

the local functionaries, is so remarkable, and presents so strong a contrast to the usual levity and servility of the French character, as to warrant the assertion of the Republican chiefs, that the nation has made up its mind. But, thanks to the desperate exertions of the vast official hierarchy created by the Empire, the members of which still occupy the prefectures and other local offices, Bonapartism assumes every day more menacing proportions, and is now evidently the one formidable competitor of the Republic. The Bourbon cause has been so utterly ruined by the obstinate adherence of its representatives to the White Flag, that it would not be surprising to see the Priesthood transfer its allegiance and carry over its still powerful support to the Bonapartes, who, if they are not religious despots, are at least despots, and hold out a better hope to the Ultramontane than any form of liberty. Indeed the Empress Eugenie, if she could succeed in controlling the policy of her son, would, in spite of the notorious corruption of her court, be as religious a ruler in the priestly sense as any ultramontane could desire. But the issue, it is melancholy and humiliating to reflect, practically depends, not on the comparative ascendancy of political ideas in educated minds; not on anything that can be described as the result of the efforts to regenerate the nation, made by a long succession of statesmen, patriots, and political martyrs, from Mirabeau and Barnave down to Guizot and the leaders of the Republic; not on moral or intellectual forces of any kind; but on the will of a coarse and uninstructed, though honest soldier, whose ideas of government have been formed in an Algerian camp. About a third of the army is supposed by Gambetta to be Republican in sentiment; but we cannot doubt that the whole would at once obey the word of command given by Marshal MacMahon. The people are disarmed—the national militia of all kinds having been disbanded, and there would be not even an

attempt at resistance. Since the election for the Maine-et-Loire, the sword has hung suspended over the life of the Republic by a slenderer thread than ever. For, in that election, the party of MacMahon and his Septennate coalesced with the Bonapartists. In the excitement of a contest, it is true, people are glad to accept allies from any quarter. But at the Court, the coalition implies on the part of the marshal a preference for Bonapartism over Republicanism, which, if Republicanism seemed on the point of triumphing, would probably lead him to cast his sword into the scale.

A more inscrutable problem could hardly be submitted to the political observer than which is presented by the state of affairs in France. As a rule, in studying revolutions, and forecasting their probable results, it is useful to keep the eye fixed on what may be called the point of aberration—the point that is where the really national movement ends, where an extreme party gets the lead, and the movement degenerates into violence. In the case of the English Revolution, the settlement of 1788 closely corresponded with the aims of the leading Reformers at the opening, and during the first Session of the Long Parliament. A Constitutional Monarchy, such as was ultimately established in the person of William III., was evidently what Pym, Hampden, and the mass of the nation with them desired. Probably, when the perfidy of Charles had been unmistakably demonstrated, a change of dynasty, such as was effected by the expulsion of James II., also entered into the councils of the leaders. Torn from this basis by the civil war which ensued, rocked to and fro for half a century by the alternating ascendancy of the extreme factions, and oscillating between the Republic of Vane and the Monarchy of Charles II., the nation returned nearly to the point of departure at last. Nearly, but not quite—for new ingredients had been added to the political caldron by the course of the struggle, and the settlement, in its strict preservation