

see—two high tides in succession without an ebb between them. The tide of 1895 was high; not only is this one higher still, but the individual ripples which go to make it up, and also the total volume of water, are considerably greater: the Government have gained in members, in majorities, in uncontested seats, and in the total mass of their supporters. The Opposition have no longer the consolation of the law of the pendulum: a loss which must be disheartening for them, but which for the nation at large, to whom party government is more important than any party interest, may well seem almost disastrous, since it gives rise to the apprehension that the clock may be about to stop altogether.

This apprehension will not be allayed by an examination into the possible causes which have brought about the present position of affairs. Such an examination is unmistakably called for, and we can but hope most earnestly that it will be undertaken by all thinking members of the Liberal party—the party upon which the responsibility rests—and undertaken in a scientific and dispassionate spirit. The hope is no certainty; it is a faint, or, at best, a trembling hope. We note with dismay that Lord Kimberley, in his speech at Wymondham, delivered on the day after the completion of the Election returns, had apparently no better tactics to recommend than the traditional, gallant, and entirely ruinous method of the frontal attack. "Perseverance," he said, "is a characteristic of Englishmen, and a time will come when the party will regain its position." To believe this is to have learnt nothing; the Liberal party has not been beaten because it did not try hard enough, nor will perseverance in its recent methods lead it anywhere except to fresh disasters. We cannot here undertake to set out the evidence or the reasoning which have brought us to this opinion; we can only state our own view, and leave it to be confirmed or corrected by the investigation for which we plead. We can also suggest the lines upon which such an investigation must, in our belief, proceed, if it is to come to any good result.