

war, of carrying it into effect by virtual co-operation with a foreign enemy in embarrassing the Government of his own country. But on the Liberal side, also, though the dearth is not so conspicuous, there is a dearth. When Mr. Gladstone, the relic of a bygone generation, shall have retired, and putting Mr. Bright out of the question, Lord Hartington is the best qualified to lead; and yet nature can by no means be said to have crowned Lord Hartington a leader. The cause of this sterility is hard to assign. No doubt the House of Commons has been largely filled of late by local plutocrats who enter it late in life, often with social rather than political aims, and without having turned their minds to public questions. But there are probably other causes at work to divert the best intellect of the nation from public life: the virulence of faction which repels the larger natures may be one; the tyrannical narrowness of the Caucus may be another; perhaps the declining influence of parliamentary debates, compared with the growing influence of the Press, may be a third. But whatever may be the account of the matter, the upshot is that the House of Commons, at a most serious crisis of the national history, both external and domestic, is becoming an assembly without leaders, and threatens to degenerate into a factious mob.

In France the Ferry Ministry having fallen, and De Freycinet having failed to form a government with himself for head, the President of the Republic has had recourse to M. Brisson, the President of the Chamber of Deputies, who is understood to be a worthy man, and to be brought forward not by ambitious desire of the Premiership, but by a feeling of duty to the country. We shall see whether he and his cabinet can manage to float on the angry waves and heady cross-currents of French faction. His programme, if it is rightly reported, is thoroughly liberal, and Catholics, who exult over the downfall of M. Ferry, as that of the arch enemy of the faith, will have occasion to moderate their transports if the separation of the Church from the State and the secularization of Church property are really a part of the programme of his successor. The French Government seems to have made, or to be on the point of making, peace with China, and on terms which appear to imply a sudden access of moderation, since the reverses, on the side of France. But the suspicion obtrudes itself that this embroilment in Europe may have something to do with the renunciation of aggression in China; and that France may be preparing to exert her power of mischief on a nearer and more interesting field. She has of late been cultivating the Russian alliance, her ambition has never ceased to point to Egypt, and Waterloo is still in her heart.

"THANK God, that is war," cried Lord Stratford de Redcliffe when the news arrived of the engagement between the Russian and Turkish squadrons at Sinope. The exclamation betrayed his folly, his wickedness, his infidelity to the Government, whose ambassador he was, and which had been striving to hold back the exasperated Turk and save the world from havoc. The war for which he thanked God came; it wasted myriads of lives, enormous quantities of the fruits of human labour; worst of all, it let loose again upon Europe the fiend who had then been chained for forty years; and of its results, so dearly purchased, absolutely nothing now remains. The remembrance of Sinope and of that which ensued lent a funeral sound to the tidings of the collision between Russians and Afghans on the frontier of Afghanistan. As from the lips of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe so from those of the Jingo there leaps the exulting cry, "Thank God, that is war." "They are ringing the bells to-day," said Walpole, when he heard the sounds of rejoicing for the proclamation of war against Spain, "but they will be wringing their hands to-morrow." If Russia has aggressed and is bent upon aggression, or if her Government is unable to control the violence of its frontier commanders, war there must be: high-handed injustice cannot be allowed to work its will over the world. In our present stage of civilization the action of international tribunals is still so limited and so feeble that when diplomacy has failed there is generally no appeal except to the arbitration of the sword. But no man in whose brain any sense or in whose heart any humanity resides can look on the necessity otherwise than with sadness, or would like to think that he had himself by act or word, even in the very humblest sphere, added strength to the forces which make for war. In the days of citizen soldiers, when every member of the community had to take the field in person, there was a check on passion which there is not in these days of standing armies, when your Jingo, after magnanimously voting and shouting for a warlike policy, has only to sit at home and enjoy stimulating narratives of carnage over his tea and muffin. The temporary gains which a vast military expenditure brings to certain trades are filched from the hard-earned store of the community at large, and they soon turn to losses even in the case of those into whose pockets they come. During the

Crimean War Canada revelled in high prices for her grain; but the brief inflation was soon followed by the ruinous depression of 1857. Let us face the calamity of war if it comes like men and patriots; but let us remember that it is a calamity, and like men and patriots strive to avert it, or at least refrain from invoking it or rejoicing at its approach.

THE Prince of Wales' visit to Ireland has been chequered by some disturbance evidently got up by the satellites of Mr. Parnell. Yet his reception has proved how great the influence of the Royal presence for good would have been and how much the Court has thrown away by its persistent refusal to visit Ireland. To send about telegrams of congratulation or condolence to all sorts of people in every part of the world costs neither effort nor self-sacrifice; but to spend a summer in the Phoenix Park or at Killarney when Osborne or Balmoral is more agreeable costs a small amount of self-sacrifice, of which Royalty has simply no idea, and which no courtier would ever venture to suggest. Another thing which, though it could not be made more certain, has been made more evident by the Prince's visit is the utter falsehood of the assumption that Ireland is a unit in favour of Disunion, and that Disunionism is synonymous with the Irish cause. To say nothing of the Protestant North, which is invariably left out of sight though it contains the very flower of the population, in Dublin itself it is clear that not only are there adherents of the Union but Unionism has the upper hand. The educated and wealthy classes throughout the island are Unionists almost to a man, and it may safely be said that history affords no example of a political movement, reasonable in its origin and deserving of success, in which a section at least of the educated and wealthy classes has not taken part. The truth is that since 1832, when the Reform Bill bestowed self-government on the three Kingdoms in common, whatever economical disasters and suffering there may have been, there has been no political tyranny or oppression of any sort in Ireland. The establishment of the religion of the minority lingered, it is true, for a time; but this also has now been consigned to the grave of the intolerant past. There were still defects in the institutions both of Great Britain and of Ireland which Parliament has had to amend, and which it was in course of amending when this utterly unprovoked rebellion broke out. Agrarian distress there has been, and out of this demagogues have gathered fuel for the fire of political sedition by identifying in the minds of the people the existence of the Union with the payment of rent. No other real motive power is there in this political movement. It will collapse at once like O'Connell's Repeal Agitation or Smith O'Brien's insurrection if the material condition of the people could be improved. Where misery is the result of a rapid increase of population on an unfruitful soil, to improve the material condition of the people otherwise than by emigration on a large scale is scarcely possible; this is the knot of the Irish difficulty, which no Fenian Republic could untie. A Fenian Republic would simply drive capital from the island, paralyse production, and like the Jacobin Republic, bless the people with a dearth of bread.

THERE is a split in the Female Suffrage Party of England. Mr. Woodall, who is supposed to be the accredited organ of the party, is bringing on in the House of Commons a motion in favour of Widow and Spinster Suffrage. Against this Mrs. Jacob Bright, the wife of the Radical member for Manchester, feeling that she and other matrons will be left in the lurch, has entered a vehement protest. She denounces the Bill as a wrong and an insult to all married women, dwelling with much acrimony on the unsavoury fact that some of the spinsters are no better than they ought to be. Mrs. Bright asserts in an edifying manner the dignity of wives and of wedlock. But there is a certain machiavellism in the distinguished lady's line of argument. She cannot help letting us see that her paramount object in seeking the suffrage for married women is not the vindication of the dignity of matrimony but the total abolition of "coverture," that is of the political unity of the family, and the complete establishment of duality, or in other words of domestic anarchy, in its place. The abolition of "coverture," she avows, has been the principle for which she and her sister advocates of Female Suffrage have worked from the beginning. This is what we have always said; it is against the headship and the unity of the family that the movement is really directed; and it is to the question whether in the interest of both sexes and of the children it is desirable that the headship and the unity of the family should cease to exist, that the attention of those who deal with this matter ought to be turned. To legislate amiss on a subject fundamentally affecting the constitution of the family is to strike society in the most vital point, and it is frightful to think of the laxity and the careless pliancy which many of our legislators show. The London *Queen* points out that if Mrs. Jacob Bright had her way, the number of the women in England being consider-