

out of the fight not indeed scatheless, but victorious—(cheers)—and the Eighty Club has been in the thick of the combat. Although most of our members are young in years, the Club may claim to be the Old Guard of the Liberal Army. We have sent more than 500 of our members into election work. 193 of our members went to contest seats, and of those 193 gentlemen 103 have been victorious and 28 of them have had the especial glory of winning seats from the enemy. (Applause.)

We have to regret the defeat of some of our ablest and most energetic candidates, but those champions, though wounded in the fray, are not discouraged, and will be ready to fight when the opportunity occurs again. It is so clearly the duty of a Chairman to leave ample room for the guest of the evening, that I will resist the temptation to discuss the incidents of the late election, and will not even dwell upon those forces which have told so heavily against some of our unsuccessful candidates, forces which I may call liquid arguments, addressed not to the ears but to the throats of the lower strata among the electors. (Laughter.)

Upon that subject we are promised some interesting revelations presently. All that I shall now do is to make two remarks—one bearing upon the past, the other upon the future. What has been the nature of the judgment just delivered by the country? It has been a judgment pronounced upon the greatest of our political issues—upon an issue which has been before the country for six years, and which has been, so to speak, driven and hammered into the midst of the country as very few political issues ever have been. Upon that issue the country has pronounced its judgment. It has pronounced a judgment not merely against a vote-catching and time-serving Government (hear, hear), a Government which has sought to combine Tory men with pseudo-Liberal measures, but a judgment in favour of the policy of reconciliation with Ireland and of the statesman who has identified himself with that policy, (cheers), and who has advocated it with a fertility of resource, a tenacity of purpose, and unswerving earnestness and energy of moral conviction which very few causes have ever enjoyed and which no other living man could have displayed. (Cheers.)

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