

of a favourable opinion from those whose disregard is most dreaded. In thus strengthening himself, Sir John is seldom able very seriously to weaken the enemy. The changed personal convictions and the new sense of duty implied in these accretions to the forces of the minister are generally confined to a few, and are often deviations from the rising current of public opinion. The recruit who goes into battle for the new cause recognizes the danger he runs, if he takes the trouble to count up the victims of these somewhat miraculous conversions. But Sir John gets the needed accession of strength, his policy is sustained, and his administration continued. The enmities he makes in the collision of political strife are never, on his side, implacable. He must have made it a rule of his public life never to refuse to co-operate with any public man on account of former antagonism; for he has always shown himself ready, if there were a good reason for it, to accept as colleagues men by whom he had been bitterly opposed, and whose hostility he had duly reciprocated. The allegiance borne him by his party is a willing and voluntary allegiance; but, in individual cases, its ardour is often damped, and mutiny threatened in muffled tones to some confidential friend. This usually happens when distance removes the follower from the personal influence of the leader; but a single interview generally converts a rebellious subject into a devoted partisan. The secret of this influence, which is so commanding as to be almost irresistible, is chiefly personal. Sir John's estimate of motives seldom errs by ranking them too high; but there cannot be a doubt that, on the whole, he measures men with a singular degree of accuracy. It has happened scores of times that, in half an hour, he has reclaimed an old friend whose feelings had been almost wholly alienated. By what secret magic did he bring about this result? In most cases, it will be found that he has

promised no part of the patronage which it is in the power of a first minister to bestow. He has removed some misapprehension under which the semi-rebellious subject laboured; he has met every objection with a plausible if not unanswerable reply, and has so managed to get the better of the argument. It has been charged against him that he insinuates promises in so general a way that he can never be called upon to fulfil them; as if the reverse of that which Clarendon said of Lord Falkland were true of him, that "he could as easily have given himself leave to steal as to dissemble, or to suffer any man to think that he would do a thing which he resolved not to do; which he thought a more mischievous kind of lying than a positive averring what could be more easily contradicted." We do not believe that the insinuation, put in this gross form, is true, though it may well be that many have too hastily inferred, without any direct promise, that Sir John would do what they had asked of him. The misapprehension, when such exists, is, we believe, frequently on their side.

The practice of keeping up the strength of his parliamentary following by winning recruits from the enemy, is one that has often shaken, for the moment, the mental fidelity of old friends, though the discontent may not have been translated into any overt act. The new recruits which have so often closed up the shattered ranks of the ministerial party, have not unfrequently been worked upon by the envious as successful rivals for the favour of the distribution of patronage, and they have lamented that their own claims, which they have believed to be paramount and incontrovertible, have been postponed to those of men who, till yesterday, had always been found in the opposite camp. But these complaints, which in a personal view were not altogether without foundation, were almost invariably silenced in the first interview between the