peers, as is well known, that the Lords passed the first Reform Bill. The Government is urged to apply the same screw now, but it seems to incline to the alternative of an autumn session, and a re-introduction of the Bill. Ultimately the question will be, whether a sufficient storm can be got up in the country to terrify the Peers. For those who are not on the spot to form an opinion on that point at present is very difficult. It must be borne in mind that the immediate decision will rest with the constituencies as they now are, not as they would be after the passing of the Bill; and an appeal to the constituencies as they now are does not seem certain to result in the overthrow of the party which supports the Peers. It does not seem certain at least that the overthrow will be so signal that the Peers will have no choice but to give way. The