

## ART. X.—THE MONTH.

AN Administration was formed by Mr. Gladstone, at the end of April, after Lord Hartington and Lord Granville had been "sent for" by the Queen. The Cabinet is essentially Whig; but the Radicals are represented by two of the members for Birmingham, Mr. Bright, and Mr. Chamberlain. The introducer of the American *caucus*, Mr. Chamberlain, an extreme Radical as regards Bible teaching in Board Schools and other great questions, became a Cabinet Minister *per saltum*; and many Churchmen who are strongly Liberal will join with the *Guardian* in regretting such an appointment. Of the members of the Government several, no doubt, are pledged to disestablishment. With sound statesmen in the Cabinet, however, such as Lord Selborne (Chancellor), Lord Northbrook, and Mr. Childers, extreme opinions on religious or ecclesiastical questions are not likely to receive Government support. The Marquis of Hartington will make an admirable Secretary for India; and that able and accomplished diplomatist, Earl Granville, will probably carry out the policy of his Tory predecessor with success. Mr. Goschen, who has shown, in recent periods of excitement, both independence and statesmanlike sagacity, is sent to Constantinople as a special Ambassador; and the Porte is to be gently coerced to carry out provisions of the Berlin Treaty without further delay. The Prime Minister's letter of apology to the Austrian Ambassador for "painful and wounding words" against a friendly Power, founded on rumours and uttered—as were many most regrettable expressions—to election crowds, is probably without a parallel. The misapprehension, according to Mr. Gladstone's letter, is obliterated from his own mind; but "whether it is likely to be as easily obliterated from that of Austria," says the *Times*, "is a different question."

Sir William Harcourt, on his appointment as Home Secretary, has been rejected by Oxford; and in the opinion of an esteemed incumbent in that city, the Rev. A. M. W. Christopher, the chief cause of this sudden change is Mr. Gladstone's appointing a pervert (Lord Ripon) to the Viceroyalty of India, and another Romanist, Lord Kenmare, to the post of Lord Chamberlain. "Not a few Oxford citizens are Gospel-loving Protestants *first*, and Liberals or Conservatives, as the case may be, afterwards." At Sandwich, and in the Wigton Burghs, a Conservative has been elected.

The debate in the House of Commons on Mr. Bradlaugh's

position was damaging to those who were chiefly concerned in the Northampton election. Another Liberal candidate, it appears, was "hustled out of the way" by Mr. Gladstone's whipper-in, Mr. Adam, in favour of Mr. Bradlaugh; and Mr. Newdegate's remarks on the grave Constitutional question involved<sup>1</sup> were endorsed by the refusal of a majority of the Committee to make matters smooth for the Ministry. It is startling in the extreme to notice the off-hand way in which proposals are made for the legalization of Atheism in Parliament. On the suggestion that a Bill should be introduced to do away altogether with Parliamentary oaths, the *Record* remarks:—

We should regard such a measure as involving a terrible descent from the ancient Constitution of this country, under which Christianity is part and parcel of the common law of England, and a profession of faith in the Almighty God is regarded as the basis of all sound morality.

The appointment of the Marquis of Ripon to the Viceroyalty of India was referred to by several speakers in recent religious anniversaries. Dr. Ryle, for example, at the Church Missionary Society meeting, spoke of it as possibly a danger ahead in regard to Protestant Missions. Lord Ripon is, indeed, a man of the highest character, and greatly esteemed; but that Mr. Gladstone should select a pervert to be the representative of a Protestant Queen in India, has excited the greatest astonishment. Canons Bell and Clayton, in published letters, and Lord George Hamilton, M.P., in a recent speech, have quoted Mr. Gladstone's statement that a pervert renounces his freedom and places his loyalty at the mercy of another:—

Well, now [said Lord George] that statement of Mr. Gladstone is either true or it is not true. If it is untrue, he has been guilty of circulating throughout the whole of England an unwarrantable insult upon a large number of his fellow subjects; but, if it be true, then I ask him why did he appoint Lord Ripon Viceroy of India?

Mr. Gladstone's statement first appeared in the *Contemporary Review*, October, 1874; it was quoted, and defended, in the right hon. gentleman's tract, "The Vatican Decrees." The chief portion of the passage runs thus:—

In the nineteenth century "when Rome has substituted for the proud boast of *semper eadem* a policy of violence and change in faith;

<sup>1</sup> Mr. O'Donnell, a Roman Catholic member, said: "Although the House might, on due consideration, deem it right to admit a Member who objected entirely to all faith in morality and in God, who explained religion as a disease of the brain, and conscience as a nervous contraction of the diaphragm, yet the question ought to be brought plainly before the House; and no backstairs arrangements or electioneering contrivances ought to turn the responsible Government of a great Christian country from its plain duty to the Christian representatives of the nation."

when she has refurbished, and paraded anew, every rusty tool she was fondly thought to have disused; *when no one can become her convert without renouncing his moral and mental freedom, and placing his civil loyalty and duty at the mercy of another*; and when she has equally repudiated modern thought and ancient history."<sup>1</sup>

The italics are of course our own. Mr. Gladstone inquired, first, were his allegations "*true*," and secondly were they "for any practical purpose *material*;" and he set himself to prove these points. He was not at that time in office. His Irish University Bill which, by its gagging clauses, "repudiated modern thought," had proved a failure. The question, then, arises, how far an eminent man's arguments out of office are for "any practical purpose material" when he returns to office.

Mr. Gladstone, indeed, has replied to Lord Oranmore that the citation from his work on which such stress has been laid "presents, when taken alone, an incomplete and misleading view" of his opinions. We have looked at the passage on page 34, to which the Prime Minister refers (May 19th), and we find these words:—

What I have less accurately said that he renounced, I might more accurately have said that he forfeited.

The Radical Dissenters, no doubt, will speedily call upon Mr. Gladstone to show, in some practical way, his gratitude. At the annual meeting of the Congregational Union, Dr. Mellor said that no one could deny that to the Nonconformists they were largely indebted for the great change which had taken place, and he had no doubt the Government would recognise that fact, and as the best expression of its gratitude seek to promote religious equality, and in due time they would have a free Church in a free State. *The Nonconformist and Independent*, similarly, speaks of "the union of Nonconformist principle and democratic fervour" as sure to bring about ere long the downfall of the Established Church. Mr. Spurgeon, also, is filled "with unspeakable delight;" "the iniquity of a privileged sect," he says, "is to be swept away!"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Rome and the Newest Fashions in Religion." Three Tracts. By the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P. Murray. 1875.

<sup>2</sup> A letter from the Rev. Horatius Bonar, D.D., to Mr. Christopher was recently published in the *Record*. Dr. Bonar says:—"I have taken no share in the politics of the day; and I mean to adhere to this somewhat negative procedure, as I think it most becoming in a minister of Christ. I decline pulpit politics altogether. . . . The withdrawal of the Christian element from social and political questions must not only lead to failure in their solution, but issue in results of the most disastrous kind. . . . I do not belong to either of the Established Churches of the land. But I have no sympathy with the attacks made upon them, especially in the interests of political partisanship, by professedly Christian men."

The May Meetings, as a rule, have been well attended, and the reports, financially and otherwise, encouraging.

The Anniversary of the Church Missionary Society afforded matter for thankfulness and rejoicing. At the clerical prayer meeting on the Monday evening an address was given by Canon Money; the sermon in St. Bride's was preached by the Bishop of Rochester. Canon Garbett's *ad clerum* address on Tuesday morning was admirable; and the great Hall was crowded in every part. We have never seen a more attentive or appreciative gathering. The very carefully prepared Report was well read by the Hon. Sec., Prebendary Wright, and its opening sentences were most heartily applauded:—

The Committee cannot otherwise begin this Report than by calling upon the friends and members of the Society to unite with them in rejoicing before the Lord for the willingness with which his people have offered to him for the work. The offerings of all kinds which have been received during the past year for the general work of the Society have reached the grand total of £221,723.

The chief passage in the Report concerning Ceylon runs as follows:—

It is well known that in Ceylon, as in the Church of England at home, a contest has been for some time going on in defence of those Gospel truths which are to the Committee dearer than life itself, and compared with which all questions of ecclesiastical organization sink into insignificance. Difficulties connected with this cause have troubled the Ceylon Mission during the last four years. The Committee would again bear their cheerful testimony to the noble and forbearing, though firm, attitude maintained by the Society's missionaries throughout that period.

To the settlement which has been agreed upon Lord Chichester referred in his impressive opening address. The noble Earl said:—

I am sure you will all join with me in an expression of thankfulness to God for the satisfactory settlement that has been made of what we have called "the Ceylon difficulty." The Committee have assented to that arrangement without the sacrifice of a single principle or point which they thought of importance for the work of the Society, and they have at the same time opened a way by which the Bishop himself can, consistently and conscientiously, co-operate with them in carrying out that work. In reference to this satisfactory settlement our best thanks are due to our beloved and most revered Primate.

At the seventy-sixth Anniversary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, its President, the Earl of Shaftesbury, occupied the chair for the thirty-second time. The Report opened with three notes of thanksgiving:—

The past year has been in some countries a year of reaction, but no old field of labour has been closed; it has been in some countries a year of exhaustion, nevertheless new fields have been opened; it has been in all countries a year of depression, in spite of which your Committee have to acknowledge the receipt of funds sufficient to hold their own and even to go forward. . . . The total free income of the Society for the year has amounted to £110,806, as against £96,426 last year; more than a quarter of this, however, is due to legacies. The total receipts for the year have been £213,374; the total payments have been £193,569."

The first resolution was moved by the Archbishop of Canterbury and seconded by the Rev. A. E. Moule. Having alluded to the cry for the unity of Christendom—"better to be obtained," he said, "by the circulation of the Scriptures than by any other means"—the Archbishop referred to the Christianity of America; our sympathy is with the West as well as with the East. In concluding, his Grace touched upon Missions:—

"I was looking yesterday at the Life of Henry Venn, a man whose name in this Hall and in all England will be ever venerated, who from his office in Salisbury Square controlled the missionary efforts of the Church of England throughout the whole world to their great advantage for so many years. In his Life you will find a speech<sup>1</sup> which he delivered before this Society in this Hall, and you will find him testifying that the work of the British and Foreign Bible Society was the great pattern of the work of Missions throughout the world; that it is not right merely to regard the Bible Society as being the handmaid of the missionary societies, but that, by dispersing the Scriptures of truth throughout the world, it gives them a power for the conversion of the whole world to the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour such as could be attained by no other means.

In an effective speech, heartily cheered, Dr. Ryle mentioned the reformation going on in Mexico:—

How did that work begin? It began by the Bible being introduced by your Society. Nearly 100,000 copies of the Bible and parts of Scripture from your Society went through Mexico and set the people thinking, and this was the means, under God, of laying the foundation of the Protestant work there, which is likely to bear such good fruit.

Dr. Manning, well known as a secretary of the R. T. S., spoke of the revival in France:—"Never since the Reformation has there been in any other land such a movement, such a revival, such an awakening, as seems now to be commencing in France."

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<sup>1</sup> "Memoir of Rev. H. Venn," p. 248. The speech was delivered in 1861. Mr. Venn also said:—"This Society is a centre of union among the various Missionary Societies, and exercises a moderating and binding influence upon them all. . . . The same benefit which manifests itself in the Church at home, manifests itself, I think, much more in the Churches abroad."