

acquiescing, or a few years of agitation will carry the Radicals back to office, with a majority sufficient to enable them to carry out their programme. Does not modern British history point to one or other of these results.

Friends of pure politics will watch with something more than curiosity the course of the Government with respect to the Weldon Bill. It is well understood, it is indeed obvious to everyone who thinks about the matter, that the Bill, in its present shape, or in any shape in which it is possible for a private member to put it, will be practically a dead letter, if passed. The requirement of a deposit of \$500 by the prosecutor who attempts to secure a conviction under its provisions, without any prospect of having his money returned, even when his charge is established, will suffice, in most cases, to secure immunity for the grossest offenders. Very few, even of the staunchest enemies of bribery, can afford to pay five hundred dollars for the sake of securing the punishment of a single offender. No private citizen, or body of citizens, should be required to pay for the enforcement of any criminal law. A great step would have been taken in the direction of the suppression of the bribery which is, in so many cases, the disgrace and bane of our politics, should the Government, as it surely ought to do, assume responsibility for the repayment of the deposit, as soon as the case shall have been established by evidence. But even this arrangement would fall far short of what the Government, if really anxious to suppress immoral practices in elections, should be ready to do. It ought to provide for and support all the legal and judicial measures necessary to the prosecution and punishment of the guilty in every case in which detection is possible. Prosecution in such cases should not be left to the uncertainties of volunteer action, but should be undertaken, by a public officer whose duty it should be to see the law rigidly enforced. Moreover the offence should, in every case of conviction, be treated as criminal and the punishment made to correspond. A very few years of vigorous action along these lines would both reduce corrupt practices to the minimum, and educate the public conscience to see them in their true light, as ruinous to the national character and degrading to true manhood.

Proverbially hard is the lot of the man who comes after the king. When Lord Rosebery succeeded to the premiership of Great Britain, only the most sanguine of his followers could strongly hope that he would succeed in holding together for any considerable time the varied and not very cohesive individuals and groups of individuals who had constituted the somewhat precarious majority of his predecessor. To the main obstacles arising out of any inferiority suggested by the extraordinary personal

qualities of his great predecessor, was added the serious disadvantage of which he was himself fully conscious, in that he had the misfortune to be a member of the Upper Chamber. This last fact carries with it two special disadvantages. It exposes him to the dislike and distrust of those members of his party—by no means few—who are hostile not only to hereditary legislators as such, by reason of their irresponsibility, but to peers and other members of the aristocracy, as members of a privileged class. Worse still, perhaps, for a man of Lord Rosebery's type, it deprives him of the opportunity which leadership in the Commons would give, of bringing to bear the personal magnetism which is so often one of the chief sources of a leader's strength, and which can be exercised to its full effect only in daily personal contact. But whatever the immediate cause or causes, the fact that the new Premier is gradually losing his hold on his slender majority has now become too obvious to admit of doubt, and the probabilities of an early defeat are acknowledged even by members of the Cabinet.

Those who are accustomed to read the speeches of the great English statesmen must have been struck with a singular contrast between those of the present leader of the Government and Mr. Gladstone's, even when both are advocating the same policy. This seems to spring mainly from the point of view of the respective speakers. To what extent the difference explains Lord Rosebery's loss of control over certain individual members of the party it is yet too soon to determine. But the moral plane on which the present leader seems to stand is distinctly less lofty than that to which his great predecessor always rose, whether addressing the House or a public audience. Mr. Gladstone's tone was always that of intense moral earnestness. Every measure was advocated on the highest ground of justice and right. His most strenuous opponents, while admitting the fact and perceiving the great increase of power it gave to his arguments, often sought to account for it on the ground of some special facility possessed by him of convincing himself of the truth of that which he wished to believe, and the justice of that which he found it expedient to advocate. Without entering into the question of the origin of this habit of mind, one can hardly deny that he feels the lack of a similar strength of conscientious conviction in the speeches of Lord Rosebery. We do not mean that he gives any indication of want of honesty or sincerity. Quite the opposite. One cannot suspect him of mere opportunism. Still less has he shown any indication of a disposition to seek to catch the rabble by specious arguments, or appeals to ignorance and passion. But his convictions seem to be political, rather than moral or religious, if we may make such a distinction. While his arguments rise higher than mere expediency

they seem somehow to lack the fire which comes of deep moral purpose, or the loftiness which is the outcome of a profound conviction that they are broad-based on eternal principles. Our reading of the contrast may be wrong but the point seems worthy of study, in relation to the effect of high moral and religious ideas and influences in political campaigns.

The course which the Dominion Government and its supporters are pursuing in regard to the tariff is remarkable, though perhaps not hard to understand. Before and during the last session of Parliament, and during the long recess, it was plainly admitted by the Premier, and less distinctly, perhaps, by the Finance Minister and other members of the Government, that there was throughout the country a real and earnest demand for tariff-reform; that the time had arrived when a revision with a view to a material reduction, was necessary. To this end a semi-ministerial deputation was appointed to visit various parts of the Dominion, inquire into the state of public opinion, and, presumably, to investigate complaints. When Parliament met the budget contained announcements of reductions in numerous articles covering a wide range of imports. True, the lowering of the tariff wall was on the whole much smaller than very many of the consumers, of both political parties, had hoped for. As the Bill introduced was examined it was perceived too that in many cases what had been supposed to be reductions scarcely deserved the name, the change from specific to *ad valorem* methods—also in response to the popular demand—giving rise to a good deal of misconception with regard to the matter and sometimes meaning really increase rather than reduction. On the whole, however, the Bill seemed to promise a considerable measure of relief from tariff burdens and a thrill of satisfaction ran through the country. We ventured on that occasion to intimate our belief that the Government had rightly diagnosed the popular symptoms and had gone so far in supplying the remedy needed by the country that it would, in all probability, regain a good deal of the waning confidence and be rewarded with a new term of office.

But, whether for better or for worse, a great change has come over the spirit, or at least, the policy of the Government. In some cases changes said to be mere corrections of clerical errors have been discovered, nearly or quite all of them, if our memory is not at fault, tending backwards towards the old figures. During the progress of the Bill through Committee, there has been a marked retrograde movement of the same kind, the indications now being that by the time the end shall have been reached, the larger part of the promised and proposed reform, in the direction both of lowered rates and the *ad valorem* system, will have van-