

"BYSTANDER" ON CURRENT EVENTS AND OPINIONS.

IN the last number of THE WEEK "A Southerner" took the "Bystander" to task, in a friendly way, for neglecting an important factor in the Presidential contest, to wit, the Negro Vote. It will be seen however that the American journals do the same. They seem to assume that the negro is for the present politically suppressed by the dominant race. It is natural to suppose that his sympathy is with the Republicans, as they struck off his chain: yet, since the removal of military pressure, and of Carpet-Bag rule, the South has been Democratic, and everybody seems to take it for granted that it will be Democratic still. The only doubt raised as to the support of Cleveland by the Southern States, is on the fantastic ground of his having been once obliged to act as hangman, and thus contracted a social taint offensive to the nostrils of Southern chivalry. With the serious character of the Negro Question, no one who has paid any attention to American problems can fail to be impressed. Instead of dying out, as was expected, the Negro race is multiplying fast, its physique is excellent, and better adapted to the climate than that of the whites; but it can never blend with the whites; intermarriage is impossible, and the concubinage which before the abolition of slavery gave birth to a mixed population has, since abolition, almost ceased. Thus there will be two races, socially as well as physically distinct, and too probably antagonistic, under the same political roof. There is nothing like this situation in history, because in all other cases slave races, when emancipated, have gradually mingled with the master race. What will be the ultimate result, nobody pretends to say: for the present, it is likely that a sense of intellectual inferiority, together with the tradition of servitude, will lead the blacks to acquiesce in the leadership of the whites, while the whites will be kept united by the fear of losing their supremacy. "A Southerner" is evidently not an optimist in his views respecting American institutions; few Southerners are; and perhaps in his prognostication of general trouble to the Union from the conflict of races at the South he overlooks or under-rates the saving effect of the Federal system, under which, so long as its essential character is preserved, each State is a little nation in itself and may keep social trouble beyond its borders. Mormonism, which is included in his catalogue of perils, may cause embarrassment to the Confederation, though there is a good deal of demagogic exaggeration on the subject; but it does not taint New England life. "A Southerner" however is mistaken in supposing that the "Bystander" "advocates" Annexation. The "Bystander" thinks that he distinctly sees, and having no motive for dissembling, he frankly avows his conviction, that the great forces on this continent are working towards an ultimate reunion of the English-speaking race. Morally he hopes, though not politically, the reunion will embrace the Mother Country of all. But he has always said that no one with a particle of statesmanship in his composition would wish to forestall opinion or force events. Commercial Union he advocates, believing that without it the people of Canada cannot reap the fruits of their industry, or enjoy their full measure of prosperity; but Commercial Union is perfectly separable from political annexation.

RUMOURS of a compromise between the Liberal leaders and the leaders of the House of Lords come to us from England, but they are vague and apparently baseless. That Lord Salisbury's mind is now going through its usual process, and that he repents of his temerity in leading his party into its present position, is more than likely; but to retire without ruinous humiliation is not easy, and the difficulty is only increased by the Tory counter-agitation. It is possible, however, even yet, that a bridge of retreat may be made. Royalty may interpose on the ground of danger to the realm from a collision between the two branches of the Legislature, and Lord Salisbury may find it consistent with his honour to bow to the wish of his sovereign, though he refuses to yield to the demands of his opponents. On which side the heart of Royalty is cannot be doubted; but its sympathies may give way to its fears; and there seems to be reason for believing that the Heir to the Crown has expressed his wish that the Franchise Bill should pass. The Royal Family, we may be sure, has some adviser, who more or less plays the part once played by Stockmar, and counsels it in its own interest irrespective of that of the political parties and their chiefs. Such an adviser cannot fail to see that if the Lords persist in the rejection of the Franchise Bill trouble for Royalty is in store. A creation of fifty new Peers, and no less a number would be required to swamp the adverse majority, would be a necessity in the last degree unwelcome, which yet, constitutionally, could not be evaded. It is possible by bringing in a Redistribution Bill to satisfy the ostensible requirements of the Peers, though by no means to remove their real objections. Mr. Gladstone will certainly avoid, if possible, the task of "mending or ending"

the House of Lords. Notwithstanding the almost Radical policy of his later years, his social connections with the aristocracy are still strong, and his elevation of the Poet Laureate to the peerage is a singular proof of the influence which the spell of rank still has over his mind. In his recent speeches his real object has evidently been by solemn warnings and adjurations to induce the Lords to give way and avert the collision which the more thorough-going Reformers of his party would very willingly provoke. A compromise is the probable issue of the present imbroglio; but the House of Lords will not have passed through this conflict, and the raking controversy to which this conflict has given birth, without being brought several steps nearer its inevitable end.

THAT the House of Commons needs reform as well as the House of Lords its conduct on the Irish question is enough to prove. "It is impossible," says an independent English journal, "to know whether the rumour that the Parnellites will in November strike a bargain with the Tories is or is not well founded." The remark is made without any expression of indignation or of belief that, in forming an alliance the profligacy of which is almost indescribable, faction would be exceeding the limit of its natural vileness. The journal proceeds to review the state of relations with Ireland. Bitter dislike of Englishmen, it says with perfect truth, is being excited by the agitators just as much as ever, and seems to grow with every English concession, and to be fed by every new example of English justice and sympathy. With Irishmen in every kind of post throughout the Empire—commanding in Egypt, governing in India, ruling in the colonies—Irishmen are entreated never to rest till in Ireland there are no Englishmen. Ireland exists by its exports to England, but all English imports are to be banned by Irishmen; and while every Irishman who chooses competes all over the earth for English appointments, the true patriot is exhorted by Mr. Redmond to boycott all who even by being passive take the English side. "What is the remedy?" asks the journal, and it answers its own question by saying that there is none. There is a remedy which would be at once effectual, without martial law, without bayonets, without the shedding of blood, or any of the evil consequences of coercion. Let the House of Commons lay aside faction, remember its duty to the country, and show a firm determination to maintain the Union: in a few months from that time the disunionist agitation will be dead. Matters would never have come to the present pass, or to anything like the present pass, nor would agrarian conspiracy and murder have ever stalked over the unhappy island, and added another deadly legacy to the heritage of hate, if in any tolerable measure patriotism had reigned in Parliament. Instead of patriotism faction has reigned unbridled and supreme. There is something peculiarly revolting in the intrigue of a section of the Tories with Irish rebellion which everybody knows they would, if they were securely in possession of power, at once conciliate with grapeshot. But Tory selfishness has a rival in that section of the Radicals which has done its best to foster what it styles the Irish revolution, and to cut the sinews of national resistance to dismemberment. These men must know well that for the sake of the Irish vote they are betraying not only the cause of the country, for which they have probably brought themselves to care little, but that of civilization. They can have no doubt what a republic of Biggars, Sextons, and Healeys would be. Even Mr. Gladstone yields to the sinister influence and fails to do what in his place seems the plainest of all duties. Surely he ought long ago to have declared that he would never consent to the severance of the legislative Union. Such a declaration from his lips could not have failed to lend strength to the loyal party in Ireland. But it would have spoiled the game of the Radicals, who want to keep the hope of unlimited concession dangling before the eyes of Disunionists till the Irish vote shall have lifted them into power. When the Irish vote shall have lifted them into power they no doubt expect, by some compromise, to avert disunion; but they may find that the subtler confederate is sometimes duped by the less subtle. The Irish leaders have the inestimable advantage of thoroughly knowing their own minds. What they are bent on having is a separate government with themselves at the head of it; and if they can help it they will not be satisfied with less. The bourne towards which all parties are at present driving is violence, if not civil war. The nation, mystified, bewildered, without a leader, clinging, in spite of what has happened, to a vague belief in the administrative omniscience of Mr. Gladstone, does not yet realize the danger of dismemberment. When it does, it will resist; and as disunion will by that time have gained great strength and confidence from the weakness of Government and the worse than weakness of the factions, it is too probable that there will be rough work, and the Irish soil, already soaked with civil blood, will drink that accursed dew once more.