

Unluckily, the hypochondrical effusions of the *Gazette* have not been without effect; the belief that England was not in a condition to enter on a maritime war must have had its influence in encouraging Russian aggression. To tell the truth, however unpalatable, is the duty of a journalist; but this is a different thing from getting up sensational panics. There must be some limit to the expenditure of the people's money in the race of naval invention. But England, with her wealth, her host of skilled artisans and her maritime habits, can put herself on a war footing much more quickly than any of her rivals. All doubt has been set at rest as to her being still by far the first of maritime powers. Her army bears in numbers only about the same proportion to that of Russia as did her force on the heights of Inkerman to the Russian force by which it was attacked. But the quality of her troops is evidently as good as ever; the victors of Abou Klea were not picked men. She has also the immense advantage of an honest and sound administration, whereas that of Russia, both civil and military, is like those of most despotic governments full of corruption. The conflict, if it comes, will of course be severe; but unless disaffection breaks out in India, of which there are at present no signs whatever, the old ship will once more weather the storm.

ENGLISH periodicals are of course full of the Russian question. Sir Henry Rawlinson, the highest authority among the Russophobes, gives in the *Nineteenth Century* the alarmist view of the advance of Russia in Central Asia. He regards her encroachments as steps in the execution of a premeditated plan, and thinks that England ought to have confronted her on her path and either by influence or by arms to have arrested her progress. The impelling motive, however, according to him is not territorial extension, nor the desire of actually conquering India, but the hope that pressure put on England in the direction of India may constrain her to withdraw her opposition to the designs of Russia on the Bosphorus. As we said before, nothing is more likely than that such a policy has conspired with the restless ambition of Russian officers and the provocations often given by marauding tribes in pushing forward the frontier of Russian dominion in Central Asia. The moral seems to be that the British nation, instead of abandoning itself without reflection to the Palmerstonian and Beaconsfieldian tradition, ought to consider seriously whether the exclusion of Russia from an open sea is so indispensable that it ought to be maintained at any expense and at whatever risk to the security of British India. Though a Russophobe, Sir Henry Rawlinson is no fanatic, and his disposition to do justice to Russia lends weight to his opinion as to the sinister character of her designs. "No one questions," he says, "that Russia is entitled to great credit for the civilizing influence that has attended her progress, for the large benefits she has conferred upon humanity in her career of conquest through Central Asia. By crushing the Turcoman raiders, indeed, and by abolishing the slave markets of Khiva and Bokhara, she has restored peace and prosperity to districts which were groaning in misery, and has earned the gratitude of thousands of terror-stricken families. Whatever may happen in the future, she has gained imperishable glory in the past by her victories of peace along the desolated frontier of Khorassan." Sir Henry's paper also brings home to us the fact that the frontier of Afghanistan is really undefined, so that encroachment is not necessarily wilful. The Afghans are wild and marauding clansmen like the Highlanders of Scotland two centuries ago. Who could have drawn the exact line between the land of the Sassenach and that of the Gael? If the Russian and British Empires were actually contemporaneous, there perhaps might be less danger, because the boundary would be exactly defined and neither power could then encroach except with a full knowledge of what it was doing and with the certainty before it of immediate war. But a partition of Afghanistan is out of the question. Respect on both sides for Afghan independence is the only practicable course. Nor ought it to be forgotten that England herself was the other day invading Afghanistan.

THE display on the part of the Prince of Wales of a patriotic sense of duty in visiting Ireland was needed to counterbalance a recent exhibition of a different kind on the part of the Court. England in these times of peril needs every friend that she can secure. Yet this is the moment chosen for affronting and estranging one so powerful, whether as friend or foe, as the German Chancellor. Bismarck is well-known to be an object of intense aversion among the members of the Royal Family of England. The House of Hanover, though its dynasty is the offspring of a revolution, and though, if the principle of legitimacy were to prevail, the title to its throne would be still in another line, feels as all Royal Houses feel upon questions concerning the rights of kings. Garibaldi, who had uncrowned the King of Naples and overturned the thrones of other Italian princes, was regarded by the British Court with a hatred the sacred flame

of which Lord Beaconsfield, among his other ministrations as a purveyor of truth to Royalty, did not fail to feed. In the midst of the ovation with which he was received by the English people, the liberator of Italy suddenly, abruptly, and, as it appeared, ungraciously left England. The explanation afterwards given was that the honours paid him had given umbrage to the Court, and that the Prime Minister had found it necessary to beseech Garibaldi to depart. The author of German Unity has been guilty of even greater crimes than the Liberator of Italy. Not only has he deposed kings, but he has deposed German relatives of Her Majesty. The House of Hanover, in spite of its long occupation of the British throne, is still Hanoverian; its domestic life and interests remain largely German; German is even in some measure its domestic language; and the dethronement of the King of Hanover by Bismarck was an offence which might well be deemed inexpiable. The result is that of all the sovereigns of Europe the Sovereign of England alone refuses to send congratulations to Bismarck on his birthday, a mark of dislike and reprobation which will probably gall as much as any open expression of antipathy. Bismarck's temper, naturally not the sweetest, has been made irritable by disease and by opposition. He is not likely to receive an affront with equanimity, and though he is happily not absolute master of Germany, the Emperor still retaining real authority, he has power to do great mischief in German Councils, and not only in German Councils, but in those of Europe. Turkey would probably be guided by him in determining the question between a British alliance and neutrality. It may be said with some justice that the Queen's antipathy to Bismarck is not diplomatic but personal, and that she has a right to the manifestation of her personal sentiments. Unfortunately, the effect is the same whether the affront is personal or diplomatic. In spite of all our philosophies of history and our talk of general laws, personal influences, even of a very petty kind, still make sport very often of the destinies of nations.

MR. WYLIE's book, noticed by us the other day, has one more point of interest. It has recently been the fashion to disparage the present state of industrial society not only by comparison with the ideal, but by comparison with the past. In the case of England Professor Rogers and others have placed the golden age of labour in the fifteenth century, after the rise of wages which ensued upon the decimation of the labouring population by the Black Death. The insurrection of the serfs in the very next reign, it must surely be owned, is rather a curious demonstration of industrial happiness and contentment. Perhaps it may be said that this was the strike by which the labouring-classes enforced better terms for themselves, and that after it they were happy. If they were, they continued in the reign of Henry IV. to show their sense of happiness in a curious manner. A reign of turbulence, lawlessness and violence is hardly a proof of general satisfaction. After the political disturbances in the beginning of the reign "law," says Mr. Wylie, "was powerless, and in the general derangement private malice found vent in indiscriminate robbery and murder." The London apprentices, gathering by thousands, fought pitched battles in the narrow streets where many were beaten, kicked or crushed to death. In the country raids were made, houses pillaged and cattle swept off by armed bands of marauders; highway robbery was everywhere rife; the neighbourhood of London was no safer than the provinces, and the officers of the law could not go abroad without a guard. Nor in the spirit of legislation do we see anything superior to the class-selfishness which is alleged to govern all industrial arrangements at the present day. Parliament enacts that no farm labourer or worker in the fields shall be allowed to become an apprentice or learn a mystery or trade unless his parents can pay 40s. a year or have personal property to the value of £40, the object evidently being to bind the farm labourers to the soil and keep down the market for that kind of labour. The same interest appears to dictate the inaction that labourers shall not be hired by the week nor take wages for working on vigils or feast days. Regulations about the dress of different orders are also expressive of class-jealousy. In France again, Utopists of different schools, ecclesiastical and socialistic, have been saying that everybody was happier in the past, when labour was regulated by fraternal guilds, and when instead of unbridled competition and the selfish maxims of economists, the influence of the Catholic Church was paramount in the industrial world. In the *Revue des Deux Mondes* M. D'Haussonville disposes of these roseate theories. He shows that the animating principle of the guild was not philanthropy but self-interest. "To shut against the working-man the road to the highest grade of his calling, or at least to strew his upward path with obstacles, was the chief aim of the masters and the inevitable consequence of their monopoly." The selfishness of caste blended with that of trade-monopoly, and in some of the guilds the highest grade was closed against all but the sons of masters. As to the