

an enemy able to attack her at sea. It is fearful to think what havoc a few fast cruisers might work on her great lines of trade. Her widely scattered dependencies would distract her naval forces and withdraw, perhaps, the needful protection from her own unfortified ports. We see how completely, in becoming the mistress of a world-wide and largely continental empire, she has forfeited the security of her insular position. Her colonies, having always relied on her protecting arm, are unprovided with the means of self-defence: they would cling helplessly to her in the struggle, and probably overtask her naval strength. It would then be seen what was the value of "prestige," and whether a pasteboard wall would keep out shot. It has always been clear in fact that a maritime war would bring the colonial question to a head. The progress of naval invention has also, it can scarcely be doubted, been adverse to the supremacy of England on the sea. What a sea-fight between two armaments composed of iron-clads, rams and torpedoes will be, we can scarcely tell before it has taken place. But the advantage can hardly fail to be less than it was with human valour, and more than it was with mechanical contrivance. Bravery and coolness will still tell, but they will not tell as they did. There will no longer be room for the intrepid seamanship displayed in handling a sailing vessel under fire; above all, there will no longer be room for boarding, the glorious tradition of Nelson's seamen. Nor is it possible to say how far invention may go. Experiments were made the other day at Washington with dynamite shells discharged from ordinary guns, and the effects produced on the target of rock were tremendous. There appears to be difficulty in the handling, and the invention is still only an experiment, though the Chief of the Ordnance reports that a mode of firing dynamite with safety from service guns has certainly been discovered. The best feature of the naval situation is that almost all the coaling stations are in the hands of England. On the other hand, England would have the advantages over Russia which belong to wealth, when it has not enervated, and to freedom. A half-civilized and merely agricultural country does not, it is true, feel bankruptcy like one highly civilized and intensely commercial: but to Russia bankruptcy would come, and it would hardly fail to cripple. In freedom, when the heart of the nation goes forth with its armies, there is immeasurable force. The power of the free country is also doubled by administrative purity, which public criticism and the vigilance of Parliament ensure, while the administration of despotic Russia, military as well as civil, is full of rottenness and corruption. Nor has England reason to fear that misfortune, should it come, will bring internal revolution, while the tottering throne of the Czar would tremble with every reverse, and, if struck by a great defeat, would probably fall.

In national peril, party sees not an appeal to its patriotism but an opportunity for scoring a point. The British Government is now contending with as formidable a complication of dangers as ever gathered round the country. In this, combined with Irish disaffection and with the dissatisfaction which any course taken by the Government, whether in the direction of war or peace, is sure to breed among men of extreme opinions, the Opposition describes a chance of overturning the Ministry and pounces upon it without compunction. Lord Randolph Churchill has told us in print, with a frankness which Butler and Kearney have hardly attained, that his maxim is to win, let moralists say what they please; and in this exposition of aristocratic honour and patriotism Lord Salisbury, as he sanctions Lord Randolph's policy, must be taken to concur. The motion of censure was the work of Lord Randolph and by him forced on Sir Stafford Northcote, whose conscience rebelled, but who preferred the retention of the leadership, though in his case it is nothing but a constant exposure of decrepitude and impotence, to the honourable repudiation of an ignoble part. When the crisis is past, the time for legitimate criticism will come, and censure may properly be moved if the interest or the honour of the country has been betrayed. A revolution in the midst of the crisis can only lead, as every man of sense must see, to an interregnum full of confusion and peril. So manifest indeed is this that it can scarcely fail to have some influence over the minds of all but the most insane and unscrupulous partisans. The Tories, if they succeed in defeating the Ministry and clambering into office, cannot carry on a Government with their present support in the House: their Parnellite allies will at once desert them, and they will be compelled forthwith to bring on a general election, pending which their Government will be too weak and too insecurely seated to have any weight in negotiation with a foreign power. Let it be once more noted that it is not by lowborn and penniless demagogues with a following of Sandlotters, but by the heads of an aristocratic party with broad heads and long pedigrees, who are always talking about patrician chivalry that this most chivalrous game is played. The Tory aristocrats once more

coalesce for the destruction of a Liberal Government with Radicals who are in the opposite extreme to themselves on the very question at issue, and with Parnellites who are avowed enemies of the realm. The majority of thirty by which the Government has on this occasion been sustained, compared with the majority on the last occasion, which was only fourteen, seems to show that patriotism, or some fear of outraging it, has found entrance into eight breasts.

At Washington all goes well. President Cleveland is amply fulfilling by his integrity and firmness the promise of his previous career. He was elected as the candidate of the Democratic Party and cannot be expected to set at nought the party tie; offices of a political character, including ambassadorships, he gives to his political friends; but in other offices he makes changes only where the holder has taken an active part in politics on the other side. He is thus delivering the country as fast as he can from the Spoils System. To Civil Service Reform and the principle of a permanent Civil Service he is thoroughly true, and his fidelity is already rewarded by increased economy as well as purity in the administration. An oversight was committed in the appointment as ambassador to Italy of a Roman Catholic who, as a devotee of the Papacy, had violently denounced the Italian Government; but this has been rectified, and the appointments generally have commended themselves to the judgment of impartial men. Exceptions there have been. Party has not let go its prey; yet its grasp upon the throat of the commonwealth has been greatly relaxed, and local syndicates of corruption, when they have attempted to treat patronage as spoils to be distributed among their satellites, have been met by the President with frank defiance. The murmurings, nay the yells of disappointed rapacity and jobbery, of course are heard; but the President turns a deaf ear. It is only to be hoped that the agonies of corruption will not give birth to a second Guiteau; for Mr. Hendricks, the Vice-President, belongs to the corrupt wing, and is said to go about assuring malcontents that their claims would not be thus slighted if the dispensation of patronage were in his hands. The Vice-Presidency is still used as a sop to some special section of the party, though sad experience has more than once proved that, by the death of the President, in place of the choice of the people the offspring of a calamitous accident may mount the elective throne and do precisely the reverse of that which the people willed should be done. A quarrel between Mr. Cleveland and the corrupt section of the Democrats cannot be long deferred; and were he, like an English or Canadian Premier, dependent for his tenure of office on the party vote, as there would at once be a coalition between the malcontents and the opposition, his administration and the hope of reform would soon be laid in the same grave. Happily he has a secure tenure of office for a limited term, and, if he will put away all thought of re-election, he is free to serve the commonwealth alone. Mr. Walter Phelps, who is no bad judge, asserts that there are members of the Democratic Party who, having seen what Cleveland is, would prefer Blaine. The machinist and the spoiler want, above all things, the system of machines and spoils. What is principle to them?

MR. PHELPS, the new American Ambassador to England, has sailed for the seat of his mission. An apprehension seems to prevail that, after so great a favourite as Mr. Lowell, his reception may be comparatively cold. As we have said before, it would be a great pity if this apprehension were to be in any way realized. Mr. Phelps is not, like Mr. Lowell, a man distinguished in the world of letters; but he is highly cultivated and esteemed by men of intellect, as well as popular in society, while his knowledge of jurisprudence and his legal habits of mind will be most useful in case any questions of international law should arise between the two governments. His appointment was cordially approved by the best judges in the United States, and was especially welcomed by those who desire that friendly relations should be maintained between the Republic and Great Britain.

It is announced that Mr. Cyrus W. Field has retired from business, in which he has been engaged for fifty years. It is no ordinary business from which he retires. Never did we feel more than at this moment the marvellous efficacy of his cable in unifying the world. Among the material agencies which have aided the progress of civilization the Atlantic cable takes no humble place. Mental isolation is henceforth impossible. We in America are present, through the cable, at battles in the Soudan, or on the Afghan frontier, and at debates in the House of Commons. We read Gladstone's speeches the morning after their delivery. The saving to commerce, through prompt information and the diminished need of agencies, is no inconsiderable addition to the wealth of the world. The strong faith of one man did it. Twenty years ago Cyrus W. Field with his Atlantic