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ART. X.—THE MONTH.

A GENERAL Election is about to take place. The startling announcement was made on the 8th,—by Lord Beaconsfield in a single sentence, by the leader of the other House in an explanatory speech. According to the Chancellor of the Exchequer the Session had fulfilled its main purpose by making proper provision for Irish distress; and the Spring is a convenient season for the elections. In a letter to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Premier's manifesto, stress is laid upon the danger which "distracts that country. A portion of its population is attempting to sever the constitutional tie which unites it to Great Britain in that bond which has favoured the power and prosperity of both. It is to be hoped that all men of light and leading will resist this destructive doctrine." In the later paragraphs of his letter Lord Beaconsfield refers to foreign affairs:—

Peace rests on the presence, not to say the ascendancy, of England in the Councils of Europe. Even at this moment the doubt supposed to be inseparable from popular election, if it does not diminish, certainly arrests her influence, and is a main reason for not delaying an appeal to the national voice.

The leaders of her Majesty's Opposition welcomed the Ministerial announcement; and vigorous addresses from eminent Liberals were quickly issued. By the Home Rule section of the Opposition, also, a manifesto, an address to Irishmen, was published; but its language is more likely to injure than to aid the Liberal party in their contests on this side the Channel. The main point in the addresses and speeches, so far (March 20th), whether Tory or Liberal, is the Foreign policy of the Ministry. Other questions, however, religious, ecclesiastical, educational, must come to the front. The *Guardian*, which has strongly supported Mr. Gladstone, pointed out, on the 10th, that those who desire to assume Ministerial responsibility ought now to speak, not upon the critical question of foreign policy only, but on the great points of domestic policy which must be taken up in a new Parliament. The *Guardian* remarks:—

We ought to know what is really meant by voting for the Liberal party—who are its real leaders, and what is the relation between the Liberal "Centre" and the Left wing, so ably led by such men as Mr. Chamberlain, and, it would seem, favoured in some points by men of greater name. Churchmen in particular have reason for inquiring what is likely to be the policy of a Liberal Cabinet towards the Church, not only in the matter of Establishment, but also in respect of giving her free play for her development and independence.

One result of the elections—said to be probable—would be truly deplorable, namely—a Liberal Ministry at the mercy of a band of Roman Catholic Home Rulers. Lord Hartington, however, in his statesmanlike address to North-east Lancashire, declared that the demand for Home Rule is “impracticable;” his Lordship considers that “any concession or appearance of concession in this direction would be mischievous in its effects to the prosperity of Ireland, as well as that of England and Scotland.”

The election which will excite the greatest interest, probably, is the contest in Midlothian between Lord Dalkeith and Mr. Gladstone. In his address the noble earl observes:—

I am a supporter of the maintenance of the Established Church of Scotland, which I believe to be in imminent danger. My eminent opponent has promised that before it is disestablished it shall have a “fair trial.” I must, however, remind you that between his pledge to his supporters that the question of the Irish Church was “outside the practical politics of the day” and his scheme for its destruction there was but an interval of three years.

Lord Derby has, at length, formally separated from the political connection in which he “was brought up.”

A correspondent of the *Guardian*, “Ex-Gladstonian,” refers to a recent speech in Marylebone by Mr. Gladstone, “extolling Nonconformists for having consented to place their own policy and beloved conviction [disestablishment] in the shade.” “Ex-Gladstonian” writes:—

Churchmen have hitherto been instructed that “disestablishment” might be the policy of the Liberation Society; but that it was a calumny upon Nonconformists to assume that their profession included and absorbed the acceptance of disestablishment. Mr. Gladstone propounds a different theory—namely, that disestablishment is the “peculiar and distinctive feature” and the “religious conviction” of the “largest of all the sections of the Liberal party”—that is, as he further explains, of all who are at once Nonconformists and Liberals. Mr. Gladstone’s thoughts can only be measured by his words, and it is plain that the concession which he makes to disestablishment by these statements is to the last degree perilous.

The Council of the Church Association have issued a circular calling the attention of the electors to the great questions at stake, viewed from an anti-sacerdotal standpoint. The *Rock* which under new management has greatly improved, justly remarks that “the source of England’s greatness, and as a necessary consequence her world-wide influence, is based upon Protestant Christianity.”

At last an eminent divine, for whom, as the *Times* has remarked, high preferment might have been expected any time during the last twenty years, has been made a dean. It will not be forgotten by Evangelical Churchmen that the Prime

Minister who promoted the veteran M^cNeile to the Deanery of Ripon has offered the Deanery of Salisbury to J. C. Ryle. Mr. Ryle's great abilities and distinguished services to the Church are acknowledged on all sides. The circulation of his tracts in this country, and by translation abroad, is without parallel. As a preacher, an author, a speaker at Church Congresses and elsewhere, he has stood in the first rank. The impetus given to Church Reform by his letters and pamphlets, though not always acknowledged, has been great.

Concerning the Article by Canon Garbett, in the *CHURCHMAN* for March, "The Doctrine of the Fathers on the Lord's Supper," the High Church *John Bull* remarks:—

Mr. Garbett is not a whit too severe on the discreditable article in *The Church Quarterly Review* on the subject of "The Real Presence." That Review is in danger of the fate that overtook the *Oxford Tracts*, and from the same cause—the admission of a Romanizing leaven.

A valuable document on the controversy between the Church Missionary Society and the Bishop of Colombo, signed by the Archbishops and the Bishops of London, Durham, and Winchester, has been published. The Committee gratefully receive the suggestions therein contained, and express their "conviction that they will be able cheerfully to act upon them." In an admirable letter from Prebendary Wright, Hon. Sec. C.M.S., we read that if the Bishop should see his way to act upon the advice given unanimously by the Prelates, a satisfactory solution of difficulties will no doubt be found. Certain facts given in the document speak for themselves. The Prelates, for instance, remark that—

This Society, which numbers some seventy Bishops of the Church of England amongst its Vice-Presidents, is acknowledged on all hands to be one of the greatest instruments by which our Church spreads the knowledge of Christ among the heathen; in the Island of Ceylon its agents have been at work for sixty years, beginning at a time long anterior to the establishment of a Bishopric of Colombo; it has already spent upon its work in that island no less than 400,000*l.*, and has become possessed of many valuable Mission buildings; about 10,000*l.* is expended annually by the Society for the support of its work in Ceylon among some 7000 native Christians connected with its Missions.

The state of things at St. Petersburg continues deplorable. The Czar will see, it may be hoped, the unwisdom of a warlike policy, which sorely presses his subjects with taxation and commercial distress. From suspicion of Russia the army of Germany has been increased. In France the new Ministry appear to be firmly seated in power, but Article 7 of M. Jules Ferry's Education Bill was rejected in the Senate by a majority of eighteen. The Jesuits have been warned.