

altogether discontinued. Politics have been voted a bore ; and not unnaturally, for there has been nothing to discuss. The Tories throughout the country have seen a Ministry supremely indifferent to criticism, which is a good thing if it is a symptom of strength and confidence ; but there has grown up a feeling that this indifference is derived from personal disdain of the voters. This suspicion has not been lessened by the type of candidate favoured by those who direct the fortune of the party. An embittered Press has not hesitated to describe the majority of those candidates as " guinea-pigs and nobodies." The middle classes, loyal to the Union and constituting the backbone of the Tory party, have found their interests systematically neglected and even denied : and their exasperation was not lessened by the distribution of power. The spectacle of peers of England filling subordinate posts and grasping eagerly at every little office of actual or potential value was disagreeable. This practice brought the Peerage into disrepute and offended Tory principles. Moreover, it intensified the belief that under our present *régime* the ordinary M.P. was nothing but a counter in the party game ; that power will always be kept in the hands of a very few, and that, for the rest, the Tory members, so long as they voted straight, might go into public life " for what they could get out of it." This phrase, which would have disgraced a man in our grandfather's or even our father's days, is constantly heard to-day ; and heard unrebuked.

Add to all this the pressure of severe taxes local and imperial : and a silent resentment at the preponderance of the Liberal Unionist wing in the counsels of the party. All honour to those Liberals who saved the Union and to their successors in power : but while rendering honour let us at the same time admit without bitterness—but also openly and without reserve—that they have had their pound of flesh, and have insisted on having it.

Add to this that for twenty years the party has had the power to abate the Irish nuisance and has not abated it, or