

BOOK
VIII.

1880.

sincerity. A motion for local option was carried by 229 to 208, both Mr. Gladstone and Lord Hartington in the minority. On a motion about clerical restrictions, only a strong and conciliatory appeal from the prime minister averted defeat. A more remarkable demonstration soon followed. The Prince Imperial, unfortunate son of unfortunate sire, who had undergone his famous baptism of fire in the first reverses among the Vosges in the Franco-German war of 1870, was killed in our war in Zululand. Parliament was asked to sanction a vote of money for a memorial of him in the Abbey. A radical member brought forward a motion against it. Both Mr. Gladstone and Sir Stafford Northcote resisted him, yet by a considerable majority the radical carried his point. The feeling was so strong among the ministerialists, that notwithstanding Mr. Gladstone's earnest exhortation, they voted almost to a man against him, and he only carried into the lobby ten official votes on the treasury bench.

The great case in which the government were taken to have missed the import of the election was the failure to recall Sir Bartle Frere from South Africa. Of this I shall have enough to say by and by. Meanwhile it gave an undoubted shock to the confidence of the party, and their energetic remonstrance on this head strained Mr. Gladstone's authority to the uttermost. The Queen complained of the tendency of the House of Commons to trench upon the business of the executive. Mr. Gladstone said in reply generally, that no doubt within the half century 'there had been considerable invasion by the House of Commons of the province assigned by the constitution to the executive,' but he perceived no increase in recent times or in the present House. Then he proceeded (June 8, 1880):—

. . . Your Majesty may possibly have in view the pressure which has been exercised on the present government in the case of Sir Bartle Frere. But apart from the fact that this pressure represents a feeling which extends far beyond the walls of parliament, your Majesty may probably remember that, in the early part of 1835, the House of Commons addressed the crown against the appointment of Lord Londonderry to be ambassador at St. Petersburg, on