

Hartington as the Leader of the House of Commons, would have been received with heartfelt satisfaction. Supposing that a coalition between men not entirely in accord on all legislative questions had entailed a certain pause in legislative progress, the country could have afforded this much better than it can afford to be left without a strong Executive Government at such a crisis as the present. But you will have learned, long before this reaches you, that our hopes have been disappointed, and that the immediate result of the Unionist victory which has been gained by such desperate efforts is the formation of a pure Tory Government.

It may be wise on the part of the Unionist press here to make the best of this result, and to allow us only to read between the lines its real opinion of the new Government. But the correspondent of a Canadian journal is under no such politic restriction. The dearth of able and trustworthy leaders on the Conservative side has all along been one of the most dangerous features of the situation. The new Government is miserably weak, and will command neither the confidence of the country nor the respect of its enemies. No revelation of a lack of good materials for an administration could be more decisive than the transfer of Lord Iddesleigh, in the last stage of his political existence, to the Foreign Office, in the business of which he has had no experience whatever. It is said by way of apology that Lord Salisbury himself, though he cannot undertake the routine work of the Office, will superintend the management of foreign affairs. This is a proclamation of Lord Iddesleigh's incapacity under another form. Besides, a great department can hardly be dry-nursed in this fashion: it must, after all, depend for its proper management on the efficiency of its own chief. Lord Iddesleigh ought to have been left where he was, as Sir Stafford Northcote, in the leadership of the House of Commons. If he was not strong in that position, he was experienced, prudent, and thoroughly respectable. But he was not violent or unscrupulous enough to suit Lord Randolph Churchill, who accordingly demanded that he should be kicked up-stairs. The moral weakness which lurks beneath Lord Salisbury's high bearing was never more plainly shown than in his compliance with that demand.

The appointment of Lord Iddesleigh to the Foreign Office, however, is satisfactory compared with that of Lord Randolph Churchill to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer and the leadership of the House of Commons. It would be amusing, if the subject were not too serious, to see the contortions with which Unionist journals swallow this most nauseous pill. The *Times* winds up a series of dubitative and balanced periods by saying that "courage and capacity cannot be denied to Lord Randolph Churchill," and that it "ventures to hope that he will not fail to develop the complementary virtues of prudence, steadiness, and caution." A pleasant prospect for the country, if prudence, steadiness, and caution are virtues yet to be developed by the Finance Minister, and the leader of that branch of the Legislature in which all power now resides. No "capacity" has Lord Randolph Churchill yet displayed except for the use of violent and abusive language which disgusts all right-minded men, though it tickles the vulgar partisan. No courage has he yet displayed except that of indulging in safe insult, which is invariably the courage of the coward. In the days when men were called to account for their words his career of vituperation and his course of statesmanship would together have been speedily cut short. Of his sense of honour he has himself given us the measure in his article on "Elijah's Mantle," where he avows his opinion that "discriminations between wholesome and unwholesome victories are idle and unpractical," and that the proper rule is to "obtain the victory, follow it up, and leave the wholesomeness or unwholesomeness to critics." His principles, in short, are those of a political sharper, and his conduct in the intrigue with Parnell and in the infamous Maamtrasna debate shows that he does not hesitate in practice to give them the fullest effect. The present peril, which arises immediately out of the surrender of Lord Salisbury to the Parnellites in the abandonment of the Crimes Act, is in no small measure the work of Lord Randolph Churchill, whose career has been an epitome of all that is lowest and vilest in Party, while his rise, and the means by which he has risen, are fatal proofs of the relation which the party system bears to the real interests of the State. As to his fitness for the special duties belonging to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, it may safely be said that there is hardly a head clerk in any London bank who does not know more about finance and currency than the man who is now Finance Minister of the greatest commercial country in the world. But Lord Randolph's tongue has made him the idol of the Tory music-halls and the Primrose League; and Lord Salisbury has not force enough to withstand an ascendancy which in his soul he must abhor, and to the fatal tendency of which he cannot possibly be blind.

The sole excuse for such a choice is the absence of any fit man; and this is, in part at least, the consequence of Lord Salisbury's want of firm-

ness in permitting Lord Randolph Churchill to clear the Conservative benches of the House of Commons of those who were likely to stand in his own way. Mr. Gibson, as well as Sir Stafford Northcote, was thus relegated to the House of Lords. About the best man left to the Conservatives in the Commons really is Mr. W. H. Smith, who, though not much of a debater, is a wise man of business, and stands as high as possible in point of integrity and honour. Good judges speak of Mr. Raikes as a real source of strength to the party. Mr. Matthews, the new Home Secretary, is raised to that important post at a bound from comparative obscurity, and is called "a dark horse." Unfortunately, he is not so dark but that it seems to be known that he is far from being a man of high character, and equally far from being trustworthy on the question of the Union. He is believed to be the nominee of Lord Randolph Churchill, and, if he is, we have another ground for the fear which is spreading among Liberal Unionists, that perfidy may deprive us of the fruits of the victory which patriotic energy has won.

This is not said from any unwillingness to see the Conservatives at present in power. I am, it is true, a Liberal, and one who cordially accepts democracy, while he wishes, for its own sake, to see it reasonably organized. To aristocracy I am heartily averse, and I have always protested against the introduction of any shadow of it into the more rational, healthier, and happier state of society in which we of the New World live. But I recognize, as I have said before, the truth of Lincoln's saying that you had better not change horses in crossing a stream. When a nation is threatened with dismemberment at the hands of a foreign conspiracy, aided by domestic treason, it must rally round such institutions and authorities as it has, whether they are monarchical, aristocratic, or of any other kind. My efforts, such as they were, in the election were specially directed to the object of inducing Liberal Unionists to vote for Conservative candidates, and I do not overstate my own feeling in saying that I would myself have crossed the Atlantic to give any support in my power to a Tory candidate who was true to the Union. The Conservatives being, as a party, the staunchest upholders of the Union, I should have been very glad to see the Government for some years in their hands, if they had only been led by respectable men, and men capable of affording the country a real and undoubted security against the present peril.

There is in the list of the new Ministers one omission at which on public, though not on personal, grounds all Unionists must rejoice. A more honourable, conscientious, or amiable man than Lord Carnarvon does not breathe. But the fatal weakness which he showed in getting, as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, into equivocal relations with Mr. Parnell, disqualifies him, if not for any such place of trust, certainly for a place in a Government the first duty of which is to combat Mr. Parnell's designs. He ought to have known Mr. Parnell's character well enough to foresee that his confidence would be betrayed as soon as anything was to be gained by betrayal, and that what passed at the interview would be misrepresented, as it was, without scruple. No one did the Unionist cause more mischief than Lord Carnarvon, except Lord Spencer, for whose mysterious collapse those who know him well account by saying that his nerve failed him at last under the extreme strain of his situation, the unspeakable foulness of the calumnies with which he was assailed by Parnell, O'Brien, and their crew, and the treatment which he received from the Conservatives in the fatal Maamtrasna debate. Though a most excellent man, he is not a man of great mental power; and his resolution, which sustained him through the actual conflict, was exhausted at its close.

It appears that Lord Salisbury, who cannot possibly wish to be in the hands in which he now is, offered to Lord Hartington, in perfect good faith and in the most generous manner, not only a fair share of the appointments, but the Premiership itself. Had Lord Hartington embraced that offer he would at once have given the country a strong Executive and obtained a real control over events. The Government would have been practically his. I shall always suspect that his own unambitious and somewhat inert temperament, his exhaustion after the campaign, and possibly even the approach of the Goodwood races, were in part the causes of a refusal which I believe to have been calamitous to the country. It is said that he was also influenced by the counsels of Sir Henry James, who, though he has opposed Mr. Gladstone, is very reluctant to break with him, as though Mr. Gladstone's temper had ever brooked or forgiven opposition. The part which he has now undertaken is one which he will find it very difficult to play. How can he at once sit on the front Opposition bench as a leader of the Liberal Party and share the councils of the Tories? Will he be able, year after year, to induce a section of Liberals to remain isolated from the rest under his individual leadership, for the special purpose of acting as crutch and regulator to a Government in which they are unrepresented? Will he succeed in persuading these gen-