

THE DEFEAT OF THE PREMIER.



It would be vain to deny that the principal event in the elections has been the defeat of Sir ROBERT STOUT for Dunedin East. Everyone said that this event would take place, and yet everyone has been surprised at the fulfilment of the prediction. It was thought that the usual good luck of a fortunate career must intervene to prevent the catastrophe; that some remnant of the former glamour, if nothing else, or even if it were only the mute, pathetic, appeal of a well-known name on the voting-paper, would hinder, even at the last moment, the fatal erasure, in sufficient instances, at least, to secure for the once all popular favourite a saving majority. In this instance, however, the resolution of the fickle multitude proved firm and Sir ROBERT fell before it.

To inquire into the causes that contributed to bring about such an end would require a more minute and extensive examination than it serves our present purpose to make. They, no doubt, were various, and different people were affected by them in different manners and degrees. Were we to say that Sir ROBERT STOUT'S career had commended itself to us in any measure approaching that in which it excited admiration and even enthusiasm elsewhere, we should be insincere. We saw many faults in it; many shortcomings, and, what is worse, many instances in which false ideals were pursued, and false or imperfect standards of perfection set up and worshipped with a zeal that might have excited warm approbation had it been bestowed upon a worthy object. Sir ROBERT'S cardinal error was that "fads," as they are called, are the infallible visions which a noble mind pursues with the end in view of working out some good for mankind and leaving the world a better world than it had previously been. Pedantry or pride, or self-sufficiency, alas! lies more often at the foundation of such notions, and they are worthy only of the base on which they rest. It would be well if in every case the vanity of the conceit exhausted itself in the individual with whom it originated, and were not spread abroad more or less widely as a mischievous effect. A career like Sir ROBERT STOUT'S possessing great capacities for good, and still producing much that is evil, presents to us, we confess, a melancholy spectacle, and gives us sad reason to contrast that which is with that which might be. But we are far from exulting at Sir ROBERT'S temporary fall. The principles which have always obliged us to be strongly in opposition to him as a public man and a statesman were not prominently involved in the causes of his defeat, and, apart from them, we entertain no feeling towards him that is not friendly and no desire but that of seeing the many excellent qualities and abilities which he possesses brought as fully and as usefully as possible into play.

That Sir ROBERT'S fall will be of temporary duration only we have little doubt. The petulant declaration that, were it to occur, it would form the close of his public life, which he recently made, and still seems to adhere to, may be dismissed as the mere slip that marked a moment of irritation. Some allowance must also be made for the feelings arising from the anticipation and experience of an unwonted check and the assumed ingratitude of a public whose habitual complacency had been naturally taken for an involuntary and well-earned homage. But it is not thus that, on calm reflection, the philosopher meets a reverse, and no man whose constant profession has been, like that of Sir ROBERT STOUT, the determined resolution to work for the good of mankind—with that hopeful effort alone for his sufficient reward—could possibly abide by any threat so rash, as well as so vengeful were it carried out.

That Sir ROBERT STOUT has in him capacities for helping, and very materially helping, to improve the position of those among whom he lives, is known to all of us. His career has been one of unruffled success, and, perhaps, now for the first time, he has encountered a serious rebuff. But, although circumstances certainly have favoured him in a manner not commonly witnessed, his success has not been altogether without merit on his part, or acquired without deserving labour. The wiser and more useful course, therefore, as well as the more consistent with his frequent professions, would be for him to renounce all notions of a self-imposed ostracism and to continue to devote to the service of his country so much of his talents and time as he can find available for the purpose. That an opening lies ready for him even now is certain, and if he be indeed a true philosopher, instead of

retiring to encounter that forgetfulness which the imperative necessities of an imperfect world compel it invariably to exercise towards even the most devoted and useful of those who have served it when death or absence obscures them from its view, he will bring to such an opening the improvement to be derived by him from the lesson he has received.

Surely Sir ROBERT STOUT is not the man to give to the Colony the retrogressive example of another ACHILLES sulking by the idle keels, even if the Ship of State must not contrive to stagger onward, with her sails spread and tolerably steered somehow or another without his aid.

SATISFACTORY news continues to reach us from every side concerning the presentation to be made to the Bishop of Dunedin, on his return from Australia. We have received intelligence that his lordship may be expected by the Mararoa, which will reach Port Chalmers on October 11, but the testimonial committee have resolved to keep their subscription lists open until October 17, on which day they will close. We have to acknowledge the receipt of £15s towards the testimonial from Mr. Thomas Nestor of Amberley, which we have handed to the treasurers. In another place we publish the first instalment of the subscription lists.

THE elections have been most remarkably distinguished by a slaughter of veterans. Mr. Rolleston is gone, and Mr. Bryce, and also Mr. Tole—but let *de mortuis*, etc., be our motto. Still it is no sin to hope that their resurrection, when it comes, may be to a better life, which, to tell the truth, in a political sense they might easily lead. And now the consideration arises as to the representation of Dunedin in the next Cabinet, whenever and however it may happen to be formed. Dr. Fitchett and Mr. Allen are too new, and Mr. Fish, just for the present at least, is probably too lively. Mr. Larnach smacks of the much abhorred Stout-Vogelism, and Mr. Barron somehow or another does not seem to count—though we intend no offence to him whatever. The competition, in fact, seems to lie between Mr. Ross and Mr. Downie Stewart. Had Mr. Dick been returned precedent would have been in his favour. But he was not returned, and not even precedent favours Mr. Stewart. Mr. Ross, then, looks like the coming man, and may possibly have the honour of crowning a career of presidencies and municipal honours by the glories of the Ministry. The events of the next few months should bring us some fun. We hope, nevertheless, that the colony may not pay over dearly for it.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL seems to take a philosophic view of things generally. Speaking at Whitby the other day, he is reported as expressing himself most jubilant at the triumph of Unionism, law, and order. Yet the triumph of law and order is exhibited in a series of grave riots, and an outbreak and extension of moonlighting and boycotting—and that of Unionism, according to Lord Randolph's showing, in the sacrifice of the landlords—whom the Tories were bound by all that was honourable in the way of pledges given to support. The offended landlords, however, may probably have an energetic word or two to say on this subject when their eyes have been fully opened—and what they say will hardly strengthen or confirm the Unionist victory. Lord Randolph was also rather philosophic in blaming Mr. Gladstone for causing the obstruction of the past session—knowing, as he must, that on the predominance of the Irish question, with which the obstruction alluded to was inseparably connected, the very life of the Tory party depended. Law and order, then, proved by the increase of riot and crime; Unionism only prevented from becoming wide disunion by perfidy and cowardice, and obstruction by which the opposing party are kept from falling to pieces, are far too abnormal tokens of a condition of peace and prosperity to be accepted as such by any but the most philosophic mind possible.—That it is evident Lord Randolph Churchill possesses—at least when it becomes incumbent on him to deceive an audience.

THE following is a copy of a memorial to the Hon. Sir Robert Stout, which is being circulated in Dunedin for signature:—"Sir,—We, the undersigned electors of Dunedin, beg to tender you an expression of our sincere sorrow at the loss the Colony has sustained through being deprived of your services in Parliament and we also venture to express the hope, and hereby most strongly urge that you will reconsider your decision as to your retirement from public life. We hope that you will consider that your private opinion and private wish should give way to the interests of the Colony, for we fully believe that your services in Parliament are of the utmost importance to the welfare of the people in the present political crisis; and although the electors of Dunedin East have lost the opportunity of retaining you as their representative, you will see from this requisition that you still possess the thorough confidence of the electors of Dunedin. Will you therefore kindly inform us if you will allow yourself to be nominated for a constituency should the opportunity offer?"

WE are not accustomed to take notice of slanderous and malevolent reports circulated by people who are unworthy of consideration. But, lest our silence be misunderstood it may be as well for us to