

scene of their former struggles, with their chances of triumph and defeat. Mr. Gladstone may have been passing through this state of mind. Final retirement on account of the infirmities of advancing age can hardly have occurred to him ; for though it is not given to all statesmen to do duty till they reach the age of Palmerston or Thiers, there must be many more years of work in Mr. Gladstone. The current of a man's ambition may change ; but it would be strange if Mr. Gladstone did not continue to find in statesmanship his greatest attraction. If he were convinced that the Conservatives would obtain a firm hold on office, for a period that would outrun the probable activities of his own life, he might not care to spend the rest of his days in an up-hill contest. But to take that view of the situation would imply a despondent condition of mind, which is precisely one to which enfeebled state of body often contributes. After the session is over, Mr. Gladstone may determine to continue the leadership in a more definite way ; and should he do so, no competitor would try to take it from him. The conviction that he is the only man who can keep the Liberal party intact, must have considerable weight in determining his future course.

Mr. Gladstone has been the object of a coarse attack from Mr. Smollet, fitly seconded by Mr. Whalley. The object was to get the House of Commons to censure the suddenness of the late dissolution. The surprise was distasteful alike to friends and foes, but there would have been neither sense nor generosity in censuring the fallen chief ; and if the House had been inclined to do so, Mr. Whalley and his seconder so greatly overdid their part, that they would have turned it from its purpose.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* expresses the opinion that the Established Church of England, which has rendered great services to the Conservative party, "may reasonably look to them for relief from some of the dis-

orders which undoubtedly threaten it with disruption and ultimate extinction." The danger to which the Conservative writer points does not come from the Dissenters and their demands to be allowed, when they bury their dead within the church-yard, to use a service of their own ; it does not lie in the fact that three parties—High Church, Low Church and Broad Church—may each teach different doctrines. This, we are told is strictly legal, but that "it is distinctly not the law, though it is fast becoming the practice, that each of these parties may signify its doctrines by such acts, ceremonies and gestures as it chooses." The violation of the law, here described as becoming general, is represented as enuring exclusively to the benefit of the Ritualists : "They alone can teach through dress, attitude and gesture, since they alone can borrow from the Roman Catholics that vast apparatus of symbolism which is the accumulation of many centuries, during which the Church addressed itself much more to the eye than to the ear." The advantage which the High Church party are getting, through violation of the law, is described as the rock on which the Established Church is splitting. The law and public opinion are said to coincide ; and the conclusion of the writer is, that "nothing is needed but the means of enforcing the law." All this may be true, and still the proposed remedy might not be a safe one : it might and almost certainly would lead to the very disruption it was intended to avert. To the existing law it is admitted some civil penalties would have to be added ; and they would, without being exactly criminal penalties, have to be strong enough to be effectual. Whether the suggestion be put out as a feeler on behalf of the Conservative Government, or whether it be merely intended as an incitement to the legislation recommended, it shows the danger of disruption to be not unreal. The Ritualists have often hinted at secession in the event of their being interfered with ; and if it were a ques-