

Orleanists who hold the balance of power in the Senate seem inclined to abandon the attitude of conciliation they have hitherto observed. Anticipating additions to their numbers, they calculate on being able to effect some diversion in favor of their cause.

An unusual crop of rumors has been afloat during the week in reference to proposals and prospects of peace, most or all of which appear to be without foundation. A very improbable report has also been circulated about an ultimatum having been sent by England to Russia. A private letter from Sofia to Pera states that Mehemet Ali can neither get men nor artillery enough to form a relieving army for Plevna. The Roumanians announce that they took the strong position of Pravetz on the 23rd, after two days' fighting. The Russians also claim to have captured the fortified town of Etropol, about twenty miles north of the Balkans, with trifling loss, while the Turks fled in disorder. A rumor that Osman Pasha has forced the Russian lines has not been confirmed. The attitude of Servia appears to be warlike, General Harvatovitch having ordered the inhabitants of Alexinatz, Saitschar, and Kaiajevatz districts to be ready within fifteen days to retire into the interior, while troops have been distributed along the eastern frontier.

A St. Petersburg special says the Russian newspapers profess a strong desire for peace. There is some talk of direct negotiations with the Porte, and the probability of such a settlement is said to grow stronger daily. Russia is reported as making special exertions to secure at any rate England's exclusion from the negotiations.

The Earl of Beaconsfield's speech at the Mansion house has been looked forward to with considerable interest, if peradventure some expression might be dropped by the Premier which would give an idea of the prospects of peace or war in the East. After alluding to the dreadful famine in India as the greatest calamity that can happen to any country, he turned from the appalling picture which India presents to the eastern part of Europe, which he stated did not present features any the more encouraging. In the war between Turkey and Russia, he spoke of the policy of England as one of conditional neutrality. He did not believe it was to the honor or the interests of England or of Turkey that England should take any part in the contest. In the case of Turkey, she has shown vigor and resource enough to prove that she has a right to be recognized among the sovereign powers. He said the independence of Turkey had been proved by half a million of warriors, who have devoted their lives to their country without pay and without reward,—he might have added, except what they get by extermination, outrage, and plunder. In reference to the prospects of peace, he said:—"I cannot forget that the Emperor of Russia, with a magnanimity characteristic of his truly elevated character, announced on the eve of commencing this war that his only object was to secure the safety and happiness of the Christian subjects

of the Porte, and that he pledged his Imperial word of honour that he sought no increase of territory. I cannot forget that his Highness the Sultan has declared in the most formal manner that he is prepared to secure all those changes which will give to the Christian subjects of the Porte that safety and that welfare which the Emperor of Russia desires. Therefore, when I find those statements made by those high authorities, and made in a manner so solemn and earnest; statements made by the two Sovereigns that are at this moment in collision and in contest; I think I have a right to say that peace ought not to be an impossible achievement and conclusion of the struggle. . . . But you say to me, have you really any hope, can you encourage the citizens of London on this occasion, by giving them any hope of the restoration of peace between these two great powers? I would say, in answer to such a question, that which was said by a wise and witty gentleman of the eighteenth century to a friend who came to him and told him of his troubles. That gentleman said he had no hope, and Horace Walpole answered, 'Try a little patience.' Now, my Lord Mayor, with respect to the present war, Her Majesty's Government have both hope and patience, and I trust the time may not be far distant when, with the other powers of Europe, we may contribute to a settlement which will not only secure peace, but also the independence of Europe."

ADVENT SUNDAY.

THE beginning of the Christian year now takes place, and it demands a more attentive observance than any other arrangement to indicate the progress of time, which is merely secular. Indeed, it would be far more becoming for Christians to mark more decidedly this commencement of the annual series of services given us by the Church than to accommodate themselves to the Pagan institutions of watch-nights and other ceremonies of a similar character, which are often used at the beginning of the civil year. Let the worldling and the unbeliever celebrate the transition from one secular division of time to another, and raise their peans in commemoration of the political and social changes to which the period gone by has given birth, we Christians are called upon to note the manifestations of Messiah. We commemorate His lowly birth; we anticipate His future triumphs; we prepare the way for His march onward to His holy seat: and therefore, in again celebrating the beginning of the series of His humiliations and sufferings, His achievements and glories, we are far more called upon to attach a due importance to its place in the Church's calendar than we are to mark the infinitely less noteworthy periods indicating the progress of events which are of the earth, earthy.

Near two thousand years ago our Lord tabernacled on earth for three and thirty years in lowliness and humiliation. We look for His coming again in pomp and glory, attended by the hosts of Heaven, to restore His brethren

according to the flesh to the land of their fathers, personally to rule over this regenerated globe, to raise the dead, to judge the world in righteousness—although in what order these events shall take place and how they shall be connected with each other we have not the least conception. We commemorate the Incarnation at Christmas; we send our aspirations forward to the coming glory during the season of Advent. But our commemoration of the one and our joyful anticipation of the other would be of no service whatever unless we were assured of the continued presence of Christ with His Church. For the Lord to be absent from His people for several thousand years would indeed have been to leave them comfortless. But His continued presence and manifestation of Himself to the Church in her corporate capacity, as well as individually to her several members, forms one of the chief glories of our religion. And this constitutes the value of the Sacraments He has given to His Church. Why are they especially prized and honored by all who believe in the pure and unadulterated Christianity of the New Testament? Simply because, instead of being merely commemorations of an absent Lord, they are the appointed channels, in the use of which His presence is both assured and manifested. It is because they bring us into real contact with Him that they are *generically* the very things which are necessary to salvation, and that they have any real value or virtue at all. And the vast importance of this aspect of the subject is seen in the fact that if we know anything really of our living Lord, we know that His revelation satisfies all the deepest yearnings of our being, our apprehensions of death, our tortures of conscience, our desire to hold converse with the Father of our spirits, our longing to be like Him, to be in His favor, and to enjoy His presence, here and hereafter. But if we are only familiar with the recent attempts to supersede Christianity with something that shall ignore the Cross, we are then "only familiar with a series of intellectual coruscations, blazing up for the moment towards the heavens of thought, and then dying back into darkness and leaving us only an inheritance of despair."

In a most admirable way has the Church given us on Advent Sunday the Gospel which contains an account of the Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem; and some difficulty may be felt in divining the cause for the selection. We are now called upon to bear in mind the two Advents of Messiah, while the history of the events that took place on Palm Sunday do not directly refer to either. If we were only contemplating the first coming of the Saviour into the world, or only of His coming to judgment, portions of the Sacred Scriptures describing either of these momentous events would be decidedly appropriate; but to embrace the entire teaching of the season on which we are now entering, we must keep the two truths before the eye of the soul; and, therefore, here we have a history in which the two truths meet—a repetition, as it were, of our Lord's first coming to His own,