

Though compensation was promised to all who had obtained their commissions on the old plan, yet so much opposition was made to the "Purchase Bill," especially in the House of Lords, that Mr. Gladstone finally dropped the measure and decreed the abolition of purchase by a Royal Warrant, on the ground that the armed forces of the realm were subject in such matters to the direct authority of the Crown. This was technically correct, but the act was much criticized as tending to take the army out of the control of parliament.

The last complete year of the Gladstone ministry, 1873, was much less fertile in legislation than its predecessors. It only

**Fall of Gladstone's ministry.** produced a "Judicature Act" for the consolidation of the courts of law, and an abortive scheme for the establishment of an "Undenominational"

University in Ireland, which was wrecked by the declaration of the Roman Catholic bishops that they would have nothing to do with it. Early in 1874 the prime minister dissolved Parliament, though it was not yet six years old, to the great surprise of both parties. He went to the country with a declaration that, if returned again to power, he should proceed to abolish the income tax. This declaration was more fitted to affect the middle classes than the masses; and the latter, enfranchised in 1867, had now superseded the former as the depositaries of political power. To his own great surprise, Mr. Gladstone was beaten at the polls; he was defeated partly on account of the general dissatisfaction with his foreign policy, but probably still more through the resentment of the countless class, trade, and local interests which he harassed by his widespread legislation. The Conservatives came into office with a majority of more than fifty in February, 1874.

Disraeli had now for the first time a real opportunity of showing what the new Conservatism was like. He was completely master of his party, and had finished the process of "educating" it which he had begun twenty years before. In his six years' administration, 1874-1880, he was able to