

ONCE more we are told that Mr. Gladstone is on the point of retirement. No man likes to close a long and glorious course under a cloud, though it is but an illusion of fancy which makes us attach so much importance to the end of a life or a career. Mr. Gladstone, therefore, though he might have willingly given ear to the warning voice of his physician had all been going on well, will probably, under the present circumstances, cling to the helm as long as his strength lasts. He cannot be expected to see, what many of his heartiest admirers cannot help seeing, that the present situation is one of the kind with which even in the zenith of his greatness his special gifts would have least qualified him to cope, and that by persisting in the attempt with his declining powers he is imperilling both the fortunes of the country and his own illustrious name. Should he retire, he would be called upon to advise the Queen as to the appointment of his successor, and he would certainly name Lord Hartington. Lord Granville, the leader of the House of Lords, is still nominally the head, after Mr. Gladstone, of the party; but he feels growing infirmities and, it is understood, wishes for rest: very likely he would retire at the same time. Lord Hartington led the party in the Commons during Mr. Gladstone's angry secession from command, and the generous readiness with which he afterwards resigned his pretensions showed his thorough loyalty to the cause. He is besides, though not a man of genius, or comparable in eloquence and parliamentary power to Mr. Gladstone, decidedly the best man for the leadership on the Liberal side. He has administrative capacity, judgment, firmness and a reputation for integrity and truthfulness, which make him an object of general confidence. His weak point is his liability to be any day transferred to the House of Lords. The Radicals dislike him least of the Whigs, and he would have more chance than any one else of preserving in some measure the combination of Whig and Radical elements which sustains the present Cabinet and party. But to keep Lord Derby and the preachers of Socialistic Democracy long in the same government is beyond the powers of any leader, whatever his tact and however comprehensive may be his policy. A rupture more or less violent must soon come, and new combinations must follow. The feeling that, on the Liberal side, after him will be chaos may well be a strong reason with Mr. Gladstone for remaining as long as possible at his post.

THE Tories in England seem to think that they have victory within their grasp. It is cabled at least that the Carlton has passed a unanimous vote in favour of their assumption of office in case the vote of censure should be carried. But the bear of whose skin the Carlton disposes, though hunted with uncommon acrimony, is not yet killed. The Egyptian policy of the Cabinet has no doubt oscillated between the inclinations of the Whig and Radical sections; and Mr. Gladstone himself, in this case as in the case of the war with Russia, has drawn the sword with a most unwilling hand, and has allowed his desire of peace to weaken the operations of war. Feebleness and miscarriage have been the consequence. Yet no one looking simply to the interest of the country would desire a change of Government at this moment. The Tories are evidently angling for the Parnellite Vote, and their chance of securing it is improved by the necessity under which Mr. Gladstone has just been placed, as leader of the House, of calling upon the Speaker to repress Irish outrage. There is likely, also, as we said before, to be a certain amount of latent hostility to the Government on the part of members whose seats are doomed by the Redistribution Bill. Extreme Radicals may fly off, though, after relieving their consciences by peace homilies and perhaps a peace amendment of their own, they will probably vote against a motion to place the Tories, that is the extreme war party, in power. The mass of the Radicals will vote with Mr. Chamberlain, the mass of the Whigs will vote with Lord Hartington, and their combined though not united forces will most likely save the Government.

If the friends of the party system will turn their eyes to the British House of Commons they will behold an instructive spectacle. They will see a body not of American demagogues, but of English gentlemen, boasting that they have been trained in the highest traditions of public and private honour, yet willing to combine with the sworn enemies of the realm, and the objects of their own fiercest denunciations, for the purpose of gaining a party victory over the Government; and this at a moment of national disaster and of serious peril to the State. The extreme section of the Tories, led by Lord Randolph Churchill, has been always ready to storm office by a coalition with the Parnellites, leaving moralists, as his lordship frankly put it, to say what they pleased. At sight of what was impending, however, as it appears, the Irish Conservatives have recoiled

and taken up a position of independence towards the rest of the party. They are about twenty in number, and if they hold together they will suffice to balance or nearly to balance such a force as has of late been completely under the command of Mr. Parnell. Everyone talks of the Irish and their cause as though Ireland were a unit in favour of Mr. Parnell and his designs, forgetting that his following has at no time amounted to a third of the Irish delegation, and that the vigorous, brave and prosperous Irish of the North, the very sinews of the population, are heartily attached to the Union.

By the dismissal of Irish workmen from English works, in consequence of the dynamite outrages, attention has been called to the fact that multitudes of Irish are domiciled in all the great cities of England, and are eating the bread of the country which they are vilifying and conspiring to destroy. It must surely be deemed strange that, if the English people have behaved like cruel and insolent tyrants to the Irish, all these Irish should have chosen to take up their abode in Great Britain. What would have become of them if England had not offered them subsistence? Their own island could not have maintained them, and their fate would have been what that of the French Canadians would be if their rapidly-growing population were shut up in Quebec. The Irish will now be made aware that, if boycotting and expulsion are to be the order of the day, they may not be the only sufferers by that game. It is deplorable, we are told, that the crime of the dynamiters should thus be visited on innocent workmen. It is deplorable, most deplorable, that hatred shall thus be stirred up between two races which are inseparably intermixed with each other and inevitably destined to live under the same roof. But on whom does the blame rest? Nor, if the Irish in England generally are innocent of the dynamite outrages, are they innocent of offence against the English people. They have on the contrary exhibited their hostility in the most irritating and insulting manner; they have broken in upon public meetings; they have held meetings of their own to pour abuse upon England and parade sympathy with her enemies; and they are notoriously preparing to use the British franchise in aid of a conspiracy for the dismemberment and ruin of the realm. Would any other nation be willing to cherish its avowed enemies in its bosom? How would the Americans have treated open sympathy with rebellion in the time of their Civil War? How did they treat the Irish when the Irish rose in favour of the South?

OVERT signs of disaffection in British India there are none, and the hysterical notes of alarm which have been sounded may be set down as emanating from the general panic bred by the critical character of the situation. But disaffection of the most dangerous kind may soon be bred if Anglo-Indian agitators continue to appeal to native sentiment as they are appealing now. Mr. Hyndman has long been doing his utmost to stir up social revolution in Hindostan as well as in England. In the current number of the *Fortnightly Review* Mr. W. Scawen Blunt publishes an article the special object of which seems to be to excite hostility to British government in the rulers of the Native States, respecting whose fidelity to the Empire suspicions already prevail. Mr. Blunt is evidently a strong partisan of Lord Ripon, whom he deems virtue incarnate; and as the general policy of the Calcutta Foreign Office is not, or is supposed by him not to be, in accordance with that of his favourite, he assails it in the same fashion in which an Opposition pamphleteer in England would assail the conduct of the Government. He represents it as carrying on in the most unprincipled and treacherous manner an organized policy of aggression with a view to annexation, and for the infamous purpose of multiplying lucrative places for officials. "It is necessary," he says in the true style of an inklinger, "to understand that the Calcutta Foreign Office is even more absolutely without moral scruple than our own." He does not hesitate even to accuse it of criminally plotting against Salar Jung, the late Prime Minister of the Nizam, and one of the staunchest friends of England; nor does he shrink from insinuating that Salar Jung was assassinated, and that upon the officials at Calcutta rests the ultimate responsibility for the deed. These are the sort of things that Mr. Biggar and Lord Randolph Churchill say of their political opponents in England. Of course the article finds its way into the Native Press, and intensifies at a perilous moment the suspicions of the Native Princes. Whether British Empire in India is a blessing or a curse to England and to India herself is a very complex question. But supposing the maintenance of the Empire to be desired, there is no doubt as to the conditions under which alone it can be maintained. During the reign of the Company British democracy and demagogism were excluded. India indeed in those days of slow and circuitous communication was practically too remote to feel their influences. But now they are actively at work; and they threaten the stability of the