

longer blowing at Westminster, a frosty calm sets in ; this is looked upon by the weary Government of the day as a time for prolonged morning slumber, and by their opponents as an opportunity for pressing an alternative view upon a public which finds difficulty enough in grasping one aspect of any question. The Englishman, who two years ago or more set out with complete self-confidence upon an apparently simple journey, has been, on the whole, little troubled with the growing indistinctness of his outlook, and has borne some painful stumbles with fortitude, because he believes that he is going straight and has nearly reached his goal. Unfortunately, it is a long time now since he started, and he is not only growing hazy about the object—the exact object—of his journey, but he is also tired enough to feel that he ought by this to be at any rate visibly approaching it. An accident, a collision, unimportant in itself, but occurring at a point where he thought the way was clear, dazes him for the moment with the suggestion that he may be going wrong after all. For no other reason, and from no other point of view than this, can the attack on Benson's column be regarded as a serious disaster. The general showed himself to the last moment of his life to be as cool and skilful as he was heroically brave ; but it is no disparagement of him to deny that he is irreplaceable, and it is the most fitting praise of him to affirm that the honour he gained for our arms and the loss he inflicted on the enemy were well worth buying, even at so dear a price. But the news reached us in the form of a meagre report of a "Reverse," or a "British Disaster," and in the moment of the shock, and the bewilderment caused by it, the Englishman became conscious that he was walking almost in darkness, and that a dozen would-be guides were shouting directions at him from every street corner within hearing.

It is these confusing noises, these clamorous and contradictory warnings, that are the chief danger of the fog. A man may, if he has set out upon a straight road and kept resolutely to it, come safely to his destination through a reek that makes his heart sink and his eyes smart ; but let him stop to doubt, or