

## ENGLAND AND THE POWERS

**T**HERE is a peculiarity about the present Government which has been responsible for a good deal of misconception. It is partly owing to certain traits in Lord Salisbury's character, and partly to certain considerations of policy which he has steadily kept in view, that it has become the fashion among the opponents of the Government, and also in the chauvinistic section of their supporters, to describe their foreign policy as vacillating and ineffective. We believe that this is a complete mistake. But it must be allowed that the mistake is not unnatural. In more than one transaction with a foreign Power it has been said that the Government have had all the worst of the bargain. Had Ministers chosen to explain in detail the advantages which this country had gained, and to point out the contrast between what the other Power had asked for and had obtained, we do not doubt that they might have greatly increased their popularity at home though they would also have much impeded the success of their diplomacy abroad. Whatever may have been the result to the political reputation of the Prime Minister, the present international position of this country is largely due to his moderation and self-restraint.

For what is the salient feature of the European situation? Is it not that during a war which has strained the resources of this country for more than two years no Power has for an instant attempted to take advantage of our difficulties? If Ministers were the set of squeezable weaklings their domestic critics profess to think them, surely some Continental Govern-