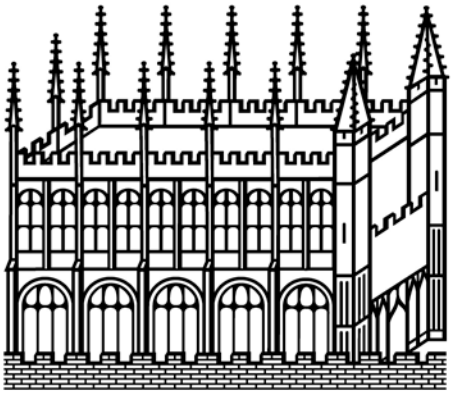

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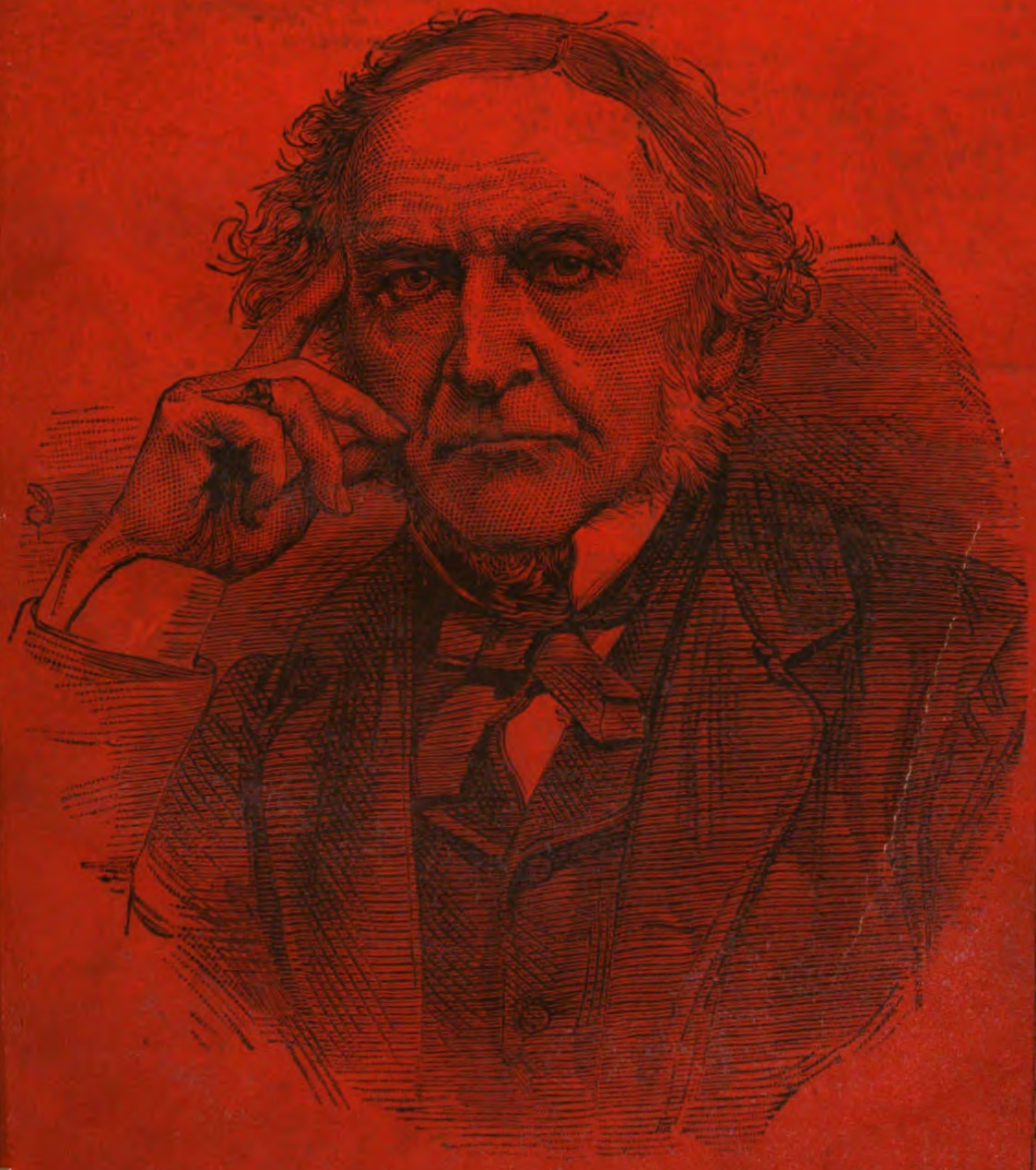
Gladstonian

LIBERALISM,

IN IDEA AND IN FACT.



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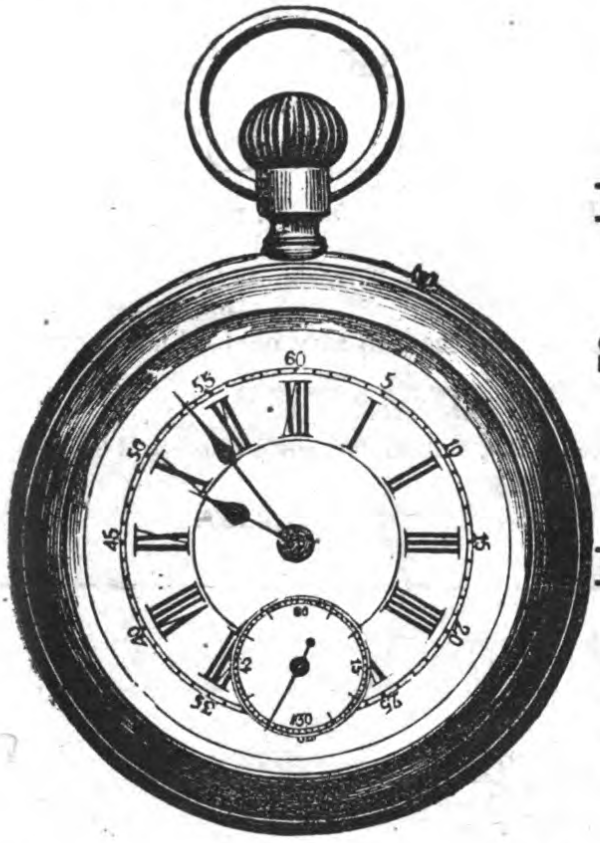

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Gladstonian Liberalism:

IN IDEA AND IN FACT.

BEING

AN ACCOUNT, HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL, OF THE SECOND ADMINISTRATION OF THE

RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.

From April 29th, 1880, to June 25th, 1885.

BY

George Brooks

" I have my thoughts. I am no party man,
I care for measures more than men, but think
Some little may depend upon the men ;
Something in fires depends upon the grate."

BAYLY'S *"Festus."*

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"YET it is to principles and not to persons that we look for stability in government. The union which is based on nothing stronger than the exigencies of party, or personal adherence, and which compels men to give a reluctant assent to a policy or to measures they secretly disapprove, is a false and artificial union. The strength of a party consists in the strength of its conviction, and convictions are based on principle alone. It therefore becomes a matter of paramount importance to consider and ascertain what are the principles on which the Liberal party of the future will take its stand, and which will be accepted and sanctioned by the votes of the people."

Edinburgh Review, July, 1885.

"Much will be forgotten before the elections. No one is better aware than Mr. Gladstone that the public memory is like a sieve, and that his own powers of reshaping and remodelling facts, so as to render them available for any purpose required at the moment, are still inexhaustible after forty years of incessant use. 'No memory is so short,' he has told us, as "Political memory." The party which can count upon forgetfulness need not trouble itself with repentance or conversion.' We know of no passage in all Mr. Gladstone's writings or speeches in which a profound truth is put into so few words."

Quarterly Review, July, 1885.

PREFACE.

THE Right Hon. J. Chamberlain, M.P., speaking at Birmingham, on June 3 of the present year, said:—"I will venture to assert that when the history of the last five years comes to be written, neither the Government of which I have the honour to be a member, nor the Parliament which was returned to power with such a tremendous enthusiasm five years ago, will have any cause to fear its verdict." Now the present writer does not flatter himself that he is writing proper history, nor does he presume that he is capable of doing so—even if the time for doing it had arrived. His aim is much more modest and practical. He wishes to place before his fellow-citizens, the electors of the United Kingdom, a slight record of the past five years, which, though it may not be dignified with the name of history, nor be quoted as an authority in future times, will at least show how the country has been governed during the past five years, and what title the men who have composed that Government, and likewise the men who opposed them, have to the confidence and support of the nation to which they both alike now make their appeal.

We make history fast now-a-days. Events crowd upon us so thickly that they make little impression, and are soon forgotten. The age of which most men know least is their own; the history of which they are most ignorant is that of the present generation. Old men are said to remember distinctly events which occurred in their youthful days, however forgetful they may be respecting those events which have happened later. The average citizen of our times is like the old men: he may have a tolerably full

and accurate knowledge of the comparatively remote past; but he has not, and he hardly can have, such knowledge of the immediate past, or of the present, though that, after all, is much the more important of the two. This work is designed to revivify, as well as record, the events of a momentous period in English history, so that they may live again in the memory, teach their lessons to the mind, and thus exert a vital and practical influence upon national conduct.

Accuracy in regard to all matters of fact has been carefully aimed at, and wherever vital questions are concerned it is believed that it has in the main been reached. Authorities are quoted where it is deemed necessary. But as the author is not an expert, and has had no access to special and exclusive sources of information; as, moreover, this work has been written in the spare moments snatched from the busy life of one who combines the avocations of a journalist and a Christian minister, the author feels that he may fairly claim indulgent treatment in respect of those portions of his work which may be found imperfect.

Impartiality is not claimed for this work. No man is strictly impartial, though he may strive to be, and may imagine he has succeeded in becoming so. But impartiality has been aimed at. It is true that opinions are freely expressed, but it is hoped they will be found to be the opinions, not of a party politician, but of an independent thinker, and above all, of a Christian man. If the author has succeeded, even approximately, in attaining his ideal, his work will have some claim to be regarded as a history plus a moral study of the period under review. In the past, history, although it is said to be "philosophy teaching by example," has been too much a dry chronicle of events, or has at best concerned itself merely with the "sovereigns and statesmen" whom Lord Beaconsfield mistakenly supposed to be the rulers of the world. It has not enough concerned itself with the people. History in

the future will have to yield to the ever-growing forces of democracy, and view all events from the standpoint of the common weal. It is hoped that something of that new tendency will be observed in this work.

Whether such a treatment of the facts, accurate, impartial, and morally just, will have the effect anticipated by Mr. Chamberlain, who is one of the parties interested, may be left to the judgment of intelligent readers.

G. B.

Benha Lodge,
West Dulwich,
London, S E.

INTRODUCTION.

THE second Administration of Mr. Gladstone took office on April 29th, 1880; it finally left office on June 25th, 1885. The story of those five years is a very eventful and exciting one. To tell that story, and point its moral—or rather its many morals—is the object of this work.

The chief actor in the various political dramas enacted before the eyes of the British people during this period, the figure which is most frequently on the stage, and which occupies the most commanding position when on it, is Mr. Gladstone himself. From the day when he was sent for by the Queen because no other Liberal leader would undertake to form a Ministry, to the day when he delivered up to Her Majesty the seals of office, he was literally the Prime Minister—the first man in England. The extraordinary supremacy of Mr. Gladstone is the central fact of this history; it is the key of the whole situation. Accordingly, some explanation of the unique position and power of this great man is first given.

The principles enunciated by Mr. Gladstone when in Opposition, especially in the famous Midlothian speeches, constituted the programme of the Liberal party when it was returned to power in 1880. A careful examination and criticism of these speeches is therefore given, and the conduct of Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues is compared with and tested by them. No fairer method of dealing with them can be imagined.

The fact just referred to explains the phrase "Gladstonian Liberalism," which forms the title of this work. During the past five years, at any rate, no Liberalism but that which consists in a belief in Mr. Gladstone and an adoption of his

principles has been known in the House of Commons, except among a few Radical spirits below the gangway, or, if known, it has not been divulged, because it was considered that it had not the faintest chance of being accepted, or even tolerated. He has been regarded as the loyal Liberal, and he alone, who followed Mr. Gladstone whithersoever he went. And this is the position to-day. The great Liberal Party has no creed but Gladstoneism. This is at once its strength and its weakness. Mr. Gladstone's renowned name may do to conjure with at the forthcoming General Election, and by a skilful and persistent use of it that election may be won for the Liberal Party. That is the strong point of the Liberal position. But when the triumph has been won, if won it should be, and Mr. Gladstone shortly afterwards has to retire, then the weakness of the situation will reveal itself. Liberals will then learn that it is impossible to rely upon one man, however great, instead of relying upon vital and lofty principles, without ultimately paying a very heavy penalty for their mistake.

Lord Rosebery, presiding at the seventh annual meeting of the Midlothian Liberal Association in Edinburgh, on June 29th of this year, used an expression that has since became rather famous about "the Gladstone umbrella." For a few weeks Liberal opinion throughout the country seemed to agree with Lord Rosebery. But then a change became visible. It began to be whispered, and then to be openly proclaimed, that "the Gladstone umbrella" was, after all, a very poor sort of weapon with which to fight the most momentous General Election that England has ever seen, and that there must be reliance, not only or chiefly upon the magic charm of a great name, but even more upon noble principles clearly defined, firmly held, and zealously proclaimed. This feeling found forcible expression in a letter to the *Times* of July 29th, by Mr. R. B. Brett, the contention of the writer being that the Liberals must have a better election cry than that of "The Old Man and the old umbrella," and that they must go to the country

with a programme if they wished to win. Mr. Brett did not object to the Old Man, but he held that the umbrella must be new; or, in other words, that Liberalism must consist of something more than the convenient but inadequate formula, "I believe in Gladstone." He also pointed out with unanswerable force that it was impossible for Mr. Gladstone to lead a movement the object of which was to exalt and glorify himself. A leader must lead to something, and for something, greater than himself, and this fact alone makes it obvious that principles ought to be magnified rather than men.

One object of this work is to show that during the period with which it deals Liberalism has suffered much from the almost absolute power of Mr. Gladstone, and hence to convey the further lesson that similar dependence upon one man in the future can only again lead to like disaster. This view is not owing, as the author will show, to any lack of admiration for Mr. Gladstone's genius and character, or to any indisposition to do justice to his splendid services to the nation, but solely to the conviction that it is not good, either for a party or for the nation, that one man should become virtually a dictator. After dealing with Mr. Gladstone's character, position, and principles, the work proceeds to treat, under various heads, of the English, the Irish, and the Foreign Policy of the late Government, and it is believed that no really vital question has been left untouched.

Gladstonian Liberalism:
IN IDEA AND IN FACT.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRE-EMINENCE OF MR. GLADSTONE.

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE has been for full fifty years a commanding figure in English political life. He entered Parliament as far back as 1832, as Member for Newark. "Who is Mr. Gladstone?" asked a writer, in a periodical of that time. The country soon knew who he was, for he at once began to achieve distinction. From the very first it was predicted that he would become a man of mark, an acquisition and an ornament to the British Senate. It was not long before the prophecy was in course of fulfilment; how completely it has been fulfilled since is known to all the world.

In 1834, Mr. Gladstone entered upon official life as a Junior Lord of the Treasury, under Sir Robert Peel (it is worthy of note that his son Herbert began his official career in the same office), and from that time to this he has been more or less in office. When the Earl of Aberdeen was called upon to form a Ministry in the latter part of 1852, on the defeat of Lord Derby, Mr. Gladstone became Chancellor of the Exchequer, his predecessor in that office being the man who was to be his great rival in after years—Benjamin Disraeli. His capacity and genius as a Finance Minister soon began to show themselves. In his first Budget he remitted taxation to the amount of £5,000,000; proposed a scheme for the gradual reduction and ultimate extinction of the National Debt; and another scheme for the reduction of the Income Tax, with a view to its aboli-

tion in 1860. He was again Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1859-61, and he again remitted taxation amounting to over £11,000,000, while he also repealed the Paper Duties.

When Mr. Disraeli was defeated, in 1868, Mr. Gladstone formed a new Government and became Prime Minister, and during this—his first Administration—the Irish Church was disestablished; the Irish Land Bill of 1870 was passed; University Tests were abolished; Vote by Ballot was secured; and Purchase in the Army was done away with. The appeal to the country, in 1880, after the turbulent and disastrous six years' reign of the Tories, resulted in a splendid Liberal triumph, and Mr. Gladstone returned to office and to power as Chancellor of the Exchequer and Prime Minister.

He returned to office because the circumstances of the time were such as to render it almost impossible for any other man to head a Liberal Government. When the results of the elections made it clear that the Liberals had gained an overwhelming majority, the question arose—"Who is to be the Liberal leader?" This same question had arisen a few years earlier, when Mr. Gladstone, in a somewhat sullen mood, relinquished the leadership of the Liberal Party, and devoted himself to literary and theological studies. The question was then settled in favour of Lord Hartington, who would never have been thought of in connection with such a position had he not been the son and heir of a powerful Whig Duke. Lord Hartington is not a brilliant man, but he has some solid and useful qualities, and in justice to him it must be acknowledged that he did the hard work of leading the Opposition in difficult times fairly well. He stuck faithfully to his post, showed some tact and discretion, and in his plodding and matter-of-fact way kept the party together until brighter days dawned upon it. When victory crowned the efforts of the Liberals the Queen naturally sent for Lord Hartington. He was the titular Chief of the Liberal Party, and if the faithful performance of a thankless task could entitle

a man to the office of Premier he certainly deserved it. But he declined, and wisely declined, the work of forming a Ministry. Lord Granville, the leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Lords, was then asked to undertake the office, but he too refused.

The fact was that Mr. Gladstone had made it impossible for anyone but himself to fill the position of Prime Minister. Though nominally but a private member of the Liberal Party, he had come forth from his retirement to expose and condemn the misdeeds of the Government; all his old force and fire returned, and he smote the Tories hip and thigh. He conducted an agitation which convulsed—and convinced—the nation; the policy which was submitted to the English people as an alternative to that of the Tories was his; the country declared for his principles and for him. It was obvious from the first that the Queen would have to send for Gladstone, and ultimately she did so, and he consented to form an Administration. This decision was, as subsequent events proved, unfortunate for the Liberal Party, for the country, and for Mr. Gladstone's own reputation. There can be no doubt whatever, in the opinion of those who are not prejudiced partisans, that Mr. Gladstone made a fatal mistake in undertaking to form a second Administration. What the history of the past five years would have been if he had refused to form a Government it is impossible to say; but it could not well have been more calamitous.

The task of forming the new Cabinet was not an easy one; Cabinet-making never is easy. There were plenty of men, and they were capable and well-experienced men too, for the most part. The principal offices were soon filled; for there were a few men so prominent that everybody knew that the first places would fall to their lot. It was in connection with offices of lesser importance that trouble arose, and still more in connection with the work of reconciling the rival claims of Whigs and Radicals. The latter, as they had been mainly instrumental in

winning the victory, looked for a share of the spoil—and they rightly refused to be content with an inconsiderable share. No longer were they to be put off with a few paltry posts—the mere leavings of haughty Whig aristocrats; they boldly bid for the highest positions. They asked for two seats in the Cabinet, and they resolutely refused to be content with less than one; while some of the principal posts outside the Cabinet were also to be theirs. Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Chamberlain were the foremost leaders of the Radical section of the Liberal Party, and they entered into a covenant that one of them should go into the Cabinet, and that that one should receive the entire support of the other. The Radical demands were, after long negotiation, conceded in full, and Mr. Chamberlain entered the Cabinet. This was regarded as an extraordinary and almost miraculous triumph for Mr. Chamberlain, who was cordially disliked by the Whigs, and regarded as a dangerous revolutionist by many even of the moderate Liberals.

The Liberal Ministry, as finally constituted, was composed as follows:—

W. E. Gladstone	First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer.
Lord Selborne...	Lord Chancellor.
Earl Spencer	Lord President of the Council.
Duke of Argyll	Lord Privy Seal.
Earl Granville	Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
Marquis of Hartington...	Secretary of State for India.
Sir W. V. Harcourt ...	Secretary of State for the Home Department.
Earl Kimberley	Secretary of State for Colonies.
H. C. E. Childers	Secretary of State for War.
Earl Northbrook	First Lord of the Admiralty.
John Bright	Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.
W. E. Forster...	Chief Secretary for Ireland.

J. G. Dodson	President of the Local Government Board.
J. Chamberlain	President of the Board of Trade.
Arthur Peel	Under Secretary for the Home Department.
Sir Charles Dilke	Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs.
Marquis of Lansdowne...	Under Secretary for India Office.
Mr. Grant-Duff	Under Secretary for the Colonial Office.
Sir H. James	Attorney-General.
Mr. F. Herschell	Solicitor-General.
Mr. Osborne Morgan ...	Judge-Advocate General.
Lord O'Hagan	Lord Chancellor, Ireland.
Mr. W. M. Johnson ...	Solicitor-General, Ireland.
Mr. Balfour	Solicitor-General, Scotland.
Mr. John M'Laren ...	Lord Advocate.
Mr. Hugh Law	Attorney-General, Ireland.
Earl Cowper	Lord-Lieutenant, Ireland.
Sir T. Brassey...	Civil Lord of the Admiralty.
Mr. G. Shaw-Lefevre ...	First Secretary of the Admiralty
Mr. Mundella...	Vice-President of Council.
Mr. Evelyn Ashley ...	Parliamentary Secretary of the Board of Trade.
Mr. J. T. Hibbert	Parliamentary Secretary of the Local Government Board.
Mr. Fawcett	Postmaster-General.
Earl Sydney	Lord Steward.
Earl of Breadalbane ...	Treasurer of Household.
Lord Kensington	Comptroller of Household.
Earl of Kenmare	Lord Chamberlain.
Lord Charles Bruce ...	Vice Chamberlain.
Duke of Westminster ...	Master of Horse.
Earl of Cork	Master of Buckhounds.
Marquis of Ripon	Governor-General of India.
Mr. Adam	Chief Commissioner of Works.
Dr. Playfair	Chairman of Committees.

One name was omitted from this list which ought on every principle of justice to have been included in it, and that was the name of Mr. James Stansfeld, who had been President of the Local Government Board in the former Liberal Administration. Various reasons were given for his exclusion. Some said he was left out at his own wish: others that his health would not permit him to take office; whereas the real truth of the matter was that he had rendered himself unpopular by his uncompromising hostility to the Contagious Diseases Acts, he being the leader of the movement which sought the repeal of those odious enactments. Mr. Stansfeld was punished for his bold advocacy of a lofty standard of morality in politics. Such an act as this was very significant of the low moral tone of the new Government, and it indicated only too clearly that the increasing multitude of the English people who regarded social and moral reform as paramount, and who were in the main Liberals, were to be again doomed to deep and bitter disappointment by the action of the men whom they had placed in office. And yet that very Government, so wholly given up to the worship of expediency, was destined to be compelled, and largely through Mr. Stansfeld's efforts, to suspend the operation of the most obnoxious clauses of the Contagious Diseases Acts, and to bring in a Bill for the better protection of young girls and women far in advance of anything ever before introduced into the British Parliament. On moral grounds it was well that Mr. Stansfeld was not in office; for he was far more useful and powerful out of office than he could have been in it. He had his triumph and his reward, and the whole country shared in the advantage. Nevertheless his treatment was highly discreditable to his former colleagues.

The new Liberal Government was, as a whole, a remarkably strong one. Mr. Gladstone, who himself took the offices of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, was in himself a tower of strength. His long experience of affairs, his financial genius, his construc-

tive skill, his versatility and resource, his extraordinary powers of speech and of work, his mastery of the House of Commons, and his supremacy in the country—these magnificent and varied qualifications, rarely if ever combined in the same degree in one man, made it morally impossible for a Government of which he was the head to be weak. Lord Granville, bland and genial, learned in the ways of diplomatists, and having large knowledge of men and affairs, naturally went to the Foreign Office, where he had reigned before. He found in Sir Charles Dilke an Under-Secretary far more capable than himself. Sir Charles was a leader of the Radical party, who had for years been rising in popular favour, and had distinguished himself by his extensive knowledge and firm grasp of all the leading questions of the day, and more especially for his almost unequalled knowledge of foreign politics. He now entered office for the first time, and if he was not in the Cabinet it was only because he preferred Mr. Chamberlain to himself.

Mr. Chamberlain, taking him all in all, was perhaps the most remarkable of all the new men. He was one of the most advanced Radicals of the day—so advanced that, like Mr. Bright in former days, he attracted to himself all the malignity and spleen of the classes who fattened on abuse and misgovernment. No language was too gross or outrageous to be applied to Joseph Chamberlain by the Whigs and Tories, who saw with well-grounded alarm that his power was assuming most formidable proportions. This, in its way, was a tribute to Mr. Chamberlain's influence not less noteworthy or valuable than the eulogy and applause which were so lavishly bestowed on him by his Radical friends and followers. This typical middle-class Englishman first made his mark in connection with his native town of Birmingham, of which he was elected Mayor three years in succession. He did not enter Parliament till 1876; yet in 1880 he was a Cabinet Minister and President of the Board of Trade; and now he is almost universally believed to be a coming Prime Minister. Very rarely indeed, in

conservative England, has a man been able by sheer ability and force to win his way in so short a time to one of the chief positions in the front rank of British Statesmen. The mere fact of his having done this speaks volumes as to the character of Mr. Chamberlain. During his five years of office he has more than fulfilled the promise of the earlier years of his political career; he has not only maintained his reputation but increased it. Even his enemies now admit that his skill as an administrator is scarcely inferior to his power as a Parliamentary debater and a platform orator.

Lord Hartington, who went to the India Office, has already been referred to, and he is so well known that it is not necessary to further describe his character here. Mr. Bright, the Duke of Argyll, the Earl of Derby, the Earl of Kimberley, Lord Northbrook, and Lord Selborne are all men who long since made their reputation, and who would naturally be expected to find a place in a Liberal Cabinet. Professor Fawcett, one of the bravest and noblest of men, entered the service of the Crown for the first time, and in spite of an affliction which would have taken the spirit out of most men, he proved himself to be one of the most successful Postmasters that England has ever seen. Unfortunately his first office under the Crown was destined to be his last, and England was called upon to mourn his loss some eighteen months ago, and very rarely has the nation been more profoundly distressed than on the occasion of his untimely death. Sir W. Harcourt, the new Home Secretary, was, next to Mr. Gladstone, more instrumental than any other man in bringing about the downfall of the Beaconsfield Government. His sledge-hammer style of oratory, his bitter and brilliant invective, and his entire freedom from the restraints imposed by lofty principle and a desire to do justice to opponents, made him a most effective ally in party warfare. But his statesmanlike qualities were less conspicuous, and if he could have been safely left out of the Cabinet no doubt he would have been. Integrity is not Sir W. Harcourt's strong point. Somehow

or other nobody gives him credit for being a true-hearted, pure-motived man; he is rather admired for his ability than liked for his sincerity; he is one of the race of politicians who must at any cost be accommodated with office lest they should turn upon their friends and rend them. It may be safely asserted, however, that any Liberal Ministry would gain rather than lose by his absence. His conduct at the Home Office during the past five years has not raised him in public estimation, and in the interests of society it is to be hoped that he will never fill such a post again. Mr. Mundella, the Vice-President of the Council, is a man who has raised himself from a humble position to the dignity and affluence of a large manufacturer, and who, having sprung from the people, is in sympathy with them. He is an enthusiastic friend of education, and the influence which he exerted upon our educational system while he was Minister of Education was of a far-reaching and beneficent character. Mr. Mundella has established his claim to a still higher position in the next Liberal Government, and men of his type will in future form the staple of Liberal administrations. Perhaps the most unfortunate of all Mr. Gladstone's appointments was that of Chief Secretary for Ireland, of which more will be said when Irish affairs come to be specially dealt with.

Mr. Gladstone was not only at the head of the Ministry, but he stood head and shoulders above any other man in it. His superiority was unquestionable, and almost unparalleled, and it was but natural that a statesman with such splendid abilities, and so magnificent a career, should have gained for himself an ascendancy such as rarely falls to the lot of even great political leaders. Among Liberals Mr. Gladstone has in all things the pre-eminence. For nearly twenty years his influence has controlled Liberal thought and moulded Liberal policy in a manner that has been almost absolute. This may have been, more or less, a necessity, but it was an unfortunate necessity nevertheless. One of the foundation principles of Liberalism is that every

man shall have the right of independent thought and judgment, that indeed he is bound to form and act upon convictions. Tories may blindly pin their faith to a leader; may be political fanatics who ignore reason and repudiate responsibility; but Liberals can never stoop to this without playing false to that which is fundamental in their faith, and proving themselves unworthy of the freedom in which they glory. Liberals degrade themselves to the level of their opponents when they substitute blind trust in a leader for enlightened loyalty to the cause in which he leads. The principles of Liberalism are greater, more glorious, and more precious than any man, or any number of men, who may dedicate the loftiest powers to the advocacy of those principles. Fidelity to the principles of Liberalism is ever the first and chiefest thing; for this means loyalty to Liberal leaders in so far as they are themselves true to the principles which they profess and advocate. And this is the fullest measure of loyalty that they have a right to demand, or can by any possibility deserve.

The ascendancy of a great man has the inevitable effect of dwarfing those around him. Not only is this the effect comparatively, but absolutely; that is to say, other men are not only relatively little when compared with him, but they are actually less than they would have been but for him, than they ought to be even in his presence. Hero-worship, when carried to the point of idolising the hero, regarding him as faultless and infallible, accepting his wish or word as being the perfection of righteous law, is distinctly belittling in its effects; though, on the other hand, it is profoundly true, as La Bruyére says, that "When we adequately admire a great man we share his greatness." Adequate admiration is an admiration which is reasonable and sufficient; which is honourable alike to those who give and to those who receive it; and which, while it dignifies those who are its worthy objects, also greatens the generous natures which feel and express it. But admiration which is inadequate, inflated, exaggerated, is irrational, undignified, degrading.

Such admiration is that which the Tories have displayed, and still display, towards Lord Beaconsfield, with results to their party of the most fatal character; such admiration, too, many of the Liberals—perhaps most of them—have shown, and do show, towards Mr. Gladstone, and to their party also the results have been disastrous in the extreme. To show how much Liberalism has suffered from this cause is one of the purposes of this work; at the same time, the author, in anticipation, entirely repudiates the charge that his object is to depreciate the great qualities of Mr. Gladstone, or to in any degree detract from the honour which is justly his due. Provided the admiration of Mr. Gladstone's followers be adequate, not erring by rushing to either one extreme or the other, no one will be more gratified than the writer; and of the two he would prefer that the admiration should be slightly in excess rather than be seriously deficient. After all, generosity is a nobler quality than cynicism.

Of modern hero-worship the two most illustrious examples are Bismarck in Germany and Gladstone in England. The Fatherland, with all its greatness, has only one statesman; not even the name of another is known beyond its own borders. England would be in danger of falling into the same condition were it possible for Mr. Gladstone to live among us another quarter of a century. Browning somewhere says:—

> Make no more giants, God,
> But elevate the race;

and what we want in our Parliaments is not one political giant towering aloft above his fellows, and overpowering and repressing them, but a general elevation of the whole race of politicians. Unfortunately, the very existence of the giant is in itself the most formidable barrier to this all-round elevation being effected. Well has it been said that Bismarck has made Germany a great country, but has made the German a very little man. In a similar spirit it may be said that Mr. Gladstone has made the Liberal party a great party, and raised it to a position of commanding influence;

but he has also made the other Liberal leaders very little men, and if some of them are not very grateful to him for doing this the fact is not very surprising. A Christian journal, however, concludes one of its Gladstone-adoration leaders in these terms: "Most sincerely do we thank God that Great Britain has no Bismarck, and that she has a Gladstone." * Blind and foolish scribe! At this very time Germany was prostrating itself at the feet of Bismarck, and Liberal England was doing servile homage to Gladstone. Both countries, to their dishonour be it said, were virtually in the same position. And yet our complacent Pharisees thank God that they are not as those German publicans!

We are told by some of our instructors that the hope of modern nations is in one-man government; that it is only under such a system of government that there is any chance of having a vigorous policy; that the multitudes love to worship a political idol—that they are at heart hero-worshippers; and that even Democracies would rather be misled by a man whom they trust than take the responsibility of finding their way themselves. This is false and deceitful philosophy, and it cannot be too strongly reprobated by all friends of progress. If Democracy is merely to land us in Cæsarism; if all men are to be enfranchised only in order that they may bow the knee to one man; then those who believe in freedom and progress are deluded, and the advance of Liberal principles has merely been a reaction towards barbarism. The nation which has, or thinks it has, only one statesman capable of guiding its destinies, and which depends solely upon him, is not, and cannot be, really free. A nation which is conscious of its greatness, which has faith in its future, and which is resolved to use its freedom for noble ends, can dispense with its chiefest man, and not be in reality much the poorer. No one man is indispensable, though his countrymen may believe him to be so. One-man government, whatever form

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* *Christian World*, April 9th, 1885.

it may take, whether it be a military despotism or a democratic dictatorship, is indicative of weakness and inferiority.

The history of the past five years affords abundant and conclusive proof of the mischievous effects of Mr. Gladstone's ascendancy. Not only has he been treated by his followers with the deference due to his superb genius, his exalted position, and his long and eminent services, but these same followers have manifested towards him a spirit of servile and almost abject submission. His name has been a fetish. The mere mention of that name was enough to throw an assemblage of serious English gentlemen, even though they might be Dissenting ministers and deacons, into a fit of fanatical enthusiasm. His will has been law. No measure could be introduced into Parliament, or at any rate passed through it, except by his consent. He has shaped Liberal policy according to his own will, and Liberals throughout the country have been expected to admire, applaud, and acquiesce. Does he decree Coercion for Ireland? Then in the eyes of Liberals Coercion is no longer a crime, but a necessity, and almost a virtue. Does he bombard and destroy Alexandria, ruthlessly suppress the national movement in Egypt, and banish Arabi the Patriot? Then these acts of arbitrary repression and wanton destruction lose their cruelty and injustice. Does he squander millions of British gold and spill blood like water in the deserts of the Soudan? Every Liberal leader-writer and platform orator at once discovers that war and waste are iniquitous only when done by Tories, and ministers of the Gospel who are Liberals subordinate the precepts of Christ to the policy of W. E. Gladstone. Does he ask, in language of menace and bluster, for a Vote of Credit for £11,000,000? He gets it without a murmur or a dissentient vote, though a Tory Government could not get a vote of £6,000,000 for a similar purpose until the matter had been debated for six whole nights. If any of the representatives of the people presumed to ask why all this money was to be spent, and the country committed to

these enormous responsibilities, they were simply reminded that Mr. Gladstone was at the head of affairs, and that he could not be expected to vouchsafe any explanation of his doings. The result was that in regard to the most vital and momentous questions of foreign policy no explanation was forthcoming till it was too late to produce any practical effect. Party spirit and loyalty to Mr. Gladstone seemed to completely invert the ideas of many excellent men on the simplest and most palpable questions of right and wrong. Their leader was not to be bound even by the moral law; he was regarded as being above that law; he was a law unto himself. While Mr. Gladstone was waging some of the most wanton wars of this generation, he was being extolled by Christian (?) journals for his "passionate love of peace." The Rev. R. Heber Newton, a New York minister, alluded to Mr. Gladstone in the following terms, in a sermon which he preached a few months ago, when the relations of England and Russia were in a strained and critical condition:—"One magnificent example of obedience to the heavenly vision is conspicuous in the eyes of the world to-day. A generation ago a man entered public life in England with the highest possible ideals—ideals which called him to make of statesmanship a service of man, a worship of God. With simple modest speech he early made it known in Parliament that he looked upon his career, not as a promising opening for ambition, not as a field for the political adventurer, but as a lofty mission, a trust from the nation and from the nation's God. He avowed his belief that the supreme work of the State was to promote internal improvements, to ease the burden of labour, to elevate the lot of the masses, to correct abuses, to foster a higher manhood; that international relationships as well as the affairs of individuals were to be brought as far as possible under higher laws; that peace was the true and normal order for Christian nations, and that right and not might should dictate public policy. He came into power and seriously set himself to carry out these principles.

He lost power when he moved too straight and steadfast after the heavenly vision of the statesman, for then the people fell away from following after him, and sought other grounds than principle. Out of power he proved as true to his vision as though no failure had crowned him with thorns, and he never sought to buy his way back to the Premiership by lowering his ideals. Again he came into power to take up and pursue his early dream. For the greater part of this generation he has been the leading figure in the history of the land which we are proud to call our motherland. He has made mistakes. He has shown his limitations. He has not been a god, but only a rare and glorious man. *Circumstances have forced him into positions where he has seemed to act contrary to his convictions.* The penalty of the wrongs and the blunders of others has fallen upon him. But he has never, so far as I can see, really turned aside from following after that heavenly vision of his youth. England, at his prompting, has dared to decide a quarrel against itself, and the proudest empire on earth, under his leadership, was true enough to its better nature to yield, in South Africa, the claim of the Boers against the popular clamour for war in the face of a national humiliation, because those claims were just. And now, *when the irony of fate has thrust this lover of peace into the vestibule of war*, this friend of Russia into the position of its foe, with what superb self-command, with what calm strengthfulness, he is exhausting every resource of diplomacy to prevent the horrors of a great war; making no threats, breathing no bluster, passing no judgment until the evidence is all in, and yet with an air of resolution that allows of no misunderstanding, preparing vigorously for the inevitable; a giant donning his armour with an aching heart and a face in tears. Magnificent spectacle of Christian manhood! Though he were to fall amid the clash of arms, overborne by the responsibilities of an awful war, he could, in dying, smile and say, 'I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.'"

It would not be difficult to find many parallels to the language of this pulpit flatterer in our own Press, for it is quite in the strain of the orthodox Liberal. Mr. Gladstone may possibly do wrong, it is true, but only because circumstances force him into positions where he cannot help doing it, and because the "irony of fate" is too much for him. He might die in the act of making war, but that would only the more clearly demonstrate his fervent attachment to peace. In his case wrong-doing is a matter of sheer necessity. It is curious to see how this fatalistic notion dominates the thought of Mr. Gladstone's apologists, and before we have done we shall have occasion to show how utterly false and mischievous a notion it is.

Perhaps the most serious feature of the present situation is that the Liberals have not learnt, and that they even seem to be incapable of learning, that elections are no longer to be won, and Liberal Administrations can no longer be carried on by appealing to the magic charm of a great name. The bulk of them still devoutly believe that it is quite enough to confess their faith in Gladstone and shut their eyes to all else. But a few of the more enlightened Liberals can no longer be content with this ostrich-like policy, and they are beginning to express their dissatisfaction and anxiety rather more loudly than is pleasant for the party leaders. It would be a merciful act on the part of Mr. Gladstone if he would clear all difficulties out of the way by retiring into private life. At present, however, his intentions are shrouded in uncertainty; nobody knows what he is going to do. On May 18, after he had been subjected to insolent and persistent interruptions in the House of Commons, he indulged in some melancholy observations which conveyed the impression that he meant to immediately resign the leadership of the Liberal party. But on June 27, after his Government had been defeated and deposed from office, he wrote the following letter to the electors of Midlothian:—

"1, Richmond Terrace, Whitehall,

"June 27, 1885.

"My dear Mr. Cowan,—I beg you to convey to the County Association, at its annual meeting on Monday, my hearty congratulations and best wishes. I rejoice that you meet under the presidency of my friend and late colleague, Lord Rosebery—who is yet to play, if his life be spared, an important part in the future politics of the United Kingdom. The battle of the franchise, which formed the subject of our chief anxiety when I met my constituents last autumn, has been won—and the Government which had the honour to fight it for the nation has, by necessary consequence of a vote of the House of Commons, been removed from office. Although it has thus happened that a vote of the representative Chamber has put an end to the late Cabinet, I must take this early opportunity of placing upon record my deep and grateful sense of the fidelity of the Liberal majority of 1880 to its trust. It has had to act under difficulties almost without example, and I can no more forget than I can repay its confidence and kindness. The time has not arrived for me to enter upon politics at large, either in the way of defence or criticism. Whatever we may think of the conduct of the late Opposition, it has become the Queen's Government, and the interests of the Empire are principally in its hands. I now look to its future, and not its past. My duty is to support and assist it as far as I have power, in doing right, and not to anticipate that it will do wrong. You may rely upon it that the Liberal party numbers in its ranks an abundance of men qualified by knowledge, ability, and vigour of age to exercise the necessary vigilance. I have never anticipated, in or since 1880, that I should solicit at your hands when the existing Parliament had done its work a renewal of the commission that Midlothian generously gave me; much less, I need hardly add, have I thought of asking the like honour elsewhere. But I am not

this moment released from my duties to the Party which has trusted me—and the first of these duties is to use my strongest and most sedulous efforts to prevent anything that can mar the unity and efficiency of the great instrument which, under Providence, his chiefly and almost wholly made our country for the last half-century. In these sentiments I am quite sure I shall have your approval and co-operation, and that of the Association, and I remain, sincerely yours, W. E. GLADSTONE."

This letter was of course a manifesto to the entire Liberal party and to the nation, and the most vital part of it was that in which Mr. Gladstone stated that though at one time he never anticipated seeking re-election at the hands of his constituents, yet under the altered circumstances in which he found himself he was not released from his duties to the Liberal party. Mr. Gladstone is nothing if not oracular. It is one of his faults that he hardly ever says a thing in a straightforward and simple way; and this expression in his letter was universally regarded as his way of saying that he meant to lead the Liberal hosts through the coming electoral campaign. But when the Bethnal Green Liberals interpreted his letter in this sense, and sent him a congratulatory resolution, he replied that the kindness of the meeting "had led them to go beyond any declaration of his." Since then it has been stated with some show of authority that Mr. Gladstone does mean to retire, after all, and the condition of his health, combined with some other circumstances, seemed to lend an air of extreme probability to the statement. And on the whole, his retirement would be one of the most fortunate things that could happen to the Liberal party, while it would be of immense advantage to the nation. Moreover, it would be best for himself. If he resolves upon another Midlothian campaign, it will probably be a humiliating failure. With all his power he can no longer exert the same spell as he did five years ago. In 1880 he had an invincible cause and a formidable

antagonist; now he has neither. Then he could denounce the extravagance, the imperialism, the annexations, and the wars of the Tories; but now he will have to defend precisely the same crimes on the part of the Liberals, and that will be a very different matter. No doubt he is in a sense equal to the task, although it is one of almost superhuman difficulty. A Midlothian campaign in which Mr. Gladstone should virtually fail would be fatal to his reputation. But, even supposing that he should achieve another brilliant triumph, and return to power as Prime Minister, his difficulties will be enormous. If the Liberals win, the Cabinet must be a Radical one; the Whig element must be subordinate; and this means that Mr. Gladstone would either have to quarrel with the most powerful Liberal leaders in the country—the Radicals, or else break with many of his oldest friends—the Whigs. It is hardly likely that he will place himself in a position where he would have to face either of these unpleasant alternatives.*

Whether Mr. Gladstone retires or not, however, the Liberals are hardly likely to commit, at any rate in so glaring a fashion, the mistake of 1880. It is true that there has of late been a good deal of the kind of talk that was so plentiful six years ago. Lord Rosebery, a smart young peer, who is vastly over-rated on account of his rank, his wealth, his horse-racing proclivities, and his friendship with Mr. Gladstone, speaking at Manchester on April 1, said: "If the Opposition came into power to-morrow, what would be their policy? On what ground would they claim your confidence? On the ground of aversion to Mr. Gladstone. I do not think you can rule the Empire on the principle of aversion to Mr. Gladstone." Very true. But it does not seem to have occurred to Lord Rosebery that the converse is equally true—that you cannot govern the Empire on the principle of admiration for Mr.

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* Since the above was written Mr. Gladstone has issued his famous manifesto. That manifesto will be dealt with later on.

Gladstone. And yet, what else has he, or the Liberal party generally, to offer? In his speech to the Midlothian Liberal Association, on June 29, Lord Rosebery used a metaphor which has since become rather famous. He was speaking of the diversity which exists among the Liberals, and trying to show that Whigs and Radicals are virtually one, that they are alike Liberals, and these were the words he used: "When I ask myself, What is a Liberal? I remember that the name of Liberal is good enough for Mr. Gladstone, is good enough for Mr. Bright, and I am quite willing to walk under an umbrella with those two gentlemen." This was the origin of the famous "Gladstone umbrella," or, as it ought in strict accuracy to be called, the Gladstone and Bright umbrella. For weeks afterwards, this umbrella played a prominent part in platform speeches and newspaper articles. It soon became apparent, however, that the "Gladstone umbrella" was only a very small sunshade, after all; and, after serving its turn during a short spell of fine weather, it had to be laid aside as altogether inadequate to the stern necessities of the stormier times that were seen to be looming a little ahead.

Sir William Harcourt was one of the first to step upon the political platform after the defeat of the Government of which he was a member, and say that the election cry of the Liberals was to be the short and sharp cry of "The Old Cause and the Old Man." On the 17th of June, during the interregnum which occurred between the going-out of the Liberal and the coming-in of the Tory Governments, Sir W. Harcourt delivered a speech at St. James's Hall, which had been carefully written beforehand, and which was even more trashy and bombastic than his speeches usually are. He referred to Mr. Gladstone in these terms: "The Tories may squabble about their leaders. We have no dissension about ours. The Liberal party has a leader such as no party ever had—a man with all the experience of age, and all the fire of youth—a man long past threescore years and ten, whose eye is not dim, nor his natural

strength abated. The Tories seem to think that they are going to get rid of him, but they reckon without their host. Do they think that Nelson is going to haul down his flag just on the eve of Trafalgar? The flag is still flying at the masthead, and the great campaign cannot very long be delayed. We shall fight it for the old cause and the old man. Under that flag, and in that name, we shall appeal to an enfranchised nation, and we shall go forth conquering and to conquer, and yet to place upon that honoured head, which the Tories have defamed, insulted, and reviled, the worthy crown of final victory." The criticism of the July *Quarterly Review* on this speech was not a whit too severe: "This is the same man, strange to say, who insulted and reviled Mr. Gladstone through an entire session, who taunted him with holding office merely by virtue of a 'blustering majority,' and who never ceased to throw dirt at that 'honoured head' until he was silenced by another good place. Such is the lofty standard of principle and good faith by which Sir William Harcourt is guided." Mr. H. W. Lucy, referring to Sir W. Harcourt's action in 1877, in his "Diary of Two Parliaments," says: "Amid the hubbub, it is generally agreed that it would be more decorous if Harcourt did not quite so loudly utter his reprobation of Gladstone's conduct. If Sir William forgets that it was Gladstone who took him from below the gangway and made him a knight, other people have better memories."

At this same meeting, Mr. John Morley, who presided, after alluding, and very properly alluding, to Mr. Gladstone as "the noblest figure of the day," said: "The great battle cannot long be delayed, and we will fight it under the banner of the late Prime Minister." Mr. Morley is one of the most independent of Radical politicians, and the mere fact of his having no policy to recommend to the Liberal electors but that of fighting under Mr. Gladstone's banner is sufficient proof of the intellectual destitution which prevails among the ruck of Liberal politicians. It never

seems to occur to these men that it is supremely ludicrous for a great party, in a great national crisis, to be reduced to one simple article of faith: "Great is Gladstone, and we believe in him." Mr. Morley, in the July number of *Macmillan*, actually lamented that Mr. Gladstone had not been dictatorial enough when in office, and attributed the misfortunes of the Liberal party to "his backwardness in insisting on his own views." All would have been right, it seems, if the Grand Old Man could have had everything his own way, and all the other Ministers could have been reduced to the condition of automata. This is Gladstonolatry with a vengeance; and things must indeed be desperate when John Morley can condescend to this. In the past, things have gone wrong because Mr. Gladstone has not been dictator out-and-out; in the future, all will be well if his supremacy can be made absolute!

Mr. Trevelyan, another Radical leader, speaks quite in the same strain. In an address delivered on July 15th of the present year, at Leamington, he undertook to justify the tactics of the Liberal leaders in relying entirely upon the achievements and the fame of Mr. Gladstone. He said:—

"Another criticism which has been made is that we Liberals place too much confidence in the gratitude of the new electors towards Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party. There are, we all know, men who endeavour to eliminate and exclude from politics every higher sentiment; who, with all the teaching of history against them, believe that the most powerful, and the only powerful, motives which actuate great masses of mankind are self-interest and greed. If the theories of these men were true, public life, instead of being the noblest, would be the most miserable and thankless of all careers. But I deny these assertions as a general statement. I do not hesitate to say that the pursuit of politics brings a man into relations with the better and more disinterested side of humanity more than any other calling or occupation. These gentlemen who are sceptical

about the gratitude of the new electors to Mr. Gladstone, must be singularly wanting either in sentiment or imagination. . . . It is thrown against us that we are going to the country on the cry of 'Gladstone,' and we are taunted with our devotion to a man who, after all, is only an individual. But in the days of popular government, when every citizen is a ruler, it is no small advantage that the million should have confidence in the one; the craving to be led by him whom they can trust and admire is the safety and not the weakness of Democracies. Why, at this very moment, the Tories, with their Primrose League, are going to the country in the name of a statesman who is not even alive and among us. I do not deny that confidence and devotion may deteriorate into credulity and adulation if they are paid to one who is not worthy. But does anybody who heard or read Mr. Gladstone's masterly and masterful speech on the policy of the new Government in the House of Commons on Tuesday week doubt that he is more influential than ever in moulding in a right shape the policy of the country? Talk of our flattering Mr. Gladstone! What panegyrics of ours are so sincere a form of flattery as the imitation of his successors?"

It will be seen that Mr. Trevelyan inculcates the pernicious notion which has already been referred to—that it is the strength and safety of Democracies to throw themselves into the arms of one man. Verily, this is strange doctrine to be proclaimed by Liberal leaders! Nothing more is required to demonstrate their unfitness for the positions to which they aspire. In regard to this speech of Mr. Trevelyan's, the *Times* very justly remarked:—"But we read his speech in vain to learn what people are enthusiastic about, or what great ends call for their united effort. There are eloquent allusions to the achievements of the past, and moving appeals to the undoubted claims of Mr. Gladstone upon the confidence of his followers. But the Primrose League itself is not more futile than attempts to galvanise a party into useful vitality by stirring descriptions

of things done by other men bearing its name in the absence of a programme for the future capable of commanding allegiance. We have never decried Liberal enthusiasm, but we cannot take seriously mere declamation on the duty of being enthusiastic. We prize Liberal unity and energy, but we confess we set little value upon pathetic entreaty to be united and energetic when nobody can give an intelligible account of the focus of unity, or the object of energy. Mr. Trevelyan offers nothing but a shibboleth for the adoration of the faithful, except when he bids us all rally round Mr. Gladstone."

The "Gladstone umbrella" was a god-send for the Tories. They had not had a better butt for their shafts of ridicule for many a long year, and they made the most of the opportunity. Lord Salisbury, speaking at the Holborn Restaurant, on July 3rd, said of the Liberals: "It seems to me either that our adversaries are somewhat shy of starting any electioneering cry, or that they are somewhat afraid of bringing their own doctrines into the light of day. They talk of 'a grand old cause' and a 'Grand Old Man,' and of umbrellas under which people of various statures and sizes can come together. Well, I think they are prudent to abstain from electioneering cries, but their appeal to 'the grand old cause' and to 'the Grand Old Man' is not a spell of the same value as it possessed five years ago." Mr. Plunket said at Bethnal Green, on August 5th: "For many days past the newspapers have exhibited a most curious study, 'The Liberals in search of a cry.' At first it was thought quite enough for all of them—no matter how they differed about anything else—to join in one great chorus in praise of their distinguished leader, and one distinguished member of their party had added a new word to the language of politics, 'The Gladstone umbrella.'" After a generous tribute to Mr. Gladstone's ability and services and popularity, Mr. Plunket proceeded thus: "This suggestion to share that personal popularity among all the sections of the Liberal party by getting them together under his wing or

under his umbrella is, I think, one of the most audacious partisan proposals that have ever been made. But there is this further difficulty in giving effect to it, that you cannot encore such an effort as the famous Midlothian campaign without comparing the second with the first performance, without contrasting in your historical conscience the promises which accompanied that extraordinary incident with the kind of fulfilment which those promises have since found; and it will not do now, in 1885, to bring out only a second-class crusade, and to offer a nasty old gingham—Mrs. Gamp—to people who remember the rainbow beauties of the brand-new silk umbrella of 1880."

But the "Gladstone umbrella" fared even worse at the hands of Liberals than it did at the hands of Tories. The latter could afford to laugh at it; but the more enlightened and independent among the former saw that for them it was no laughing matter. Dr. R. W. Dale, of Birmingham, a Liberal leader of acknowledged authority, especially among Nonconformists, uttered, on June 30th, the following wise and weighty words: * "The manner in which the meeting had received the name of the great Liberal leader indicated that their loyalty towards Mr. Gladstone was unabated—that the enthusiasm with which they regarded that statesman five years ago was unquenched. He trusted that they would fight the next election under Mr. Gladstone's banner as they fought the last; but he trusted also they would learn something from their experience in 1880. In that contest there were many constituencies in which it was enough for a candidate to say, 'I believe in Mr. Gladstone.' That was a very short creed. No doubt, adequately interpreted, it means a great deal, but many who had accepted it had not proved their faith by their works, and he trusted that the Liberal party in the various constituencies in the three kingdoms would take care to select its candidates in time, and candidates who would be able to give an independent

* Speech at Birmingham in favour of Mr. Broadhurst's candidature.

account of their own political convictions, and not seek to be returned to Parliament merely under the shelter of a great name." This was an extraordinary declaration to be made by such a man, for no section of the Liberal party have so distinguished, or so abased, themselves by adulation of, and servility to, Mr. Gladstone as the bulk of the Nonconformists. In their great assemblies he was extolled in speeches of fervid eloquence, and resolutions approving his policy were unanimously and enthusiastically adopted even when that policy was a palpable violation of some of the plainest principles of Christianity. A few days after Dr. Dale had spoken, the *Nonconformist* published a leader urging the Liberals to return 400 members to Parliament at the General Election, and the only reason it thought worth while to advance in support of its appeal was that it was the duty and privilege of Liberals to believe in Mr. Gladstone.

The idea advanced by Dr. R. W. Dale was still more strongly emphasised by Mr. Reginald B. Brett, in a letter which appeared in the *Times*, on July 29th, and which attracted considerable attention. Mr. Brett insisted that the Liberals, if they meant to win at the General Election, must have a definite and practical programme. The "Old Man and the old umbrella" was perfectly useless as an electioneering cry—the umbrella was already worn out. Mr. Brett had no objection to the "Old Man," but he contended that he must head a new cause, and as his own contribution to the Liberal programme he suggested that Disestablishment and the Land Question should be put in the very forefront. Much controversy was called forth by this letter. Day after day the programme and the prospects of the Liberal cause were discussed in the public journals, and it soon became evident that Mr. Brett had given voice to the thoughts which had been smouldering in the minds of thousands of members of his party. But the Liberal leaders maintained silence; no programme was put forth, and the electors were kept in ignorance as to the grounds

on which the Liberal party meant to appeal to them for their confidence and support. It was universally felt that Mr. Gladstone was the man to lead, and it was anxiously desired that he would formulate a policy; but he made no sign. If Gladstone himself was to be the be-all and end-all of the Liberal campaign, then it was obvious, as Mr. Brett pointed out, that he could not lead that campaign; but if the Liberals, with Mr. Gladstone at their head, would place before the nation vital and supreme issues, then they might win a glorious victory.

It would not be proper to conclude this chapter, which relates entirely to Mr. Gladstone's unique ascendancy, without expressing the utmost abhorrence of the gross attacks which have been made on that illustrious statesman by some of his enemies. Many of these attacks have been diabolical in their malignity; they have outraged all propriety and decency; and they will cover with undying infamy the miserable party hacks who have made them. In this respect Lord Randolph Churchill has been the chief of sinners. This haughty and conceited young aristocrat, who probably would never have been heard of if he had not been a Duke's son, has, during the whole of the past five years, reviled and calumniated Mr. Gladstone, a venerable and renowned statesman who, whatever his faults, has rendered immense service to his country, in the service of which he has grown grey. Such men as Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir H. Wolff, and Mr. Chaplin have effectively seconded Lord Randolph Churchill's efforts. These men acted with the approval of their party. Many reputable Conservatives who would have been ashamed to insult Mr. Gladstone themselves gloated over the insults which were heaped upon him by others. When the Tories came into power all the men who had baited and badgered Mr. Gladstone were put into office, and they hold those offices to-day as the reward of their wicked and degrading conduct. As for the Conservative Press, it has teemed with foul and venomous slanders against Mr. Gladstone, the Tory papers vying with

each other in malice and brutality. Not very long ago the *St. Stephen's Review* (the Conservative Press Company) published a Presentation Cartoon called "A Study in Blood and Tears," and "the Study" represented that "villain of the deepest dye," Gladstone, skulking away in the darkness, with the everlasting axe under his arm, pursued by the ghosts, in a mist of blood, of Cavendish, Burke, Earle, Hicks, Gordon, Burnaby, and Stewart. In order that there might be no mistake as to the meaning of all this, the *St. Stephen's Review*, in its article explanatory of the "cartoon," had the following choice sentences :—

"Worship of you (Gladstone) can hardly rank higher than that of Baal or Moloch, involving as it does the mutilation and bloodshed of its votaries."

"Never previously had you (Gladstone) appeared as leader of the Gadarene swine."

"You (Gladstone) have been a man of blood. It is impossible to enumerate the lives lost directly through you."

"Your spirits have risen as the ghastly total of deaths has swelled."

"What has been to all a bitter lamentation is to you (Gladstone), as it were, a festival of blood."

"Deliberate neglect to fulfil a duty calculated to save life is equivalent to murder; and you (Gladstone) would not be easily acquitted were you made to answer for your deeds before a jury of your countrymen."

On Mr. Gladstone's return from Norway, *Vanity Fair*, an aristocratic journal, remarked:—"The Grand Old Jawmonger has come back again. Mr. Gladstone is still suffering from a slight hoarseness--the Lord be praised for small mercies!—but his voice has sensibly—or shall I say idiotically?—improved. However grateful the nation ought to be for Mr. Gladstone's safe return, I cannot help regretting as an individual that the *Sunbeam* didn't capsize. Mr. Gladstone would have been in no real danger, as his collars would certainly have kept him from sinking, and he would have looked so pretty puffing and praying and

paddling about on the crest of the glassy wave!" For such brutality as this we must look to the organs of "polite society."

These are only two samples, and fair samples, of what has appeared of late years in Tory newspapers, and with some of the worst of these newspapers are associated men who are now Cabinet Ministers. Mr. Chamberlain has always been honourably free from Gladstone-worship, he has always had a nobler policy than that of blindly following Gladstone, and this adds to the value of anything he may say in defence of his late chief. Speaking at Birmingham, on June 3rd, Mr. Chamberlain delivered a very eloquent eulogy on Mr. Gladstone, which he concluded in these words: "Justice will be done to him in the future, and there will be a signal condemnation of the men who, moved by motives of party spite, in their eagerness for office have not hesitated to load with insult and indignity the greatest statesman of our time—who have not allowed even his age, which should have commanded their reverence, or his experience, which entitles him to their respect, or his high personal character, or his long services to his Queen and to his country, to shield him from the vulgar affronts and the lying accusations of which he has nightly been made the subject in the House of Commons. He, with his great magnanimity, can afford to forget and forgive these things. Those whom he has served so long it behoves to remember them, to resent them, and to punish them." This is true. All decent and fair-dealing Englishmen ought, without distinction of party, to strive to banish from political life the men who have made politics to stink in the nostrils of those who regard truth and honour.

It is no secret that Mr. Gladstone is not a favourite at court; and this is one reason of his great popularity. For, whatever may be said to the contrary, the English people at heart despise the sycophants who cringe and fawn to Royalty. Mr. Gladstone's refusal of the earldom which was so grudgingly offered to him after his recent defeat has

still further raised him in the estimation of the majority of his countrymen. He has sprung from the people; he is still of the people; and the people venerate and love him accordingly. They hold, and will continue to hold him in high honour, whatever may be said by rabid Tory politicians. On the day when these words were written he started for a cruise round Norway in Sir Thomas Brassey's *Sunbeam*, his object being to recover his voice, which for some weeks previously had almost entirely failed him. The *Times* referred to his departure in language which may fitly close this chapter: "The condition of Mr. Gladstone's health is a matter of no small concern. Whether by virtue of his long and devoted public services or of his unrivalled Parliamentary supremacy, Mr. Gladstone is a man of whom the whole country is proud, without any distinction of party. However he may be judged as a Minister, all parties respect him as a man. The whole nation wishes him well, and every one would regret to see him disabled by the failure of a voice so long and so well used in the public service, while his general powers, physical and mental, still remained unimpaired."

CHAPTER II.

THE POLICY OF MIDLOTHIAN.

THERE can be no doubt that Lord Beaconsfield's Government was overthrown in 1880 mainly through the exertions, the extraordinary and unparalleled exertions, of Mr. Gladstone. Even the Conservatives have never thought of denying this. Although Mr. Gladstone was not nominally, he was really, the leader of the Liberal party, and the speeches which he delivered to his constituents, and through the Press to the whole nation, were with one accord accepted as the authoritative exposition and proclamation of the principles on which the Liberals appealed to the country against the party then in power. The Liberals triumphed simply because a majority of the electors preferred the principles enunciated by Mr. Gladstone to those represented by Lord Beaconsfield. And of course those electors who voted for Gladstonian principles did so in the faith that those principles would be carried out by their author. This being so, it becomes a duty to inquire whether or no those principles were carried out, and if so, to what extent; and if not, why not? And first of all it is necessary to gain a clear idea as to what doctrines Mr. Gladstone really did set forth in those now famous speeches, and as this knowledge can only be gained from the speeches themselves, it will be necessary to quote them at length. In this chapter, therefore, Mr. Gladstone will in the main speak for himself.

The *Quarterly Review* remarked the other day:—"To vary one of Mr. Gladstone's own phrases, 'There is not an instance, there is not a spot upon the whole map, where you can lay your finger and say, There the Gladstone Administration did good.' In the Transvaal, in India, in Egypt, in Europe, either actual disasters have been brought

upon us, or a train has been laid which must inevitably produce them in the future. The Liberals often take credit to themselves for having had a definite policy to lay before the country in 1879, but so far as it was definite at all it has been dishonoured, repudiated, and reversed in every detail since 1880. The programme was sketched out in the Midlothian speeches, and those speeches when compared with the deeds of the late Ministry will be Mr. Gladstone's all-sufficient condemnation in history. No public man ever before framed so ruinous an indictment of his own reputation. It needs no adversary to assail his career, or to attempt to destroy his character as a statesman. Nothing more is requisite than for some impartial hand to make an abstract of his principles as formulated between 1876 and April 1880, and place it side by side with a plain unvarnished record of his acts as a Minister since the latter date. To that record Mr. Gladstone's worst enemy would scarcely desire to add a word. It would tell its own tale, and such a tale there is not to be told of any public man who has flourished during the present century." This is, of course, an extreme partizan view. How far it is borne out by the facts remains to be seen. But at all events, neither Mr. Gladstone nor his admirers can complain of the method here adopted, viz., that of clearly setting forth Mr. Gladstone's opinions, or allowing him to do so, and then comparing his deeds with, and judging them by, his words. If the facts of this history condemn Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues, then so much the worse, not for the facts, but for them. The *Edinburgh Review*, evidently anxious to avoid going very deeply into an unpleasant subject, observed in its July issue:* "It would not become us to criticise the measures of the late Government, and we shall not attempt so ungracious a task. We leave that to their opponents; but the more we are attached to the principles of Liberal Government, and personally to the members of the late

* 1885.

Cabinet, the more we regret that the results of their policy have fallen short of the expectations of the country, and of their own aspirations." But even a Whig Reviewer would probably admit that there is nothing specially ungracious in examining the actions of a man or of a party in the light of their own professions, or in criticising them where they have manifestly set their professions on one side. True, the *Edinburgh Review* asserts that a retrospect of the history of the late Government "is of small avail," and it gives as its reason for this statement that "the past is irrevocable," but we imagine that few sensible people will agree with this opinion. If the past is irrevocable, its lessons abide for our instruction, and it is surely the part of wisdom to take those lessons to heart; though this can only be done intelligently when the past is known. Both Whig and Tory agree that the late Government failed in almost every important respect to fulfil the pledges which it gave, and the expectations which those pledges created; and it surely cannot be "of small avail" to ascertain the causes of this failure.

The principles set forth in the Midlothian speeches may be classed under the following heads:—

1. A wise and safe Foreign Policy, the keynote of which was to be Peace.
2. A sound system of Finance, the first essential of which was Retrenchment.
3. Domestic concerns were to have preference over foreign affairs, in accordance with the Liberal policy of reform.
4. Domestic questions were to be settled in harmony with the will and convictions of the people.
5. The nation should be actuated by an enlightened self-interest, minding its own business, and setting its face against further annexations of territory.
6. Full recognition of the rights of other nations.
7. Sympathy with the struggles of the weak and oppressed.

8. The responsibility of Parliament, as well as of the Government, to the people for their neglect of the nation's interest or misuse of their power.

I will take the chief of these subjects in the order stated, and quote under each Mr. Gladstone's own words. Foreign Policy stands first, and on this great and vital branch of politics he had naturally a great deal to say, as the last election turned more upon Foreign Policy than any one thing besides. Mr. Gladstone's principal statements on this subject are the following—his more general statements being placed first:—"Pericles, the great Athenian statesman, said, with regard to women, 'Their greatest merit was to be never heard of.' Now, what Pericles untruly said of women I am very much disposed to say of foreign affairs—their great merit would be to be never heard of. . . . ." (Page 114, Series 1.)

"What we want in Foreign Policy is the substitution of what is true for what is imposing and pretentious, but unreal. We live in the age of sham. We live in the age of sham diamonds, and sham silver, and sham flour, and sham sugar, and sham butter—for even sham butter they have now invented and dignified by the name 'Oleo-Margarine.' But these are not the only shams to which we have been treated. We have had a great deal of sham glory, and sham courage, and sham strength. I say, let us get rid of all these shams and fall back upon realities, the character of which is to be guided by unostentatiousness; to pretend nothing, not to thrust claims and unconstitutional claims for ascendancy and otherwise in the teeth of your neighbour, but to maintain your rights and to respect the rights of others as much as your own. . . . " (Page 352, Series 2.)

Mr. Gladstone stated at considerable length his views as to what constitutes a wise and true Foreign Policy, as contrasted with the sham Foreign Policy of his opponents. Here are his six principles:—

"I first give you, gentlemen, what I think the right

principles of Foreign Policy. The first thing is to foster the strength of the Empire by just legislation and economy at home, thereby producing two of the great elements of national power—namely, wealth, which is a physical element, and union and contentment, which are moral elements; and to reserve the strength of the Empire, to reserve the expenditure of that strength, for great and worthy occasions abroad. Here is my first principle of Foreign Policy—good government at home. My second principle of Foreign Policy is this—that its aim ought to be to preserve to the nations of the world, and especially, were it but for shame, when we recollect the sacred name we bear as Christians, especially to the Christian nations of the world, the blessings of peace. . . . In my opinion the third sound principle is this—to strive to cultivate and maintain, aye, to the very uttermost, what is called the concert of Europe ; to keep the Powers of Europe in union together. And why ? Because by keeping all in union together you neutralise and fetter and bind up the selfish aims of each. My fourth principle is—that you should avoid needless and entangling engagements. You may boast about them, you may brag about them, you may say you are procuring consideration for the country. . . . . But what does all this come to, gentlemen ? It comes to this, that you are increasing your engagements without increasing your strength, and if you increase engagements without increasing strength you diminish strength, you abolish strength, you really reduce the Empire and do not increase it. You render it less capable of performing its duties; you render it an inheritance less precious to hand on to future generations. My fifth principle is this, gentlemen, to acknowledge the equal rights of all nations. You may sympathise with one nation more than another. You sympathise most with those nations, as a rule, with which you have the closest connection in language, in blood, and in religion, or whose circumstances at the time seem to give the strongest claim to sympathy. But

in point of right all are equal, and you have no right to set up a system under which one of them is to be placed under moral suspicion or espionage, or to be made the constant subject of invective. And the sixth is, that, in my opinion, Foreign Policy, subject to all the limitations I have described, the Foreign Policy of England should always be inspired by the love of freedom." (Pages 115-117, Series 1.)

Not only did Mr. Gladstone expound these principles of Foreign Policy, but he expressed his readiness to act upon them. He said :—" I am not only prepared to show what are the rules of action which, in my judgment, are the right rules, but I am prepared to apply them, nor will I shrink from their application." (Page 117, Series 1.)

How far Mr. Gladstone's actual Foreign Policy corresponded with his ideal one we shall see by-and-by. For the present we will only express the opinion that his action during his late five years of office by no means proves that he has acted up to the spirit of the declaration just quoted.

No doubt Mr. Gladstone and his supporters will say that he did not bind himself to reverse the policy of the Tories; that, on the contrary, he warned the nation that it would in future years reap a harvest of bitterness and misery as the fruit of its folly in placing Lord Beaconsfield in office. This is true. He did say distinctly that if a Liberal Government came into office they would be in honour bound to carry out any specific engagements into which their predecessors had entered. Here are his words :—

" I believe some member of the Tory Government said it has been alleged by me that if the Liberals come into power, we shall at once make an end of all the engagements into which the present Government have entered, and relieve the country from the consequences at no other expense than that of its honour and good faith. . . .

" We have no power to relieve you from engagements of honour and good faith entered into by the present Government through a summary process. However we may

disapprove them, however we may deplore them, however we have striven to point out—not to you, for you have not had a fair chance yet, but to that majority in the House of Commons which has been perfectly deaf to our arguments—however we may have striven to point out to them the mischiefs and the dangers of the course they were pursuing, we must take the consequences; the country must take the consequences. Prudence, care, diligence, may do much in the course of time, but whatever faith requires must be accepted and fulfilled." (Page 22, Series 2.)

"I think I have shown you my proposition: That Governments of England, even although they may disapprove of measures which have been taken, yet if these measures involved them in moral obligations which they cannot cast aside, they look at no question but this: what is our duty for the happiness of those whom we are appointed to rule, and for the honour of the Empire to which it is our delight to belong?" (Pages 25-6, Series 2.)

After all, however, Mr. Gladstone only says here that "engagements of honour and good faith" cannot be lightly set aside, and that where the measures taken by a preceding Government involve "moral obligations," they must be respected. Nobody is likely to condemn the late Government for maintaining such engagements as these. Moreover, he intimates that a Government must be judged by the way in which it strives to promote the happiness, and maintain the honour, of the British Empire. His severest critics could hardly desire to apply to his own conduct of our affairs any other standard. "Prudence, care, diligence," he indicates as qualities which might be expected from a Liberal Government in regard to foreign affairs; how far these qualities were manifested by the late Government the facts will show.

Perhaps the least satisfactory feature of Mr. Gladstone's Foreign Policy is his treatment of the question of the treaty-making power. If anything has been conclusively proved by the history of the last fifty years, and especially

of the last ten, it is that the power of making wars and of making treaties ought to be taken from the Crown and vested in Parliament. In other words, it ought to be made impossible that the country should be committed to war, or to the engagements of a treaty with another nation, until the representatives of the people have been consulted; and yet Mr. Gladstone, a Liberal leader, a statesman who is believed by some to be almost a Radical, speaks of this subject in the following extraordinary style :—

"I charged the Government with having abused the war-making power and the treaty-making power. Of the war-making power I will not now speak further than to say that I allude especially to the war in Afghanistan, on which I yet hope to find some opportunity of explaining myself more at length. To you I will speak, within the narrow limits I have described, of the treaty-making power; and, gentlemen, though you are a vast assembly, meeting here in circumstances of some inconvenience, and though the subject is one not free from difficulty, I have so much reliance on your intelligence, as well as upon your patience, that I am confident you will clearly understand what I want to convey to you. Consider, gentlemen, I entreat you, what is meant by the treaty-making power. It is a power under which the Crown of the United Kingdom is entitled to pledge the faith and honour of the country to any other State whatever, and for any purpose whatever, unless I except the payment of money, but the exception is more apparent than it is real." (Page 167, Series 2.)

"The treaty-making power is an unlimited power in the hands of the sovereign of the country, acting under the advice of Ministers. There is no covenant, however monstrous, or however ludicrous, however unwise, or however impracticable, of which it is not abstractly in the power of the Crown, to bind the faith of the country—that is to say, your faith and mine—that, strange as it may sound, that strange paradox which I have just delivered is unques-

tionably true, nay, it is a commonplace of our parliamentary life." (Page 167, Series 2.)

"This treaty-making power is one of the most peculiar in our Constitution. There is no absolute monarch whose power in making treaties is more unrestrained than the power of the Constitutional sovereign of this country. That in itself appears to be a great paradox. It is on account, not of its Constitutional principles, but of practical difficulties, that this enormous prerogative is confided to the Crown." (Page 59, Series 2.)

"It is a very remarkable fact that while our Government, in the course of the present century, has become in its general strain a much more popular Government than it was a hundred or a hundred and fifty years ago, yet at the same time the Crown has obtained a more absolute and exclusive power over the business of negotiation." (Page 60, Series 2.)

"It has been the purpose of our parliamentary liberties, above all, to control the military action of the Crown, and to take care that whatever the abstract theory of the Constitution be as regards the declaration of war by the Crown, yet practically no wars shall be carried on by the British nation, and the blood of the British nation shall not be shed, excepting with the consent of the British nation through its representatives." (Page 175, Series 2.)

Mr. Gladstone evidently believes that our wars, in spite of the enormous powers of the Crown, are practically carried on by the nation through its Parliament, so that the nation actually consents to the expenditure of money and of life which may be demanded by any given war. How any man who claims to look at things in a practical and common-sense fashion can hold this view is incomprehensible. Mr. Gladstone says:—

"There is no instance known to me of a treaty concluded earlier than the year 1878, which treaty was not in conformity, in general conformity, with the known and ascertained wishes of the people." (Page 61, Series 2.)

He has not said that all our wars (except those made by Tories) have been "in general conformity with the known and ascertained wishes of the people," and yet some things he has said seem almost to indicate that he holds such an opinion.

The vicious and dangerous principle of the Constitution which enables the Crown to make wars and conclude treaties finds a warm defender in Mr. Gladstone. He says:—

"Mr. Rylands moved to abridge the treaty-making power of the Crown. Now I, the factious man that I am, did not support that motion of Mr. Rylands. On the contrary, I followed Mr. Rylands in debate, and I made an argument against his motion, and my argument was this: that, however plausible, nay, however solid might be many of his arguments considered in themselves, however true it was that presumptively great dangers might arise from the uncontrolled power of the Crown, in binding the faith of the country to treaties which it had never heard of, yet, notwithstanding all that, in practice when the matter was put to the solid test of experience, we found that there was not a treaty upon record, though some of them might be recognised now as unwise—which is quite a different matter—there was not a treaty upon record which had not been, at the time when it was concluded, entirely agreeable to the general sense of the country. I said therefore I am content with the prerogative, which whatever danger under conceivable circumstances, or under, as I then thought, inconceivable circumstances, it might entail, yet in such a variety of trials, has been proved to work safely, expeditiously, effectively, and without detriment to any of our liberties." (Page 62, Series 2.)

In regard to the Afghan war, however, Mr. Gladstone, though holding the opinions quoted in relation to the powers of the Crown, felt it consistent with those views to strongly condemn the action of Parliament. He said:—

"The House of Commons could have stopped this by lifting up its little finger. The House of Commons would not stop it, approved it, sanctioned it, confirmed it, stamped it in your name, and gave all the encouragement in its power to the repetition of such acts in future times." (Page 176, Series 2.)

A pretty good illustration this, one would think, of the error and absurdity of Mr. Gladstone's opinion that the nation cannot be committed by the Crown to expenditure and engagements except in general conformity with its own wishes. Another illustration, even more emphatic, of the weakness of Mr. Gladstone's conviction on this matter, is the following complaint as to the last Afghan war:—

"And I must frankly tell you that I doubt very much whether the Emperor of Russia, who rules the most despotic state in Europe, and is supposed to have that people in a condition nearest servitude—I doubt very much whether the Emperor and Government of Russia would have dared to make such a war without the knowledge and cognisance of their people, as the war that has been made by the Ministers of England, in the name of the Queen of England." (Page 178, Series 2.)

Whilst censuring Parliament for not stopping this war, Mr. Gladstone complained that the information on which alone it could have acted was withheld from it until it was too late to be of service. He said:—

"The Parliament has been kept in ignorance at the most vital periods of the last two or three years of information absolutely necessary for a right decision upon the great questions which it has been called upon to debate." (Page 176, Series 2.)

If Parliament was kept in ignorance, and was compelled to debate great questions, at critical periods, in the dark, then Mr. Gladstone was rather hard upon Parliament. Had the executive been compelled by law to take the House of Commons into its confidence at the outset,

the results would probably have been different. Notwithstanding his complaint, however, Mr. Gladstone, during his late five years of office, very successfully emulated Lord Beaconsfield in keeping Parliament in the dark. In fact the *Quarterly Review*, not without reason, makes precisely the same complaint of him as he made of his predecessor:—

"It can scarcely be said that Parliament is responsible for the Foreign Policy of the late Government; for as a rule Parliament has been kept almost entirely in the dark, until it could no longer exercise any effective control. So much word-spinning and word-twisting, so many evasions of plain questions, or dogged refusals to give information, we have never seen since Mr. Gladstone's first Administration, when he gradually embittered the whole country against him and alienated his own followers, by exhibiting a conspicuous want of candour and common sense. The late Government has made it a great offence that the Conservatives 'asked so many questions,' but it might at least admit that very few of the questions were properly answered. The art of equivocation was sedulously practised by every member of the Ministry Each subordinate tried to equal his chief in weaving meshes of words, so dense and confusing, that no ray of light could penetrate through them. Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice has recently stated that it had been his lot, following his valued friend, Sir Charles Dilke, for three successive years in the House of Commons, to resist with the support and approval, he was glad to know, of his political leaders, that system—that is, the system of questioning the Government on its Foreign Policy, which the late Under Secretary called 'crippling the Government.' This is an important admission, and no doubt Lord E. Fitzmaurice and his 'valued friend' and his political leaders will now and then be reminded of it. Lord Beaconsfield's Administration was badgered from morning till night by questions which could not be

answered without injury to the public service; and then it was accused of hiding all its doings in a cupboard, and of enveloping itself in mystery." (*Quarterly Review*, 1885.)

With respect to one matter affecting Foreign Policy, Mr. Gladstone's utterances in Midlothian were peculiarly unfortunate, and that was the conduct of Austria. He censured the policy of that power in most severe language. This would not at all have mattered if he had first of all made sure of his facts, and then stuck to his statements through thick and thin; but he did neither of these things. His first reference to Austria was in these terms, which were used in a speech in the Waverley Market at Edinburgh, November 29, 1879: "I appeal to you to join me in the expression of the hope that under the yoke of no power whatever will those free provinces (Bulgaria and Roumelia) again be brought. It is not Russia alone whose movements ought to be watched with vigilance. There are schemes abroad of which others are the authors. There is too much reason to suspect that some portion of the statesmen of Austria will endeavour to extend her rule, and to fulfil the evil prophecies that have been uttered, and cause the great change in the Balkan Peninsula to be only the substitution of one kind of supremacy for another." This, however, was very mild in comparison with what followed. In his second series of Midlothian speeches, delivered in 1880, Mr. Gladstone attacked Austria with such violence as to arouse the anger of that Power, amaze Europe, and grieve his countrymen; and involve himself in consequences which were by no means pleasant. The first of these attacks was couched in the following language:—

"Did you read in the London papers within the last few weeks an account of the energetic support which they derive from the Emperor of Austria? Did you see that the Emperor of Austria sent for the British Ambassador, Sir Henry Elliot, and told Sir Henry Elliot what a pestilent person he considered Mr. Gladstone, as a man that did

not approve of the Foreign Policy of Austria, and how anxious he was—so the Emperor of Austria was condescendingly pleased to say for the guidance of the British people, and of the electors of Midlothian—how anxious he was, gentlemen, that you should all of you give your votes in a way to maintain the Ministry of Lord Beaconsfield? Well, if you approve of the Foreign Policy of Austria, the Foreign Policy that Austria has usually pursued, I advise you to do that very thing. If you want to have an Austrian Foreign Policy dominant in the councils of this country, give your votes as the Emperor of Austria recommends. What has that policy of Austria been? I do not say that Austria is incurable. I hope some day or other it will be cured, because it has got better institutions at home, and although its condition is one of much difficulty and doubt, I heartily wish it well in its attempts to confront its difficulties. Yet I must look to what that policy has been. Austria has been the steady unflinching foe of freedom of every country in Europe. Russia, I am sorry to say, has been the foe of freedom, too, but in Russia there is one exception—Russia has been the friend of Sclavonic freedom. But Austria has never been the friend of Sclavonic freedom. Austria trampled Italy under foot. Austria resisted the unity of Germany; Austria tried all she could to prevent the creation of Belgium; Austria never lifted a finger for the regeneration and constitution of Greece; there is not an instance, there is not a spot upon the whole map where you can lay your finger and say, 'There Austria did good.' I speak of course of her general policy, I speak of its general tendency." (Pages 40-41, Series 2.)

This was extraordinary language to be used by such a man, even if it had been based on fact. Mr. Gladstone was a powerful statesman, and the leader of the Liberal party; he had been Prime Minister, and was likely to become so again; and consequently, a responsibility attached to his utterances such as could not possibly

attach to those of an ordinary individual, or even to those of any other Liberal leader. Sir Henry Elliot, the British Ambassador to Austria, promptly denied that the Emperor of Austria had ever used such language as that attributed to him, or any language that could be forced into a resemblance to it. Mr. Gladstone's rejoinder was a repetition of the original statement, varied only by a rather contemptuous reference to Sir H. Elliot. Here are the words:—

"Some time ago I read in a Tory paper—not in a Liberal, but in a Tory paper—I read an account which appeared to me a very strange account, of some proceedings that had taken place at Vienna with the British Ambassador, Sir Henry Elliot, who was supposed to act, not for this or that party, or this or that person, but on behalf of his country. This British Ambassador had had an interview, or conversation, with the Emperor of Austria, in which the Emperor of Austria had been pleased to pronounce extremely severe censure upon myself, as a most dangerous politician, and to express his hope that such a politician would not be allowed to influence the councils of his country. Well, I feel no resentment—none whatever—but I feel a duty on that account. The reason of that disapproval is, that in whatever I have done in Foreign Policy, and in most important questions, I have generally found myself, if liberty were concerned, in direct conflict with the Government of Austria." (Page 263, Series 2.)

In the same speech he further said:—"Unhappily it has been the fate of Austria, and the policy of Austria, in the case of Greece, in the case of Italy, in the case of Belgium, wherever she had anything to say, her influence has been unfortunately used on behalf of arbitrary power, against freedom, and against good government in the States. Probably, it is no wonder that the Emperor of Austria should disapprove of my proceedings, because I consequently happened to disapprove very much of the

proceedings of the Austrian Government. I told my audience in Edinburgh the other day that in my opinion we were bound to watch the Austrian Government, just as we were bound to watch Russia, and to take care that whenever, and wherever, the Austrian Government interfered, and attempted to put down freedom in the Balkan Peninsula, and substitute its own influence and powers for the free governments that are gradually rising up in that peninsula under the recent arrangements, we should appear, so far as we had a right to be heard, as the opponents of that policy." (Page 264, Series 2.)

When Mr. Gladstone came into office he found that these unguarded utterances were exceedingly embarrassing. Austria was naturally disposed to resent the attacks which had been made upon her, and to retaliate upon their author. The relations between the two Governments were in a strained and uncomfortable condition, and it was felt on both sides that something must be done. Mr. Gladstone had to eat humble pie and apologise, which he did in the following terms :—

"At the moment when I accepted from the Queen the duty of forming an Administration I forthwith resolved that I would not, as a Minister, either repeat, or even defend in argument polemical language in regard to more than one foreign Power which I had used individually when in a position of greater freedom and less responsibility. I feel a cordial respect for the efforts of the Emperor, and I trust that their complete success may honourably and nobly mark his reign. With respect to my animadversions on the Foreign Policy of Austria in times when it was active beyond the border, I will not conceal from your Excellency that grave apprehensions had been excited in my mind lest Austria should play a part in the Balkan Peninsular hostile to the freedom of the emancipated populations and to the reasonable and warranted hopes of the subjects of the Sultan. These apprehensions were founded, it is true, upon secondary evidence, but it was not

the evidence of hostile witnesses, and it was the best at my command. Your Excellency is now good enough to assure me that your Government has no desire whatever to extend or add to the rights it has acquired under the Treaty of Berlin, and that any such extension would be actually prejudicial to Austria-Hungary. Permit me to state to your Excellency that had I been in possession of such an assurance as I have now been able to receive I never would have uttered any one of the words which your Excellency justly describes as of a painful and wounding character. Whether it was my misfortune or my fault that I was not so supplied I will not now attempt to determine, but will at once express my serious concern that I should in default of it have been led to refer to transactions of an earlier period, or to use terms of censure which I can now wholly banish from the public mind. I think that the explanation I now tender should be made not less public than the speech which has supplied the occasion for it, and as to the form of such publicity I desire to accede to whatever may be your Excellency's wish. Your Excellency says that his Imperial Majesty expressed, in conversation with Sir H. Elliot, 'his deep regret at my hostile disposition towards Austria.' Permit me to say I have no such disposition towards any country whatever, and heartily wished well to Austria, in the performance of the arduous task of consolidating the Empire."—*Letter to Count Karolyi.* (Pages 364-5, Series 2.)

This was in one sense an unfortunate beginning in the domain of Foreign Policy, and it did not please the country. It was right, under the circumstances, that the apology should be made; but it was highly injudicious on the part of Mr. Gladstone, especially when his experience and position are considered, to place himself in such a situation as to render it necessary. Besides which the apology was, perhaps, unnecessarily abject in its tone and language, and it was widely felt that England was in some sense abased in the matter.

It has been stated that Peace was the keynote of Mr. Gladstone's ideal Foreign Policy. His second principle of Foreign Policy* is that England ought to strive to preserve to the nations of the earth peace, "were it but for shame when we recollect the sacred name we bear as Christians." Here are some other declarations on the same point:—

"When I look at the inscription which faces me on yonder gallery I see the words 'Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform.' All of these words, ladies, are connected with the promotion of human happiness."

"Of all these words — peace, retrenchment, and reform—the one word upon which I will say a few more especial words on this occasion is the word 'peace.' Is this, ladies, a time of peace? Cast your eyes abroad over the world. Think what has taken place in the last three or four years. Think of the events which have deluged many a hill and valley with blood; and think, with regret and pain, of the share, not which you individually, but which your country collectively, has had in that grievous operation."

"But I am here to say that a long experience of life leads me, not towards any abstract doctrine upon the subject, but to a deeper and deeper conviction of the enormous mischiefs of war, even under the best and most favourable circumstances, and of the mischiefs indescribable and the guilt unredeemed of causeless and unnecessary wars." (Page 93, Series 1.)

"If all the millions bestowed upon giving effect to the warlike policy of the Government had, instead of being so applied, been thrown down to the bottom of the sea, you would have been better off with such a mode of disposing of the funds than you are now." (Page 136, Series 1.)

"We have absorbed it (Indian Famine Fund) to support a war of wilfulness, of injustice, and of folly. And, gentle-

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* See page 45.

men, I think that the pulpit, rather than the platform, is the place from which to impress upon the minds of a Christian nation the enormous guilt, the immeasurable responsibility, which is undertaken by those countries that indulge themselves with levity, nay, even with something like exultation, in those wilful, unjust, and destructive wars." (Page 203, Series 1.)

"We have finance in confusion; we have legislation in intolerable arrear; we have honour compromised by the breach of public law, we have public distress aggravated by the destruction of confidence; we have Russia aggrandised and yet estranged; we have Turkey befriended, as we say, but mutilated, and sinking every day; we have Europe restless and disturbed—Europe, which, after the Treaty of Paris, at all events so far as the Eastern Question was concerned, had something like rest been approaching twenty years, has almost, ere the ink of the Treaty of Berlin is dry, been agitated from end to end with rumours and alarms, so that on the last 10th of November we were told that the Prime Minister thought that peace might be preserved, but on the previous 9th of November—namely, four months after the Treaty—it had been much more doubtful. In Africa you have before you the memory of bloodshed, of military disaster, the record of 10,000 Zulus—such is the computation of Bishop Colenso—slain for no other offence than their attempt to defend against your artillery with their naked bodies their hearths and homes, their wives and families. You have the invasion of a free people in the Transvaal; and you have, I fear, in one quarter or another—I will not enter into details, which might be injurious to the public interest—prospect of further disturbance and shedding of blood. You have Afghanistan ruined; you have India not advanced, but thrown back in government, subjected to heavy and unjust charges—subjected to what may well be termed, in comparison with the mild government of former years, a system of oppression; and with all this you have had at home in

matters which I will not now detail, the law broken and the rights of Parliament invaded. Gentlemen, amidst the whole of this pestilent activity—for so I must call it—this distress and bloodshed which we have either produced or largely shared in producing, not in one instance, down to the Treaty of Berlin, and down to the war in Afghanistan—not in one instance did we either do a deed, or speak an effectual word, on behalf of liberty." (Pages 209-10, Series 1.)

Impartial readers of the foregoing passages will feel that the *Quarterly Review* puts the matter none too strongly in saying:—

"It can be proved beyond all cavil or doubt that Mr. Gladstone came into power—apart from the Irish vote—mainly through his solemn, distinct, and reiterated promises of peace. The country had been disturbed, it wanted rest, and under Mr. Gladstone there would be, happen what might, no more bloodshed. This was the foundation-stone of the whole Gladstonian edifice."*

Leaving the subject of Foreign Policy, let us turn to that of Finance, and see what Mr. Gladstone has to say on that. This was one of the leading topics of the Midlothian speeches, and as it is one of vital importance, and one, moreover, on which Mr. Gladstone has distinctly departed from his own principles, it will be well to let him speak at length. Take, first of all, his Four Rules of Finance:—

"The first of them is, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer shall boldly uphold economy in detail; and it is the mark, gentlemen, of, I was going to say a chicken-hearted Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he shrinks from upholding economy in detail, when, because it is a question of only £2,000 or £3,000, he says that is no matter. He is ridiculed, no doubt, for what is called saving candle-ends and cheese-parings. No Chancellor

* July, 1885.

of the Exchequer is worth his salt who is not ready to save what are meant by candle-ends and cheese-parings in the cause of his country. No Chancellor of the Exchequer is worth his salt who makes his own popularity either his first consideration, or any consideration at all, in administering the public purse. . . . But that resistance in detail to jobbery and minute waste and extravagance is the first of wholly sound financial rules." (Page 148, Series 1.)

"The second rule, gentlemen, is this, and this is perhaps the most essential of them all: that once in the year, and only once, the Chancellor of the Exchequer shall make his financial statement, shall say such was my income, and such was my charge for the year that has expired, so that Parliament can judge me upon it; such is my estimated income, and such is my estimated charge for the year that is to come, so that Parliament can form its judgment with reference to the condition of the country, whether it is reasonable, and if there be need what measures it shall take in order to supply the means. . . . ." (Page 149, Series 1.)

"Well, here is another rule, and it is this, that when you have not money enough you must supply the deficit by taxation. . . . ." (Page 151, Series 1.)

"To aim at annual surplus as a main instrument for the steady reduction of the public debt." (Pages 152-3, Series 1.)

One count of Mr. Gladstone's indictment against the Beaconsfield Government was that it had violated these sound rules of finance. Of Sir Stafford Northcote, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, he said:—

"I am bound to say hardly ever in the six years that Sir Stafford Northcote has been in office have I heard him speak a resolute word on behalf of economy." (Page 148, Series 1.)

If Mr. Gladstone should make a fourth series of Midlothian speeches, as he not improbably may, perhaps he

will tell us how many "resolute words" he has uttered on behalf of economy during the past five years. In Midlothian, however, he spoke resolute words enough in regard to the extravagance of his opponents.

"Their war expenditure I will not deduct, because their war expenditure, so far from having been an inheritance from other Governments and from other times, has been the fruit, as we hold, of their needless and wanton choice." (Page 135, Series 1.) Yet how ready the late Government were to ascribe their difficulties, financial and other, to their predecessors, rather than to their own choice.

"This extravagance of expenditure is due to no one cause. It bubbles up everywhere. It is due in one part to what has been called a vigorous Foreign Policy, and a spirited Foreign Policy." (Page 137, Series 1.)

"I say broadly, that in my opinion a total augmentation in our expenditure of eight millions sterling, including a military augmentation of six or seven, is due to the existence and the action of the present Ministry." (Preface, Series 1.)

One of the things most forcibly insisted upon by Mr. Gladstone was what he called "squaring the account." He perpetually enforced the doctrine that the Government should pay its way, and meet the year's expenditure with the year's revenue:—

"We are not fond of taxation, and we have shown what we thought of taxation by our proceedings when we have been in Government. But we are fond of this,—we are fond of financial honesty. We are fond of squaring the account; and no nation, in our judgment, is financially honest which does not use its best exertions to square the account. What can be more idle than to attempt to satisfy the people of this country by showing that the taxes have not been increased in proportion to the expenditure?" (Page 139, Series 1.)

"I assure you, gentlemen, upon my whole knowledge and experience, that the efficiency of the popular

and Parliamentary control upon the expenditure of the country entirely depends upon the maintenance of the principle of the annual as opposed to the triennial or tri-monthly budget. It is idle to talk of controlling the expenditure of the Government, unless you compel them to adhere to that rule. . . . ." (Page 150, Series 1.)

He exalted Sir Robert Peel as an example in this respect, and compared his conduct with that of the Beaconsfield Government.

"He had a large deficiency. He had to deal with the people at a period of the most serious distress, grievous distress, such popular distress as has not been known within those last few years. And he came to Parliament and stood at his place in the House of Commons, pointed out the figures as they stood, and said to them, I ask you, will you resort to the miserable expedient of tolerating deficit, and of making provision by loans from year to year? That which he denounced as the miserable expedient has become the standing law, has become almost the financial gospel of the Government that is now in power." (Page 152, Series 1.)

Not only did Mr. Gladstone condemn the Government, but he chided the people—as if they, poor wretches, had practically anything at all to do with it, except to provide the money for those who prey upon them.

"Now, gentlemen, what I object to is this, we are all of us —I mean, considered as tax-payers, a great deal too much given to laxity in this matter; to spend too much and not to insist upon a rigid rule of making a sufficient provision for what is spent. But the Constitution appoints one particular man to teach us sound doctrine, and to nail us up to that particular doctrine, and that particular man is the Chancellor of the Exchequer." (Page 152, Series 1.)

Where is the sound doctrine of Mr. Childers?

It is a very singular fact, and eminently characteristic of Mr. Gladstone's mind, that at the very time when he was enforcing economy, and commiserating the taxpayers on

the waste of their substance, he constituted himself the apologist of one of the worst forms of extravagance—the vicious pension system and the practice of compensating all sorts of people for imaginary losses. His words are:—

"When you are dealing with the proceedings, either of an economical or of an extravagant Government, the present circumstances never set forth the whole case. In this country our economies are eminently prospective, because for a very long series of years, in fact, ever since economies began—I may say about half a century ago—*the wise practice has been to carry them into effect with the most liberal consideration for individual interests.*" (Page 133, Series 1.)

On the general question of taxation Mr. Gladstone said:

"I do not hold, gentlemen, that good finance is the beginning and ending of good government; but I hold this, that it is an essential of good government—it is a condition of good government. Without it you cannot have good government, and with it you almost always get good government. The things are harmonious, though they are not identical." (Page 132, Series 1.)

"Now I tell you, as a practical matter in dealing with finance, that nothing has done so much to enlarge the expenditure of this country as the existence of the income-tax, and the facility with which, upon causes comparatively slight, that income-tax could at any time be raised. That in my view, gentlemen, is a very great evil. I am one of those who agree with Mr. Cobden in one of the many useful sayings which that eminent and admirable man delivered for the benefit of his fellow-men. It was this, that 'public economy was public virtue.'" (Page 233, Series 2.)

In a similar strain he approvingly referred to the financial policy of Sir Robert Peel:—

"I do not know that Sir Robert Peel was not even more economical than the Liberal Party of his own day. At that time the whole nation was united in the desire to see

the government of the country economically carried on for the benefit of the people. The principle held was, that the taxes were, after all, money taken out of the honest earnings of the people, and that no money ought to be taken out of the honest earnings of the people, except under a strong public necessity—that was the admitted principle of both parties." (Page 236, Series 2.)

Mr. Gladstone warned the electors that if they continued a Tory Government in office they might expect this extravagant expenditure to go on, and even increase; but he virtually pledged his word that if the Liberals were returned to power, the precisely opposite result would follow. In fact, he placed financial reform first in his programme, giving it precedence over even the Land Question:—*

"The condition of finance is a subject of many branches, and won't bear treatment in detail without a great expenditure of time, but I am satisfied now to note it, as one of what I think three subjects likely to vindicate their claim to be immediately and seriously set about by any right-minded Parliament. If you return a Parliament like this, I won't promise you that your finances will be dealt with at all. *I won't answer for what will happen if you return a Parliament of the wrong kind. If you return a Parliament of the right kind, finance is one of the first subjects that must receive careful and close attention.*" (Page 199, Series 2.)

"I do not say that it is possible now, with the extended wants of the country and its immense population, to go back to the moderate scale of expenditure which was in force thirty, forty, or fifty years ago. But I do say this, that there has been a tendency to undue and to unnecessary profuseness in dealing with the proceeds of those taxes which are taken from the pockets of the people, and the levying of which goes to abridge the comforts, ay, in

* See Page 237, Series 2.

many cases, the necessary comforts, I may say—of human life." (Page 233, Series 2.)

"If Lord Dalkeith and the members of the majority who have done all these things, and have sanctioned all the worst deeds of the Government, are returned again to Parliament, and another six years of such proceedings are witnessed, the income-tax won't stop at fivepence in the pound, but will ascend higher, by one of those turns of the screw which are so easily administered to that very powerful financial engine. And not the income-tax alone, but in other forms likewise—both that and the personal property of the country will be greatly affected." (Page 234, Series 2.)

On the rights of other nations, and the manner in which those rights should be respected by us, Mr. Gladstone had a great deal to say, and to what he said no exception can be taken by anyone who believes that Christian principle ought to be applied to political affairs. If Mr. Gladstone is at fault, it is not in his preaching, but in his practice.

"In the principles of Foreign Policy, gentlemen, as I have professed them from my youth, it is a fundamental article that we are to set up no claim for ourselves which we do not allow to others, and that he who departs from that principle is committing treason against public law, and the peace and order of the world." (Page 196, Series 1.)

"The principle of equality among nations lies, in my opinion, at the very basis and root of a Christian civilisation, and when that principle is compromised or abandoned, with it must depart our hopes of tranquillity and of progress for mankind." (Page 123, Series 1.)

"We have said that we never confound the sense of party with the duties of humanity; but foolish indeed it would have been if, because we were a party, we were to have renounced our obedience to those duties." (Page 190, Series 1.)

"Remember the rights of the savage, as we call him.

Remember that the happiness of his humble home, remember that the sanctity of life in the hill villages of Afghanistan among the winter snows, is as inviolable in the eye of Almighty God as can be your own. Remember that He who has united you together as human beings in the same flesh and blood, has bound you by the law of mutual love, which is not limited by the shores of this island, is not limited by the boundaries of Christian civilisation; but it passes over the whole surface of the earth, and embraces the meanest along with the greatest in its unmeasured scope." (Page 94, Series 1.)

"Those hill tribes had committed no real offence against us. We, in the pursuit of our political objects, chose to establish military positions in their country. If they resisted, would not you have done the same? And when, going forth from their villages they had resisted, what you find is this, that those who went forth were slain, and that the village was burned. Again, I say, have you considered the meaning of these words? The meaning of the burning of the village is, that the women and children were driven forth to perish in the snows of the winter. Is not that a terrible supposition?" (Page 94, Series 1.)

"I mean the sound and the sacred principle that Christendom is formed of a band of nations who are united to one another in the bonds of right; that they are without distinction of great or small; there is an absolute equality between them, the same sacredness defends the narrow limits of Belgium as attaches to the extended frontiers of Russia, or Germany, or France. I hold that he who by act or word brings that principle into peril or disparagement, however honest his intentions may be, places himself in the position of one inflicting—I won't say intending to inflict—I ascribe nothing of the sort, but inflicting injury upon his own country, and endangering the peace and all the most fundamental interests of Christian society." (Page 129, Series 1.)

"I find among these Afghans that some were executed for the offence of inciting their fellow-countrymen to resist. They are not merely slain in action, but they are executed for that offence. I am not going to censure General Roberts. Such is the necessity of his position that I will not take into my hands the office of judging, him. But I say, is not this monstrous, that we should place ourselves in such a position, that when the Afghan discharges the first duty of a patriot—namely, to endeavour to bring his countrymen to resist the foreign invader, that is to be treated as a sin, and is to be visited, not merely by the chances of war, but by an ignominious death, even after resistance has ceased?" (Pages 295-6, Series 2.)

"But do you attach some value to mercy? What measures does this war entail upon your generals and soldiers? It entails such measures as these—that when in January, 1879, they were making war among the mountain-tops of the passes between India and Afghanistan, the tribes who inhabited them naturally, and not wrongfully, issued forth from their villages to resist; and where they had so issued forth, the villages were burned to the ground, and the women and children, by natural and necessary consequence, driven forth to wander and perish in the snow. These things, in my opinion, are horrible to the last degree. I am far from saying that they entail blame on your military commanders. They obey the necessity of the case; the guilt lies with those who imposed upon them that necessity. The responsibility lay, first with the Indian Government; it lay next with the English Government, who sanctioned the acts of the Indian Government; it lay next with the majority of the House of Commons, who sanctioned the acts of the British Government; it will lie last with you, the people of Penicuik, and the rest of the people of the country, and with every one among you who gives by his vote his sanction to proceedings so dishonourable to the British name." (Page 294, Series 2.)

The annexationist policy of the Beaconsfield Government was stoutly opposed by Mr. Gladstone, who proclaimed as an alternative to it what I have called a policy of enlightened self-interest. He inculcated prudence, and denounced the foolish notion that England's strength consists in the extent of her possessions. All swagger, bluster, and unnecessary interference with the affairs of other nations he declared to be unwise and wicked.

"Is it in the nature of things—is it in the design of Providence, that besides the concerns of the vast Empire over which this little island rules, we should be meddling in the business of almost every portion of the globe?" (Page 183, Series 1.)

"What do you mean by this sort of strengthening the Empire? It is simply loading the Empire. It is not strengthening the Empire." (Page 64, Series 1.)

"We had strength enough for every duty, and our duties were weighty and numerous enough; we had none to misapply or to throw away." (Page 65, Series 1.)

"There is no strength to be added to your country by governing the Transvaal, by overrunning Zululand, by undertaking to be responsible for Egypt, or for the vast mass of mountains in Central Asia, and for keeping in order their wild and warlike tribes. It is sheer and pure burden imposed upon you." (Pages 64-65, Series 1.)

"The meaning of it is this, that with that limited store of men, and of funds which these islands can supply, we are continually to go on enlarging our responsibilities, and our dangers all over the surface of the earth." (Page 64, Series 1.)

"I make the complaint, that the shoulders, so to speak, of this nation have been loaded by a multitude of gratuitous, mischievous, and dangerous engagements. I point to Africa, I point to India, I point to Afghanistan, to Syria, to Asia Minor, to the whole of Turkey in Asia; I point to our assumption practically, and in an alliance with France, most critical in its nature; our assumption of

the virtual government of Egypt; I point to our practical annexation of the Island of Cyprus, to all the military dangers and responsibilities of undertaking the defence of the Turkish frontier in Armenia; in fact, I point to enormous increase of difficulty and labour all over the world—and I challenge it, in the first instance, upon the most modest and lowest ground, I challenge it on the ground of its prudence. Common sense, after all, gentlemen, is the rule as of private so of public life, and it is a rule of common sense which everyone of you would observe in his private concerns, that you would not undertake new engagements when your hands were full." (Pages 62-63, Series 1.)

"Depend upon it that this Empire is an Empire the daily calls of whose immense responsibilities, the daily inevitable responsibilities, task and overtask the energies of the best and ablest of her sons. Why, gentlemen, there is not a country in the history of the world that has undertaken what we have undertaken; and when I say 'what we have undertaken,' I don't mean what the present Government have undertaken—that I will come to by-and-bye—but what England in its traditional established policy and position has undertaken. There is no precedent in human history for a formation like the British Empire. A small island at one extremity of the globe peoples the whole earth with its colonies. Not satisfied with that, it goes among the ancient races of Asia, and subjects two hundred and forty millions of men to its rule. Along with all this it disseminates over the world a commerce such as no imagination ever conceived in former times, and such as no poet ever painted. And all this it has to do with the strength that lies within the narrow limits of these shores. Rely upon it, the strength of Great Britain and Ireland is within the United Kingdom." (Page 46, Series 1.)

"Whatever is to be done in defending and governing these vast colonies with their teeming millions, in protecting that unmeasured commerce; in relation to the enormous

responsibilities of India—whatever is to be done must be done by the force derived from you and from your children, derived from you and your fellow electors, throughout the land, and from you and from the citizens and people of this country. . . . . ." (Pages 46-47, Series 1.)

"I affirm that, on the contrary, strive and labour as you will in office—I speak after the experience of a life-time, of which a fair portion has been spent in office—human strength and human thought are not equal to the ordinary discharge of the calls and duties appertaining to government, in this great, wonderful, and world-wide Empire. And therefore, gentlemen, I say it is indeed deplorable that in addition to these calls, of which we have evidence in a thousand forms, and of our insufficiency to meet which we have evidence in a thousand forms, when in addition to these calls, all manners of gratuitous, dangerous, ambiguous, impracticable, and impossible engagements are contracted for us in all parts of the world." (Pages 47-48, Series 1.)

The responsibility of the Government to Parliament, and of Parliament to the people, was a leading theme of the Midlothian speeches, and on this subject Mr. Gladstone made some noteworthy declarations:—

"It is with me a main point to throw the responsibility which was originally that of the Government upon the Parliament. It no longer belongs to the Government, it belongs to those who supported the Government, encouraged the Government, stimulated the Government, and took on themselves the whole responsibility, and have now got to answer for it before you." (Page 335, Series 2.)

"Those with whom we have to deal are not the members of the Administration, but the members of the majority. It is by disposing of the majority that you will dispose of the Government. It is by returning that same majority again—though I think it is rather late to think of that now—but if it were possible it would be by returning that same majority again that the Government would be kept in office.

You have to deal with the majority, you have to deal with the individual members of that majority, you have to deal with the particular individual who has represented Midlothian." (Page 328, Series 2.)

"A great State trial is proceeding. That State trial is the trial of the majority of the last House of Commons at the bar—not merely of public opinion, but at the bar of this nation, legally and constitutionally assembled in its several constituencies to pronounce judgment of acquittal or condemnation on the members of that majority." (Page 327, Series 2.)

"Not only have they been supported by the majority, but I am convinced from observation that they might, if they had pleased, have gone a great deal further in the same course of mismanagement and misconduct than they did, and still have had that support just as unbroken as it had actually been." (Page 329, Series 2.)

"If the members of the Opposition should come into the Government, and if they misbehave themselves, why, then, gentlemen, turn them out, and send them about their business." (Page 329, Series 2.)

"We are not, in my opinion, passing direct judgment upon the conduct of the Ministers at this moment, so much as we are passing judgment—that is, I am calling upon you to pass judgment—on the conduct of the majority of the House of Commons by whom that Ministry was made, and by whom that Ministry has been supported."

"Is it right, or is it not right, that the Government of a country which calls itself Christian and believes itself civilised, should be carried on upon principles like these? It is for you to decide. The whole matter has now come into your hands. It is no longer by Ministers, it is no longer by the Parliament that I believe was dissolved this afternoon—that these things will be done. Your approval is to be signified by your votes for the members of the majority, asking to be again returned to Parliament, your

condemnation is to be signified by returning men who have been in opposition to that majority. So much, gentlemen, for right, so much for the policy of your proceedings." (Page 291, Series 2.)

"Is this the way, or is this not the way, in which a free nation, inhabiting these islands, wishes to be governed? Will the people, be it now or be it months hence, ratify the deeds that have been done, and assume upon themselves that tremendous responsibility?" (Page 210, Series 1.)

Mr. Gladstone's utterances on domestic questions will be referred to later on; this chapter may fitly be closed with a few general statements of principle and policy.

"I charged them, first, with the mismanagement of finance; secondly, with an extravagant scale of expenditure; thirdly, with having allowed legislation, which is always in arrear in this country, from the necessary pressure of the concerns of so vast an Empire,—with having allowed that legislation to come into such a state that its arrears are intolerable and almost hopeless. I charged them with a Foreign Policy which has gravely compromised the faith and honour of the country. I charged them with having, both through their ruinous finance and through their disturbing measures, broken up confidence in the commercial community, and thereby aggravated the public distress. I charged them with having contributed needlessly and wrongfully to the aggrandisement of Russia. I charged them with having made an unjust and dangerous war in Afghanistan, and I further charged them with these terms: 'By their use of the treaty-making and the war-making powers of the Crown they have abridged the just rights of Parliament, and have presented prerogative to the nation under an unconstitutional aspect, which tends to make it insecure." (Page 169, Series 1.)

"What we complain of notwithstanding is this, that the greatest subjects of legislation have been allowed to fall into terrible arrear. I am sorry to say, gentlemen, there are more or less arrears. Nothing but the greatest

diligence can avail to keep abreast of the calls made by the vast concerns of this Empire. But in this particular instance, it has been the pleasure of the Government to fill our minds, and to take up our minds, with every sort of scheme and of policy all over the world; and in consequence a very large and most undue proportion of the time of Parliament has necessarily been diverted from the care of your affairs in order to discuss and bring within the knowledge of the nation at large, the strange and extraordinary scheme of foreign and Indian policy which has characterised for the first time the history of a British administration. We complain, therefore, that legislation is sadly in arrear. I need not prove it. We are all conscious of it—conscious of it in England, and conscious of it even more, but equally conscious of it in Scotland. We complain, gentlemen, that the elementary duty of the Government in the right management of finance has been grossly neglected. That charges, which even if they had been imposed for beneficial purposes, ought to have been courageously met, have been timidly and most improperly and unusually postponed from one year to another, until at length the amount of deficiency thus accumulated is actually eight millions of money." (Page 94, Series 2.)

"Finally, you want statesmen who will be guided by the great principles of justice, economy and reform. It is needless for me to do more than say in my firm and sad belief those principles of justice, those principles of economy, those principles of reform, have been either neglected or gravely compromised, and even trodden under foot." (Page 213, Series 1.)

The Midlothian speeches, taking them all in all, constitute a declaration of principles of which any political party may well be proud. They are everywhere pervaded by a lofty spirit—qualities of the highest order are conspicuous on every page. The speaker is evidently manly, courageous, humane, generous, and patriotic. He speaks as if he felt his responsibility and realised the grandeur of his

mission. No wonder such words, spoken with the eloquence of which Mr. Gladstone is so great a master, thrilled vast audiences and almost turned the heads of the Liberals throughout the country. Never before was such a splendid exposition of noble principles set before any nation. It is true Mr. Gladstone was weak on the treaty-making power and on the subject of pensions, but in the main his programme was excellent. The very excellence of Mr. Gladstone's political gospel made it the more difficult of attainment. A statesman who uttered such denunciations, expounded such principles, and made such promises, committed himself to an enormous responsibility. But as Mr. Gladstone spoke deliberately, after careful thought, with a due sense of responsibility, and with a full consciousness that he was undertaking a gigantic task, it is undoubtedly just to hold him to—and judge him by—his words. He never told us that he was expounding ideal principles, which were intended to exercise a temporary fascination over the electors, but not to be practically applied to the political questions of the day; his air was always that of a grave and sincere man, who meant every word he said, and we must deal with him accordingly.

When such a man speaks in such a spirit of peace, retrenchment, and reform; of responsibility, progress, and justice, common people may be forgiven if they expect him to achieve great results when he gets into power. The orator of Midlothian stood before the country as philosopher, statesman, and reformer. As men listened to him they almost felt that Liberalism and Christianity were one and the same thing. No wonder they believed, rejoiced, and positively exulted in the faith that a brighter day had dawned. Wars would now cease, and the nation would have a season of rest. England would no longer play the part of a bully among the nations, but would respect the rights of others, and do as she would be done by; nay, she would even manifest a spirit of humanity and mercy to the down-trodden and the weak. Expenditure would drop

to its normal condition, and the taxpayer would be eased. Ireland would be treated with justice and consideration, and in return would begin to respect England. Domestic concerns, the affairs of our own over-worked and suffering poor, would at last receive the earnest attention of the British Parliament. All this, and much more, so it was believed, would be realised when Mr. Gladstone and his Liberal majority returned to office. For this belief Mr. Gladstone was directly responsible. He created it. The Midlothian speeches kindled new faith and hope in the heart of the nation. If that hope has been disappointed, if that faith has been in vain, the fault is not with the people who indulged them, but with the man in whom they trusted. They expected, and reasonably and properly expected, that he would make his Ideal the Real. Has he done this? Has he strenuously striven to do it? We shall see! The Ideal is now before us; it remains for us to inquire how far the Real corresponds with it. From Egypt, South Africa, and remote parts of the world, as well as from Ireland and from England, will come a seven-fold answer.

CHAPTER III.

PEACE—FOREIGN POLICY.

THE three great principles inscribed on the Liberal banner are, "Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform." The greatest of these is peace. As Lord Derby once said, "The greatest British interest is peace."

It was a true instinct that led Mr. Gladstone to place this in the very forefront of the programme which he laid before the country in 1880. The nation had grown sick of the Jingoism and of the bastard Imperialism of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury. The people had learned that a "spirited foreign policy" meant to them loss of profits and of wages, as well as the loss of their sons who fell in battle. The action of the Tory Government had excited the contempt and the anger of the whole country, and when the electors, in 1880, had an opportunity of expressing their opinion upon the Tory policy, they swept away its authors in a very tempest of indignation. This outburst of wrath was largely due to the action of Mr. Gladstone, who virtually promised a political millennium to the nation if only they would place him in power. As we have seen, he stated that peace was one of the fundamental principles of a sound Foreign Policy; that, in other words, no Government could wisely direct the Foreign Policy of England unless it were a peaceful Government.

It behoves the people of England to inquire how far Mr. Gladstone has carried out the principles which he so eloquently enunciated in regard to this point. The ideal which he placed before the country was a very noble one, although it was not at all too exalted, or in any-wise an impossible ideal. Our business now is to inquire how far the Real has corresponded to the Ideal.

It must be admitted that Mr. Gladstone began well. He

had during his Midlothian campaign given utterance to some very severe censures upon the policy of Austria, and when he came into office he had the good sense to tender to Austria a complete apology. His enemies, of course, sought to make it appear that in giving this apology he humiliated himself and degraded England. But there is never any degradation in a frank confession of error, or in an honourable effort to repair an injury. It may be that Mr. Gladstone, in his anxiety to make full reparation to Austria, made his apology rather too abject in its terms. But that, after all, was a very venial fault.

Not only did Mr. Gladstone begin his Foreign Policy well, but he continued it well for a time. In relation to the Transvaal he displayed the same courage as he had shown in regard to Austria. The Transvaal had been annexed by England on the report of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, who represented that the majority of the inhabitants of that country were not only willing, but anxious, to place themselves under the sway of the British Government. It soon turned out, however, that Sir Theophilus Shepstone had entirely misrepresented the facts of the case, and that the people of the Transvaal, as a whole, were bitterly opposed to any measure that would subject them to English rule. For a short time they were seemingly acquiescent, but only for a short time. They very soon began to exhibit a spirit of restlessness and of hostility, the result of which was that they were speedily at war with England. They did not resort to warlike measures, however, until after they had exhausted every means in order to secure a peaceful settlement. They sent several deputations to England to represent their case to the Colonial authorities, and to obtain redress; but all in vain. The fact was that Lord Carnarvon, who was then Colonial Secretary, had an ambitious project in his mind for bringing about a South African confederation, and he thought that the annexation of the Transvaal was one important step towards the fulfilment of his grand idea.

All the English officials at the Cape were stoutly opposed to any re-opening of the question which would restore to the Boers their independence. Sir Bartle Frere, who represented himself as a friend of the Boers, advised them not to believe that the English people would ever give up the Transvaal; and Sir Garnet Wolseley, who was in chief command in the eastern part of South Africa, both civil and military, proclaimed in that grandiloquent style which he so often affects: "That the Transvaal territory shall be, and shall continue to be for ever, an integral portion of Her Majesty's dominions in South Africa." On another occasion he said, "So long as the sun shines the Transvaal will remain British territory." But the men who talked in this brave style little knew the spirit of those with whom they had to deal. The Boers had set their hearts upon regaining the independence which had been taken from them in so dishonourable a manner, and under entirely false pretences; and they had powerful friends in England who were prepared to help them to secure their object. Mr. Gladstone himself, in his Midlothian speeches, condemned the Conservative Government for annexing the Transvaal, and for endeavouring to "transform Republicans into subjects of a monarchy against the will of more than three-fourths of the people." It cannot be doubted that those words of Mr. Gladstone strengthened the Boers in their determination to fight for their freedom. Another thing which inspired the Boers was that an English force had been disastrously defeated by the Zulus under Cetewayo. At length, in November, 1880, the spark was kindled which led to a great conflagration. A Boer in the town of Potchefstrom resisted a claim which was made upon him by the Treasury officials, and which is believed to have been illegal. His waggon was seized with the intention of selling it to meet the claim, but when it was brought into the open square of Potchefstrom to be sold by the sheriff, that official was seized by a number of armed Boers, and the waggon was carried away in triumph. This was

the beginning of the Transvaal War of 1880. The insurrection soon assumed very serious proportions. A series of battles was fought in which the Boers were invariably successful. They were almost unequalled in their skill as marksmen, and hence they were dangerous foes to meet. The English officers were nearly always singled out first, and picked off by the Boer sharpshooters. It became evident that unless reinforcements were sent to South Africa, the Boers would be successful, though Sir George Colley, the English General, did all that could be done to vanquish his enemies. Matters came to a crisis in February, 1881, at Majuba Hill. In this engagement, as in those that preceded it, the English officers were very soon shot down, Sir George Colley himself being amongst the slain. The British troops were routed, and fled, being hotly pursued by the Boers. General Wood, who succeeded Colley in command, agreed to an armistice. Negotiations which had previously been entered into were now resumed between the two parties, and the result was that peace was established. The terms on which peace was concluded were—that the Republic should be re-established, though nominally under a British protectorate and a British Resident. The Boers were granted complete control over their own country, subject only to the conditions that slavery should be prohibited; that the natives were to have the right to buy and hold land, and to appeal to the ordinary courts for justice; that complete religious liberty should be established; and that the British Government should have the right to veto any Treaty made by the Republic with a Foreign Power. An arrangement was also made by which the Transvaal debt was reduced from £385,000 to £250,000, and by which it would be entirely liquidated in twenty-five years. To all intents and purposes the Boers gained everything that they had asked from the first.

Mr. Gladstone was severely condemned by the Tories for his action in this matter; but the fact is that nothing in

his whole career has been more honourable to him than the part he played in the settlement of this question. His only fault was in not coming to terms with the Boers sooner than he did. He went out of his way shortly after these men had risen in arms to declare that none of their demands could be entertained until they had laid down their arms. Events proved that it would have been far wiser to have treated with the Boers in a conciliatory spirit than to have uttered such threats as this. The Liberal party had all along been opposed to the annexation of the Transvaal, and its duty clearly was, in coming into office and finding out the true state of the case, to have at once reversed the policy of the Tory Government. The great fault, however, of the Gladstone Government, as we shall have occasion to show pretty frequently before we have finished, was that in regard to Foreign Policy they were ever more ready to yield to the clamour of the Tories than to act upon those Liberal principles which they advocated when in opposition. On the whole, however, Mr. Gladstone acted in relation to the Transvaal with great discretion, and with a courage which is, unfortunately, too rare among statesmen—the courage to retrace the steps which may have been taken on a wrong track.

With regard to Afghanistan, Mr. Gladstone acted in very much the same spirit. There had been in that country a most unnecessary and iniquitous war under the Beaconsfield Government, and the action of the Tories in regard to this question was one of the most powerful of the causes which led to their ultimate overthrow. The war was ended by the treaty of Gandamak, which was signed on May 5, 1879, and which bound the English Government to pay the Ameer Yakoob Khan £60,000 a year, and to support him against any foreign enemy with men, and arms, and money. In return Yakoob consented to allow a British envoy to reside in Cabul. This peace was, however, of very short duration. Our envoy in Cabul, Sir Louis Cavagnari, was murdered with the members of

his staff, the result being that British troops occupied the city. Yakoob abdicated, and was imprisoned in India. What to do with the Afghan throne was a problem which seriously perplexed the British authorities, but ultimately it was arranged that Abdur Rahman Khan should be the new Ameer. This arrangement, however, did not suit Ayoub Khan, who began to fight for his own ends. There was a good deal of hard fighting before the matter was finally settled, and the British troops were badly defeated at Maiwand, and retreated in disorder to Candahar. In the end, however, Abdur Radman was, for an Afghan potentate, securely seated upon his throne, which he has kept down to the present time. The Government of India undertook to pay him a yearly subsidy of £120,000, which was to be raised by a tax on the people of India; British troops were withdrawn from the country, and the railway which had been commenced to Quetta was discontinued. In taking these measures in respect of Afghanistan, the Gladstone Government, as far as it could do so, entirely reversed the policy of the Tories, which it was placed in office to do.

Mr. Gladstone also did his best to put into execution the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin, by which treaty certain territories were granted to Montenegro and Greece, though up to the time of the Liberals coming into office no attempt had been made to give to those countries the extension to which they were entitled. Mr. Gladstone lost no time in invoking the aid of the European Concert, in order to obtain the fulfilment of these provisions of the Treaty of Berlin, and the result was that the claims of Montenegro and Greece were fully satisfied, and in entire agreement with the powers of Europe, though not until Turkey had shown a disposition to involve Europe in new complications.

In 1884, Mr. Gladstone delivered a third series of political speeches in Midlothian, and in the course of these speeches he took considerable credit to himself for the way

in which he had dealt with Foreign Policy. He referred to what had been done for Montenegro and Greece, and to the new relations which had been established between the British Empire and Afghanistan, and also to the arrangement which had been made in the Transvaal; and he rightly claimed that the action of his Government in regard to these matters had been honourable to the Government, and beneficial to the interests of the whole Empire. In his recent Manifesto, Mr. Gladstone virtually repeats what he said on these topics, and challenges the verdict of the nation on his Foreign Policy with regard to the countries just mentioned. It must frankly be admitted, however, that Foreign Policy is the weak point in Mr. Gladstone's harness. He made, though in a less degree, the same mistake as was made by the Tories—viz., of supposing that the people of this country regard Foreign Policy as a subject of supreme interest and importance. The simple fact of the matter is that the people of England have been wearied and disgusted with Foreign Policy, which has come to mean that they are to meddle in everybody's business to the neglect of their own; that they are to constitute themselves the protectors of oppressed people in all parts of the world, while their own people are left to do the best they can in misery and degradation;—that, in other words, they are to search out and correct the abuses of every country under the sun, while evils equally great and mischievous flourish unchecked under the very shade of their own Parliament. Of this kind of Foreign Policy the English people have had more than enough. "A Liberal Solicitor," writing to the *Spectator*, the other day, said "as to foreign politics, the rural voter cares nothing about them." He is right. And what is true of the rural voter is largely true, also, of the town voter. Now that the whole people of England are enfranchised there will be a short shrift for any Government which goes in for a spirited Foreign Policy.

We now come to the consideration of Mr. Gladstone's

policy in Egypt, and if he gained credit for his action in those branches of foreign affairs to which we have already adverted, he has certainly also gained lasting dishonour rom the policy which he pursued in that unfortunate country. From beginning to end it has been an unbroken and lamentable series of mistakes, blunders, crimes. Mr. Gladstone himself now virtually admits that his whole course in Egypt was, not merely unfortunate, but wrong. The admission does honour to his moral courage, though it cannot be said to increase confidence in his judgment. It is all very well to admit, after 9,000 British soldiers have been killed or invalided in the Egyptian campaigns; after 60,000 Egyptians have been slain, and millions of British money, hardly earned by the people of this country, have been squandered on these arid deserts—that it was all wrong from beginning to end; but, unfortunately, the admission does nothing to undo the mischief or to repair the loss. It is very easy, too, for Mr. Gladstone to lay all the blame upon his predecessors; to say, as he does say, that it all comes of the Dual Control which was established by Lords Beaconsfield and Salisbury; but this will hardly carry conviction to any unprejudiced mind which takes the trouble to inquire into the facts. Nothing has been more remarkable during the history of these past five years than the defence which has been set up by the Liberal party in Mr. Gladstone's behalf. We are asked to believe that this powerful statesman, with his unrivalled experience and capacity; with the largest Liberal majority at his back that the country ever saw, and with a force of public opinion behind him which was absolutely immeasurable; that this man was the unfortunate victim of a series of circumstances which he could not control, and that he was virtually compelled at every step in Egypt to take the very course which his own judgment and conscience, as well as the principles of his past life, united to condemn. Even Christian ministers have not hesitated to say, in Mr. Gladstone's defence

that he was the slave of some iron fatalism, about which they speak in the vaguest terms, but of which they have never given any clear explanation. Foremost amongst ministers of this class was the Rev. J. Guinness Rogers, who has been unceasing in season and out of season in apologising for what he felt to be the mistakes of Mr. Gladstone's Egyptian Policy; and in endeavouring to justify them. In a pamphlet written by Mr. Rogers some three years ago, entitled "The Liberal Party and the Egyptian Policy," he says: "From its very birth the path of the Ministry has been dogged by misfortune, and *circumstances have forced* on the Premier tasks the most uncongenial to his tastes and principles. *A stern necessity has forced him to leave undone the things he was most anxious to do*, and to do the very things he would most gladly have left undone. The statesman whose name will for ever be honourably associated with the protest against Bourbon tyranny in Naples has himself had to suspend constitutional liberties in Ireland; the advocate of peace and economy, he has been compelled to sanction an expedition which will certainly load the exchequer with a new burden, and may possibly involve the country in costly war. The work in Egypt, as the work in Ireland, is, it cannot be doubted, abhorrent to his feelings in itself, and doubly so as it forms a new obstacle to the progress of reform at home." In the same pamphlet Mr. Rogers ridicules Sir Wilfrid Lawson and Mr. Rylands for the speeches which they made on the day following the bombardment of Alexandria, in which they severely condemned the action of the Government. It might have been supposed that Mr. Rogers, being a Christian minister, would have had some respect for men who, on Christian principles, denounced what was certainly an utterly unjustifiable act of war. But Mr. Rogers could only brand these men as dogmatic and intolerant, as men who, because they preferred principle to party, were therefore disloyal to Liberalism, and who delighted in vehement invective

and railing accusation against their own leaders. For Mr. Bright, who left the Government at this juncture, Mr. Rogers has a grudging word of commendation; but for the other men who advocated the very same principles as Mr. Bright, Mr. Rogers can scarcely find one good word. He says: "There are numbers of Liberals whose sympathies are all with Mr. Bright and Mr. Richard, but whose judgment goes in the opposite direction. They are strongly in favour of non-intervention, but the arguments against British action at Alexandria point to a policy of non-resistance, which no State could adopt without effacing itself." Perhaps no journal did so much to urge the Government to take warlike measures in Egypt as the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and yet that journal, according to Mr. Rogers, treated the whole subject with "great judgment and coolness." Mr. Rogers seemed to be a little uneasy when he wrote the pamphlet in question, because it might be naturally supposed that his action, and that of those who supported him, was due to their devotion to an "idolised leader." In relation to this he says: "I at least have no objection to adopt the epithet, and to bear any reproach it may seem to involve. Never had a political party more reason to be proud of its chief, or to accord to him the most thorough confidence. It is surely an important factor in this difficult problem that a statesman like Mr. Gladstone *has been forced into action* which is singularly distasteful to him. He is pre-eminently a Minister of peace." Of course, Mr. Gladstone must be right, and all who differ from him must just as certainly be in the wrong. Let us hear Mr. Rogers again. "It is unfortunate," he says, "that there should be any difference of opinion among advanced Liberals, but it is a mistake to suppose that Mr. Gladstone's prestige will be lowered by it. Any attempt to convict him of inconsistency has signally failed." In an article which appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* of June, 1885, on "Mr. Gladstone as a Foreign Minister," Mr. Rogers substantially

repeats what he had said three years previously in regard to the Egyptian policy of the Gladstone Government. He says: "The five years which have passed since those memorable speeches were delivered have disappointed the hopes of multitudes, and of no one more than the speaker himself. Instead of peace we have had war, rumours of war, trembling anxieties as to the probabilities of war. At that time Mr. Gladstone was troubled about the excessive burden of government which was laid upon the nation, but that burden has been largely increased. He deprecated extension of territory, and we have had annexation upon annexation.

"*By a cruel irony of circumstances the Government have done — as we hold, have been forced into doing — the very things which they desired not to do, and have, therefore, had to leave undone some of the very things which they were most anxious to do.* It is not difficult to make out a very telling case against them, so long as we look at appearances only; but the remarkable feature is that their accusers, who lack neither the will nor the ability to use the materials of an indictment, have absolutely failed to convince the nation that the Ministry deserve the censures so freely lavished upon them. It is not suggested that the Ministry have not committed any blunders. They are not superhuman, and, however excellent their intentions, it is certain that they must sometimes have made mistakes in the measures they have taken for carrying them into effect." Again, "The claim set up for Mr. Gladstone is that he is an able and upright statesman, not that he is an infallible Minister. His difficulties, as impartial observers cannot fail to see, are mainly a legacy bequeathed to him by his predecessors, and their number is legion. Mr. Joseph Cowen, in one of his splendid bursts of rhetoric, treats such a plea as a sign of cowardice. But rhetoric cannot alter facts, and the fact is, that from the first the Prime Minister has been struggling against the conditions of a situation he did nothing to create. If, while seeking to steer his way amid such com-

plications, he had never made a mistake, he would certainly be a phœnix among statesmen. . . . But *I believe it was to a large extent inevitable*, and that it is not fairly open to the censures directed against it from opposite sides."

"It may be that he has attached too much value to the obligations contracted by his predecessors; that he was too loyal to Tewfik Pasha, and too distrustful of Arabi; that he and his colleagues have sometimes, and especially in the case of General Gordon, allowed themselves to be too readily overborne by popular clamour. What, then? These are, after all, mistakes of procedure, not deflections from the straight line of principle." "I do not set up as an apologist for Mr. Gladstone's Foreign Policy. There is no need for apology. Under circumstances of unparalleled difficulty he has been as faithful to his ruling ideas as the needle to the pole. Events have thwarted his efforts, but they have never caused him to swerve from his righteous purpose. Nothing is more certain than that he has advanced as far as any statesman could venture to do on the lines of a pacific policy, and it has been difficult enough for him even to do so much." Referring to some remarks of Lord R. Churchill, in which the speaker exulted in what seemed to him to be indications of the decline of Mr. Gladstone's power even over Nonconformists, Mr. Rogers says: "Had his lordship been present at the great representative gathering of Congregationalists in the City Temple on May 12th, he would have seen a spectacle which might have enabled him better to understand Nonconformists. I had the honour of moving a resolution of confidence in the Prime Minister, but the meeting would not allow the reading to be completed without a demonstration of its feeling. At the mention of his name, the hundreds present sprang to their feet, and it was a little time before the subsidence of the cheering allowed me to continue reading." And Mr. Rogers actually glories in the fact that an assembly of Christian men could act in such a manner as this!

In strange contrast to the ignoble doctrine of expediency advocated by Mr. Rogers is the noble declaration made by John Bright on the occasion of his resignation of his seat in the Cabinet owing to his inability to approve of the warlike proceedings of his colleagues in Egypt. Mr. Bright said: "The House knows—many members, at any rate, who have had the opportunity of observing the facts of my political life, know—that for forty years at least, I have endeavoured, from time to time, to teach my countrymen the opinion and doctrine which I hold, which is that the moral law is not intended only for individuals, but is intended also for the life and practice of States. I think the present case is a manifest violation of international law and of the Moral Law. Therefore it is impossible for me to give my support to it. I cannot repudiate what I have preached and taught during the period of a rather long political life. I cannot turn my back upon myself, and deny all that I have taught to many thousands of others during the forty years that I have been permitted, both in public meetings and in this House, to address my countrymen." It is our conviction that all unprejudiced readers will arrive at the conclusion that Mr. Bright and the handful of men who took the same course as he in the House of Commons were more loyal to true Liberal principles in opposing the policy of the Gladstone Government in regard to Egypt than were the authors of that policy; while it scarcely need be added that they were at the same time faithful to the Moral Law, which is even more important than Liberal principles. Nor can there be any doubt that the verdict of history will condemn the men who bombarded Alexandria; annihilated the national party in Egypt, and were the authors of a series of bloody wars in the Soudan; while it will abundantly justify the action of the men who opposed the Government at every step in their unfortunate course.

It may be well if we now briefly review the steps which were taken in relation to Egypt. First of all, let us premise

that Egypt was in a very disorganised and miserable condition when Mr. Gladstone came into office. Ismail Pasha, who was a very capable and also a very corrupt man, had made the country, which he so fearfully misgoverned, liable for a debt of 90 millions of pounds in less than ten years, and had engaged to pay interest on this money from 12½ per cent., which was the minimum, to 26½ per cent., which was the maximum. In consequence of the prodigality of Ismail, the taxes in Egypt rose, during these ten years, from £4,937,405 to £10,689,070, and 70 per cent. of the gross revenue of the country was swallowed up in paying the interest on the loans. Most of this money was spent by the Khedive in bribing the Porte; in corrupting officials; in building 20 palaces and harems; and in the most wanton forms of extravagance and debauchery that the imagination of even an Oriental libertine could devise. The poor, oppressed Egyptians were taxed in the most iniquitous manner in order to pay the interest of this debt. These miserable people were taxed at the rate of 40s. per head, whereas in India the natives are taxed at 4s. per head, though even they are over-taxed. In 1875 the Hon. Stephen Cave was sent to Egypt by Lord Beaconsfield to report on its condition; the result of his mission being that the English Government purchased from Ismail his shares in the Suez Canal at a cost of £4,000,000. Mr. Gladstone and many Liberals protested at the time against this expenditure on the ground that it might involve the country in both financial and political difficulties. On coming into office they found that the country had actually been involved in these difficulties, and yet they lacked the courage to attack the main cause of the evil. The Egyptian Government naturally had great difficulty from the first in paying the interest on the enormous debt which had been heaped upon them by their Khedive. Mr. Cave reported that the wretched Egyptians were paying three years' taxes in two years, in order to meet the interest. Even this, however, did not satisfy the bondholders, who insisted upon pay-

ment in full, whatever the fellaheen of Egypt might suffer in consequence. In 1876, Mr. Goschen, acting in the interests of the bondholders, pressed Lord Beaconsfield's Government to use its influence with the Khedive in order to induce him to raise the money by some means or other. The English representative in Egypt was accordingly instructed to bring unofficial pressure to bear upon the Khedive, and the French Government, also acting under the influence of the bondholders, took a similar step. Thus the first Anglo-French Control was established —an arrangement which was fraught with mischief to everybody concerned; except the greedy speculators who regularly received their interest. In 1877, the Khedive passed what is known as the law of Moukabala, by which means he raised the sum of 17 millions from the farmers and cultivators of the land, on the following conditions:—they were to pay six years' land-tax in advance, and they were to be permanently freed from half the tax in 1885. A few years later this law was repealed, and the men who had advanced the 17 millions on the security of that law were simply robbed of all the money they had advanced. The state of Egypt in this year may be judged from the following facts: European employes, who swarmed in Egypt, had their salaries, to the amount of £300,000 a year, paid punctually and in full, while the pay of the native servants of the Government was withheld. In 1877, the revenue of Egypt was £9,543,000, and the expenditure was as follows:—For payment on interest of debt, £7,473,000; for tribute to the Sultan, £1,000,000, and for the *expenses of the Egyptian Government*, £1,070,000, and yet the British Government, with Lord Salisbury as Foreign Secretary, actually used its enormous power to insist on the Khedive keeping up his promise in the interests of the bondholders. In 1878, the financial committee appointed by the Alexandrian Exchange issued a protest calling upon the European Governments to protect the creditors of Egypt, who, they said, were

menaced with robbery, through the system pursued by the Khedive. Ismail proposed to refer the matter to the Porte, but on the advice of Messrs. Goschen and Joubert this was refused. Messrs. Wilson and Primrose were sent by the Government to inquire into the financial affairs of the Khedive, and the Crown lands were ceded to the committee to be held as security for the creditors of Egypt. A new scheme of administrative reform was forced upon the Khedive. Mr. Rivers Wilson and M. de Blignieres were appointed Ministers of Finance and Public Works in the Egyptian Government, and it was stipulated that they could not be dismissed by the Khedive without the consent of the Governments of England and France; a new loan of 6 millions was raised by Messrs. Rothschild; 500 native servants were dismissed, and Europeans appointed in their stead; the poll-tax, which was levied on all males over 12 years of age, was doubled, and the other taxes were largely increased; enforced labour was imposed on some of the fellaheen who had been exempt from it; and 2,500 officers whose pay was in arrear were retired on half-pay. The Khedive was driven to desperation; he dismissed the two European Ministers, and refused to re-instate them. Owing to this action, the Sultan was compelled by the English and French Governments to depose him, and to place Tewfik on the throne. The payment of the coupon was rigorously insisted upon, and the taxes were wrung from the miserable Egyptian peasantry by the use of the most barbarous means. Even by these means, however, the money could not be obtained, and in 1880 Lord Salisbury summoned a Commission of the great Powers to devise means for liquidating the debt. This Commission actually agreed that 45 per cent. of the gross revenues of Egypt should still come into the pockets of the bondholders, and it consented to the repeal of the law of Moukabala, by which the tillers of the land were not only robbed of the 17 millions already referred to, but of a further sum of £1,700,000 a year for ever. As a natural

consequence of all this oppression and tyranny grave discontent prevailed throughout Egypt, and in every part of the country the people were on the verge of rebellion. This was the condition of things when Mr. Gladstone succeeded Lord Beaconsfield in 1880. In regard to this point, at any rate, Mr. Gladstone scarcely used exaggerated language when speaking of the terrible inheritance which he had received from his predecessor.

Such was the situation in Egypt, when Mr. Gladstone came into power. Was that situation of such a nature as to compel Mr. Gladstone to adopt the policy with which we are now so familiar? Did the relations which existed between Egypt on the one hand, and England and France on the other hand, compel this country to interfere in Egyptian affairs to the extent that it did, or indeed to interfere at all? This is the question which we have now to discuss, and upon which one or two issues turn. Mr. Gladstone asserts that "every step which we took in Egypt down to the time of the operations against Arabi Pasha, in 1882, was the direct consequence of the agreement with France for reciprocal support, and for the independence of the native Government." It should be clearly understood that Mr. Gladstone had years before he came into office condemned this entangling arrangement with France and with Egypt. He regarded the Anglo-French Egyptian Alliance as dangerous to the best interests of this country. Why, then, we are constrained to ask, did he consider himself bound by that alliance, especially as he admits that the "French Chamber, in the exercise of its undoubted rights, rejected the proposals of its Ministry to take part in military measures." If France, one of the parties to this engagement, had an undoubted right to withdraw from it, surely the other party to the engagement, England, had an equally good right to withdraw from it; nay, it is possible to put the case even stronger—for if one party to the contract fails to fulfil its engagements, the other party is by that failure released from its obligations. Moreover, France of her

own free will withdrew from the Dual Control, and her withdrawal practically annulled that agreement. Yet, Mr. Gladstone would have us believe that he and his Government were so bound by the agreement with France that they were compelled against their own better judgment to pursue the course which they followed in Egypt. Mr. Gladstone claims that they were supported in this by public opinion, which seems to mean that because a majority of the House of Commons was in favour of warlike measures in Egypt that, therefore, the Government thought it expedient in its own interests to pander to that majority. But a majority of the House of Commons does not invariably represent public opinion. In regard to this matter, Mr. Gladstone is weak under the scathing criticism to which his Manifesto has been subjected at the hands of Mr. Moberley Bell, the *Times* correspondent in Egypt, and Mr. Wilfrid S. Blunt. It would be wise on the part of Mr. Gladstone and his supporters to say as little as possible in this strain. It certainly will not do to tell the people of England that a Liberal Government committed all its blunders and crimes simply because a Conservative Government had entered into certain engagements with France and Egypt.

For about twelve months after Mr. Gladstone came into office matters proceeded smoothly in Egypt, and that country was fairly prosperous; as prosperous, that is, as any country could be which had suffered so terribly at the hands of its professed friends. In February, 1881, however, the first sign of the coming trouble appeared on the horizon. A military revolt broke out, which was caused by the refusal of three colonels to be tried by court-martial. France at this juncture was willing to take action in Egypt. England refused to do so. In August of the same year a second military disturbance occurred. France was again anxious to intervene; England still refused. In September, still a third military disturbance occurred. The Egyptian Minister of War issued orders which were disobeyed. Arabi Bey,

who was a colonel in the army, appeared in the public square at Cairo at the head of a number of regiments, who demanded that the Khedive should dismiss his Ministers. He refused to do this. The ministry of Riaz Pasha was overthrown, and the ministry of Cherif Pasha succeeded. Probably joint action would have been taken by France and England at this point, but for the fact that Lord Granville and M. St. Hilaire, the Foreign Ministers, differed in their opinion as to what ought to be done, Lord Granville being in favour of allowing the Porte to send two Turkish Generals to put down the revolt, while M. St. Hilaire objected to this course. This is significant as being the first divergence between the two Governments. The Sultan, however, sent two envoys to Egypt in face of the protests of France and England. These two nations each dispatched an ironclad to Egypt, and when the envoys withdrew the ironclads also departed. Up to this time nothing had occurred in Egypt to excite any grave apprehensions, and, if Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues had been wise in their management of affairs, and had been scrupulously careful to act on the great Liberal principle of non-intervention, or even to keep to the lines laid down by the previous Government, all might have been well. In January, 1882, however, a new policy came into view. In conjunction with the French Government the English Government presented a Joint Note to the Khedive, which has since become so notorious, and which exercised such a disastrous influence upon the subsequent course of events. The ambassadors of both countries were instructed to inform the Khedive and his Government of the determination of France and England to offer them support against the difficulties of various kinds which might interfere with the course of public affairs in Egypt; the Note further stating that "the English and French Governments consider the maintenance of His Highness on the throne, on the terms laid down by the Sultan's Firmans, and officially recognised by the two Governments, as alone able to guarantee for the

present and the future good order and general prosperity in Egypt, in which England and France are equally interested. The two Governments being closely associated in the resolve to guard by their united efforts against all cause of complications, internal or external, which might menace the order of things established in Egypt, do not doubt that the assurance publicly given of their formal intention in this respect will tend to avert the dangers to which the Government of the Khedive might be exposed, and which would certainly find England and France united to oppose them." The English Government, however, were careful to make a very important reservation, which was to this effect:—"That they must not be considered as committing themselves to any particular mode of action, if action should be found necessary." The effect of the Note in Egypt was to cause something like consternation. Sir Edward Malet, on receiving the Note, was so alarmed at its probable consequences that he telegraphed no less than five times to the Foreign Office for permission to append to it an explanation which would have the result of modifying its effect upon the Egyptian populace. His request was refused, and he had serious thoughts of resigning his office in consequence. There is good reason to believe that in less than three months after this Note had been delivered Mr. Gladstone bitterly repented the step. In fact, there is only too much ground for the opinion that he was profoundly ignorant of some of the most vital facts relating to the state of things in Egypt. Very much, therefore, of the blame must rest upon Lord Granville, who conducted these affairs. It is very probable that this Joint Note would have been followed by an outbreak of war within a very few weeks had it not been for the remonstrance of Prince Bismarck and the death of Gambetta. The Note was in fact an ultimatum. It was an insult to the Sultan, to the Khedive, to the Egyptian Notables, to Arabi Pasha, and to the Egyptian nation, and it was presented in spite of the protest of the English ambassador in Egypt. The Khedive,

however, remained loyal to his engagements with England and France, and lost much of his popularity in consequence, while Arabi improved his opportunity and largely increased his power. A month later, February, 1882, Cherif Pasha resigned, and the Notables entreated the Khedive to accept the Ministry of which Arabi was the head, in order that they might save their rights. The Khedive assented. England and France were at this time engaged in consultation, and it is exceedingly probable that France would have repudiated the policy of the Joint Note at any time within six months after its presentation if England would have done the same.

Now we reach the point in the history at which Arabi comes into greater prominence. In January, 1882, he had been appointed Under Secretary of State for War, with the approval of the English and French Governments. Sir Edward Malet, telegraphing on the subject to Lord Granville, said:—"The intention of the Government is to utilise his influence, and the Controllers generally have not opposed the appointment, thinking it better that he should belong to the Government than be outside it." The influence of Arabi had, of course, been growing, and he was able to carry a law which declared that the Egyptian Budget should be submitted in its entirety to the Chamber of Notables. This was the head and front of Arabi's offence. He had dared to defy the bondholders; to lay hands upon the revenues of Egypt, which had been sacredly dedicated to the payment of their interest; to demand that the representatives of the Egyptian people, from whom the money was raised, should have the right to say how that money should be appropriated. This was an unpardonable sin. The English and French Governments, which were largely dominated by the financial interest, never forgave the "military adventurer," as they called him, though he was in truth a disinterested patriot, for daring to lay hands upon the Egyptian Budget, or even to propose that it should be submitted to the only representative

authority existing in Egypt, which representative authority, moreover, had been set up by France and England. Some difference also arose between Arabi and the Khedive in regard to the punishment of certain officers; the Khedive appealed to the representatives of the Powers, and Lord Granville and M. de Freycinet proposed to send an equal number of English and French ironclads to Alexandria in order to support the Khedive, and protect the foreigners. This encouraged the Khedive to dismiss the Minister, but he was compelled by the threats of the army officers to reinstate Arabi and his colleagues. The English and French Governments answered by doubling the number of their ships at Alexandria, and by inviting a European Conference to discuss the affairs of Egypt. Arabi, defiant, began to strengthen the fortifications of Alexandria, and on the 11th of June a massacre of Europeans occurred in that city. It is commonly stated that Arabi was, if not the actual author of these massacres, at any rate the main instigator of them. This is, however, by no means clearly proved, and there is at least as much reason to blame the French and English Governments, who interfered in the domestic concerns of Egypt, not for any great and worthy ends, but merely in order to minister to the greed of a set of rapacious men who had succeeded in obtaining the powerful support of European Governments. In July the forts of Alexandria were bombarded, and a large portion of that town was destroyed. This exciting work of destruction and bloodshed was performed by the British navy under Sir Beauchamp Seymour. The French Government refused to have any part or lot in it. In the Joint Note, it will be remembered, it was stated that the French and English Governments would be found acting in union, and yet when matters were pushed to extremities England was left to act alone. France withdrew in time. Was it not open to England to do the same? It was at this juncture that Mr. Bright severed himself from his colleagues, and in language which did him honour, and which created a pro-

found sensation throughout the country, denounced their proceedings as violations not merely of Liberal principles, but of the Moral Law of God.

Arabi fled with his army into the desert, and ultimately an expedition, under Lord Wolseley, was sent out from this country in order to break his power. His power was broken at Tel-el-Kebir in September, and Arabi, with his principal colleagues, was exiled to Ceylon. These events created great excitement in this country. A large section of the Liberal party believed with Mr. Bright that these proceedings were entirely opposed to the traditional policy of the Liberal party, and to all the professions which had been made by Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues when in opposition. Radicals especially took this view of the matter, and an Egyptian Committee was formed in London, under the presidency of Sir Wilfrid Lawson, and meetings were held in all parts of the country to denounce the policy which had been pursued in Egypt. Some Liberals, who were Christians before they were Liberals, took a still higher view of the matter, and condemned the action of the Government on moral grounds, though it must be admitted that these were but an insignificant minority. Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. Richard, and a few others, criticised with great severity the proceedings of the Government from their places in Parliament. These gentlemen, with commendable fidelity and courage, ventured to tell Mr. Gladstone to his face some things which were by no means pleasant for him to hear.

We now come to another branch of the Egyptian Policy of the late Government—namely, its proceedings in the Soudan, which, perhaps, is the most lamentable part of the whole affair. In 1883 the Egyptian Government made an attempt to suppress a rebellion in the Soudan by an expedition under Hicks Pasha. This army was not only defeated, but so utterly destroyed that scarcely any trace of it has been found to this day. The dispatch of this expedition was a piece of hare-brained folly. It is astounding that

the English Government should ever have assented to it. They did not put their foot down firmly, and veto it as a mad and dangerous enterprise, as they should have done. But if the Government committed a blunder in not preventing the expedition of Hicks Pasha being sent, they certainly committed a crime in afterwards sending two expeditions of their own to fight the Soudanese. Mr. Gladstone himself said, referring to the advice of General Gordon to crush the Mahdi, "It would be a war of conquest against a people struggling to be free. Yes, these are a people struggling to be free, and rightly struggling to be free." Yet two expeditions were sent to the Soudan by Mr. Gladstone's Government, one for the avowed purpose of extricating the Egyptian garrisons in the Soudan, in regard to whom England had no responsibility whatever, and who, moreover, were ruthless oppressors of the poor Soudanese, and therefore had not the shadow of a claim to mercy; and the other for the delivery of General Gordon. For the latter there was some faint shadow of justification. One of the fatal mistakes of the Government, however, was in sending General Gordon to the Soudan. They had proposed to do this as early as November, 1883, before the first defeat of Hicks Pasha, and again in December of the same year, after Hicks' defeat, they pressed the matter upon the Khedive, but he refused to hear of it. Afterwards, however, yielding to clamour, which they mistook for genuine public opinion, and which was largely produced by the *Pall Mall Gazette*, they sent Gordon out. On arriving at Khartoum General Gordon made extraordinary professions of his peacefulness and the humanity of the mission which he had undertaken; but his disposition soon changed. He began to treat the Soudanese as enemies, and to involve himself in warlike operations with them. The result was that he soon found himself besieged in Khartoum, but, with the obstinacy which was characteristic of him, he refused to leave the city even when he might have done so; he set at nought the instructions of the Government of

which he was professedly the servant; and generally proved himself to be about the most intractable and impracticable agent that any Government could have. To say even one harsh word of so simple and noble a man as Gordon is an ungracious task, and yet fidelity and truth compel the admission that his conduct at Khartoum was of such a character that he forfeited his previously powerful claims to the respect and support of the British nation. It was an evil day when Gordon started for Khartoum, as it was the presage of a whole series of disasters, the least important of which was the ultimate death of the hero himself. Even after Gordon's death the Government, with that mysterious infatuation which seems to have possessed it all through its Egyptian troubles, announced that the expedition to Khartoum would still be pressed forward, and that the Mahdi was to be crushed on the very scene of Gordon's death. Lord Wolseley, delighted with this new project, which, however much of death and destruction it might involve to English and Soudanese soldiers, meant for him and his class higher promotions and larger pensions, announced to his troops that the march to Khartoum would be continued in a few months. But both Wolseley and the Government reckoned without their host. The English people were surfeited by these stories of carnage from the Soudan, and it very soon became evident that public opinion would not tolerate any further prosecution of the war. Within a few weeks afterwards, therefore, the Government announced that the Soudan would be evacuated; that the much-talked-of railway between Suakim and Berber, which had cost scores of thousands of pounds, was to be abandoned; and that the vast trackless deserts of the Soudan were to be allowed to remain in the exclusive possession of the fierce, wild tribes who inhabited it, and who had suffered such terrible injustice at the hands of an English Liberal Government.

In the light of the principles propounded by Mr. Gladstone in Midlothian, and stated at length in the previous

chapter, how do these proceedings in Egypt look? Will it be said that peace was the fundamental principle in this branch of Mr. Gladstone's Foreign Policy? Is there a true Liberal in the whole nation who, on a calm review of these events, does not feel thoroughly ashamed of the entire series of transactions? The irony of the situation is that in spite of all the expenditure of treasure and blood in Egypt, we have left things worse than we found them. We have not established a native Government in any true sense, as we proposed to do; the authority of the Khedive is feebler now than it has ever been; the interior of Egypt is overrun with brigands, and is more unsafe than it has been for twenty years; while no reform worthy of mention has been introduced into that unfortunate country as the result of European intervention. Mr. Gladstone may well use words of apology in extenuation of the disastrous course he has pursued in Egypt. He said at Edinburgh, in September, 1884, in answer to a question, "What took you to Egypt?" "Honour took me to Egypt; plighted faith took me to Egypt. I make no apology. I am now speaking for myself. I am saying what acted on my own mind, and looking back upon it for the years that have elapsed, and with all the unfortunate consequences that have ensued, I cannot escape from that conclusion. We had no alternative choice except to commit what in our eyes would have been a breach of faith." The election was then some fifteen months distant, and the English people had not then given such evidence of their feeling in these matters as they have given since. In his recent Manifesto Mr. Gladstone speaks in a more chastened and subdued tone, and condescends to use language of apology which he disdainfully refused to employ a year previous. It is true he still contends that the policy pursued by him in Egypt was forced upon him by the action of his predecessors, but in regard to the Soudan he says :—" Lord Hartington has lately and justly stated, in general terms, that he is not disposed to deny our having fallen into errors of judgment. I will go one step further,

and admit that we committed such errors, and serious errors, too, with cost of treasure and of precious lives, in the Soudan. For none of these errors were we rebuked by the voice of the Opposition. We were only rebuked, and that incessantly, because we did not commit them with precipitation, and because we did not commit other errors greater still. Our mistakes in the Soudan I cannot now state in detail. The task belongs to history. Our responsibility for them cannot be questioned." Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, who was a member of the late Cabinet, speaking at Maidstone on Saturday, September 26th, said, referring to Egypt: "I am not prepared to enter upon a defence of the late Government. I regret that we ever involved ourselves in the occupation of Egypt. Our action in the Soudan was a grave departure from the principles laid down by the country in 1880 against a policy of aggression and adventure." This is a most humiliating confession, and the matter is by no means mended by Mr. Shaw-Lefevre adding that: "The Tories are in a high degree responsible for what was done. They urged us on by their meetings and speeches to the occupation of Egypt." What, one is disposed to ask, was a Liberal Government placed in power to do, if not to resist the pressure which the Tories are always eager to exert in favour of war?

Perhaps the most remarkable feature in connection with these sad events was the attitude taken up by the majority of Christian Churches and their ministers. These men were either silent—and silence under the circumstances was criminal—or they actually spoke in support of these warlike proceedings. Assemblies of Dissenting ministers passed resolutions in support of the policy of the Government, even when that policy was directly antagonistic to the fundamental principles both of Christianity and of Liberalism. One minister, the Rev. Moir Porteous, preaching at the Camden Road Presbyterian Church after the bombardment of Alexandria, and the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, on the greatness of the British victory, said:—

"When some of the facts are recalled—as the preparedness of the British army for active operations, its speedy and well-ordered transit, and especially that wise, cautious, courageous, just, and merciful commander, obeyed with such implicit and zealous confidence—so that the work has been accomplished at a sacrifice on our part of less than four hundred of wounded and slain—we are led to exclaim, 'What hath God wrought!' The great blessing of the victory consisted in the hope which it gives of a settled and enduring peace. Brief had been the glances afforded of the scenes, but these were sufficient to leave their impress of the horrors of war in the tumults, the massacres, the flight, the bombardment, the city on fire, the Christians under doom, the hardships of our troops—roasted, blinded, and sun-stricken; prisoners tortured on the one hand, and the wounded mutilated on the other; the shrieks and groans of the dying in the trenches, and the terror-stricken flight of the Egyptians as the sun arose upon the plain. Hence the joy, the gladness that mantled over every patriotic and Christian heart as the electric spark flashed the news of victory and succeeding triumphs from hour to hour. Thanksgiving went up from multitudes over all our beloved land and the colonies—ay, over all the civilised and Christianised globe. . . . Great Britain has been selected to restore to it (Egypt) peace and order, with justice and mercy. It is one of the most marvellous characteristics of this event that Great Britain has been called to do the work. Why continental nations, and especially France, that has such a large interest at stake, should stand quietly by is an insolvable problem on any other ground than this. God has said to them all, 'Stand back, and let Great Britain be My instrument.' . . It is needless to raise the objection of the employment of personal and national interests, for these have been employed by God for the advancement of great ends. . . Nationally, God has been making use of us, and Egypt has been made to contribute to our

prosperity, comfort, and happiness. Is it not, then, a high privilege and incumbent duty—personally and unitedly—to fall in with and to promote the Divine design?" This model preacher of the Gospel of Peace represented a very large number of his class, and it is no exaggeration to say that men of this type are far more dangerous enemies of Christianity than all the Bradlaughs and Ingersolls in the world. But perhaps the saddest reflection of all is that the people to whom these men preached loved to have it so. Still, the responsibility of the teachers is tenfold greater than that of the taught. There were some honourable exceptions, however; foremost amongst whom were Canon Fremantle, the Rev. F. W. Crosbie, M.A., of Brighton, and others who occupy comparatively obscure positions throughout the country. The Peace Society shared in the general infatuation. The president and the vice-presidents of that Society, who sit in the House of Commons, were silent, and we witnessed the unwonted spectacle of peace-loving Quakers tacitly supporting a dishonourable and unnecessary war. The Peace Society itself gave hardly any sign of its existence. It might have been supposed that it had died a natural death. Probably no society in the country displayed greater disregard of its own principles, or did so much by its indifference to forfeit the respect and support of Christian men, as the Peace Society. It did indeed issue a protest against the operations in the Soudan, but not until Lord Wolseley was well on his way to Khartoum, and this was the merest mockery. That protest should have been made in Parliament, and made in time, and backed by all the members of the Peace Society who have seats there. But instead of this, Sir Joseph Pease, the president of the society, actually refused to vote against the Egyptian war, and that refusal was, under the circumstances, virtually supporting the war. The same is true of many other members of the Peace Society. Their action was in direct opposition to their

principles, and it is not probable that the real friends of peace will ever again have perfect confidence in them. If we seek an explanation of the conduct of the Peace Society it will probably be found in the fact that it allowed itself to be influenced by party considerations. During the Afghan war the Peace Society was never silent. It denounced, and rightly so, the whole proceedings as nefarious and iniquitous. But the war in Afghanistan was quite as justifiable as that in the Soudan. Cavagnari and his friends were massacred at Cabul, and an army was sent to punish the murderers. Colonel Stewart and his friends were massacred in the Soudan, and an army was sent, partly to avenge their blood, and partly to deliver Gordon and the Egyptian garrisons. But how was it that the Peace Society took the war in Egypt so quietly, whilst they tried to rouse the whole country against the war in Afghanistan? Was it not because one war was the work of a Tory Government, and the other was the work of a Liberal Government? If this is not the reason, will Sir Joseph Pease or Mr. Richard inform us what is? When Mr. Richard delivered a solemn protest against the war, just before the bombardment of Alexandria, Mr. Gladstone replied in effect, that the responsibility rested entirely upon his (Mr. Gladstone's) head. Now the Peace Society, had they been true to their principles, ought to have moved heaven and earth to oust Mr. Gladstone from office. But they did nothing of the kind. On the contrary, they, by their guilty silence, and by their cowardly action on critical divisions, practically endorsed the policy of the Government. We can only infer that the Peace Society applies one moral standard to the conduct of Conservatives, and another to the conduct of Liberals. But such jugglery as this is very dangerous, and it may prove fatal. Once let the Christian public of England be convinced that the Peace Society is a party organisation, whose purpose is to whitewash Liberals and blacken Tories, and its influence will be gone. We fear that it has already been

shorn of much of its power, and that it will find it difficult to regain the respect of some who once had great confidence in it, and expected great things from it. This action was fairly typical of its conduct during the existence of the Liberal Administration. The Positivists deserve honourable mention for the protest which they made from the first against the Egyptian policy of the late Government. Mr. Frederic Harrison, in regard to this matter, played a more Christian part than the Archbishop of Canterbury, the President of the Wesleyan Conference, and the Chairmen of the Baptist and Congregational Unions. With the laudable resolve of condemning the renewal of war in the Soudan after the death of Gordon, a Positivist protest was issued, signed by Dr. Richard Congreve, from which we quote as follows: "A Government of uncertain purpose and half-convictions, yielding to pressure and driven on by its own errors and misdeeds, has determined to continue the war in the Soudan, a war entered upon in order to rescue General Gordon, and naturally ceasing with his death. It is making itself the instrument of a policy which it had hitherto disclaimed—a policy of vengeance, prestige, and aggrandisement. In the name of humanity I, and I speak for my co-religionists, protest against the decision of the Government, not merely as pregnant with evil consequences to our material and moral interests as a nation, but as in itself essentially and radically immoral—a pure abuse of our strength."

It would not be proper to conclude this chapter without a reference to the action of the Press. The general Press of the country is always ready to support war, and, therefore, it is not to be marvelled at that this war should have been generally approved by it. From the religious Press, however, we expect better things, and yet nearly every religious paper in the land either hesitated to say anything about the war at all, or endeavoured to find excuses for it. Perhaps no journal gained such unenviable distinction in this direction as the *Christian World*, which is evidently

incapable of perceiving anything evil in the conduct of a Liberal Government. The *Nonconformist and Independent* at first showed a tendency of the same kind, although it afterwards took up a position more in harmony with the principles it advocates. The Baptist papers waited on public opinion, and when they saw how that declared itself they followed. The Church of England papers did what they usually do—gave their blessing to any and every Government which involves the country in warlike operations. Only one religious journal, so far as we know, consistently, courageously, and persistently opposed the war both in Egypt and the Soudan, from the time it began to the time it ended, and that journal was the *Christian Commonwealth.*

The writer learnt from a private letter of Mr. John Bright, written in February, 1885, that the veteran statesman was in a most depressed condition of spirits in regard to public affairs. He said the nation was going stark mad and the Government with it; that the times were out of joint, and that he could only look on in deep distress without being able to do anything. The tone of the letter was one of sadness, almost of despair. Such a fact as that throws a flood of light upon the condition of the public mind at that time. For reasons which will be both understood and appreciated Mr. Bright avoided any open and public condemnation of the colleagues with whom he had so recently acted; and yet it might have been better if Mr. Bright had laid aside all considerations except that of loyalty to that moral law to which he referred when resigning his position in the Cabinet, and on the ground of that moral law had publicly and openly condemned the action which he so bitterly regretted. Mr. Henry Richard felt very much the same as Mr. Bright, and although in his capacity as secretary of the Peace Society, he did less than he ought to have done to resist and thwart the policy of the Government, it must, to his honour, be said that in Parliament he spoke with admirable courage and force

against the doings of Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues. There were throughout the country thousands of true Christian men and good Liberals whose hearts were wrung with the bitterest anguish on account of the misdeeds of the Government which they helped to place in power. These men cannot reflect on the sad history of the last five years without a feeling of painful disappointment. The only consolation open to them is that these disastrous years may have burned their lessons into the heart of the English nation.

CHAPTER IV.

RETRENCHMENT—FINANCE.

RETRENCHMENT is the second great principle which Liberals place in the front of their programme. In his Midlothian speeches, Mr. Gladstone declared that one of the chief needs of the country was a sound system of finance. Indeed, he laid it down as the second of the great principles which he was anxious to impress upon the mind of the nation. Unfortunately, however, this principle like the one considered in the last chapter, seems to have been almost entirely left out of sight by Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues when they got into office. The expenditure showed a constant tendency to increase throughout the whole five years covered by the late Administration. For the first time in the history of the nation the annual expenditure rose to the enormous sum of £100,000,000, and the Gladstone Government on leaving office left a deficit of £15,000,000. Those Liberals who had expected to find that a policy of rigorous retrenchment would be initiated, that all forms of waste and extravagance would come to an end, and that the finances of the country would be placed upon a reasonable basis, were as deeply disappointed in this respect as they were in regard to their hopes of a pacific policy being pursued by the Government. These two matters, in fact, bear a very close relation to each other. It was largely because Mr. Gladstone departed from his professions and intentions with regard to peace that he found himself unable to carry out his promise in respect to retrenchment. The Liberal Government showed itself quite as eager to bestow pensions, to grant royal dowries, and generally to misappropriate the people's money, as any Tory Government could do. The simple fact of the matter is, that in regard

to this subject both parties are very much alike. Whatever they may profess when they are out of office they no sooner get into office than they yield themselves to the old bad traditions of our great spending departments, and thus the evil system is perpetuated whichever party may be in power. It is impossible to name a single leading statesman with the exception of Mr. Bright, whose day is almost past, who feels any real concern in relation to the nation's finances. Mr. Gladstone has a great reputation as a finance Minister, and there can be no doubt that he has done more than any other British statesman, except Sir Robert Peel, to reform and improve our fiscal system; but, after all, Mr. Gladstone is not an economist. He is not a reformer of finance in the sense that he is anxious to reduce the annual expenditure of the nation, and what is true of Mr. Gladstone is equally true of all the men who were associated with him in his Government. Professor Fawcett said three or four years ago that the "Government money was the people's money," and he added that those words ought to be written over the portals of every political association in the country. That is very true; but it is even more necessary that these words should be inscribed over the doors of our Government spending departments; for, as a rule, the men who occupy these offices are utterly destitute of conscience when handling public money. Professor Fawcett's statement, however, was valuable as an indication that even in regard to this matter a new spirit is taking possession of English statesmen. How far that new spirit is to dominate our politicians depends entirely upon the people themselves. If they continue apathetic, if they refuse to exercise any vigilance over those who are entrusted with their money, if they tamely submit to be plundered in the wholesale fashion which has been followed in the past, then they have only themselves to blame. It is only by creating an enlightened and vigorous public opinion on this subject, and by bringing that opinion to bear upon every Government in regard to every matter which affects

the national expenditure, that any improvement can be hoped for. This is pre-eminently a matter for the common people. So many of the upper classes and the professional class, and some even of the commercial class, are so directly interested in a wasteful annual expenditure that no reform can be hoped for except from below. The working men and the middle-class will have to take up this question in right good earnest before any improvement will be effected.

Richard Cobden once said—"I sat through the voting of money, vastly edified and scandalised at the way in which the poor devils of taxpayers are robbed." Then he added: "The people are, I am afraid, fit for nothing better. I did not offer an objection, for it would have been ridiculous to do so. It did, however, cost me some efforts to hold my tongue." Happily, however, the state of things has improved since then. It is quite true that the "poor devils" of taxpayers are robbed now, as they were then, and, perhaps, even more than they were then, but the improved feature of the situation is that there are a few men in Parliament who, although they have neither Cobden's ability nor courage, manfully stand up to denounce wanton extravagance on the part of the Government of the day. During the Gladstone Administration a small band of men, headed by Mr. Rylands, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Mr. H. H. Fowler, Mr. Labouchere, and one or two others, consistently opposed those proposals, which ought never to have been presented to the House of Commons with the sanction of a Liberal Government. Some of these proposals were as absurd as they were unjust. We will take one or two examples from the Session of 1883. Two sums of £878 and £720 were asked for the payment of fees in connection with installing the Kings of Saxony and Holland as Knights of the Garter, and for conveying Royal personages across the Channel. These votes were opposed by Mr. Arthur O'Connor and Mr. Labouchere, who were supported by minorities of 24 and 27 respectively.

Mr. Illingworth, speaking on the cost of conveying these Royal personages across the Channel, wished to know how long these "Royal paupers were to dip their hands in the people's pockets in this fashion. He thought they ought to have the workhouse test applied to them." Mr. Leonard Courtney, who is supposed to be a Radical statesman, was actually reduced to the humiliation of defending this expenditure. The expenditure upon the Royal palaces was also sharply criticised. There are said to be fifteen Royal palaces supported by the nation, only one of which, Windsor Castle, is occupied by the Queen. There was a vote for £8,000 for repairs to Windsor Castle, upon which Lord Randolph Churchill remarked that it meant robbery somewhere. For the Royal mews, at Pimlico, £1,350 were asked; for the Hampton Court stables, £946; for the stable at Bush House, a place of whose very existence everybody in Parliament seemed to be ignorant, £507; and for St. James' Palace, £3,000. On the kitchen garden, at Windsor, £5,107 was spent in the year 1881, and £905 in 1882. The paving of the royal cow-house was put down at £150, and the Prince of Wales sent in a gas bill for Marlborough House, amounting to £125. Fuel, gas, and water supplied to palaces occupied by friends of the Queen, cost £19,089. Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, who was then First Commissioner, had the pleasant task of defending these various items of expenditure. As, however, Mr. Lefevre has since accepted a pension of £1,200 a-year, on the ground, as stated by him, that he could not afford to keep up his position without it, it is not unlikely that even this task may have been rather congenial than otherwise. Mr. Gourley called attention to the expenditure on Royal yachts, in regard to which he had a most discreditable story to tell. He was informed, he said, that the *Victoria and Albert*, which is hardly ever used, and never to convey Royal personages across the Channel, was to have £55,000 spent upon it. He moved a reduction of £20,000 in the vote for this yacht, and he was supported by

Messrs. Rylands, Illingworth, Broadhurst, and Labouchere, though only twenty foes of such extravagance as this could be found in the House of Commons, with a Liberal majority of 120. Mr. Illingworth, in criticising the Army Estimates, which amounted to £17,000,000, for 137,000 men, declared that our Army cost us £120 per man, and then, after all, was very inefficient. He denounced the policy of intervention abroad which the Government was following, and roundly told them that their duty was to improve the condition of their own people at home. Mr. H. H. Fowler moved a reduction of one of the votes by £5,000, as a protest against the extravagance of the Government, and he declared that their conduct "Belied all their professions when they were out of office." Mr. Fowler is a true and loyal Liberal, and the fact that he felt compelled to speak of the Government in this way tells its own tale. During this same Session Mr. Gladstone moved that pensions should be granted to Lords Wolseley and Alcester, who had both been made peers on account of their inglorious work in Egypt. So strong, however, was the opposition excited by this proposal that it had to be considerably modified, and grants substituted for pensions. This was a significant fact, and it is not likely that we shall ever hear of any other proposal to grant pensions to such gimcrack heroes as these. Sir Wilfrid Lawson opposed the bestowal of the grants out and out, and in his caustic speech he handled the parties chiefly concerned with deserved severity. He thought the Admiral deserved censure rather than reward, and he advised the admirers of the Egyptian "heroes" to start a penny subscription, and said that the archbishops, the president of the Peace Society, Nonconformist ministers, and the London mob would subscribe, finally clenching his arguments with a quotation from the Midlothian speeches. Perhaps Mr. Gladstone never showed to such poor advantage as when he was trying to defend the Khedive and Lord Alcester.

It is not the purpose of this work to examine in detail

the financial policy of the late Government, but rather to deal with the general principles which underlie that question. A brief glance may, however, be taken of the various Budgets which were introduced during the period covered by Mr. Gladstone's second Administration. In 1880 a supplementary budget was brought in by Mr. Gladstone himself, which contained a surprise in the shape of a proposal to abolish the malt-tax. To meet the deficiency caused by this, as well as a further sum of £100,000, which was needed to supplement the estimates of Sir Stafford Northcote, a penny was added to the income-tax. The Budget of 1881 contained no exciting proposal, and Mr. Gladstone took off the penny which he had previously put on the income-tax, and by so doing turned his estimated surplus into a small deficit, which was covered by some trifling changes in levying the spirit duties and the probate duties. He made a long statement on the condition of the national finances, and initiated a scheme for reducing the National Debt by a system of long terminable annuities. The Budget of 1882 estimated the revenue at £84,935,000, and the expenditure at £84,630,000, showing a surplus of some £300,000. Mr. Gladstone again entered into a general survey of our whole fiscal system, and a lengthy explanation of the stagnation of the revenue. The Vote of Credit for the Egyptian Expedition led to an addition to the income-tax, which was made 6½d. in the £. The Budget of 1883 was presented by Mr. Childers, who had become Chancellor of the Exchequer, and who, in his speech, made a vigorous attack on the financial policy of the preceding Government. He said the Liberals were paying off the debts of the Tories, no less than £10,700,000 having been paid for war charges during the previous three years, of which £7,800,000 was inherited from the Conservative Administration. He estimated the income at £88,480,000, and the expenditure at £85,789,000, thus leaving a surplus of £2,691,000. With this Mr. Childers proposed to give sixpenny telegrams; to take the passenger duty off all fares

of one penny per mile and under, reduce it by 2 per cent. on all fares in the neighbourhood of towns, and increase the number of workmen's trains; to reduce tobacco and snuff duties (which ought rather to have been increased); and reduce the income-tax to 5d. in the pound. And, after all, there would be £240,000 left. During the previous three years the National Debt had been reduced by £20,500,000; and Mr. Childers proposed to reduce it during the next 20 years by £172,000,000. One of the most remarkable passages in the Chancellor's speech was that in which he expressed his gratification at the falling-off of the revenue from drink. During this Session Mr. Rylands brought in a motion demanding a reduction in the national expenditure, and he made out a very strong case. His resolution was as follows:—"That in the opinion of this House the present amount of the national expenditure demands the earnest and immediate attention of Her Majesty's Government, with the view of effecting such reductions as may be consistent with the efficiency of the public service." He stated that in 1870-71 the Army cost £11,750,000; in 1883-4 it was £15,600,000, an increase of £3,850,000; the Navy expenditure for the same years stood at £8,927,000 and £10,757,000 respectively, an increase of £1,830,000. In these two departments the augmentation was £5,680,000. The Civil Service Estimates during the same period had increased by £6,970,000. Here was an increase of £12,650,000 since 1870-71. Verily it was time something was done. Mr. H. H. Fowler seconded Mr. Rylands' motion, and pointed out that the Exchequer got sixpence out of every shillingsworth of tea. Mr. Gladstone accepted Mr. Rylands' resolution, and declared that the Government meant to act upon it. At the same time he showed that whilst population had increased since 1840 by 65 per cent., and wealth by 115 per cent., the expenditure had grown only 33 per cent. Mr. Collings was for spending more on education and art, and Mr. Broadhurst, in the name of the working classes, demanded greater economy

in the Army, Navy, and public offices. It will be seen that Mr. Gladstone distinctly stated the Government meant to carry out Mr. Rylands' resolution, and yet that subject remains untouched to this day. The Gladstone Government went out of office without having made one serious attempt to reduce the enormous and ever-increasing expenditure of the country. Mr. Childers stated, in answer to Mr. Rylands, shortly before the Government was overthrown, that the idea of a committee on Army and Navy expenditure had been abandoned for the present. The Budget of 1884, which was not presented until the last week in April, presented no feature of special interest, as there was but a very small surplus, and no change was made in taxation with the exception of a trifling relaxation of the carriage duties. In 1885 there was an addition of twopence to the income-tax, which made that section of the English people which pays the income-tax realise what our policy in Egypt really meant. They had been ready enough to shout for war, but they pulled a very long face when they were called upon to pay the bill. This Budget also proposed an alteration in the death duties in the direction of assimilating real and personal property, while it added 2s. per gallon to the duty on spirits, and 1s. per barrel to that on beer. This Budget was destined to prove fatal to the Government, for it was owing chiefly to the hostility aroused in the minds of the liquor dealers, and the landed interest, both of which were affected by the budget proposals, that the Government was finally defeated. It should be observed that in addition to the extra twopence on the income-tax, a Vote of Credit of £11,000,000 was asked for by Mr. Gladstone, and granted by Parliament without a murmur, in order to prepare for war with Russia, which then seemed imminent owing to the critical state of the negotiations with regard to the Afghan frontier.

Since the Session of 1883, very little has been said either in Parliament or out of it in regard to retrenchment. The few zealous economists to whom we have previously referred,

evidently lost heart, and gave up the conflict in despair. It is not to be wondered at when it is considered how contemptuously their efforts were ignored, and how earnestly their efforts were resisted even by a Liberal Government. There has, however, been a continuation of the endeavours which are so persistently made to run the country still further into extravagant expenditure. The *Pall Mall Gazette*, at a time when the expenses of the Government were higher than they had ever been, endeavoured to get up a scare on the Navy, and, unhappily, it was in some degree successful, for the Navy Estimates were largely increased in consequence. Sir E. J. Reed, the late Constructor of the Navy, said a year or two ago in Parliament, that he could testify from his own personal knowledge that £2,000,000 of money which were voted to the Admiralty every year went to persons who never rendered any service to the nation in return for it. This extraordinary statement never seems to have been inquired into. If it is desirable to add to the efficiency of the Navy, let the £2,000,000, which are now simply wasted be devoted to its improvement. It would be easy to save another £2,000,000 on dockyard expenditure. This would give £4,000,000 annually for increasing the efficiency of the Navy.

Just now, when the General Election is close at hand, the subject of retrenchment, and, indeed, of our financial policy as a whole, is receiving considerable attention. This is satisfactory as far as it goes, but it is useless to expect much from the promises of statesmen. The vested interests which exist in this country are so strong that the most powerful Government will be unable to resist and overcome them, unless it is continually active and persistent in its work. This is, it cannot be too often repeated, a question for the people of England. It may be true, as the *Edinburgh Review* says, that Democratic Government is the dearest in the world, but, at any rate, a self-governed people is much more likely to demand value for its money than is an obligarchy which professes to act in the nation's

interests. Besides, the people raise the money, and consequently they have a right to spend it as they like, but the same right certainly does not belong to the class who have hitherto mainly transacted the business of this country. We do not believe, however, that the people would be found, even if it were possible for them to be so, more extravagant than the aristocracy has been. Mr. Bright, a few weeks ago, when speaking at Street, Somerset, pointed out in his usual forcible language that under every Government we are plunged into new wars, and went on to refer to the terrible consequences which have accrued to this country from the Crimean War, and to France in consequence of the war with Germany. He added, "and I say this, that by just laws and wise and prudent administration, we may yet demand, and we do demand, with a voice that nobody can misunderstand, the avoidance of war, and greater economy during periods of peace."

CHAPTER V.

Reform—Five Years' Legislation.

It is proposed to present in this chapter, though only in briefest outline, an account of the legislation accomplished during the five Sessions of the Gladstone Administration. The first Session, that of 1880, was of course a broken one, and it lasted only sixteen weeks. Clearly it was impossible in this time to carry out a very ambitious legislative programme. Yet a good deal was done during this brief period; in fact, this Session was comparatively the most fruitful of the five. The Ground Game Bill was passed in the interests of the farmers, to whom it gave the right to kill hares and rabbits on their farms. It was a modest, but a very useful measure. The Burials Bill, which was also passed, marked another step in the advance of religious equality, and removed a rankling injustice from the minds of Dissenters. It gave to Nonconformists the right to be buried in parish churchyards by their own ministers, and with such religious services as they, or their friends, might desire. The Employers' Liability Bill modified considerably in the interest of workmen the doctrine of "common employment," which virtually released an employer from responsibility towards his workpeople in cases of accident, unless it could be proved that his personal negligence was the cause of the injury. This measure enabled workmen employed in mines, factories, railways, &c., to claim compensation for injuries received when in common employment through no fault of their own. Mr. Fawcett's Savings' Banks and Money Orders Bill, the Grain Cargoes Bill, the Census Bills, and some smaller measures were also passed. The chief measure of the Session, however, was the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, which proposed to enable County Court Judges in Ireland to award compensation to tenants who were ejected for non-

payment of rent, when such non-payment was owing to the failure of the crops. This reasonable and just measure was fiercely opposed by the landlord interest, both Whig and Tory, in both Houses; and though it passed the House of Commons, it was rejected by the peers. The House of Lords also rejected the Irish Registration Bill. Other measures which failed to pass were the Vaccination Acts Amendment Bill, which proposed to abolish cumulative penalties; the Irish Borough Franchise Bill; and a Bill for renewing the Ballot Act.

The Session of 1881 was almost wholly occupied with Irish legislation. Three great Irish measures were passed: a Coercion Act, entitled the Protection of Person and Property Bill, an Arms Act, and the Irish Land Act. The only other Government measures passed were the Army Regulations Bill, and the Naval Discipline Amendment Act Amendment Bill, which abolished flogging in the Navy. Among the private members' measures passed were Earl Cairns' Conveyancing and Law of Property Bill; the Solicitors' Remuneration Bill; the Newspaper Libel Bill; and the Welsh Sunday Closing Bill.

Irish affairs again occupied most of the Session in 1882. On May 11th another Coercion Bill was introduced by Mr. Trevelyan in consequence of the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke, and was passed after protracted and exciting debates. The Arrears (Rents) Bill, which gave Irish tenants relief out of the Irish Church Funds for arrears of rents which they were unable to pay, was also passed. These two measures virtually monopolised the whole of this long Session, though some smaller measures were passed, such as the Electric Lighting Bill, the Parcels Post Bill, the Married Women's Property Bill, the Municipal Corporations Act, the Bills of Exchange Act, and Earl Cairns' Settled Land Bill. Among the measures abandoned were the Corrupt Practices Bill, the County Government Bill, the London Municipal Reform Bill, and the Bankruptcy Bill.

The Queen's Speech of 1883 presented a somewhat ambitious programme of business, the proposals including a Criminal Code Bill, Criminal Appeal Bill, Bankruptcy Bill, Patents Bill, Corrupt Practices Bill, Ballot Bill, a London Municipal Reform Bill, a Bill for Reforming Local Government, a Welsh Education Bill, and an Agricultural Holdings Bill. The two Bills on Criminal Law and the London Municipality Bill were dropped. An attempt was made by the Government to pass an Affirmation Bill, which would have settled the Bradlaugh difficulty, but they were defeated. A Tramways Act, which was a measure of more importance than its name conveyed, was passed for Ireland.

In 1884 another promising programme was placed before the nation, legislation being promised on the following subjects:—The Extension of the Franchise, Reform of Local Government, London Municipal Reform, Extension of the Hours of Polling, Corrupt Practices at Elections, Irish Sunday Closing, and the Protection of Life and Property at Sea. The Shipping Bill and the London Municipal Reform Bill—two of the most important measures—were, however, abandoned, owing to the conflict with the Lords over the Franchise Bill. This latter was the principal achievement of the Session, and indeed of the last Parliament, as it conferred the franchise for the first time in our history upon all the householders in the United Kingdom. It is often asserted that if the late Government had done no more than pass this Reform Bill it would have deserved well of the country. This may be admitted, although the fact by no means justifies the failure of the Government to press forward other measures. The Tories stoutly opposed the Reform Bill, and the House of Lords refused to pass it, thus bringing about a deadlock. This action led to an agitation throughout the country, enthusiastic meetings being held in favour of the abolition of the House of Lords, and a "People's League" being formed for the same object. A Cattle Diseases Bill was also

passed; while Bills on Railway Regulation, Irish Sunday Closing, Irish Land Purchase, Criminal Law Amendment, Medical Acts Amendment, Scotch Universities, and Welsh Education were announced only to be abandoned. Among the private members' Bills sacrificed were Mr. Bryce's Custody of Infants Bill, Mr. Stevenson's Sunday Closing Bill, and Mr. Anderson's Cruelty to Animals Bill.

The Session of 1885 was another broken Session, the Government being defeated in June on the Budget. The Redistribution Bill was carried, and also Registration Bills for England, Ireland, and Scotland, while a Crofters' Bill was introduced, and likewise a Welsh Intermediate Education Bill; but these measures, with others, were sacrificed, partly in consequence of the change of Government and partly from other causes.

CHAPTER VI.

The Liberal Policy in Ireland.

The election of 1880 was preceded by the issue of a remarkable Manifesto from the pen of Lord Beaconsfield. In this Manifesto the condition of Ireland occupied a very prominent place. Indeed, the Manifesto was itself a letter addressed to the Duke of Marlborough, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. As this document played so important a part in relation to that election, we give it entire: —

"The Earl of Beaconsfield to His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

"10, Downing-street, March 8th, 1880.

"My Lord Duke,—The measures respecting the state of Ireland, which Her Majesty's Government so anxiously considered with your Excellency, and in which they were much aided by your advice and authority, are now about to be submitted for the Royal assent, and it is at length in the power of the Ministers to advise the Queen to recur to the sense of her people. The arts of agitators, which represented that England, instead of being the generous and sympathising friend, was indifferent to the dangers and the sufferings of Ireland, have been defeated by the measures, at once liberal and prudent, which Parliament has almost unanimously sanctioned. During the six years of the present Administration, the improvement of Ireland and the content of our fellow-countrymen in that island have much occupied the care of the Ministry; and they may remember with satisfaction that in this period they have solved one of the most difficult problems connected with its Government and people, by establishing a system of public education

open to all classes and all creeds. Nevertheless, a danger, in its ultimate result scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine, and which now engages your Excellency's anxious attention, distracts that country. A portion of its population is attempting to sever the constitutional tie which unites it to Great Britain in that bond which has favoured the power and prosperity of both. It is to be hoped that all men of light and leading will resist this destructive doctrine. The strength of this nation depends on the unity of feeling which should pervade the United Kingdom and its wide-spread dependencies. The first duty of an English Minister should be to consolidate that co-operation which renders irresistible a community educated, as our own, in an equal love of liberty and law. And yet there are some who challenge the expediency of the Imperial character of this realm. Having attempted, and failed, to enfeeble our colonies by their policy of decomposition, they may perhaps now recognise in the disintegration of the United Kingdom a mode which will not only accomplish but precipitate their purpose. The immediate dissolution of Parliament will afford an opportunity to the nation to decide upon a course which will materially influence its future fortunes and shape its destiny. Rarely in this century has there been an occasion more critical. The power of England and the peace of Europe largely depend on the verdict of the country. Her Majesty's present Ministers have hitherto been enabled to secure that peace, so necessary to the welfare of all civilised countries, and so peculiarly the interest of our own. But this ineffable blessing cannot be obtained by the passive principle of non-interference. Peace rests on the presence, not to say the ascendancy, of England in the Councils of Europe. Even at this moment, the doubt, supposed to be inseparable from popular election, if it does not diminish, certainly arrests her influence, and is a main reason for not delaying an appeal to the national voice. Whatever may be its consequence to Her Majesty's present advisers, may it return to

Westminster a Parliament not unworthy of the power of England, and resolved to maintain it.

"I have the honour to be, my Lord Duke,

Your faithful servant, Beaconsfield.

"His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, K.G."

Naturally this document attracted considerable attention in all parts of the country. The leading Liberal statesmen, in their election addresses, had a good deal to say about it. It may be said, perhaps, of most of these addresses that, although they displayed less hostility towards the Irish people than the Manifesto of Lord Beaconsfield, the Irish policy which they disclosed was hardly more satisfactory than his. Lord Hartington, who was then the nominal leader of the Liberal party, referring to Home Rule, said, "I believe the demand so described to be impracticable, and considering that any concession, or appearance of concession, in this direction would be mischievous in its effects to the prosperity of Ireland, as well as that of England and Scotland, I have consistently opposed it in office and in opposition, and I shall continue to oppose it." Mr. Gladstone, who was the real leader of the Liberal party, referred to the subject in the following terms: "In the electioneering address which the Prime Minister has issued, an attempt is made to work upon your fears by dark allusions to the repeal of the Union and the abandonmen to the Colonies. Gentlemen, those who endangered the Union with Ireland were the party that maintained there an alien Church, an unjust land law, and franchises inferior to our own; and the true supporters of the Union are those who firmly uphold the supreme authority of Parliament, but exercise that authority to bind the three nations by the indissoluble tie of Liberal and equal laws. As to the Colonies, Liberal Administrations set free their trade with all the world, gave them popular and responsible govern-

ment, undertook to defend Canada with the whole strength of the Empire, and organised the great scheme for uniting the several settlements of British North America into one Dominion, to which, when we quitted office in 1866, it only remained for our successors to ask the ready assent of Parliament. It is by these measures that the Colonies have been bound in affection to the Empire, and the author of them can afford to smile at baseless insinuations." Mr. Shaw, who was then the leader of the Home Rule Parliamentary party, said, in his address to the electors of Cork county: "Her Majesty's Ministers have resolved on an immediate dissolution of Parliament. The Prime Minister has not thought it beneath his position to issue an electioneering manifesto, placing false issues before the electors of the Empire, and tending to excite the worst passions of the ignorant. There has been no Ministry within my memory by which less has been done for the improvement and content of the people of Ireland. The demands made by her representatives, urged moderately and fairly, have been scoffed at, and the government of the country for the last six years has been practically in the hands of the reactionary party. The distress, now so general, deepening in some places into famine, was at an early period brought before the attention of Her Majesty's Government, and if the measures then earnestly recommended had been promptly and generously adopted, this widespread suffering would have been to a great extent prevented, and the people would not have been pauperised. I charge the Government with gross and culpable ignorance and neglect. They have not taken timely, prudent, or liberal measures to meet the emergency. The Prime Minister, not for the first time, misrepresents the general opinion of the people of Ireland, as expressed by a majority of her representatives, in favour of self-government in domestic affairs, as if it meant the dismemberment of the Empire. No one knows better than the Prime Minister that that is not a true statement of the case. We mean by Home Rule not that

the connection between the two countries should be destroyed, but that the relationship may be placed on a healthy, and natural, and honest basis, and we seek this object by strictly legal and constitutional means. The Prime Minister knows this, but he thinks it a good cry for the English electors, and he sends his party forth to the constitutional struggle with 'a lie in their right hand!'"

It will be seen that both Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Shaw were of opinion that the state of Ireland was serious, if not alarming, and events soon proved that they were in the main right. The Land Act of 1870, although it was a great measure, largely failed to accomplish what had been expected from it, In the year 1879, nine years after that Act was passed, there were 1,000 evictions in Ireland; in 1880 over 2,000; and in 1881 and 1882, over 3,000. Even the Bright clauses of the Act of 1870 proved to be to a great extent inoperative. In a word, the Act instead of settling the land question in Ireland, unsettled it, and made further legislation an imperative necessity. When Mr. Shaw was chosen leader of the Irish Parliamentary party, in 1879, instead of Mr. Butt, who had died, the land question again assumed an acute form. Mr. Michael Davitt, of whom more was to be heard in a few years' time, inaugurated a new land agitation, out of which sprang the Irish National Land League. Mr. Davitt and some of his coadjutors were prosecuted by the Tory Government for speeches made by them at land meetings, but the prosecutions were soon abandoned. Great distress, indeed almost famine, prevailed in Ireland. Mr. Parnell, who entered Parliament in 1875, and two years later became the leader of the advanced wing of the Home Rule party, went to America to raise funds for the starving Irish peasantry. Mr. E. D. Gray, M.P., who was Lord Mayor of Dublin, raised another fund, and so also did the Duchess of Marlborough. Relief measures had to be proposed by the Government. This was the condition of affairs when Lord Beaconsfield issued his Manifesto and appeal to the nation. One consequence of

that Manifesto was that the Irish vote in England was solidly given for the Liberal party, and this partly accounts for the enormous majority which the Liberals obtained. After the election of 1880 the Irish Home Rule members appeared in the House of Commons in two divisions—the advanced men, who were the most numerous, following the lead of Mr. Parnell, while the moderate men followed Mr. Shaw. The Parnellites were a band of vigilant, capable, hard-working, pertinacious men. No equal number of men in the House of Commons sat through so many hours, or proved themselves so watchful, and earnest, and self-sacrificing in regard to all the matters in which they were specially interested.

The Liberal Government failed to realise the nature of the new situation, or to adapt themselves to its conditions. Mr. Forster was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland, with a seat in the Cabinet. This was the most unfortunate appointment that Mr. Gladstone made, or perhaps, could have made, and it did more to blight the hopes which had been raised by the accession of the Liberals to power than any one thing besides. Mr. Forster is doubtless a man of great ability, and of his sincerity there can be no doubt. At the same time, he is a brusque Yorkshireman, whose method of dealing with men and affairs is calculated to exasperate rather than to conciliate. Moreover, strong as his character is in some respects, he soon proved himself too weak a man for the Irish Secretaryship. He was not strong enough to resist the influence of Dublin Castle. Indeed, he was practically in the hands of the permanent officials in Ireland. He looked at things through their eyes rather than through his own. He was guided by their counsels rather than by his own judgment. He made a show of strength at the very point where strength was not specially needed. He blustered in the House of Commons where a quiet and reasonable, and yet firm attitude would have been invaluable; but when engaged in the actual work of administration in

Ireland, when real strength was required, he proved feeble in the extreme. Yet Mr. Forster's appointment caused great expectations. He was a more considerable man than had usually been appointed to what is regarded as a subordinate office. Moreover, he was a member of the Cabinet, and that fact still further raised the hopes both of the English and Irish peoples.

The Liberal Government began well in Ireland, as it did in most directions. The Queen's Speech announced that the Peace Preservation Act, as it was called, would not be renewed—in other words, the Liberals, in harmony with true Liberal principles, announced that they would govern Ireland by the ordinary law, and thus show their confidence in the Irish people rather than depend on those hateful measures of coercion, which have ever been the resort of incapable politicians. The Queen's Speech, moreover, contained a promise that a Bill would be introduced to extend the Irish Borough Franchise. Much disappointment was felt at the fact that no reference was made to the land question, which was from every point of view the most vital and pressing question in connection with Ireland at that juncture. Evictions were still on the increase, no less than 2,110 families being evicted in 1880. The Irish party brought forward an amendment to the address which called for immediate legislation on the land question. Mr. Forster admitted the necessity of such legislation, but declared that there would be no time to deal with it during that Session. The Irish Members then asked for a temporary measure to prevent evictions, and pressed the Government not to assist the landlords to evict their tenants by lending them the aid of the military, to all of which Mr. Forster answered that the landlords were acting within their legal rights, and that the law must be carried out. As evictions still increased, Mr. O'Connor Power brought in a Bill which was designed to stay evictions. The Government refused to accept it, but brought in their now famous Compensation for Disturbances Bill, the object of which was to allow compensation

to tenants who were evicted for non-payment of rent, when their insolvency had been caused by the failure of the crops. In introducing this Bill Mr. Forster said that if it were not passed the Government would be the Ministers of injustice. The Bill was successful in the House of Commons, where it was carried by a majority of 66, but it was rejected in the House of Lords by a majority of 232. This is the most vital fact in the history of the Irish question during the last five years. It is not the Parnellites, nor the Land League, nor the Irish peasantry, who are responsible for the lamentable events of this period in regard to Ireland; it is the House of Lords. Mr. Forster, however, bravely as he had spoken in moving the second reading of his Bill, tamely submitted to defeat when the Lords rejected that Bill, and it is only fair to say the same of his colleagues in the Cabinet. If Mr. Forster had been actuated by the right spirit he would at once have resigned his office, when he was prevented by an irresponsible House of Landlords from carrying out the policy which he had declared to be vital to the welfare of Ireland. Serious dissatisfaction was caused throughout the Liberal ranks by this action on the part of the Government, and dark foreboding as to the future seized the hearts of many of the most earnest supporters of the Government in the country.

As a result of the rejection of this Bill, the Land League agitation become more active, and the consequences of that agitation became more serious. Mr. John Dillon, Mr. Michael Davitt, Mr. T. D. Sullivan, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Biggar, Mr. Patrick Egan, Mr. Thomas Brennan, and Mr. Parnell delivered most violent speeches in different parts of the country, and murders and outrages were rife. It was during this autumn that Captain Boycott, the agent of Lord Earne, was completely forsaken by all his servants and neighbours. No one would work for him or deal with him, and he and his family were reduced to the direst necessity. Ultimately, the Orangemen of Ulster sent a number of armed labourers to assist Captain Boycott to get in his harvest. This was

the origin of the term which has since become so common —Boycotting. A State prosecution was commenced against the officials of the Land League, among whom were the prominent Parnellites who were in Parliament. The jury, however, were unable to agree, and the trial proved abortive.

The next year, 1881, was destined to be still more turbulent and unfortunate in relation to Irish affairs. Two or three weeks after Parliament assembled, Mr. Forster, in accordance with an intimation which had been given in the Queen's Speech, introduced a Coercion Act for Ireland, in support of which he endeavoured to make out a strong case. His method of presenting the matter to Parliament was, as already remarked, not conducive to quietness of debate. The Irish Members, and even the most moderate among them, expressed their strong disapproval of the course which was being pursued by the Government. Dr. Lyons proposed an amendment to the effect that remedial measures should precede coercive measures. This was on the 24th of January; the debate was continued until February 1st, on which day, the House having been sitting for thirty-one consecutive hours, the Speaker refused to permit further discussion. This action was almost, if not entirely, unprecedented, and certainly it was a stretch of the Speaker's authority which it would be very dangerous to have repeated. When the Speaker was about to put the question, an Irish Member rose, but the Speaker refused to listen to him, whereupon the whole Irish party stood up and shouted "Privilege, privilege"—a cry which had not been heard in the House of Commons since the time of Charles the First. Mr. Forster immediately brought in his Bill. The next day Mr. Michael Davitt was arrested, and when, in answer to Mr. Parnell, Sir William Harcourt announced this fact to the House of Commons, tumultuous cheering followed. This, under the circumstances, was most unseemly and ungracious, and clearly showed that the majority of the English Legislature were incapable of taking a serious view of Ireland's condition, grave as it was. Mr. Parnell closely

questioned the Government in regard to Mr. Davitt's arrest, but the Speaker, without allowing Mr. Parnell to finish his interrogatories, called upon Mr. Gladstone, who wished to submit a motion declaring that the passage of the Coercion Bill was urgent. When Mr. Gladstone had begun to speak, Mr. Dillon rose on a point of order. The Speaker declared that Mr. Gladstone was in possession of the House. Mr. Dillon remained standing while the Speaker was addressing the House, and, with calm attitude and folded arms, he demanded his right to speak. English Members vociferated against Mr. Dillon; Irish Members shouted as loudly for him. In the end Mr. Dillon was named for disregarding the authority of the chair, and the Speaker called upon him to withdraw, but he again rose and attempted to speak. He refused to withdraw, and the Serjeant-at-Arms was called to remove him. He refused to move until the Serjeant had summoned several assistants to help him in ejecting the obstinate Member. Mr. Gladstone again proceeded with his speech, when Mr. Parnell sprang to his feet, and moved that Mr. Gladstone be no longer heard. Mr. Parnell was named, but he refused to withdraw until the Serjeant had again summoned his assistants. For half-an-hour the proceedings of Parliament were suspended while nearly all the Parnellites were expelled from the House. The Government carried their Coercion Bill through the House of Commons by large majorities, while the House of Lords passed it through all its stages in a very short space of time. The Arms Act, introduced by Sir William Harcourt, followed, and this, also, was soon passed through both Houses. When this work of coercion had been accomplished, and the English Liberals had been greatly irritated, and the Irish people had been goaded almost to the point of rebellion, the Irish Land Bill was introduced. This was undoubtedly a great and valuable measure. It was intended to protect the Irish tenantry against exorbitant rents and unjust evictions. It was opposed, however, by the Conservatives, led by Mr. Gibson and Lord Elcho (now Earl

Wemyss), as unnecessary, unjust, and impolitic. Every clause was persistently fought in Committee by the Conservatives in the interests of the landlords. The Peers, as usual, endeavoured to deprive the Bill of its really useful features. In fact, they simply reduced the measure to a sham. The Government and the House of Commons rejected the most vital of the Lords' amendments, which were accordingly struck out. The Lords re-inserted the amendments, and, in the end, the Government made some concessions, although they still rejected most of the Lords' amendments. A collision between the two Houses seemed imminent. Lord Salisbury assumed a defiant attitude; but in the end the Bill became law in very much its original form. The Irish party continued to manifest hostility towards the Government, and the Land League agitation showed no signs of abatement. The Irishmen in America took up the cause of their countrymen at home, and proclaimed war by dynamite against the English garrison in Ireland. Explosions occurred at the Liverpool Town Hall, at the London Mansion House, and some other places, the result being that considerable alarm was excited throughout the country. Mr. Parnell, with Messrs. Sexton, Dillon, and O'Kelly, and some other prominent Land Leaguers, were arrested and put into prison, where they remained until May, 1882. In fact, many hundreds of Irishmen who were in no sense criminals, against whom no charge was ever proved, who were at the worst merely suspected, were put into gaol. Mr. Forster had been losing, not merely his popularity in Ireland, but had also slowly, but surely, been declining in the opinion of English Liberals, who began to realise how much his fatal policy was likely to cost them. When Mr. Parnell and his colleagues were put into prison, there were loud rejoicings in England, and when Mr. Gladstone made the announcement at the Mansion House that the Irish leader had been sent to gaol, his audience went into ecstasies.

The Government were, however, more glad to release

their prisoners than they had been to confine them. When they were released, Mr. Forster resigned the post of Chief Secretary, and Lord Cowper retired from the Lord-Lieutenantship. On Saturday, May 6th, in this year, Lord Frederick Cavendish, who had succeeded Mr. Forster, and Mr. Burke, the Under-Secretary, were murdered in the Phœnix Park. This sad event put a stop to all ordinary legislation, and again aroused a violent antagonism between the Irish and English peoples. A new Coercion Bill was brought in by Mr. Trevelyan, the new Irish Secretary, and Sir William Harcourt, which suspended trial by jury in a certain class of cases, and increased the powers of the police. This Bill was opposed by the Irish party and a few English members, line by line, and clause by clause, so that when twenty-three days had been spent upon it, including an all-day and all-night sitting, only half the clauses had been disposed of. The chairman declared that the Bill was retarded by systematic obstruction, and Mr. Parnell and twenty-four other members were suspended, and the remaining clauses were passed in a sitting of twenty-eight hours. The Arrears Bill was also brought in by the Government, which relieved the Irish tenantry out of the Irish Church Funds of those arrears of rent which they found themselves absolutely unable to pay. The measure was opposed in the House of Commons by the Conservatives; and Lord Salisbury made an attempt to strike out from the Bill one of its most vital provisions. After a brief contest, however, with the House of Commons, the peers succumbed.

Nothing very vital has occurred in regard to Ireland since the events just referred to. During the past two or three years, however, there has been a manifest increase in Mr. Parnell's popularity and power, while the National party has strengthened its hold on Ireland in an extraordinary manner. Mr. Parnell has become more and more defiant, and is surrounded by lieutenants who are evidently determined to second his efforts to the best of their ability.

Probably Mr. Parnell will appear in the next House of Commons at the head of eighty followers, all pledged to assist him in procuring a system of Home Rule for Ireland, which, although it may not sever the Imperial bond between the two countries, will certainly give Irishmen the control of their own affairs. To this they are entitled; and it is perfectly futile for English parties to attempt to prevent this result being brought about. It is not probable that able men, who are competent to serve their country in its highest offices, will be content to be ignored year after year, while Englishmen fill those offices, and receive their emoluments. A new Scotch department has just been created, and it is said that no man has a chance of being appointed to any office in that department whose name does not begin with "Mac." In other words, he must be a Scotchman, and, as a matter of fact, these offices are filled by Scotchmen. Why should not the same thing be true in relation to Ireland? It is an almost incredible fact that Mr. Forster, during his term of office as Chief Secretary, did not deign even to consult with any Irishman in regard to the affairs of Ireland. We might have understood his ignoring Mr. Parnell; but surely there was no reason why he should also ignore such moderate men as Mr. Shaw and those who followed his lead; and yet it is a simple truth that not even these men were consulted in regard to Irish matters. It is utterly impossible to go on governing Ireland in this fashion. The question now is, What are our English statesmen going to do in regard to Ireland? This is one of the problems of the future. It is being much discussed at the present time, but discussion does not seem to help us towards its solution. Liberals condemn Tories for forming an alliance with the Parnellites, and Tories have condemned Liberals for doing the same. The simple fact is that neither party has the courage to form an honourable alliance with the very men who are really the representatives of the Irish people. The party which does form such an alliance will not only do a good stroke of business for

itself, but it will do much to help us to a statesmanlike solution of this perplexing difficulty. One thing cannot be doubted: Mr. Parnell is in earnest, and he leaves us in no doubt as to what he intends to do. Even his worst enemies cannot charge him with cunning and duplicity. He states in open and honest terms what his aims really are. In his recent speeches he has placed the matter beyond all doubt. Speaking at Dublin, on August 24th last, he said: "I shall now go further a little. I have already spoken of the past, and of the immediate future, and I shall ask you to accompany me for a moment a little beyond that, to a time when Ireland, having prudently and sagaciously selected her so-and-so representatives, shall have sent them over for the battle, and, as we all hope and believe, the final battle. What will be the new programme? It has been the custom to include a number of measures, in addition to the great measure of all, the restoration of an Irish Parliament—the concession of legislative independence. We have had resolutions about Land Acts, Franchise Acts, Municipal Acts, Labourers' Acts, and so forth, all pointing to the belief in our minds, as those who are primarily responsible for the drafting of our programme, that it would be necessary for us to pay attention as well to remedial measures—in fact, that there would be time to pay attention to remedial measures before winning the final, and great, and ultimate measure of all. Although that cannot be described as putting the cart before the horse; yet I hope that it may not be necessary for us in the new Parliament to devote our attention to subsidiary measures, and that it may be possible for us to have a programme and a platform with only one plank, and that the plank of national independence. I feel convinced, comrades, that our great work, and our sole work, in the new Parliament will be the restoration of our own Parliament. And when we have obtained it, what will be its functions? and what will be its powers? We shall require our new Parliament

to do those things which we have been asking the British Parliament to do for us. We shall require them to develop the Healy clause of the Land Act; to abolish evictions, and landlord oppression, and rack-renting; to make every tenant-farmer the owner of his holding upon fair terms. We shall require that power to do this shall be given to our Parliament. We shall require our new Parliament to secure to the labourers a share in the heritage of the land and comfortable homes. We shall not then have to depend upon the halting actions of ex-officio Boards of Guardians. We shall require our new Parliament to build up the industries of Ireland; to see that not only the agricultural labourers, but the artisans, the working man, and the mechanics of the towns, shall be enabled to live; and thereby we shall endeavour to keep our own people at home, to afford profitable employment, to look after the educational interest of the youth of Ireland, and to train them up in the way they should go, both from a religious and a national point of view. We have, therefore, a great work before us, both in the English House of Commons for a while, and also in the Irish Chamber; and I hope we shall not have a House of Lords to cumber us. I therefore feel assured that the next Irish party that will be assembled will be the last in the English and the first in the restored Irish Parliament." On the following day he remarked :—"I desire to take the opportunity which has been afforded to me—in the presence of such a very large and representative gathering as this, composed of the members of the central branch of the League, many of whom have come from different parts of Ireland—to express to you my conviction, which has become if possible more firm than ever, of the very near approach of the speedy triumph of the national cause. There can be no shadow of doubt, gentlemen, that if you use your recent victory with judgment and moderation, you will have the two English parties vying with each other for the settlement

of the Irish question. I believe we shall get a settlement of the national question from whichever Government or party is in power, whether it may be Whig or whether it may be Tory. There may be a slight variation in the terms which we might succeed in securing from one party over the other; but I believe the settlement which we shall obtain from the Tories will be as valuable and important for the interest of Ireland and the prosperity of the nation as the settlement we shall be able to obtain from the Whigs. We are therefore in this position: that no matter which of the English sides wins, we are bound to win."

CHAPTER VII.

Neglected Reforms.

It may emphatically be said of Mr. Gladstone's Government that they did the things they ought not to have done, and left undone the things they ought to have done. This is admitted even by themselves and their supporters. The only difference between their view and that which we take is, that they say it was a necessity of the case that they should act in this manner, and we say that it was not. Mr. Gladstone in his Midlothian speeches, as we have before shown, made it a charge against the Beaconsfield Government that it expended its energies on operations abroad, whilst it neglected pressing reforms at home. He intimated, moreover, that if the Liberals were returned to power, this state of things would be reversed, and that reforms at home would take precedence over intermeddling with matters abroad. In one of his speeches Mr. Gladstone said: "The mind of this country, ladies and gentlemen, has been led abroad, and over the whole earth. It really seems as if, under the present sway, our business was not to regulate the concerns of our own land and our own firesides, but the concerns of the people of Europe, Asia, Africa, and the rest of the world. That is not my view of the matter at all. My view of the matter is, that the promotion of good government among and for a people is a great and noble and arduous work that taxes all their energies. I wish to get rid of a great deal of the nonsense—the mischievous nonsense—that has been introduced into our politics." In the address which he issued on Thursday, March 10th, 1880, just previous to the General Election, Mr. Gladstone complained that the policy set forth by Lord Beaconsfield in his election address ignored the most pressing matters of domestic legislation. These are his

words: "As to the domestic legislation of the future, it is in the election address of the Prime Minister a perfect blank. No prospect is opened to us of effectual alteration of the land laws; of better security for occupiers; of the reform and extension of local government throughout the three kingdoms; of a more equal distribution of political franchises, or of progress in questions deeply affecting our social and moral condition." Mr. Gladstone in his address to the nation, did not ignore domestic matters; on the contrary, he made them very prominent, and virtually pledged himself to inaugurate a new era as regards domestic legislation. The difference between him and Lord Beaconsfield was this, that Lord Beaconsfield promised nothing under this head, and, therefore, raised no expectations in the minds of the English people; while Mr. Gladstone promised a great deal, and raised such expectations—only, however, to cruelly disappoint them. It is the purpose of this chapter to show that the very questions which are most vital to the welfare of the English people, and which most deeply stir their hearts, are exactly the questions which have either been touched in the most gingerly fashion or have been passed over altogether. Let us take a few of these neglected questions in order. We will begin with the question of the liquor traffic. There is no social question which is of such paramount importance as this one. It is a question which deeply affects both the moral and the material prosperity of the people of this country. The Excise Returns for the year 1884 show that there was an increase in the expenditure on drink of £871,981, as compared with 1883, the totals being £125,477,275 for 1883 and £126,349,256 in 1884. This is a surprising fact —or it would be so if past experience had not accustomed us to expect that the liquor traffic will flourish whatever other trade may be depressed. For years we have been hearing doleful lamentations about bad trade; "bitter cries" were wailed into our ears; appeals were made to us in behalf of the destitute and the starving; and yet nearly a

million more money was spent on drink in that year than in the year before. This one million—the increase in our drink bill in one year, represents just about the amount that this entire nation gives to the cause of missions. Surely no Christian man can reflect on this fact without experiencing a deep sense of shame. In 1883 there was a decrease of the expenditure on drink of £774,084, as compared with 1882; but in 1884 the figures went back to their former point, and nearly £100,000 beyond it. We must not, therefore, flatter ourselves that our drink bill can be kept down to its present point, under the present condition of things, much less can we hope to considerably diminish it. Mr. Hoyle may well express the opinion that the year 1884 will, as regards its economical features, be somewhat of a puzzle to future historians. He points out that we have had the three things which are necessary to ensure prosperous trade—cheap food, cheap money, and good wages, and yet we have not secured the prosperous trade. How is this? The answer is, that much of the nation's current income, which represents its purchasing power, is wasted in drink, and consequently the people are to that extent unable to buy the goods produced by our own manufacturers. This increase in the drink bill is the more remarkable, and the more discouraging, too, when we consider that the agencies which exist in this country to combat drinking and its attendant evils were never so numerous or influential as they are now. Probably in the year 1884 there were more pledged abstainers, more advocates of Temperance in its various forms, and more Temperance societies than there had ever been in England before, and yet the liquor traffic thrives in spite of them all. Their combined efforts do not even avail to hold this terrible business in check. It mocks their endeavours, laughs at their earnestness, and goes joyously on its hideous path. In the words of the *Times*:—"Drinking baffles us, confounds us, shames us, and mocks us at every point. It outwits alike the teacher, the man of business, the patriot,

and the legislator. Every other institution flounders in hopeless difficulties; the public-house holds its triumphant course." Why is this? Is it not owing chiefly to the fact that the people, the ratepayers, are almost entirely helpless in the matter? Without doubt it is. In Mr. Hoyle's words, this increase in drinking "supplies another illustration of the fearful potency of the legalised temptations to drinking which everywhere so extensively beset the path of the people."

The obvious lesson surely is that the people should have power to sweep these temptations from their path should they desire to do so. It is all very well to talk of "moral suasion," but that nonsense is now played out. It is the veriest cant to talk about moral suasion whilst we allow 160,000 liquor sellers to tempt people to drink. When we cease to legalise temptations moral suasion will have a chance. This, however, is a view of the matter which our statesmen seem to be utterly blind to. We do not know of any one thing which so degrades British statesmanship as the fact that the liquor traffic, established in the interests of a few wealthy brewers and distillers belonging to the upper classes, has been allowed to flourish and to fatten upon the very life-blood of the people, bringing in its train miseries and woes of a most direful character. The history of our legislation on this subject is a long and ghastly series of blunders and crimes. Even Mr. Gladstone himself seems to be as incapable of perceiving the real nature of this question and the kind of legislation that is necessary to effectually deal with it as inferior statesmen. His unfortunate measure for making the sale of wines more common has done more, perhaps, than any recent measure to contribute to an increase of drinking in this land. Its effect has been to turn many of our grocer's shops into insidious agencies for the increase of drunkenness. The man who has inflicted such a measure as this upon the English nation ought, if only for shame, to endeavour to repair the mischief thus done by taking the lead in order to secure drastic

legislation on this question. Mr. Gladstone made certain statements in Midlothian which seemed to indicate that he was at last beginning to realise the gravity and urgency of this subject. Among these were the following:—"But I have promised, gentlemen, to say a word during this course of addresses on a subject of very great importance—namely, the subject of the liquor laws of this country. I confess that the state of this country with regard to intemperance, we must all painfully feel it, is a national vice and scandal. . . . . But my opinion is this, that the three principles which ought to guide the consideration of this difficult question are as follows: Serious efforts ought to be made to abate this terrible mischief. These efforts should be made just as the remarkable effort that was successfully made in past sessions to close the public-houses of Ireland on Sunday. They should be made with a due and careful regard for the state of public opinion. . . . . During the late Government we introduced a bill which again embodied the principles of Local Option. It was not in our power to carry that Bill. I do not dwell upon its provisions particularly. I do not ask now whether they were the wisest and the best, or the most unwise and the worst. I speak only of its principle, and I say that, so far as I am able to judge, there is no reason why upon the threshold a proposition for allowing the operation of Local Option in regard to the liquor laws should be rejected and condemned. I will do my best on every future occasion, as I have done it upon every past occasion, to join in any rational and fair and practicable scheme for the amendment of the liquor laws, and for the mitigation of the curse of intemperance." The last extract contains what is really a pledge to the effect that Mr. Gladstone would do his best to secure such legislation as would diminish the evils flowing from the liquor traffic; but as a simple matter of fact he did nothing at all during his five years of office. It would be impossible to name a single

instance in which the late Government acted in such a manner as to convince the country that they were in earnest on this question. They have, on the other hand, studiously endeavoured to ignore the subject. They have given no attention whatever to it, except as they have been forced to do so. Some of them, it is true, voted with Sir Wilfrid Lawson, but it is very easy to make too much of a vote cast in favour of an abstract resolution. Politicians are cunning casuists, and are capable of drawing very fine distinctions, and it is quite probable that some of the gentlemen who have voted with Sir Wilfrid Lawson never intend to vote for a real and effective scheme of Local Option, and when the Bill is introduced we shall discover that some of them mean one thing by Local Option and some another. Mr. Gladstone, however, has not even voted with Sir Wilfrid Lawson. He justifies his abstension from voting in the following terms:—"When I was here in November I said a word upon a very practical, and in a social point of view, a very important subject—the subject of what is called Local Option; and a gentleman who is an elector in the county has written to me, expressing in terms of great propriety and courtesy, his regret that I did not vote the other night for the resolution of Sir Wilfrid Lawson. What I stated to you in November was, that to the principle of Local Option I took no preliminary objection, but that I must consider many matters in regard to its application, among which would be a strict justice to the interests which possibly the exercise of that Local Option might injuriously affect. I could not support the resolution of Sir Wilfrid Lawson, however much I respect his high patriotic motives and his high moral purpose, and however much I admire his abilities and character, for these two reasons—one of them, that it contained no recognition of the fair and equitable title of those interests to be heard; and allowed no opportunity of making their case for an equitable com-

pensation if new principles were introduced into our legislation, which might bear injuriously upon their interests. We have little reason for gratitude undoubtedly to that particular interest in England of which I speak; but no man is entitled, because he does not think there is a case for gratitude—no man is entitled on that account to deny or to stint a full measure of justice. But there is another reason which I am wishful to explain to you, because it affects my general conduct. I have never been in the habit of voting for what are called 'abstract resolutions' in the House of Commons until I am prepared with a plan to give them effect."

It is evidently vain to expect any Bill worth the paper it is printed on from a man who talks in this way. The late Government was put into office by the united votes of Temperance men and Nonconformists—that is to say, the Liberal Government could not have been raised to power if these classes, or any considerable proportion of them, had been against it. In these circumstances, it might have been expected that the Gladstone Cabinet, if from no higher motive than that of gratitude towards its supporters, would have shown some anxiety to deal boldly and vigorously with the evils which admittedly flow from the common sale of intoxicating drinks. But there is a higher motive than that of gratifying any class of men, however excellent they may be, and it is the motive of promoting the true weal of the nation. To this lofty consideration Liberals ought, from their professions, to be keenly susceptible. But what has the Gladstone Government done, during its five years of office, to abate the terrible evils of the drink traffic—evils which, in Mr. Gladstone's own words, are greater than those of war, famine, and pestilence combined? Nothing. We are grieved to make such an admission, but it is the simple truth. Local Option, Sunday Closing, schemes of licensing reform have all been discussed, and in relation to them all the Government was either half-hearted or hostile.

We are well aware that one or two Ministers spoke in favour of Local Option—but how feebly! with what little heart! with what manifest hesitation! In these speeches there was none of the enthusiasm which these men throw into the more congenial topics of party strife. They were for the most part speeches which were made from motives of policy rather than from deep-rooted conviction.

After five years of Liberal rule Temperance reformers are no nearer their goal than they were before. This is a fact which should be well pondered by all the adherents of the Temperance cause; if it is so pondered, it will perhaps do something to modify their political views. Nor is this all, or the worst. Not only did the late Government fail to meet the expectations of those who desire to see England saved from the curse of drink, but it actually pandered to the liquor interest. This was the meaning of Mr. Childers' modification of his Budget proposals in a sense favourable to the distillers and publicans. The proposed increase in the spirit duties was reduced one-half for no other reason than to conciliate the powerful drink interest. That it had the opposite effect to that which had been anticipated, and encouraged them to make still larger demands, does not disprove what we have said. The Government hoped to stave off defeat by truckling to Beer; but the very means they adopted to avoid being overthrown led to disaster. Had they clung to principle they might have stood—expediency led to their ruin. It is no use saying, as Mr. Gladstone did say, that the alarm caused among landlords by the proposed increase in the death duties was the chief cause of defeat; that may have been a secondary cause, but the primary cause was drink. The publicans were not slow to claim the victory as theirs, and to exult over it as a new proof of their power. Mr. Childers feared to array against him the forces of King Grog, and the same spirit animated many of the Liberal members who absented themselves from the division. They had the fear of the drinksellers

of their constituencies before their eyes. And yet these Liberal leaders and Liberal members of Parliament will expect to get the solid Temperance vote at the General Election just as if these things had never happened!

The question for the electors is, whether or not this problem is to be dallied with any longer in this fashion. It is far and away the most vital issue before the country, although persistent efforts are made to obscure this fact. Many of our statesmen and journalists and men in high positions are pecuniarily interested in the liquor traffic, and they persistently endeavour to persuade the electors that local government reform, the land question, free education, disestablishment, etc., are all vastly more important than legislation affecting the liquor traffic. If the people of England are wise, however, they will see through these devices. Too long have the rich been allowed to perpetuate an accursed traffic which preys chiefly upon the poor. Now that every poor man who is at the head of a family has a vote, let him give that vote in favour of men who will support measures which will enable the poor man to banish the liquor traffic from the neighbourhood in which he dwells, as well as the rich man. A real question before the people of England at this election is this, "Is Grog to be King?" and to such a question only one answer ought to be possible, and that answer ought to be given with promptness and decision.

On the 24th January, the United Kingdom Alliance, an organisation which has done more to educate the public mind on this question than any other agency in this country, issued an address to the electors of the United Kingdom, which we here give:—"Two millions of new voters will be on the New Electoral Rolls, and every male householder will be entitled to vote for his representative in Parliament. A General Election must soon take place, and it will depend upon the decision of the electors what the character of future legislation shall be. A new era in legislation is beginning. In the present Parliament a resolution has

been three times passed, affirming the proposition that the inhabitants of every locality in the kingdom should themselves have the power of protecting their district by an effective measure of Local Option from the disease, pauperism, crime, and taxation arising from the liquor traffic. It is of supreme importance that your convictions on this question should be adequately represented in the new Parliament, and to effect this it is important that you should in your various constituencies take such action as will ensure that candidates shall be elected who will enforce your just and reasonable demand for a DIRECT POPULAR VETO on the traffic in intoxicating liquors. There are other questions of national importance waiting for solution, but none affecting the social, moral, and physical well-being of the people is as important and pressing as this, which touches the every-day life and welfare of the whole nation. Mr. Gladstone says that the liquor traffic brings upon us mischiefs greater than the combined ravages of 'war, pestilence, and famine.' Mr. G. O. Trevelyan says:—'The people lose everything that is to be lost by this traffic, they gain absolutely nothing.' Earl Cairns says that public-houses 'are just so many allurements and ambushes, so many traps and pitfalls in the path of the working man.' These are the utterances of great party leaders, and they form an irresistible argument for your disregarding all party politics, and uniting in the demand for the immediate passing of an Act that will give you the power to say to the licensing authorities in your various districts that you will have no liquor shops thrust upon you or continued in your midst against your will. The Executive Council of the United Kingdom Alliance urgently calls upon the electors of the United Kingdom to take prompt and effective action within their respective Parliamentary boundaries to ensure the selection of such candidates as will, irrespective of party ties, distinctly promise to support Sir Wilfrid Lawson in his just and commendable efforts to secure for the people of each locality a FULL AND DIRECT POPULAR VETO on the

liquor traffic, whenever and wherever they may so desire to act for the defence of their homes and the best interests of the nation.—THE EXECUTIVE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM ALLIANCE."

This appeal is a reasonable one, and it is not likely to have been made in vain. This question has now passed out of the hands of statesmen into the hands of the people, wherein all true reformers will rejoice. Whatever interested persons may say, the people are alive to this question. They thoroughly understand it, and they will insist upon reforms being carried out, and that speedily, and will open the eyes of some of our statesmen in a remarkable way. It is surprising that every Reform Bill has been followed by an advance on this subject. The division list on Sir Wilfrid Lawson's motion, in 1883, shows that Wales and Scotland were practically unanimous in favour of Local Option; that Ireland showed two to one in its favour, while England had a majority of only eight in favour of giving the people power to deal with the liquor traffic. There were 168 English members for Local Option and 160 against it. A further analysis reveals the fact that the majority of the hostile members sat for county constituencies, whilst the majority of friendly members represented boroughs having over 20,000 inhabitants. It is clear, therefore, that the constituencies where household suffrage existed were largely in favour of Local Option, and that the constituencies where working men were practically shut out upheld the present licensing system. But these latter constituencies have been revolutionised. Two millions of voters have been enfranchised, and nearly all of them reside in counties. How is this likely to affect legislation on Temperance and social reform generally? Will the working men of the counties be likeminded with their brethren of the boroughs? We think they will; and it is, at any rate, difficult to see why they should not. This is the one bit of blue in a very black sky. But if there is to be any improvement a very different class of men must

be sent to the House of Commons. Brewers, and all who are connected with them and their trade, should be resolutely opposed. Every candidate should be pledged either to sweeping licensing reforms or to Local Option, the latter always being preferred. Governments, too, must be made to understand that they will have to deal with this life-and-death question with the earnestness which its gravity demands. We have pretty freely expressed our opinion on the action of the late Government on this subject. Can better things be expected from the present Tory Government? Decidedly not. In one sense nothing at all can be expected from them. Their position is entirely anomalous and unnatural. They are tied hand and foot, and can only move as they are allowed to move by the Opposition. Besides, all the preferences of the Conservatives, as a political party, are in favour of drink. They are steeped up to the lips in pledges on behalf of the publicans. At the last election their battle-cry was "Beer and Bible," and not improbably it will be so again at the coming Election. The bulk of the liquor traffickers have gone over to the Conservatives, and the bulk of the Conservatives have gone over to the drink trade. Churchmen who sympathise with Temperance try to persuade themselves that it is not so: but they "imagine a vain thing." Already we have evidence that many Conservatives accept this as the natural order of things, and parsons are actively canvassing in support of candidates who are nominees of the publicans. The infamy of this state of things is equalled only by its shamelessness.

It is evident, therefore, that earnest Temperance reformers have little to thank either party for in the past, and almost as little to expect from either party in the future. If they mean to do anything thorough they must trust neither party and oppose both. It is about time to take sides in this matter, and to bring things to a decisive issue. Henceforth, the Temperance vote ought to count for something in our political contests; it ought, indeed, to be so powerful than any man or any party who ignored or

defied it would be swiftly and inevitably crushed. We hear of the "Irish vote," the "publican vote," the "working man vote," and we ought to hear of the "Temperance vote." The Temperance men of England can turn almost any election they like. They ought to do it. If they refuse to do it they become responsible for the continuance of the evils of this accursed liquor traffic. Doubtless it will be said that if Temperance men act thus they will break up our political parties. So be it. Let them be broken up. This is no time to consider the interest of parties. With drunkenness abounding — and among women at any rate increasing; with manifold evils afflicting this nation and destroying much that is noblest in its life; are we to refrain from smiting the drink hip and thigh because the calculations of party managers may be upset? Scorned be the thought. The great question for us is, How can we rid this country of the curse of intemperance? Is Grog to rule us, or are we to break its fell power once and for ever? If Temperance men do not make this a leading issue at the General Election they will prove false to every principle they profess, and betray the interests alike of their own cause and of the nation.

Another class of reforms which have been grievously neglected are those which relate to what is commonly called immorality. The Contagious Diseases Acts, the object of which is to make "Provision for the lusts of the flesh," in the case of soldiers and sailors in our garrison towns, not only legalise, but encourage vice, and the pernicious principle underlying them is that vice is a necessity —a necessity to be provided for by the Legislature of a Christian nation. These Acts were passed by a Liberal Government, and passed in a way which was most dishonourable to the Government and to Parliament, and which was a betrayal of the nation. Earnest attempts have been made to secure a repeal of these Acts ever since they were passed. Such attempts, however, have met with no support from Governments or politicians. The

men who advocated their repeal were looked upon as fadists, men with crotchets and intolerant. But the agitation has borne fruit; directly, inasmuch as the late Government was compelled by the vote of the House of Commons to suspend the operation of the Acts as regards their most objectionable clauses; indirectly, because it has educated the public mind on all questions relative to the social evil. The vote just referred to was preceded by a debate opened by Mr. Stansfeld, who has been the leader of this agitation, and who, as we have already stated, was in consequence of his action on this question excluded from the Liberal Government. Mr. Stansfeld had, however, the satisfaction of triumphing over the men who had thought him disqualified for office by his connection with a great moral movement. The Acts, however, are not yet abolished, they are merely suspended; and under these Acts abominations are perpetrated, especially in the Colonies, which, if published to the English nation, would rouse a storm of anger such as has rarely been witnessed; and yet Mr. Osborne Morgan, a member of the late Government, of course with the concurrence of many of his colleagues, enthusiastically defended the Acts against Mr. Stansfeld. Incidentally it may be remarked that the Liberals outside the Government were, as a whole, with Mr. Stansfeld, while the Tories, as a body, were against him. Any person who heard the debate in the House of Commons on that evening would need no further evidence to convince him that moral reform could only be expected from the Liberal party.

We have referred to the indirect results of this agitation. Amongst these results may be mentioned the growth of public opinion on the protection of young girls, a subject which has been much discussed during the last four years. In 1882, a Select Committee of the House of Lords reported on the law relating to young girls. The facts stated in this report are of a most dreadful character, and it is a pity that they are not in the possession of all the

heads of families in the country. When this committee sat the law of England was to the effect that a girl of 13 was perfectly competent to dispose of her own person in any way she liked; in other words, as soon as a girl reached the age of 13 she was considered capable of consenting to her own seduction. The effect of this was that no man could be punished for seducing a girl of 13 or over. This was the law in Christian England. Not the whole of the law, however, for side by side with that was another law made for the special benefit of the rich man's child. If a child was made a ward in Chancery, her seduction was a punishable crime until she passed the age of 21. Moreover, there was, and still is, a law on the Statute Book which affirms that a young man, until he has passed the age of 21 is a minor, and is not competent to manage his own affairs. He may get into debt, but he cannot be sued for the money, except in so far as relates to necessaries of life. Thus, the law of England stated that a man aged 20 years and 11 months, who belongs to the stronger sex, cannot be trusted to manage even monetary affairs; while a girl of 13 years and one day, belonging to the weaker sex, a mere child in fact, was thought perfectly capable of protecting her person against the wiles, stratagems, and the villainy of corrupt men. Will it be believed that this state of the law was defended by men in both Houses of Parliament, for what purpose it is not difficult to imagine, and that the most formidable difficulties were experienced in Parliament in securing an alteration of the law? To state these facts in their naked simplicity is to brand with infamy every man who took a part in supporting this law or what is the same thing, who took no part in securing its abolition.

In the year 1880 the Committee for the Exposure and Suppression of the Traffic in English Girls for the purposes of Continental Prostitution, of which Mr. Benjamin Scott, City Chamberlain, and Mr. Alfred S. Dyer were the moving

spirits, succeeded in securing the conviction of several persons in Belgium who had been engaged in this traffic. A year later, the same Committee, through Lord Shaftesbury, secured the appointment of the Select Committee of the House of Lords to which we have already referred, and which reported in 1882. The Committee also made certain recommendations, which were as follows:—1. That it be made a serious misdemeanour for any person to solicit or endeavour to procure any woman to leave the United Kingdom, or to leave her usual place of abode in the United Kingdom, for the purpose of entering a brothel, or prostituting herself, in parts beyond the sea, whether he shall or shall not inform the woman of such purpose. 2. That upon every birth certificate issued at Somerset House of the birth of a woman who would at the time of issue be between twenty and thirty, there shall be stamped in red a conspicuous notice in French to the effect that these certificates having sometimes got into improper hands and been used abroad for fraudulent purposes, foreigners are warned to require evidence that the person producing a certificate is really the person named in the certificate. 3. That the age up to which it shall be an offence to have or attempt to have carnal knowledge of, or to indecently assault a girl, be raised from thirteen to sixteen. 4. That the age of unlawful abduction (24 and 25 Vic. c. 100, s. 55), with intent to have carnal knowledge unlawfully be raised from sixteen to twenty-one. 5. That it shall be a misdemeanour for any person to receive into any house or into or on to any premises occupied or possessed by him, or of which he has the management or control, any girl under the age of sixteen years for the purpose of her having unlawful sexual intercourse with any person, whether such intercourse is intended with any particular man, or generally. 6. That a police magistrate shall have power, on application of a police inspector, and on his affidavit that he has reason to believe that some girl has been so received and is then in such house or premises, to grant a warrant to

such inspector to search the house or premises and to bring before him any person offending as aforesaid, and also the girl, and if the magistrate shall commit any person for trial for such offence, he may also bind over the girl to appear as a witness on such trial. 7. That the soliciting of prostitution in the public streets be made an offence, and the police authorised to act accordingly, without proof that it is done "to the annoyance of inhabitants or passengers." 8. That the police be authorised to make applications under the Industrial Schools Amendment Act, 1880, as to the children therein mentioned; and that any magistrate before whom a girl under the age of sixteen is convicted of soliciting prostitution, may, if it shall appear that she has no friends able to provide a suitable home for her, remit her to a refuge or industrial home until she attains the age of sixteen. 9. That the court or magistrate may direct any charge, trial, or application, under Nos. 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8, to be heard in private.

In May, 1883, the first effort was made to carry out these recommendations, Lord Rosebery introducing the first Criminal Law Amendment Bill into the House of Lords. It passed that House, but it failed to pass in the Commons. In 1884 the Bill was re-introduced into the House of Lords by Lord Dalhousie, and was again passed and sent down to the Commons. Again, however, it was sacrificed to the exigencies of party conflict. In 1885 the Bill was again passed in the House of Lords, with this important difference, however, that the age of consent was lowered to fifteen. The second reading was moved by the Home Secretary, Sir Wm. Harcourt, on the eve of the Whitsuntide recess. So great was the interest manifested in the measure that only twenty members of Parliament were present to hear his speech. Mr. Cavendish Bentinck talked the Bill out, and everybody believed that its fate was sealed for that Session. This seemed to become an absolute certainty when a change of Government occurred, and the whole programme of business was changed. An unexpected

factor at this point entered into the case. Mr. W. T. Stead, the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, with several coadjutors, made a special inquiry into the condition of things which prevailed in London as to the ruin of young girls. This inquiry was commenced as soon as the Criminal Law Amendment Bill had been talked out; and in July a series of articles appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* which created an almost unparalleled sensation both in London and the provinces. These articles laid bare with unshrinking hand the awful immorality of the metropolis, and constituted a revelation of fiendish lust and cruelty which appalled the nation. Mr. Stead has been severely censured for his action, and also prosecuted by the Government for the abduction of a girl named Eliza Armstrong, who was procured by an agent whom he employed. Mr. Stead probably did some things which were not wise, though nobody has imputed to him anything in the nature of criminality. It is admitted that he acted in the most heroic manner, that he displayed a self-sacrifice such as is rarely seen, and that he undertook the cause of English children when they had no protector. Yet this man, whose only fault is that he has thrown light upon the doings of high-placed libertines, is prosecuted, by the Government of England, be it understood, whilst the men who commit these crimes against childhood, and who are perfectly well known to the Government, are allowed to go scot free. It will probably prove, however, that the prosecution of Mr. Stead, like the exclusion of Mr. Stansfeld from the Government, will do more to advance the cause of moral reform than years of agitation could have done.

It should be remembered, in judging of Mr. Stead's action, that Parliament was largely implicated in the crimes which he brought to light. Many of the most prominent men in both parties were notorious for their immoral lives. They were known to be constant visitors at fashionable brothels. How could such men be expected to lift a finger in behalf of an amendment of

the law! The police again, were, and are, in league with the purveyors of vice. Not only common policemen, but inspectors and high-placed officers in the force, are in the pay of the keepers of bawdy houses. This was clearly brought out in the case of the notorious Mrs. Jeffries, who keeps something like a dozen aristocratic brothels in the south-west of London, and who was prosecuted and tried before the Middlesex magistrates. "Tried," we observed, but she was not tried, as the trial was the merest farce, the whole thing having been arranged beforehand by the judge and the counsel in private. An inspector of police in Chelsea, Mr. J. Minahan, who refused to take the bribes of Mrs. Jeffries, and who reported to his superiors as to her proceedings, was virtually driven out of the force, and although efforts were made to obtain redress in his case they all failed. This is only one instance out of many that could be adduced in order to show that the police as a body are in league with criminals of this particular kind. It is not at all an uncommon thing in London for an ordinary policeman to receive as much as thirty shillings per week from a brothel keeper. It was useless, therefore, to expect any help from the police in unearthing the persons who were destroying our English girls by the hundred. Again, the Press of the nation was utterly dumb on this question. We often boast as a nation of the freedom and independence of our Press. It is to be feared, however, that the Press is, in regard to certain subjects, and these subjects of the greatest importance, enslaved by the power of wealth and by social influences. At any rate, it is a palpable fact that many of our most influential papers, in fact all of them, resolutely ignore questions of most vital moment. No one who has tried to do a good work, and especially to secure redress for an injured person or class, will need to be told that it is about the most difficult thing in the world to induce an editor of an influential paper to allow

anything to appear on the subject. The Press as a whole, goes in for what is popular and will pay. Questions of principle and moral considerations are set aside as impracticable, while expediency and safety are regarded as of chief importance. The average editor conducts his paper on exactly the same principle as a theatre is conducted by its manager. The question with him is, "What will pay? what will increase my circulation?"

With certain facts that have recently transpired in mind, it is somewhat difficult to go into ecstasies over the freedom and independence of the British Press. Perhaps, after all, it would be just as well to confess the truth of the matter, and to recognise that a free Press, that is, a Press free to support right and justice, is a huge fiction. The Press did next to nothing to amend the law for the protection of young girls: the Press has opposed rather than helped the movement for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts; the Press supports the vested interests of the liquor traffickers; the Press refused to assist Inspector Minahan to secure an inquiry into his case; the Press declined to exert its influence in the Poole perjury case, where another man of whose innocence there can be no doubt was sentenced to penal servitude; and the Press so far from supporting the cause of Mr. Stead, was unsparing in its censures, and in many cases the most odious motives were imputed to Mr. Stead, and attempts were made to bring him into contempt. Doubtless, journalistic jealousies had something to do with this, but men who could act from such motives as petty spite, and who are capable of showing such malignity as was manifested in regard to this matter, must not be surprised if their claim to be considered as free and independent is denied. The simple fact of the matter is, that many journalists, like politicians and policemen, are the hired instruments of men of wealth and position, who manipulate the Press in order to promote their own interests and secure their own safety. Mr. Stead proved, at any rate, that there was one journal that was free and independent, and one journalist

who dared to defy all the wealth and authority and rank of London. It is sought to make him suffer for his bold action in defying these powers. The prosecution which has been instituted against him is simply a conspiracy on the part of the West End aristocracy to crush him, and to this conspiracy the Government have lent themselves. In the result, however, it will be seen that there is a moral sense in the English people, and a power in Christian public opinion which will prove too much even for the money and the influence of the West End.

Mr. Gladstone's Government is clearly open to the charge of having been indifferent to this great moral question; we owe no thanks to them for the progress which has been made, for every inch of that progress has been won from them by stern conflict. They have rather been the opponents than the promoters of moral reform. The silence which was observed by Mr. Gladstone during the whole of the discussion of the Criminal Law Amendment Act was very significant, and some people did not hesitate to place upon it a very sinister interpretation. The man who aroused the English nation in regard to the Bulgarian atrocities had nothing to say about the worse atrocities committed on English girls in London. What is true of Mr. Gladstone is equally true of the other members of his Government. They stand before the country as men who stood idly by and refused to give their powerful aid to men and women who were fighting in the cause of purity and justice. Perhaps the saddest fact relating to our moral condition in England to-day is that we cannot count upon the help of our leading statesmen in the work of reformation.

The two questions we have referred to are doubtless the most important of those which have been neglected. There are, however, many others of minor importance. Amongst these is the question of Disestablishment, or the removal of the inequality and injustice which are inflicted upon Nonconformists by the existence of a State Church. Some, of course, say that this is not within the region of practical politics, but it is probable that the people of

England will bring it into that region within a year or two. Statesmen always say of a question with which they do not wish to deal that it is not within the realm of practical politics. The great mass of the people, both on this and some other subjects, have had their minds pretty fully made up for some years, but have not had the power to make their will felt. Now that they have got that power, they will use it with effect. Another subject of the greatest gravity and urgency, which has been played with by the late Government, is the land question, which is in reality a matter of life and death to the people of this country. Mr. Gladstone said, in his eighth Midlothian speech, "Our Parliaments have been too much landlords' Parliaments;" and this was true of the Parliament which has just passed away. Equally true is it that even Mr. Gladstone had not the courage to boldly attack the power of the landlords of Great Britain. The Agricultural Holdings Act, which he passed for England and Scotland, were wholly inadequate to the needs of the situation, and they have proved to be far more in the interest of the landlord than in the interest of the tenant. The Scotch Act, moreover, was so drawn that it could not apply to existing leases, the effect of which was that the men who most needed relief and were most deserving of it derived no benefit whatever from the Act. Some most grievous cases of eviction have occurred in Scotland, the landlord confiscating the tenant's capital simply because the tenant was unable to take advantage of the small measure of relief which would have been given to him by the Agricultural Holdings Acts. When the Bill was before Parliament, Mr. Jas. Howard, M.P., specially requested Mr. Gladstone to insert a provision making it applicable to current leases; but Mr. Gladstone, acting on the advice of Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, refused to listen to the proposal. And on what ground? Simply on the ground that it would be an interference with freedom of contract; the real fact of the matter being that, as between landlord and tenant in Great Britain, there never has been any free-

dom of contract. Mr. Gladstone sits for Midlothian, an agricultural county, and the bulk of his constituents are farmers, and yet he declines to give to the struggling farmers of Scotland who have entered upon leases any relief whatever. If the farmers of Midlothian know their own interests they will not again return Mr. Gladstone until they have secured from him most distinct pledges as to his future action. He has given to the Irish tenants the three "F's"—fixity of tenure, fair rents, and free sale. All these tenants are under the protection of a Land Court. The same thing will have to be done for the farmers of England and Scotland before they get any real relief; and yet what has been given to rebellion and sedition in Ireland is likely to be for years denied to the long-suffering and law-abiding farmers of Great Britain, unless they show more spirit than they have hitherto done, and combine for the protection of their own interests. One good measure passed by the late Government was the Hares and Rabbits Bill, which was distinctly an advantage to the tenant. After all, however, it was but a small thing, although from the way in which the Liberals take praise to themselves for doing it, one might imagine that it was the greatest measure of land reform that the world had ever heard of. Speaking generally and with regard to truth, it must be stated that land reform, so far as regards Great Britain at any rate, is one of the vital questions which were neglected by the Gladstone Government. Other matters which have been neglected are the House of Lords, which did more to thwart the efforts of Mr. Gladstone than anything besides, and towards which he yet displays such a tender regard; and the raising of the Indian revenue from an immoral traffic in opium. On these, however, and some other matters we cannot dwell. To sum up the matter under this head, we may say, in language used by Mr. Gladstone five years ago: "What we complain of, notwithstanding, is this—that the greatest subjects of legislation have been allowed to fall into terrible arrear. We are all conscious of it, conscious of it in England, and conscious of it even more, but

equally conscious of it in Scotland." (The Scotch farmers will feel the force of this.)

Again, to use other words of Mr. Gladstone: "I point to the state of our legislation, our accumulated and accumulating arrears constantly growing upon us; I point to the multitude of unsolved problems of our Government." Mr. Gladstone once made the following statement in regard to Sir Stafford Northcote:—"If you want to find intelligent, clear, equitable, satisfactory accounts of the true principles of English policy; not, perhaps, upon all questions which touch us as Liberals, but yet generally—you will be able to find almost all these things admirably set forth in different speeches or writings of Sir Stafford Northcote. I have only one complaint to make, and that is, that when the time comes for putting these declarations to the proof, he entirely forgets that he has made them, and he travels in exactly the opposite direction with the same apparent comfort and self-satisfaction, as I own I could better understand in more stupid and less intelligent men." May we not say of Mr. Gladstone himself very much the same thing? When we look at the declarations of his Midlothian speeches, and consider what opportunities he had for making them good, and when we see him travelling in precisely the opposite direction, if not with comfort and self-satisfaction, yet at any rate without any apparent compunction of conscience, we are perplexed and disappointed beyond measure. With another extract from the sixth Midlothian speech, which was spoken in relation to the Beaconsfield Government, but which is equally applicable to the late Gladstone Government, we close this chapter:—"We think that the last six years have been singularly inefficient in the work of domestic legislation. There never was a Government which had greater advantages from the compactness and the docility of the majority in the House of Commons by which it has been supported, and notwithstanding that great advantage very little progress has been made. With Scotch questions almost no progress has been made."

CHAPTER VIII.

The Future of the Liberal Party.

When Mr. Gladstone started for his cruise in Norway, the *Times* said that Sir Thomas Brassey's yacht the *Sunbeam* carried with it the fortunes of the Liberal party; the meaning of course being that the fortunes of the Liberal party are in the hands of Mr. Gladstone. There may be a sense in which this is true; but just as certainly there is a sense in which it is not true. The Liberal party is greater than any one man, and is not dependent upon any one man, however great he may be. Nothing is more remarkable in the present electoral contest than the decline of Mr. Gladstone's influence. That he is still a power no one will deny, but that his power is beginning to decline, and has already declined very considerably, no one can dispute who carefully weighs certain tendencies of the times. Mr. Chamberlain has a firmer hold upon the mind of the English electorate than Mr. Gladstone has. The speeches of Mr. Chamberlain attract even more attention than those of his nominal leader. One significant fact is that every Tory speaker in the land instinctively turns to Mr. Chamberlain, and pays him the compliment of criticising his speeches, and not unfrequently of traducing his character. All this shows that the centre of power has shifted. Mr. Gladstone must decrease; Mr. Chamberlain must increase. Lord Hartington has almost dropped out of notice, and certainly he is in no sense of the word a true leader of the Liberal party. The Radical section of the party is surely acquiring ascendancy, and it is not improbable that in the immediate future the Whigs and the Tories will find it needful to coalesce in defence of the citadel of Privilege against the growing power of the Radical party, whose ultimate aim is to secure for the

people their Rights. For the present Mr. Gladstone holds the Whigs and the Radicals together in a hollow and unreal unity. This show of unity is kept up for party purposes, until the election is over. When it is over, and Mr. Gladstone retires, we shall then see a break up of parties, and witness some extraordinary coalitions.

It is a remarkable fact that Mr. Gladstone's Manifesto, issued a few weeks ago, has produced a surprisingly small effect upon the Liberal party and the nation. This is not to be wondered at, for a more vague and indefinite election address was never issued. The only thing clear about it is that it was written to meet party exigencies rather than to serve the highest interests of the nation. It is precisely the kind of declaration that we might expect from a time-serving politician, but not at all the kind of declaration we should look for from a statesman who has the reputation of being profoundly in earnest, and of placing moral considerations in the foreground. The impression left upon the mind by his Manifesto is that his only anxiety in writing it was to avoid every question which deeply stirs the heart of the nation. Really vital matters are either altogether ignored, or else they are touched in the most incidental fashion. How different is this from what occurred five years ago, when Mr. Gladstone went forth with almost irresistible might to expound great principles, to deal with living issues, and to appeal to the nation on the highest moral grounds. Then he had a noble cause, and into the advocacy of that cause he threw his whole heart; now his cause is the trumpery project of securing a hollow and temporary union amongst Liberals; and there is nothing in this to call forth the fire and energy which still slumber in Mr. Gladstone's nature in spite of the snows of age. His Manifesto is without spirit and, therefore it will dispirit, and not inspirit, his followers. The four subjects placed before the nation in this programme are—reform of procedure in the House of Commons; Local Government, the Land Question, and the

registration of voters. This is Mr. Gladstone's programme! Was ever such a meagre and feeble Manifesto put forth by a powerful statesman at a grave juncture of a nation's history? If this were all we had to work for, we might almost as well fold our arms and sit down. No doubt it will be said that it is unreasonable to expect a man of seventy-five to grapple with really vital and difficult questions, or either to feel enthusiasm himself or inspire his followers with it. Mr. Gladstone, indeed, excuses himself from dealing with the more serious subjects affecting the nation's well-being on the ground that "the law of nature at my time of life dispenses me from doing it." To which the natural and obvious reply is that this same law of nature ought to convince him of the propriety of laying down a work to which he is no longer equal.

The most disappointing parts of this Manifesto are those which lightly touch on the very subjects which ought to have been made most conspicuous. Take, for instance, the liquor traffic. There are two references in the Manifesto to this question, though these two are really only one, inasmuch as in both places it is merely stated that the liquor traffic should be dealt with as an incident of Local Government. Not a word to indicate that this subject is one of paramount importance and of pressing urgency. This, of course,, would not be "statesmanlike." A man whose soul is fired with indignation when he sees myriads of his countrymen slain, ruined, and rendered miserable by drink, and who resolves to do his utmost to rid the nation of this legalised iniquity, is not "a statesman." This is the pernicious notion which has been inculcated by party hacks, and which many well-meaning people have come to believe. Five years ago Mr. Gladstone promised in Midlothian that this question should be earnestly dealt with; but the five years have passed away without his having made one serious attempt to deal with it. Now he makes no promise to deal with it at all, except as a detail of the reform of Local Government. There is not a word

in this Manifesto about the Housing of the Poor, nor about the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts; indeed, subjects which may be called moral and social, rather than distinctly political, are passed over. This is, of course, nothing new; it is merely a repetition of what has been. But there is a new spirit in the air now, and some people were sanguine enough to hope that Mr. Gladstone, in the last great Manifesto that he will ever address to the British nation, would recognise this fact and would rise above the sordid ideals of the party politician. They have been disappointed. Mr. Gladstone has simply shown that he is bound by the old bad traditions of the past; that he is either unable or unwilling to project himself into the future; that the utmost that can be expected from him is a policy which will tide over the difficulties of the present. During the Midlothian campaign Mr. Gladstone had much to say about the gravity of the crisis upon which the nation was entering. If matters were critical then, they are much more critical now. Since then two millions of English citizens have been enfranchised, and for the first time the whole householders of England are about to record their votes. We may, therefore, say, putting even more emphasis into the words than Mr. Gladstone did when he uttered them, that "the present is the most important crisis in our national history that has occurred during the last half-century."

So much for Mr. Gladstone's programme. Now a word about the "Radical Programme." A book bearing this title was published a short time ago, to which Mr. Chamberlain wrote a preface, and by so doing gave it his imprimatur. This may, therefore, be regarded as being, in some authoritative sense, the programme of the Radical party. The chief items in this programme are Disestablishment, the abolition of hereditary legislators, free education, land reform, the reform of our system of taxation, the better housing of the poor, and sweeping changes in our system of local government in the direction of giving Home Rule both to this

country and to Ireland. Of this programme it may be said that there is much more in it to arouse enthusiasm than in that of Mr. Gladstone. Indeed, if there were added to it a proposal to give the people of England a direct veto on the liquor traffic, and to sweep away such measures as the Contagious Diseases Acts, and the opium revenue in India, it would fairly meet all the demands that are being made not merely by Radicals but by Temperance men, and by social and moral reformers. The liquor traffic is undoubtedly the most urgent of all these questions. The land question is next in urgency, and religious equality is next to that. If these subjects were thoroughly dealt with in the spirit of true Radical reform there could be no manner of doubt that the position of the Radical party would be paramount for many years to come.

What is chiefly wanted, however, in this country is a new party—a party which will take its principles from, and base its action upon, the New Testament. We want not merely Radicals, but Christian Radicals—men who will do justice and love mercy, who will set their face against all vice and iniquity, who will be the friends of the oppressed and downtrodden, who will support every Government in the right and oppose every Government that goes wrong. We have pointed out in this work what we regard as the mistakes and the wrong-doings of the late Government. The question we now have to ask is this: How can future Governments be so checked in their action as to avoid similar errors being made? If a Government so good did so much that was evil, what may we expect from a Government not so good? The remedy for all this is a Christian Democracy, a Democracy based on love, truth, and justice. Let no man sneer at the use of the word Christian in this connection. Whatever others may say, we do not believe that the English people are anti-Christian. That they reject the Christianity of the Churches, which is mainly a jumble of tradition and creeds and priestcraft, is so much the more to their credit. We reject it, too; but do the English

people reject the Christianity of the Sermon on the Mount, or of Romans xii., or of 1 Corinthians xiii.? We contend that they do not, and therefore say, "Let us base our Democracy upon the Sermon on the Mount." That will win. Our conviction is that the time has come for a new departure in politics. In these days good men who desire reform should be neither Tories nor Liberals, but Christian Democrats. Their aim should be to secure the application of Christian principles to the solution of political and social problems. Christianity is essentially a Democratic system. The New Testament is the most Democratic book in the world. There never was such a reformer as Jesus of Nazareth. No person who truly follows that Working Man can be the friend of privilege against right; he must be the helper of the poor and needy.

What we need perhaps most of all is to insist upon having men of clean character in public offices. Every candidate who seeks the suffrages of a constituency, and who is known to be loose in his morals and depraved in his habits should be sent to Coventry. Even the *Edinburgh Review* has at last got a faint glimmer of this truth, for it says:—"Never was there a moment when it was more desirable to send the House of Commons men of character, principle, and independence. Their personal qualities are of even more moment than their political opinions. We want men of higher gifts and a nobler spirit than a mere servile adherence to party organisation; for upon the choice of the representatives of the people in this next Parliament depend in no small degree, the welfare, the security, and the honour of the nation." We must have done with the silly notion that the public have nothing to do with the private lives of the men who serve them. A man whose private life is bad can never be good in his public life. Such a man will not support the reforms which are most needed. We must make the tree good if we want the fruit to be good, and the House of Commons must consist of decent moral men before we can expect it to sympathise with moral

movements. Perhaps the future of the nation will depend more upon this one thing, upon sending morally-qualified men into Parliament, than upon any other thing besides. On the same ground a strong argument may be based for the abolition of the House of Lords. It is well known that many of the members of that House are among the most profligate men of the country, and yet they are life legislators. They have a perpetual right to make laws for the government of this country. Such a monstrous anomaly is too ridiculous to last much longer. Every Christian citizen ought, in this crisis of our history, to put moral considerations into the foreground. Whatever becomes of his party, let him vote for the principles, which, as a follower of Christ, he professes to hold dearer than anything besides. The Christian electors of Great Britain can work their will. They are so powerful that no party could thwart their wishes if they are only true to themselves and their Lord. If they like to form a party—a Christian party—it will be the dominating party in this country. It follows that, if they refuse to do this, if they support partisans rather than principles, upon them will rest the responsibility for what may be done by the Legislature in the name of the English people.

Finally, we would remind the people of England that this election is an appeal to them ; that they are asked not only to send certain men to the future Parliament, but to pass judgment upon the men who served them in the last. We may say to them, in the words of Mr. Gladstone : "It is no longer the Government with which you have to deal. You have to deal with the majority of the House of Commons. The majority of the House of Commons has completely acquitted the Government." Mr. Gladstone said, five years ago : "I rejoice that now we have another tribunal to appeal to—a tribunal, I think I will venture to say, of larger hearts and larger minds—a tribunal from which I expect more solid and more intelligent judgment than we have been able to get out of the

Parliament that is now expiring, misguided as it has been by the influence of the Administration. Gentlemen, the Ministers now come before you, and they bring their titles in their hands. What are those titles? Neglected and stagnant legislation; confused and broken-down finances; the law of Europe in several instances, as I have shown, trodden under foot—even the statute law of this country, as I think we have proved in Parliament, set at naught by the high-handed action of the Government. We have found these things in their action at home—what have we found abroad? We have found wars stirred in three quarters of the globe, every one of which I am firmly convinced might have been prevented had there been but common prudence, had there been but a spice of moderation, had there been——but I am here now upon an altered ground; I am no longer to impeach the Government. I am to impeach the majority of the House of Commons--and not the majority as an abstraction, but the majority in the individual men of whom it is made up. The work done by the Government is now their work; it is now the work of the individual men who were their supporters; and I must say here, in justice to the Government, that I have not known a single occasion on which they have been checked in their unwise career by that majority." We do not know whether Mr. Gladstone will experience a similar joy now that the nation is to be asked to pass its verdict upon his action instead of that of Lord Beaconsfield; but whatever may be his feelings, those who take a reasonable and truthful view of these subjects will experience as much delight now as he did in 1880, that the nation is to be appealed to. Until that appeal has been made and answered, the nation cannot be said to have endorsed the action of the late Government and, therefore, it cannot be held responsible. To use Mr. Gladstone's words in regard to Lord Beaconsfield's Government: "The nation, therefore, is not yet responsible. If faith has been broken; if blood has been

needlessly shed; if the name of England has been discredited and lowered from that lofty standard which it ought to exhibit to the whole world; if the country has been needlessly distressed; if finance has been thrown into confusion; if the foundations of the Indian Empire have been impaired;—all these things as yet are the work of an Administration and a Parliament; but the day is coming, and is near at hand, when that event will take place which will lead the historian to declare whether or not they are the work, not of an Administration and not of a Parliament, but the work of a great and a free people. If this great and free and powerful people is disposed to associate itself with such transactions; if it is disposed to assume upon itself what some of us would call the guilt, and many of us must declare to be the heavy burden, of all those events that have been passing before our eyes;—it rests with them to do it." At present, the responsibility for all these doings rests upon the House of Commons, from which, to use another phrase of Mr. Gladstone's in regard to the previous Parliament, Ministers have derived "their worst inspirations," so that the House of Commons "has not been as it ought to be—a control upon the executive for the people." By their action, therefore, at this election, the electors will either condone or condemn the action of the late House of Commons and the late Government. How to condemn it without exiling the Liberal party from power is, perhaps, a difficult question to answer; but, at any rate, it is quite possible, by free expression of opinion in our election meetings, and by electors making known their views to their representatives, to make it clear to the Liberal leaders that profound dissatisfaction and disappointment exist over their doings during the last five years, and that the repetition of such doings would simply be disastrous to the Liberal party, as it would alienate the bulk of its warmest supporters. For the cause of real reform, and especially of real moral reform, it would be disastrous to the best interests of the nation that the Tories should be

returned to power. The only hope for the cause of progress is in a Radical triumph—a triumph of Radicals who base their action on moral and Christian principles. In the words of Mr. Gladstone, and speaking in the name of the people of England, and applying the words to the late Liberal Government, we may say: "It is necessary to frankly avow that we so widely and fundamentally differ from the course pursued by Her Majesty's Government in affairs of vital moment to the country, that we cannot contemplate with satisfaction the longer continuance of that Government in office,"—or, rather, the perpetuation of such a policy as that Government unfortunately pursued.

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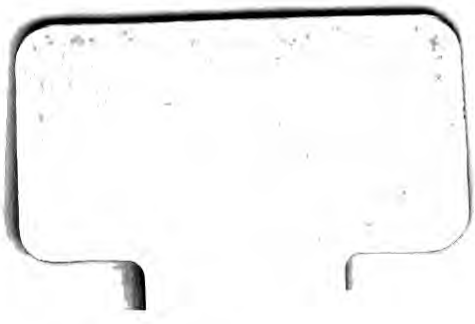
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