

THE WEIGHT OF NOBLEMEN.

An English scientific person has made a careful examination of the weight of the English nobility for the last three generations. He finds that the grandfathers of the present nobility reached their greatest weight and largest circumference at the age of 40; that the last generation of noblemen reached their greatest breadth and width at 60, and that those of the present generation do not reach their greatest weight until the age of 70, at which age they weigh a little more than their fathers and grandfathers weighed at the same age.

These figures, of course, possess their meaning. The most obvious meaning is that the British nobleman is growing thinner in his youth as the successive generations come and go, and that the only fat noblemen are the very old ones. Their increased fatness cannot be the result of increased ease and contentment, for the lot of the old English nobleman is by no means as comfortable as it once was. He is attacked by Radical papers and Radical legislators in a way that must annoy him; he is threatened with the abolition of the House of Lords, a threat that certainly is not conducive to peace of mind, and he is not half as important a member of the body politic as he was thirty or sixty years ago. Nevertheless, he grows fat after he reaches 70. This is certainly somewhat strange.

The fact that the last two generations of noblemen attained their greatest weight at a comparatively early age may perhaps be explained by the fact that they led easier lives in their young days than young noblemen at present lead. The modern nobleman is what might be called a light weight at 40, whereas his grandfather at that age weighed 184 pounds. It may be that Mr. GLADSTONE, Mr. BRIGHT, and Mr. CHAMBERLAIN vex the souls of the young nobleman and keep him thin. When, however, he reaches the age of 70 he feels that the chances are that the House of Lords and respect for the aristocracy will outlast him. He therefore gains sufficient peace of mind to grow fat, and permits his sons to make themselves thin by contemplating the woes that the future has in store for them. Furthermore, it should be noted that there are few very old noblemen in the House of Commons exposed to the wearing effects of Mr. GLADSTONE'S oratory. The "grand old man" may talk the flesh off the bones of young Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL, but most of the old noblemen are out of the reach of his oratory.

The present generation of noblemen drink claret wines, while their fathers and grandfathers drank port and sherry. It is very certain that some French wines have a tendency to keep the consumer from growing fat, whereas the old-fashioned port-drinkers were, as a class, men of weight and width. It is quite possible that the physical deterioration of the younger British aristocracy is due to the light wines introduced by Mr. GLADSTONE, and his enemies have good reason to assume that Mr. GLADSTONE'S object in bringing French wines into England was to render thin and impoverished the blood of British noblemen.

Whatever may be the causes of the physical decadence of the British nobility, the fact remains, and may well make the British noblemen thoughtful. If the present tendency continues, the next generation of noblemen will be as thin and fragile as the cultured Bostonian "swell," and in the course of another generation British noblemen will become practically invisible. The Radicals need not trouble themselves to abolish the House of Lords, for, if left to themselves, the peers will disappear by a process closely analogous to that of drying up and blowing away.