

“the back swing of the pendulum,” and a reversion towards Unionism.

Accordingly Gladstone retained office, and announced that after a very short recess he should summon Parliament to meet again in November for active legislative work.

Gladstone remains in office. But great difficulties met him: the Irish were discontented; the English Radicals were split up into cliques and coteries which pulled different ways; the party discipline was evidently deteriorating. All that was done in the way of important legislation was the passage of a Parish Councils Bill, which gave parishes the same power of electing boards to settle their local affairs which the last Conservative Government had given to the counties.

In March, 1894, the premier announced that he was compelled to lay down his office; the stress of work was too much for one whose eyesight and hearing were both beginning to fail. His last speech as prime minister had consisted of a diatribe upon the perversity of the House of Lords in setting itself against the House of Commons; and he more than hinted that, if they continued to act as they had done on the Home Rule question, the nation must take in hand their reform or extinction. It was, therefore, curious that a member of the recalcitrant house should be chosen to fill Gladstone's vacant place. His successor was Lord Rosebery, his Foreign Secretary, an able man in early middle age, who had won considerable applause by his administration of our external affairs, but who could not be called a typical Radical or an enthusiastic Home Ruler. In many ways he was more like the Whig statesmen of the eighteenth century than the Liberal politicians of to-day, combining considerable literary talents and a wide knowledge of foreign affairs with a keen passion for the turf. He is the only British premier who has ever run winners of the Derby (1894 and 1895).

On Mr. Gladstone's retirement, it became at once evident