

a heaven-born Minister, above criticism; and therefore he judges his performances on their merits, not reckoning in the account the possible value of high moral principles or services in church: and tried by this standard, Mr. Gladstone is found wanting. If the correspondent of the *Globe* were a great merchant he would not, we suppose, condone gross mismanagement of his business by a manager, because this manager was also an excellent and much-respected Sunday school teacher; he would get instead an abler, if less pious, man of business for his service; and in doing so he would not be "insulting the great body of Christian lay-workers." And so with Mr. Smith's animadversions on Mr. Gladstone, and his hope that the business of the nation may never again be entrusted to one who is indeed fitter to be head of the Society of Jesus than of the British Empire.

HE [Mr. Gladstone], says the *Quarterly Review*, will stand out in our annals as the great model for every public man who, in coming times, finds it necessary or expedient to discard by wholesale the doctrines which he has once solemnly advocated, and to adopt a totally new set whenever the shifting wind of popular favour seems to call for it. There is no act of political apostasy which the popular reader of the future will not be able to justify by some precedent in Mr. Gladstone's life. If we wanted to quote specimens of passionate advocacy of old-fashioned Toryism we could not do better than go to Mr. Gladstone's speeches and writings for them. We all remember his devotion to Toryism until he found that the reversion of the leadership of the Tory party could not possibly fall to his lot. We remember his bitter hostility to Lord Palmerston, under whom he served, and how he tried his utmost to weaken Lord Palmerston's Government in the prosecution of the very war which he had helped to bring about, and how he sought to strengthen the hands of Russia. He accused Lord Palmerston of unbridled recklessness and incapacity, and declared that "his sun had set," never to rise again. Then we may further recall the fact that in 1859 Lord Palmerston's sun did rise again; and that he deemed it discreet, for one reason and another, to offer Mr. Gladstone the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer. From that time forth Mr. Gladstone's language in reference to Lord Palmerston was that of extravagant, almost servile eulogy. There are many reasons for believing that in 1859 he was on the eve of joining Lord Derby's Administration, and had it remained in power a few months longer, his Toryism might have been confirmed in him once for all. But Lord Palmerston re-entered the field too soon. Mr. Gladstone turned himself without difficulty from the work of disparaging his chief to that of extolling his very faults. But he is still a Conservative until Oxford rejected him in 1865, and by that time Mr. Disraeli had entrenched himself in too strong a position in the Tory party to be easily dislodged. The death of Lord Palmerston opportunely opened up to an adventurous spirit the prospect of leading the Liberals, and from that time till March, 1886, Mr. Gladstone has been at least true to one party, if not to one cause.

WE are far from implying that Mr. Gladstone is guilty of conscious duplicity or hypocrisy; on the contrary, we believe that his memory is so short, his faith in himself so unbounded, and his judgment so unsound, that he is really incapable of appreciating the equivocalness of the several circumstances in his career traced by the *Quarterly Review*. It is very likely that in each case he conscientiously believed that his sudden conversion to the view that best served his interests was genuine; and that the aces he played on one or two occasions with such effect had, to use the expressive metaphor of Mr. Labouchere, been placed up his sleeve by Providence. But all must admit that the trick he took in 1868, when he trumped Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill with the Irish Church Bill, and so succeeded in ousting his rival, has a very ugly look; and equally so has his present Home Rule scheme, which even *The Spectator*, though in one passage it "cannot profess to understand the rationale of Mr. Gladstone's change of mind, in spite of his 'History of an Idea,'" in another condemns by plain implication as the desperate scheme of an old man in a hurry. The attitude of *The Spectator*, indeed,—its determined opposition to Mr. Gladstone's scheme, its severe condemnation of the methods employed by Mr. Gladstone, and in spite of all, its refusal to condemn Mr. Gladstone himself,—affords a good illustration of the glamour cast over many penetrative and strong minds by the reputation Mr. Gladstone's incessant talk has acquired him; they admit he has done this and that; that this and that was wrong in principle, and highly dangerous to the State; that he profited or was likely to profit by these *tours*;—yet they steadily refuse to pronounce him guilty of the smallest dereliction of duty or principle, or to admit a word against his statesmanship. The truth is, there is not a more dangerous foe to England to-day than William E. Gladstone—whether guilty or not of what is charged against him; and they are the best friends of England who speak plainly in exposure of the great danger that menaces her while Mr. Gladstone remains in public life.

THE London *Advertiser* is of opinion that if Mr. Gladstone had been in office the Russian interference in the Balkans would have been said to be due to that fact; yet, though Lord Salisbury is at the head of affairs, it does not find that he exercises any perceptible influence over the conduct of Russia upon the Eastern Question. In fact, the *Advertiser* is not at all sure that the action of Russia has not been more decided with Lord Salisbury in office than if Mr. Gladstone had continued Prime Minister. Now, this latter supposition we take to be ill-founded. The fact is, England has had no appreciable influence in the matter one way or the other: she has been treated throughout as *une quantité négligeable*, and that is exactly what she has become. But how has this come about—what has destroyed that prestige that once was projected from the British Isles over the whole Continent, and was sufficient, in lending the strength of many battles to the British voice, to at the same time avert all necessity for battles? Is it likely to be the few months of Lord Salisbury's Government, this year and last, or the years of national disgrace and humiliation that preceded it? Plainly to speak, England is indeed in no condition to interfere in the Balkans; and she has been reduced to this powerlessness mainly by Mr. Gladstone, who, not content with isolating his country and estranging her natural allies, to gratify his sentimental predilections, has now ended—(let us hope, he has ended)—by splitting the nation in twain, introducing the weakness of disunion, in pursuance of an ambitious crotchet.

IN the debate on Mr. Parnell's Land Bill, Mr. Morley made use of an argument which sufficiently shows from what impracticable *doctrinaire* minds sprang the Irish Bill of the late Government. If it was true, he said, that the inability of the tenant to pay rent was due to the excessive use of whiskey or subscriptions to the League, it would be easy to insert an amendment requiring the tenant to show a satisfactory cause of his inability to pay rent, rendering dishonesty impossible. Very easy, no doubt, in the imagination of such statesmen, for Irish tenants, in the poverty-stricken condition we are told they are in, to produce their house-keeping books, showing exactly how their revenues are disposed of, and balanced to a penny by the cash on hand.

THE Nationalist Party in Parliament have done their best during the short session just closed to disgust the English people with them, perhaps in the expectation that by so doing they are promoting the removal of the Irish Members from Westminster to Dublin. But the greater likelihood is that an opposite effect will be produced, and the men who are deliberately and treasonably trying to wreck the machinery of the British Government will find themselves not in Dublin, but in some much less pleasant place. They at any rate have not forwarded their cause by their recent tactics, which, if continued, will be likely rather to alienate from them thousands who voted for Gladstonianism in the late election. The present Government bears the mandate of the majority; the majority must rule; but, as Lord Salisbury said at St. Albans on Wednesday, "Irish obstruction is an instrument of torture to compel a majority Government, by mere physical suffering, to concede whatever the obstructionists set their hearts on, and the majority must sit and listen, not to argument or exhortations, but to elaborate efforts to waste time, made merely for the purpose of keeping the majority up night after night in the hope that from sheer fatigue they will concede something which they know public duty compels them to refuse." If, he added, representative government is to continue, this instrument of torture cannot be permitted to survive. It will paralyse all legislation, and bring discredit upon the oldest instrument of freedom in the world. And therefore, we learn elsewhere, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has given notice of the intention of the Government to introduce, early next session, measures for considerable modifications in the present method of conducting public business in the House of Commons. But a preparatory step they will take, we fancy, and that very soon, is the suppression of the National League, without which it is simply useless to try any other measures of amelioration.

MR. PARNELL cannot escape responsibility for the behaviour of his crew by going into hiding and sending his instructions to the House. For a whole week, while his followers were engaged in their parliamentary filibustering, he did not once appear on the scene, apparently supposing, ostrich-like, that the attention of observers would be diverted from him to his puppets, and so he might escape the public disgrace that must attend their antics. But he cannot; any more than he can escape responsibility for the crimes of the National League by telling untruths. And neither can Mr. Gladstone. In abetting these proceedings, though by a furtive support, the Grand Old Man is throwing away the remains of his reputation, and accelerating vastly that declension into powerlessness—though not, we fear, obscurity—which began with his joining the