NOTES ON THE ELECTIONS.

The elections have gone against the Gladstonites so far,—which, indeed, was only to be expected. Every constituency which returned a Tory at the last elections would return one with a bigger majority this time, and most of those that returned a Liberal by a narrow majority would now return a Tory,—in either case supposing there was no Irish vote to neutralise the Whig vote. Then all respectability, right down to the lowest ranks of the lower middle-class, will vote jingo: the clerks, grocers, gardeners, and general hangers-on of villa-dom, will of course vote on the same side. Traditional national spite and "rampant-lionism" will follow suit; and the obedient followers of big names, such as Bright and Chamberlain, will,—perhaps sometimes with a sigh,—put the cross against the name of the Jingo candidate. All this makes a very formidable reactionary phalanx. Against it is arrayed the personal following of Mr. Gladstone, which probably will make no so good an appearance at the polling-booths as it would in the streets; and lastly,—much lastly, it is to be feared,—the body of people who are convinced, either by study of the facts or instinctively, that it is neither creditable nor convenient for England to stagger along dragging a second Poland after her.

To investigate the chances of the elections in detail is rather the business of an election-agent than a human being. But, without being eager to risk a prophecy which next week may give the lie to it, does seem most probable that the new parliament will give us much the same party cohorts as the last; only of course the Whips and Jingo Radicals will go to Westminster pledged to a kind of loose alliance with the Tory Rump, from which will result wriggling, exasperating, humilitating and refreshing to the cynical onlooker. Meantime a lesson will be given to the devotees of parliamentary agitation and the believer in the perfection of "representation," if he will only use his senses and learn it. He may see, if he will, that the body of professional politicians formed by M.P.'s, candidates, and wire-pullers, is far more powerful than a reasonable man would expect it to be, judging from the very low average of the talent in that body. The constituencies do certainly allow themselves to be led, or rather driven, by the group of shuffling and intriguing self-seekers whom they have elevated to rule over them, and at the best consider that when they have voted for the candidate provided for them they have fulfilled all the duties of citizenship. In short, as a rule the voters expect everything to be done for them; and what the representatives really represent is unreasoning hatred for any implicit trust in the magical powers of the word "Representation."

It is humiliating indeed to think of the shouts of applause with which working men have greeted John Bright's last feat of digging himself up from the political grave, in which he has lain all these years, to oppose his galvanised corpse to the march of events. And yet it is more humiliating still to think that the Home Rulers would have been to-day but a powerless faction if Gladstone had not at last made up his mind to take them up.

As it is, "His Leadership" has undoubtedly pushed forward the cause of Revolution; nor can it be denied that he would never have attempted to do so until there had been some growing instinct in its favour. Nor if he is beaten in the elections will his defeat much check the growth of that instinct. As has been said before in these columns, the Tories and Jingoese have been driven to see the impossibility of mere coercion. What are they to do, then, when they find themselves apparently masters of the situation? They must bring forward their Home Rule measure, which will of course be framed in such a way as to give the Irish the shadow without the substance of independence—the "tub-to-the-whistle policy" is the only one possible to them. They will hope partly to tire out the Irish party and partly to divide them into moderates and irreconcilables: in the latter attempt they may succeed beyond their expectations, and beyond what is good for the health of their own party. The Irish may, and probably will, accept the compromise offered them,—accept it as a compromise, that is, without leaving off the agitation for complete independence. In a short time it will no more be a question of some Gladstone Bill, with its safeguards and constitutional provisions, but of something far more revolutionary. The Irish will be divided indeed, like the familiar demon in the old fable, cut by his unhappy employer into two unmanageable devils; and the more unmanageable will not be asking for a mere Dublin parliament, but will be claiming his right to do something with the country of Ireland itself, which will make it a fit dwelling-place for reasonable and happy people.

In short a triumph for the great Whig Rump or Moderate Party seems at hand, which will undoubtedly strengthen it very much in Parliament, and will overcome the parliamentary and constitutional opposition to its dull and eyeless tyranny; but may it not be hoped that its success, and the woodanness with which it stands in the way of the progress which it was once supposed to further, may open the eyes of ingenious people not welded to mere party names? It seems to me a fair hope, and that many driven back on themselves and compelled to turn away their hopes from the parliamentary squabble, will begin to bethmik of what the true end of politics is, and that a new party will begin to form outside Parliament, a party of the People prepared to help themselves, by education first, consultation next, and at last, when the happy day comes, by action. It seems to me that the defeat of the present attempt to give Home Rule to Ireland which is founded on a genuine popular instinct, will be a blessing in the form of a curse if it helps to purge people's minds of this waiting on parliamentary providence, which is such a heavy weight on our over-fatigued democracy.

On the other hand, if the Gladstonites manage to snatch a victory from the hands of the Whig-Tory-Jingo coalition, they will still find that the battle is to be fought over again: compromise, hesitation, evasion, and all the many forms of lawyer-like delay which so-called statesmanship has had such long practice in, will whittle their triumph away to nothing; and those of whom they have been in earnest in championing freedom and its hopes, will find out before long that the day which will make them parliamentary outcasts is only deferred and not got rid of. The Great Whig Rump will die hard, and even the first days of obvious Revolution will find it still there, still supposing itself the only real political party, still fulfilling its real function as the battle-flag, the war-borne standard of respectable legalized robbery.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

CO-OPERATION AND COMPETITION.

There are the forces relied on by the Socialist and the Individualist respectively. A comparison of the advantages or otherwise of each may help us to decide rightly between these two opposing principles.

Competition, it is said, stimulates every one to do his best; it finds out those exceptionally good, and rewards them by raising them above their fellows. The more good at business makes much money, hence all seek to be good; the more skilled at work gets higher wages, and perhaps eventually gets out of the working class altogether, hence all will try to become skilled. The ideal man of a competitive society is the man who has raised himself from the bottom and has become lord mayor. The looks which such society finds its youth to read are such as "Men who have Made Themselves," or "From Log Cabin to White House." The Individualist likes to see society in the form of