

stone's second Administration had suddenly come to an end. It had puzzled many good Conservatives to understand how that Administration, burdened by an accumulation of blunders and disasters, was able to endure so long; but at any rate the hour of doom had struck at last, and jubilation was natural enough amongst those who were likely, or thought they were likely, to profit by the change.

Sir John Pynsent and his friends had been discussing with much animation the probable distribution of the patronage which the see-saw of party government had now placed in the hands of the Conservative leader. Sir John, whose opinion on this subject was specially valued by his political associates, had already nominated the Cabinet and filled up most of the subordinate offices; and he had not omitted to bestow a place of honor and emolument upon his ambitious relative, Sydney Campion.

The good-natured baronet was due that evening at the house of Lord Montagu Plumley, and he hurried away to keep his appointment. When he had gone the conversation became less general and more unrestrained, and there were even a few notes of scepticism in regard to some of Sir John's nominations.

"Plumley is safe enough," said Mr. Charles Milton. "He has worked hard to bring about this result, and it would be impossible for the new Premier to pass him over. But it is quite another matter when you come to talk about Plumley's friends, or his friends' friends. I for one shall be very much surprised if Campion gets the solicitorship."

"He's not half a bad sort," said Tom Willoughby, "and his name is being put forward in the papers as though some people thought he had a very good chance."

"Ah, yes, we know how that kind of thing is worked. The point most in his favor is that there are not half-a-dozen men in Parliament good enough for the post."

"What is the objection to him?"

"I don't say there is any objection. He is not a man who makes many friends: and I fancy some of his best cases have been won more by luck than by judgment. Then he has made one or two decidedly big mistakes. He will never be quite forgiven for taking up that prosecution of Walcott for a purely personal object. I know the late Attorney was much put out when he found how he had been utilized in that affair."