

A PERUSAL of the Republican Platform is enough at once to show anyone familiar with the tricks of the political vocabulary what spirit prevailed in the Convention. Reform of the Tariff is repudiated, and it is demanded that the imposition of duties on foreign imports shall be made not for revenue only but for the purpose of increasing the profits of the manufacturers, whose objects are shrouded in the usual veil of cunning phrases about diversities of industry and the rights and wages of labourers. In order to get rid of the surplus produced by over-taxation, and at the same time to gain the soldier's vote, the Republican party pledges itself to go on squandering in pensions sums which dwarf the most monstrous pension-list of European monarchies in the most corrupt times. All sorts of claptrap schemes for the legislative improvement of the lot of the working man, receive the kiss of electioneering hypocrisy. The eight hours law is of course included in the list, though few members of the Convention can be such simpletons as to believe that an hour is an equal measure of all kinds of labour. As wool-growing does not pay so well as other things in the United States, the evil is to be corrected by compelling the people to pay more for the wool which they find it necessary to import. To propitiate the silver kings bi-metallism is embraced, and governments are called upon to fix the relative values of gold and silver, as though it were possible for any power on earth to maintain an unchanging ratio between two values, each of which is constantly changing. Fervent proclamations of universal freedom, equality and justice are followed by the avowal of a resolution to deny the right of labour to the Chinese. The revival of the mercantile marine is to be encouraged while the exclusion of the material for ship-building is to be maintained. Mormonism is of course denounced and threatened with extermination by the sword; but the fulfilment of the threat would be improvident as it would extinguish an invaluable magazine of cant. A faint profession of allegiance to Civil Service Reform is a nominal tribute to public morality and to the sentiment of that section of the party of which Mr. George W. Curtis is the foremost man: it has probably no practical significance. The whole document, like platforms in general, is a curious comment on the assertion that the people are educated, and their interest in politics is kept alive, by the presentation of great questions in connection with presidential contests. Presented the questions are, but only as they serve the ends of electioneering trickery, and in a cant language peculiar to the framers of electioneering manifestoes of which the object is to hide the truth.

In England the nomination of Mr. Blaine seems to be regarded as a sinister triumph of the Irish vote. The impression is exaggerated. But there is no doubt that Mr. Blaine has resorted, without any fastidious scruples, to this as well as other sources of popularity. No one can mistake the meaning of that plank in the platform which declares that "everywhere the protection accorded to citizens of American birth must be secured to citizens of America by adoption;" or, it might be added, by fraudulent breach of the naturalization laws. A change seems to have begun in the party relations of the American Irish. In England the Irish hover between the two camps; so they do in Canada; so they do in Australia, where local writers on politics complain that this shifting influence renders it almost impossible to carry on representative government. In England their ambiguous manœuvres were the chief agency in reducing the House of Commons to that anarchic state from which Mr. Gladstone has, with very imperfect success, attempted to bring it back to order by the new rules. But in the United States they have always remained in one camp. They have adhered, in spite of all Republican allurements, steadfastly and in a mass, to the Democratic party. Slavery, to the end of its days, received their undeviating and almost solid support. If they should now disengage themselves from their old allegiance, and begin to play the same game which they have played elsewhere, their political power may for a time be increased, because both parties will be courting their suffrage; but, on the other hand, they will no longer be masters, to the extent to which they have hitherto been, of the Democratic party, and that party may, in course of time, take its character entirely from its other elements, and become simply conservative. If it could assume that character without delay, let Tammany go, and, at the same time, declare boldly for tariff reform, it would at once become respectable, and it would soon become strong. But parties seldom have courage or forecast. They will always renounce or compromise the future rather than risk the loss of any immediate support—above all, rather than face a split.

If the Emperor Nicholas looks down in spirit on the diplomatic scene, he must be enjoying a grim satisfaction. It was by proposing a partition of the Turkish Empire, in which Egypt was to fall to the share of England, that he aroused a whirlwind of indignation, and brought on

himself the Crimean War. Now that the Eastern question is re-opened Russia will scarcely remain unmoved. Her internal state is not so desperately bad as readers either of the reports of the stockmarket or of essays on Nihilism may suppose. Her finances are not in good order; but her debt compared with her undeveloped and available resources is not very large; and financial embarrassment does not affect a nation in a comparatively rude state as it affects the sensitive frame of a highly organized community. All the best authorities on the subject agree in saying that the sympathy with Nihilism does not extend to any considerable section of the nation. It is almost confined to those who have personal grounds of discontent, noblemen reduced to bankruptcy by the consequences of the emancipation of the Serfs, officials whose places have been abolished, or who have been dismissed for misconduct, sons of the clergy and others unable, in the close and caste-like organizations of Russian society, to find for themselves a satisfactory sphere. The number of speculative Nihilists appears to be very small, as indeed in any community in which property and marriage exist the number of those who are declared foes to both, as well as of the whole system of social morality, must be. In the army it seems that the disaffection is confined to a few malcontents among the subalterns. There is a large party in favour of constitutional reform, and increased liberty of the press, but this party is loyal to the throne, and sees in the Nihilists its worst enemies. Russia, therefore, is not, as some writers seem to assume, paralyzed or incapable of taking advantage of an opportunity. She might find action abroad a relief from such difficulties as exist at home. That she aims at the conquest of British India is, in the opinion of all cool-headed men, a baseless belief, whatever loose talk there may be in her guardrooms, and whatever menaces may be thrown out by her journals when diplomatic bickerings are going on. Her empire in Central Asia has grown as that of England in Southern Asia has grown, and as such empires generally grow, by successive subjugations of restless and predatory tribes with which she has come into collision on her frontier. There is a wide step from extension of this kind to a deliberate invasion of the dominions of another civilized power. These are not the days of Genghis Khan, and a Czar must be intoxicated with despotism indeed, if he fancies it possible to reign at once in Petersburg and in Calcutta. That Russia, while she is threatened and badgered by British Jingoism should be inclined to take possession of points of vantage is not unnatural: England has in the same manner tried to make a bastion and a sally-port of Afghanistan. But it is not to British India that the aspirations of Russia point; they point to a free passage through the Dardanelles into the Mediterranean. This is her constant mark, and the fixed object of her desire. It is an aim perfectly natural, since every great empire must crave for access to an open sea; and being natural, it is sure to be pursued with a tenacity which must in the end triumph over all the artificial and temporary combinations formed by the jealousy of other powers. Into the Mediterranean Russia will infallibly make her way; the only question is whether she shall appear there as the friend or the enemy of England. Jingoism does its best to determine that she shall appear as an enemy of England, and as the future ally of France in any complication which may arise; but there is no reason in the nature of things why she should not appear as the best of friends.

MR. HALL's treatise on Ireland has not yet come into our hands. But unless English journals mistake its import or over-estimate its importance, it strongly confirms that view of the Irish question which has found expression in these papers. Mr. Hall, it seems, maintains, as the "Bystander" has always maintained, that the island is incapable of affording a decent livelihood to a large population. Owing to the wetness of the climate it is not well suited even to the growth of the potato. It is fit only for cattle breeding and for the production of butter and cheese. When, in such a country, population multiplies recklessly and thriftlessly, suffering and, if the potato fails, famine, is the inevitable result. The political institutions are no more responsible for the destitution and the barbarism than they are for the rainfall, nor would any alteration that could be made in them remove, or materially help to remove, the root of the evil. Nothing will remove the root of the evil but the conversion of the land to its proper uses, and the departure of the population which now starves upon it to some country where it can find bread and the means of civilized existence. To say that the Government organizes the famines is the mere delirium of hatred. Political incendiarism simply aggravates the sufferings of the people by turning them from industry, by repelling the application of the economical remedy, and by rendering all property insecure and preventing the investment of capital and the development of such resources as the island really possesses. It is in the lulls of political agitation that Irish wealth has increased and the island has enjoyed a measure of prosperity.