

CANT ABOUT THE EASTERN QUESTION.

Scatterbrained people, since the Porte sulks in Armenia and its Bedouins in Arabia murderously refuse to be clean, have started the old talk of "driving the Turk out of Europe." If the Eastern plot thickens we suppose that all the battered old implements of warfare, "the Sick Man of the East," "a bag and baggage policy," "Perish India" and the like will be taken down from the wall to form the equipment of this favored land's thousand and one soundly informed writers on the "Eastern question." We suppose so from a vivid remembrance of the phraseological horrors of the Russo-Turkish war as she was wrote in America.

But the entirely new phases of the Eastern question will make a misfit of most of the old terminology. Except for Bishop Coxe's essentially lyric reason of the purification of St. Sofia, Russia can find no excuse for driving the Turk out of Europe. For Europe took the Muscovite at his word at Berlin in 1878, freed the Christian subjects of the Sultan in Servia, Bulgaria, Roumania, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Roumelia and Montenegro, and left him without a Christian population under Moslem rule among which to send his emissaries. When these provinces, with their 3,550,000 Slavs and 200,000 Wallachs, were in one way or another liberated, the great outpouring of Russian blood and treasure, the fearful exposure of defects in the Russian military system of 1877-78 were made worse than dead loss, for then was Russia deprived of her one decent excuse for getting to the Bosphorus. The four or five million sub-

jects left to the Sultan in Europe are, in the main, Turkish and Albanian, without aspirations toward the sort of freedom that Russian rule affords, without a co-religious Russian affiliation, and quite insusceptible to Russian intrigue. The Pan-Slavonic cock died in the pit at Berlin, and never will it fight again below the Balkans. Spoliation must unmask itself and become the avowed as well as the inspiring motive of "a bag and baggage policy."

How much of hypocrisy there was in those old cries of Russia and Russophiles is shown by their utter apathy over the Armenian outrages. If the way to Constantinople lay through that stricken province, as it did eighteen years ago through Bulgaria, a Russian army would before now have been on the march, preceded by a war correspondent of the London Daily News to justify in advance its operations. Though Edward Freeman, compiler of that sapient and patriotic apostrophe, "Perish India," is dead and Mr. Gladstone is in retirement, their successors long since would have been found to fill Exeter Hall with tears, sighs and execrations of the Tory government. But soft! Come to think of it, this government, which so languidly responds to the cries of slaughtered Christians, isn't a Tory, but a Liberal, government, a rump Liberal, "Who-said-atrocities?" Gladstonian government at that!

The discussion of the new and interesting phases of the Eastern question will have to be divested of catchwords and cant. The question has outworn, outgrown them. And somewhere in desolate, wind-swept space, in twilight land, in no man's land, a cynical shape must regard the situation with a smile of amusedly contemptuous satisfaction on its ghostly Hebraic features—the shape of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, K. G.