

Hartington, in his speech at Rossendale, two or three weeks ago, did not, so far as we can discover, object to the principle itself, but dwelt on the improbability of its becoming law at any very near date. Even were Mr. Gladstone returned to power, the Irish Question would, he contended, swallow up all others, and the electors who had been gained by Mr. Gladstone's adherence to the principle of "One man, one vote," would have to put off the realization of their hopes until some indefinite future after the Irish Question had been finally settled. On the other hand, Sir George Trevelyan, in a speech at Newbury, promised that when the Liberals next come into power they would begin, not with the Irish Question, but by passing a law restricting every elector to one vote. *The Spectator* observes that it has no objection to the law, but pertinently inquires why it should be taken for granted that it will have a Radical effect when passed, seeing that household suffrage has been found, in all the larger constituencies, consistent with a Conservative majority. Into that question we need not enter, though it is an interesting one for English politicians. It might become still more interesting were it to happen, as in the light of past events does not seem impossible, that the Conservative leaders, aided by their Liberal allies, should, without waiting Mr. Gladstone's opportunity, adopt the principle and turn it to their own account. This might well be done by the authors of the Local Government Bill. It would certainly be hard for Tory or Liberal to show any good reason why the citizen whose property is scattered over three or four constituencies should have three or four votes, while his neighbour who owns an equal amount in one locality is restricted to a single vote.

LORD SALISBURY'S public announcement that he, personally, is in favour of giving women the political franchise must have been positively startling to many an English Tory of the old school. Such a declaration from one who is at the same time a representative of English aristocracy and the leader of a Conservative Government seems, at first thought, a phenomenon rather than a sign of the times. When, however, one recalls the change that has been coming over English public sentiment during these late eventful years, in regard to woman's work and sphere; when he remembers what women have been doing in connection with school boards and other public bodies, and as members of political leagues, as personal canvassers, and as platform orators, surprise will give way to other emotions, which will be of widely diverse character, according to the individual standpoint and predilection. But whatever may be the feelings of the representative of the lordly class who have so long monopolized the franchise, whether he will or will not, the fair cohorts are marching on, and will evidently not stop short of the polling booth. Lord Salisbury's confession of faith will give fresh inspiration and impulse for the final attack. This much at least is certain. When the majority of the good and true women of the land distinctly and unitedly demand the franchise there is no power in England or America which can long withhold it from them. The wedge has been fairly entered in England in the extension of the suffrage to woman in local affairs, granted by the new Local Government Bill, and may be driven home at the first opportunity.

STRIKINGLY suggestive of the way things may be done where women hold the ballot, and some burning question fires the blood, is the story of the late municipal elections in Boston, Mass., when more than 18,000 women marched to the polls, defeated Mr. O'Brien, the present Mayor, who had been elected by large majorities during four consecutive years, and elected Mr. Hart to take his place. Mr. O'Brien was regarded as the candidate of the "ring" controlling the City Hall machine, Mr. Hart as the citizen's candidate. So far the result seems to have been hailed by all citizens of the better class, of both parties, as the pledge of a purer administration of civic affairs. Truth to tell, however, the real reason for the vehement action of the Boston women, of whom not more than 2,000 had ever voted on a previous occasion, lies deeper than a mere matter of civic reform. The movement had its origin in the question of Roman Catholic influence in the Public Schools, over which all Boston has been in a furore for some time past. That question arose, as our readers will remember, in connection with the Roman Catholic objection to the teachings of a certain teacher and a certain text-book in one of the Public Schools—teachings which misrepresented, as Catholics protest and as fair-minded Protestants, we believe, admit, the Catholic doctrine of the indulgence. The Catholic influence on the School Board prevailed. The teacher was

dismissed and the text-book struck off the list. The result, due largely to the women's vote, is the replacing of the Catholic majority on the School Board by a Protestant majority. It is open to the cynical objector to say that this result is the outcome of sectarian prejudice, rather than of a dispassionate regard to the right and wrong in the case. Hence he may moralize on the danger to society in surrendering control of public affairs to those who will be governed by feeling rather than by reason. As, however, the Catholic women may be trusted to use the ballot as well as their Protestant sisters, and as in this case the Catholics still retain a proportionate representation on the Board, while the general character of the civic officers has been greatly improved, the objection will scarcely excite much alarm.

IF it were sought to characterize by a single word the relations subsisting in the Imperial House of Commons, between the occupants of the treasury benches and their followers, and the members seated upon the opposite side of the House, it would be, we think, *leniency*. Throughout all sorts of obstructionary tactics, throughout the most flagrant abuse of the usages of Parliament, throughout every form of opposition the Government has kept its temper, and instead of summarily moving closure, has listened patiently to amendment after amendment, to speech after speech, has accepted proposals, promised explanations, supplied returns, and done everything in their power to show that their endeavour was not simply to continue in power, but to carry Bills they believed the country to be in need of. They might have ridden rough-shod over their opponents, with a splendid majority always to be counted on, they might never have hesitated in moving the closure, and might have carried everything before them with a high hand. Instead of this, with a very laudable desire to prove to the country that they were perfectly willing to give their opponents fair play, they have allowed nothing to disturb their equanimity. Throughout the history of Lord Salisbury's régime are scattered evidences of this, but one of the most noticeable occurred quite recently, the arrangement, namely, that Irish members against whom summonses had been issued were not interfered with during the debates on the Irish estimates. Probably only the ministry know how much trouble and annoyance a few obstreperous Irish members can cause. It is surely evidence of their long-suffering when they make such an arrangement as this. The Sheehy incident, too, over which such a fuss was made, was another example of leniency. Mr. Sexton insisted that the committee should sit "forthwith." The House was busy with that very important Ashbourne Act and Mr. W. H. Smith was doing his best to hurry on to the estimates. Nevertheless the committee sat "forthwith" and the sitting was suspended. We hope the country will recollect little incidents of this kind at the next general elections.

NO Gladstonoclast—and politicians in England may now be roughly divided into Gladstonolaters and Gladstonoclasts—no Gladstonoclast will be surprised at any assertion of Mr. Gladstone's. But if it were possible for any to surprise him it would be the following sentence in a letter to Mr. L. Dillon, published in an English newspaper:—"I have always desired the settlement of the Irish question by the Tories . . . and I have made every effort in my power to promote such settlement." Of all rich things said by Mr. Gladstone (and of late years he has said a good many) this is the richest. Why, not even the most Conservative of the Liberal-Unionists would have or could have ("would" and "could" have, we fear, lost their distinctions with Mr. Gladstone) written such a sentence. But it is waste of words to attempt to reconcile this many-opinioned man's words with his acts. All that can be said is that, if he thinks the "Irish Question" (whatever that may mean) can be "settled" off hand by a Home Rule Bill, his own party would be the first to vote against it. For is not the settlement of the Irish question the one thing that Irish agitators do not want? Where then would be their occupation—and their remuneration? They want, certainly, an Irish Parliament. But what for? Merely as a means to carry on agitation. It would be a more powerful lever than is now the Parnellite party in the House of Commons; that is all. That it would mean a settlement of the Irish Question no one in his wildest moments could imagine.

AND what politician on either side of the House could define what is meant by the "Irish Question"? It is a network of questions. It includes such diverse problems as that of dealing with land tenure, with arrears of rent,

with periods of distress, with paid demagogues, with intimidation, with local government in all its branches, with the relations of the Executive with the Home Government, with police control, with the appointment of magistrates, with the diversities of religion, with the influence of the Roman Catholic priesthood, with the fate of Ulster, with absenteeism, with the institution and improvements of trades and manufactures, with Ireland's relationships with her brethren across the Atlantic, with elementary and secondary education—these are only a few of the problems included in the "Irish Question." The settlement of such a question will be not the work of one Bill or of one Session, probably not of one Parliament or of one party; it will be the progressive work of generations of unbiassed statesmen. What an obstacle has Mr. Gladstone already succeeded in putting in their way! It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

EVEN those who are in the best position for forming a judgment can do little more than guess whether the story of the alleged capture of Emin Pasha and a "white traveller" by the Madhi's forces is true or false. On the one hand the notorious untruthfulness of Osman Digma, the writer of the letter received at Suakin, deprives his personal assertion of any weight on its own account. Again, the old date of the cartridges sent with the letter as confirmation, is strongly suggestive of fraud. There is, still further, the unaccountable and suspicious absence of any news through other channels of a battle between Emin's forces and those of the Madhi, though such news would have been pretty sure to travel as fast by means of missionary despatches and otherwise, as by the messengers to Osman Digma. On the other hand, the letter, recognized by General Grenfell as the original one he had drafted and delivered to Stanley for the Khedive, seems, at first thought, almost conclusive in support of the alleged capture. But even this is by no means absolute confirmation, seeing that there are several other ways in which the letter might have come into the possession of the enemy, e.g., by the capture of scouts carrying the letter to Emin, the capture of Emin himself after receiving it, the treachery of servants, etc. If any such supposition can be regarded as at all tenable, then the assumption that the possession of the letter had suggested the whole scheme as a means for securing a respite at Suakin, is far from unreasonable. On the whole there seems no sufficient ground for concluding that the statements of the letter are true, or that either Emin or Stanley has been captured, though there is more reason to fear in the case of the former than in that of the latter.

IN any event, the British Government is placed in a most trying position. It is very easy for critics to say now that an attempt to conquer the Soudan would be an attempt to fight against Nature, and that, in view of the impossibility of attaining any complete result, the continued defence of Suakin is useless and illogical. But is Egypt to be abandoned after all that has been done by British capital, financial skill, and pluck to rescue her for civilization and progress? Are Emin Pasha and Stanley to be left to the fate of Gordon? Is British prestige to be ruined in the eyes of the Arabs, and of all the barbarous tribes of Africa? If there is really no possibility of freeing the Soudan from the despotism of the Madhi and his fanatical followers, there still may be, surely, some means of retaining what has been gained in the more accessible parts of Egypt. Englishmen may well shrink, perhaps, from the thought of another Soudan Expedition, but it would ill accord with British tradition to confess defeat at Suakin, and hand over the Egyptians there to the tender mercies of the Arab hordes.

THE prompt, if not very formidable, demonstration made by the United States against Hayti suggests that it may be no safer to count on the magnanimity of great Republics, than on that of great monarchies, in their dealings with feeble States. The seizure of the American vessel by the Haytian authorities who are for the moment in the ascendant is probably unlawful; at least it has been so declared by the Washington Government, to whom the Haytians trustfully referred it. But seeing that no question of the life or freedom of American citizens is involved, such precipitancy in dealing with a petty sister republic seems, to say the least, somewhat unkind. No such hasty action, it may be safely averred, would have been decided on, had the offending State been even a moderately strong one. What would our American neighbours have said had England been equally hasty in demand,