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THE TIMES.

Mr. Gladstone has won the most magnificent personal victory on record, I think. When the Bulgarian atrocities first began to be spoken of, he broke upon the public like a vision; he caused a storm of indignant appeal and protest to beat upon the Conservative Cabinet, and compelled Beaconsfield to put away the notion of an active alliance with Turkey. And now, when the time for the elections was at hand, again he came forth to arraign the Government and change the opinion of the nation. It seemed a hopeless task. The enemy was strong, a compact force; Jingoism was fairly hilarious; the people were dazzled with glittering sentences filled with empty promises. But he undertook the work, and has grandly accomplished it. He poured torrents of eloquence upon the people—honest, earnest, straightforward speech—which swept away all opposition, and to-day he is England's great man and ruler, great in intellect, in heart, in moral sense and mental vigour, hated by men of no moral sense and no heart, but loved again with enthusiasm by the common British people, who never wander long from the point of loyalty to an honest and able man.

Apart from the eloquence and moral character of Mr. Gladstone, the Liberal victory would hardly have been won. But other forces were set in motion against the Conservatives. The country was ready to pronounce emphatically for a change of Ministry. This may be accounted for in one of two ways—perhaps both had something to do with it: First of all, the English people like to have periodical changes in the parties who govern them. There is a very popular notion abroad that Whig and Tory should reign by turns, and when a Cabinet has run the full lease of its term, it has to make room for the opposite party. How far this feeling may have operated in this instance, of course, no one can tell, but that it has been a factor in the whole we need not doubt.

But more than a mere desire for change has been in operation to bring about the overthrow of the Conservative Government; the English people have emphatically and unmistakably condemned the policy of Lord Beaconsfield. He had made his appeal to the country on two "Imperial" ideas: the unity of the kingdom and the greatness of the empire, and grandiloquently stated that any change of Ministry would involve the "decomposition of the colonies," and "the disintegration of the empire." But they have disregarded his most solemn warning, either not believing in the truth of the statement, or thinking the time has come for Ministers to attend to matters of importance at home. That is what Lord Beaconsfield has not done. Since 1874 almost every matter of current administration relating to home has been systematically neglected. They have passed a religious worship bill, which from the hour it became law has been completely inoperative; also an artisans' dwelling act, which has done a little good and a great deal of harm; they have also made two poor attempts to regulate intermediate university education in Ireland, and they have decided to retain the use of the cat in the army. Beyond these questionably useful measures, the Government has done nothing at home. Mr. Gladstone's surplus of \$20,000,000 has been eaten up, and a deficit of \$40,000,000 has been

created. Revenues have gone to waste, and there is little or nothing to show for the enormous outlay. Ireland has been ravaged by actual famine, and England has passed through a period of deep industrial and agricultural depression, yet nothing has been done by Government to reform abuses or to diminish the unequal pressure of economic laws. The Premier gave sufficient time to the consideration of Irish affairs to allow him to coin and utter a glittering sentence or two, but mad agrarianism and starvation have been met with nothing more practical and permanent than almsgiving.

The foreign policy has doubtless been "vigorous," but it has been wanting in every element of success. The obligations of the Mother Country have been multiplied, but there are no corresponding advantages to be seen. What has been done? The Queen has been named an Empress; the Suez Canal has been purchased; a secret treaty has been made with the Turks which encouraged them to enter upon a disastrous war with Russia; five thousand Sepoys were sent to the Mediterranean; Russia was menaced and bullied for a time, and Europe led to suppose that England meant serious business; the Transvaal has been taken from the Boers; Zululand has been conquered and Afghanistan invaded. And what more? Positively nothing. But Russia has been checkmated? No; Russia has had her own way in Armenia and Bulgaria. But British influence has been maintained at Constantinople? No; it has declined, and the grateful Turk loves Russia more than England. Still, it will be granted that India has gained a "scientific frontier"? Perhaps, for nobody can tell what that means; but it is certain that India was more impregnable before this last new phase of political science was discovered. England is no stronger and the world is no better for the policy which Lord Beaconsfield has pursued, and now Lord Beaconsfield and his policy are rejected.

It is a matter for congratulation that the Liberal Government will not be under the thumb of the Home Rulers. Imagine the muddle-headed Parnell virtually master of the Cabinet! Better a Conservative Government a hundred times. But fortunately the reaction in favour of the Liberal policy has been strong enough to save the country from that disaster. The Home Rulers will have to fall back upon their old policy of obstruction, which can accomplish nothing.

Who will be Prime Minister in the new Government? It seems to me that it must be Mr. Gladstone. The Conservatives are saying: Let it be Lord Granville or Lord Hartington, and we shall not consider the change of Ministry an unmitigated evil. Possibly. But fortunately the victorious Liberals are not bound to consider the tender sensibilities of the ex-powers. They have to choose their own chief, and need not consult their political opponents. And what man among them can they choose for the first place but Mr. Gladstone? To him their victory is due. The electors have voted for his policy; they have given their whole-hearted confidence to him once more, and for him to fill a subordinate position in the Cabinet or to be outside altogether would be absurd. It might suit the Conservatives and the moderate Whigs to have Lord Granville Premier, but what will the Radicals say?

Many speculations are afloat as to what the new Government will do. I think we shall see no very great and startling changes. Lord Beaconsfield's foreign policy will not be adopted, of course. There will be no further leaning towards an alliance with Austria and Germany as against Russia and France. The Turks will be dealt with firmly and briefly; the unprofitable squabble in Afghanistan will be brought to as speedy a close as possible, and India put under the governance of a more competent Viceroy. The attention of Govern-