

tion. To make Ireland an exception would be odious, but there would be nothing odious in suspending political change altogether till the agrarian agitation had subsided and the union had been placed out of peril. To throw the ballot into the hands of people who tell you frankly beforehand that they will employ it for the purpose of wrecking the Legislature and dismembering the nation is the act of the highest political wisdom or of something very much the reverse.

THAT the extension of the franchise, as well as the Irish Land Act, is the work of political infallibility is the comfortable belief of the devoted followers of Mr. Gladstone. In obedience to his decision, in reliance on his wisdom, inside the Cabinet and outside, this dispensation is accepted. No one can doubt that more than half of the members of the Government are in their own minds opposed to the aims of Mr. Chamberlain. If, as social science proclaims, general laws rule history, it must be owned that they still operate largely through individual men. The power of political chiefs such as Bismarck, Cavour, Gambetta and Gladstone, though it rests on intellectual influence, not on the sword, is almost as personal as was that of Julius Caesar or Charlemagne. Is Mr. Gladstone's fiat a guarantee for the practical wisdom of a measure? For the morality of a measure it is. His victorious struggle with Jingoism and his restoration of righteousness as the rule of foreign and imperial policy form his best title to public gratitude, in the estimation of everyone who knows what the true honour of the country is. But in such a question as that of the extension of the franchise practical forecast is the quality required, and few even of his most ardent would say that practical forecast was the distinguishing gift of Mr. Gladstone. Perhaps it is seldom the distinguishing gift of great orators, who are apt to think more of the present triumph than of future results, and whose magical powers of persuasion conceal defects and dangers from themselves. To his present position of, it may almost be said, Radicalism Mr. Gladstone has been borne forward partly by the glowing philanthropy which inspired what angry Tories styled "the flesh and blood argument" in favour of an extension of the suffrage, partly by the increasing antagonism into which he has been thrown with the territorial aristocracy, which has pursued him with personal and most bitter hatred. That his views, intellectually, have hardly yet been settled appears from his retention, in curious combination with his new Liberalism, of his old High Churchism and his old reverence for title. Whether he clearly sees or has tried clearly to see what sort of polity will practically result from his measure, and how universal or even household suffrage will work with the House of Lords, we shall be able to say with more confidence when he has introduced his measure and his exposition of it is before us. What neither he nor anybody else as yet sees is that the country has now no government but organized party, so that if the enfranchised masses ever cease to own the control of a powerful party leader like himself, sectionalism, confusion and administrative anarchy must almost inevitably ensue. Instead of calling uninstructed masses suddenly and without any preparation to the exercise of political power, at a moment when they are particularly likely to make a suicidal use of it, the policy of a statesman who had studied democracy and wished to place it on a safe basis would rather be first to form a strong groundwork of local institutions, upon this to found his central government, and at all events before the flood-gates of extension were opened, to secure to the country a regular and stable executive for the maintenance of law and the administration of public business irrespective of the fluctuations of opinion. But Mr. Gladstone has not studied democracy; he has been converted to it, and in his neophyte zeal at seventy-four, he is not unlikely to lose Ireland and leave the other two kingdoms in a perilous condition.

THE Governor of Rhode Island in his message to the Legislature, says, that the increase in proportion of divorces to marriages, in the State, is absolutely startling, and recommends, as a check to the growing evil, that testimony in divorce trials be heard in open court. The New England Divorce Reform League states in its circular that in the three eminently moral and highly educated States of Maine, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire, there has been of late one divorce to every ten marriages. The two most populous counties in Minnesota increased their divorces, in ten years, fifty per cent. faster than their marriages. In Chicago, Louisville, and Connecticut, the ratio is somewhat lower, but in San Francisco and in counties in a number of States it is as high as 1 to 6. Besides the divorces which appear in these statistics, every one familiar with American society knows that there is a number of separations formal or informal. There are men who live in New York while their wives live in Paris. It is assumed both by the Governor and the League, that the laxity of the divorce law is the root of the mischief, and that the reform of the divorce

law would be an effectual remedy. This may be doubted. To loosen the marriage bond, to diminish the sanctity of wedlock, to separate the interests of man and wife, to subvert the authority of the head of the family and thus to break up the family itself, has been the tendency not of divorce law legislation alone, but of legislation on matrimonial questions generally, and of the whole revolutionary movement with regard to the relations between the sexes. The period has been marked by the growing insubordination of children, and their loss of reverence for their parents, as well as by the increase of divorce. When we hear of a husband prosecuting his wife, of a wife suing her husband for the rent of the house which is their home, of a wife opposing her husband's candidature and the two encountering each other on the stump, it is clear that a change has taken place of which a lax divorce law is little more than the formal expression. Tighten the divorce law, without restoring the tone of sentiment, and the probability is that the number of separations will increase. When the belief in the marriage which blends two lives into one is gone, and has been succeeded by the notion of a quasi-commercial compact—a "married copartnership" as Miss Susan Anthony calls it, the partners will separate as often as they disagree or get tired of each other, let the divorce law on your statute book be as stringent as you will. Even the Churches bend to the prevailing wind. It was announced the other day that one of them had struck the wife's promise of obedience out of the marriage service. If the word "obey" imports anything in the least arbitrary on one side or servile on the other, it is quite right that it should be discarded. But if it imports simply a recognition of the headship of the family, how is the family to be held together without such a headship? To whom is the obedience of the children to be due? Mr. Mill, conscious of the difficulty, proposes that in each case the supremacy over the household shall be divided between the man and the wife, and that the cases in which each is to be supreme shall be specified in the marriage settlement—in the marriage settlement, for example, of Sally of Our Alley. No mother of a family wants domestic anarchy. Obedience to usurped authority degrades, but obedience to legitimate and necessary authority is no more degrading than command: it is the lot of all men who act under official superiors, masters or employés of any kind; in a very important sense it is the lot of all human beings, inasmuch as they are obliged to conform to the general ordinances of society and of nature. Of all kinds of power, that is the least likely to be abused which is intrusted to the hands of affection. Why should we assume that a husband will tyrannize over his wife more than that a mother will tyrannize over her children? Why should we assume that a man will maltreat the woman of his choice any more than that he will kick his invited guest out of doors, as it is strictly in his power to do? Christian marriage, as instituted in the Gospel, combines a distinct recognition of the headship indispensable to unity with the assertion of moral equality and of the principle that marital authority shall be exercised, not like that of a Roman master of a family, but entirely under the guidance and for the objects of affection. We live in a period of such profound and sweeping change that it would hardly surprise us if what has hitherto appeared one of the pillars of moral civilization should prove, after all, to be not adamant and should pass away. But if there is anything of which it can be truly said that it has hitherto been a pillar of moral civilization, so far at least as Christendom is concerned, it is Christian marriage. What would come in its room nobody has yet pretended to divine, except perhaps Mrs. Victoria Woodhull, from whose social millennium morality at present recoils. Churches uphold as vital to the faith dogmas which impartial inquiry shows to be Hebraisms misinterpreted, metaphors hardened into facts, peculiarities of Alexandrian theosophy, remnants of Roman legalism, or the offspring of that violent recoil from Indulgences, and the notions of good works, sin and forgiveness embodied in them, which generated so much of the doctrinal system of the Reformation. Christian marriage and the Christian family are a great deal nearer the life of Christianity than any of these. To abandon the "sound form of words" in deference to the fashionable sentiment of the hour would be deemed apostasy. Is it less apostasy to abandon a great Christian institution?

UNIVERSITY Confederation is showing symptoms of life in more than one quarter. When a movement is fairly on foot and minds are predisposed in its favour, little things, even names and terms of expression, sometimes tell. The introduction of the term confederation seems to have a good effect on this discussion. "Consolidation," though the plan had been explained, seemed to imply that the life of the individual college would be merged in that of the larger body. Confederation expresses the fact that the life of the individual college will remain distinct and unimpaired, as does that of a State in a federal union. All the colleges will combine