

## MR. GLADSTONE'S RETURN TO POWER.

ONCE more the chief of disaffection in Ireland has been enabled, by leaguering himself with a British faction thirsting for revenge and place, to overthrow the Queen's Government, greatly increasing thereby his own power and the perils of the nation. A noble course was open to Mr. Gladstone. Had he put his country above himself and his party, dismissed from his thoughts the means by which Lord Salisbury had obtained power, scorned at least to imitate him in the use of them, refused to see in him anything but the head of the Queen's Government struggling against Disunion, pressed on him the duty of upholding the law in Ireland, and in the performance of that duty given him a hearty support, his own career would have found a truly glorious close, and he would have won a crown of patriotism brighter than any crown which mere success, however brilliant, can bestow. The conduct of the Tories in intriguing with Mr. Parnell had no doubt provoked retaliation; but the revenge would have been as complete as it would have been generous, and in the end might have led back by a nobler path to power. To choose the better part, self-sacrifice was needed; but where will self-sacrifice be found if it is not found in a man loaded with honours, almost worshipped for his virtues, when his country in extreme peril appeals to his devotion? In spite of his professed longings for repose, Mr. Gladstone craves for power, and above all for the opportunity of dealing with the Irish Question, which, as those who follow his fortunes assure him, and as he believes, only his statesmanship can settle, though the wreck of his all-healing Land Acts and of his whole Irish policy lies before him. Past failure he hopes to merge in a splendid achievement. By this lure he is drawn into alliance with an agitator whose imprisonment he with his own lips proclaimed to an applauding multitude at Guildhall, and whom he denounced as marching through rapine to the disintegration of the Empire.

It is evident that as soon as Mr. Gladstone found he had not a majority of his own, he determined to obtain the assistance of Mr. Parnell. Openly and directly this could not be done; but it was allowed to transpire that Mr. Gladstone was prepared to give Ireland a Parliament of her own, and further, that in his opinion it was only through party warfare that Ireland could obtain justice. The uproar which followed extorted from Mr. Gladstone an ambiguous disclaimer. But in the debate on the Address he conveyed to the Parnellites a broad hint that he was their man. The hint was taken; the Parnellite forces passed into the Radical camp; Mr. Gladstone was reinstated in office, and Mr. Parnell ordered his political vassals in Armagh to vote for Mr. Gladstone's candidate. This a German journal, with Teutonic bluntness, calls intrigue. It is, at all events, a startling instance of the influence of party even over minds deemed by all the world the purest and the most exalted; nor has any defeat or loss that England has ever undergone touched the soul of her greatness so nearly as this moral catastrophe. Macaulay's prediction that Mr. Gladstone would, by the stiffness of his Toryism, make himself the most unpopular man in England has been curiously belied; possibly a determination to belie it may have subtly mingled with antagonism to the landed aristocracy, philanthropic ambition, and the other influences which have turned the Tory late in life into the most unlimited, if not the most extreme, of Radicals, and left of his old Conservatism only a sufficient trace to render him an inestimable deodorizer and stalking-horse for Revolution. Completely loosened from his moorings, he floats from one advanced position to another on the everflowing tide of his rhetoric, and to his progress, unless Nature ends it, there is no apparent end. He now takes office on the platform of agrarian Socialism, embodied in Mr. Collings's motion, as well as on that of Home Rule. Instead of being the most unpopular man in England on account of the stiffness of his Toryism, he is idolized by the multitude as the angel of boundless change, yet is in danger of leaving his name written not in letters of light on one of the most disastrous and shameful pages of his country's history.

The Cabinet which Mr. Gladstone has formed appears to be pronounced by candid critics as strong as his materials could permit. But there can be no doubt as to its Radical character. The seceding Liberals—the name Whig is now utterly obsolete and senseless—such as Lord Hartington, Mr. Goschen, Lord Selbourne, Sir Henry James, and Mr. Courtney, are men of principle, whose refusal to join the Government is full of significance. The Liberals who remain are for the most part either men notoriously desirous of office or, like Lord Spencer and Lord Granville, personal friends of Mr. Gladstone, and especially under his influence. The following, by whose wishes the policy of the chiefs must be determined, is mainly Radical and Parnellite; perhaps it may become exclusively so when the situation is defined and the policy of the Government is disclosed, though there are Liberals who cling tenaciously to the party, hoping, now surely against

hope, that they may yet succeed in modifying its course. Agrarian Socialism has a distinct representative among the holders of minor office in Mr. Jesse Collings, on whose amendment in favour of compulsory allotments the party rode into power. Mr. Parnell has wisely refrained from taking the Irish Secretaryship in his own name, but he has taken it under the name of Mr. John Morley, of whose unswerving fidelity to his cause and constant zeal in furthering his designs he has received, as he gratefully acknowledges, conclusive proof. From the outset Mr. Morley's skilful pen and eloquent tongue have been assiduously and effectively employed in the service of Irish disaffection. He vied with the rebel press and platform in the bitterness of his attacks on Mr. Forster when the representative of the national Government was struggling not only with the domestic, but with the foreign enemies of the nation. In stating the case between England and Ireland, his sole aim apparently has been to justify disaffection by an exaggerated statement of Irish wrongs, while he must well have known both what efforts British statesmanship has been making during the last fifty years, and the inability of any statesmanship to cure evils which arise from the reckless multiplication of the people on a niggard soil, from defects of Irish character, which are the same on both sides of the Atlantic, or from the paralyzing influence of the Roman Catholic religion. If among fair-minded Americans, or fair-minded foreigners anywhere, there is any feeling against Great Britain or sympathy with Irish Secessionism, to the utterances of Mr. Morley and his political partner, Mr. Chamberlain, it is mainly due. Mr. Morley now says that the loss of Ireland would be a disaster and a disgrace; but all that could be done to make such disaster and disgrace possible he and his associates have done. To the Loyalists of Ireland the appointment is almost hostile; for they have been treated by Mr. Morley with a contemptuous aversion, which perhaps Agnostic dislike of their Protestantism conspired with political antipathy to produce. It is curious and instructive to see the Nationalist Archbishop Walsh, when he sees Mr. Morley coming, stand with arms half-extended, doubtful whether he ought to embrace the Nationalist or to recoil from the Agnostic. He is destined, perhaps, if Disunion gains the day, to experience the same embarrassment on a larger scale. The extirpation of Protestantism from the Isle of Saints, which Roman organs are beginning to proclaim as the happy sequel of Separation, has on memorable occasions proved a programme, in spite of the disparity of numbers, not easy of fulfilment; but should it be fulfilled his Grace the Archbishop may chance to find himself in the arms not of Ultramontane Ascendency, but of the Red Republic. Of this the Pope himself, a cool-headed Italian statesman, appears to be not unaware.

Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy is announced as Social Order, Land Reform, and Self-government. Mr. Trevelyan, however, declares, apparently in the name of his chief, that there is no use in coercion. Does he pretend that there is no use in asserting the supremacy of law over lawless terrorism, or that Government is not bound, above and before all things, to afford protection to the lives, property, and liberty of its loyal citizens? Mr. Parnell would turn out the Ministry if it dared to do its first duty to Ireland; that is what Mr. Trevelyan means; and this is the depth to which from its height of majesty British government has fallen. The land reform will probably prove to be a scheme for buying out the landlords, the Land Act having done nothing, as might easily have been predicted, but whet the appetite for agrarian spoliation. It is to be tacked, we are told, to a measure of Home Rule, so that the Peers will be obliged to pass the measure of Home Rule if they wish to get anything for their Irish land. The estimate of patrician patriotism which this manoeuvre implies is, unhappily, not belied by experience: ill-starred is the nation which has to rely for its preservation from Dismemberment on the self-sacrificing constancy of a body of men nursed not in labour and duty, but in idleness and pleasure. It remains, however, to be seen whether the people of England and Scotland will allow thirty millions to be added to their burdens at a time of commercial distress for the purpose of paying blackmail to disaffection, with the certainty, established by the experience of the past, that the result, instead of gratitude, will be increased hatred and more savage abuse. All bribes will go, and with justice, to the credit of Mr. Parnell; all political concessions will become leverage for Separation, which, with the destruction of British power, is his constant and avowed aim. Nor is there any hope of improving by political or agrarian change the condition of a country in which terrorism paralyzes the hand of lawful industry, in which no contract is binding, in which no investment can be made. In propounding his new scheme Mr. Gladstone will confess the failure of his former legislation, of the sovereign efficacy of which he has hitherto admitted no doubt.

From the language of the most powerful and respectable organ of the party, it appears that the Conservatives are now conscious that by their