

and the neutralisation and establishment of the Civil Service, cannot be officially learned till after the election. Equally dumb are the Republican oracles. The voter will have to choose his ballot, so far as he chooses it upon public considerations, according to the way he feels personally towards Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Blaine, who, between them, represent all the practical politics that the country has in stock at the moment. B.

PARTIES IN ENGLAND.

THAT part of Lord Palmerston's reported prophecy as to the result of Mr. Gladstone's leadership which related to the fortunes of the Liberal Party in England, though its fulfilment has been delayed, as the fulfilment of political prophecies is apt to be, has at last come true with a vengeance. Not only is the Liberal Party divided against itself, but it is losing ground altogether, as might be expected when its leader makes himself the general organ of anti-patriotic sentiment, the traducer of the country before the world, and the apostle of national disruption. The tide, not only of Unionism, but of Conservatism, pure and simple, is now evidently running high in England. It is natural that the nation, threatened with dismemberment by the confederates of a foreign conspiracy, should rally round the existing symbols of its unity, and entrust power to the party which, if it is at all true to its professions and traditions, can, of the two parties, be best trusted to resist disruption. Nor will any rational Liberal repine at a pause in legislative progress, which is necessary in order to avert irretrievable disaster. The greatest question of reform may wait, but the Union once surrendered can never be restored, or can be restored only by war. The thing to be lamented, even from a Liberal point of view, is not that the Conservative Party is for the present in the ascendant, but that it has not leaders more worthy of national confidence and more equal to the situation. In this respect the country is most unfortunate. Lord Salisbury, with great abilities and all the prestige of rank and wealth, is morally not strong, as his failure to control Lord Randolph Churchill proves. He has also the fault common among aristocratic politicians, and signally exemplified in the late Lord Derby, of fancying that rank without labour will make a statesman. He takes up politics as his natural domain, but he has never studied them as a science. On economical questions he never touches without showing he has not given his mind to them. When he is not in office or engaged in a campaign, instead of turning his thoughts to the political problems which he will have to solve, and trying to forecast the future, he devotes himself to chemistry, in which he has conceived the vain ambition of rivalling regular men of science. It is impossible, therefore, to feel sure that his action is part of a well-considered policy, or anything more than the mere tactic of the hour. Nothing great has ever been achieved in politics or in war, any more than in science, without steady and concentrated thought. This Wellington knew when he broke his violin. But Lord Salisbury, buried in the House of Lords, can hardly be said to be Prime Minister. The real Prime Minister is the leader of the House of Commons; and the leader of the House of Commons is a man about whom a plain opinion has been more than once expressed in these columns, and our estimate of whom remains unchanged. During the few months which have elapsed since his sudden elevation, Lord Randolph Churchill has been on his good behaviour, but, if we mistake not, he is Lord Randolph Churchill still. He is still the man who rose, not by honourable means, but by caballing and conspiring against his chiefs; by traducing Sir Stafford Northcote, and by an infamous intrigue with the Parnellites. He is still the man whose mutiny and treachery the respectable organs of his party denounced, and with whom the respectable men of his party refused to appear upon the platform. He is still the man whose nerve failed him, as the nerve of boasters is apt to fail them, in council, and who, by his timorous advice on the Irish Question, brought Lord Salisbury's first Government to an ignominious end. He is still the man who had the effrontery to avow in print that he regarded distinctions between wholesome and unwholesome victories as unpractical, and that his maxim was to win in any way you could, and let criticism say what it pleased. The theory of "wild oats" may apply to indiscretion—it does not apply to dishonesty. He who sows wild oats of dishonesty always reaps what he sows. The *London Spectator*, while it congratulates itself somewhat prematurely, as we think, on the conduct of the new leader of the House of Commons towards Liberal Unionists, admits his "political dishonesty," his "unscrupulous time-serving," and his "impudent" disregard of consistency. Never before were such things said by an impartial critic of the leader of the British House of Commons. The Dartford speech is instinct, like all the other acts and productions of its author, with the spirit of intrigue, with selfish vanity, and with disloyalty to colleagues, whom it is the evident object of the speaker to thrust aside and eclipse,

so that he may appear to be the whole Government in himself. Radicals applaud, of course; but the silence of misgiving prevails in the Conservative press, and the *St. James's Gazette* asks whether the principles of Latter Day Radicalism have really been adopted by the Conservative Government. The answer is that there is no Government, and power has been allowed to fall into the hands of a political adventurer, who will do anything, and avows that he will do anything, to gain or keep place. Even supposing the Union itself to be safe in such hands, its preservation would be dearly bought by turning public life into a gambling-table for unscrupulous ambition. What England needs, above all things, for the present conduct of her affairs, and what it seems hard that she should not be able to get, is simple integrity combined with moral courage. She wants a high-minded and patriotic English gentleman, who, scorning trickery and intrigue, will walk steadily in the path of honour. Lord Randolph Churchill's partisans talk of his "go." There is plenty of "go" and plenty of "cheek"—probably there is even a sufficiency of "the gift of the gab" in places which are not supposed to be seminaries of statesmen.

THE EASTERN CRISIS.

THERE could be no use in attempting to follow the shifting outline of the war-cloud in the East, or in chronicling the rumours which the daily press feels bound to supply. At Cabinets there may be a representative of the *New York Herald* under the table; but Foreign Offices still usually know how to keep their own counsel. The Austrian press, which would be the likeliest source of information, is entirely in the hands of Jews who are always playing their own game. We can do no more than note the general objects and attitudes of the Powers concerned. Russia is manifestly bent on extending her supremacy, if not her actual sway, over the Danubian Principalities. To prevent that extension must certainly be the first object of Austria, whom the progress of Pan Slavism threatens with dissolution. France wants to reassert herself, to find balm for her wounded self-esteem, and to gratify the temper which, next to vanity, is the most powerful motor of French action. This she can best do at the present juncture by throwing herself into the arms of Russia, and into the arms of Russia we need not doubt that she has thrown herself. That Germany should desire the aggrandisement of Russia is impossible: it is a constant menace to herself; but the exact line taken by her Government remains a mystery. It is always to be borne in mind that, powerful as Bismarck is, the Emperor still has the last word; and the Emperor is believed to be bent, above all things, on maintaining peace. The loquacity of Lord Randolph Churchill has not failed to proclaim upon the streets the policy of England which he wishes to be considered as entirely his own, and the world is informed that the flag of jingoism has been hauled down.

It is difficult to imagine anything more disastrous than a gratuitous provocation of Russian enmity, such as went on under Palmerston and Beaconsfield, followed by a sudden fit of peace-at-any-price. A Europe armed to the teeth seems to be always on the verge of war: yet these vast armaments have in a certain sense a pacific tendency, because the consequences of a quarrel are so tremendous that each Government shrinks from incurring them, especially if it has to render an account to its people. Complicated as the imbroglio is, the chances would still, we venture to think, be greatly in favour of peace were it not for the personal violence of the Czar. If the report of his shooting an officer, in a transport of wild alarm, is to be believed, this man, who, by a single word, can launch havoc on mankind, is in such a state of savage panic as hardly to be master of himself. This the world owes to Nihilism, with which some of the friends of liberty have allowed themselves to sympathise, but which has paralysed the party of reform in Russia, intensified the military despotism, and made the despot more than ever a terror and a scourge, not only to his own people but to all nations. The interests of humanity are not to be served by crime.

A very sinister report is now current respecting the special attitude and intentions of France towards England. That part of the report which represents the French Government as preparing for an armed descent on Egypt, and as having communicated its design to Bismarck, is totally incredible; but the rest of the report is only too likely to be well-founded. While a French soldier who fought at Gravelotte or Sedan lives, France will not challenge another trial of strength with Germany. No one knows better than a Frenchman when he is beaten; and it is one thing to declaim about revenge, or crown with wreaths of immortelles the statue of Strasburg on the Place de la Concorde; it is another to face again the legions of Von Moltke. But if Sedan cannot be avenged, possibly Waterloo may: at any rate the critical situation in which England is at present placed by the combination of the trouble in Ireland with the