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The Life Of
William Ewart Gladstone

By

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In Three Volumes—Vol. II.

(1859-1880)

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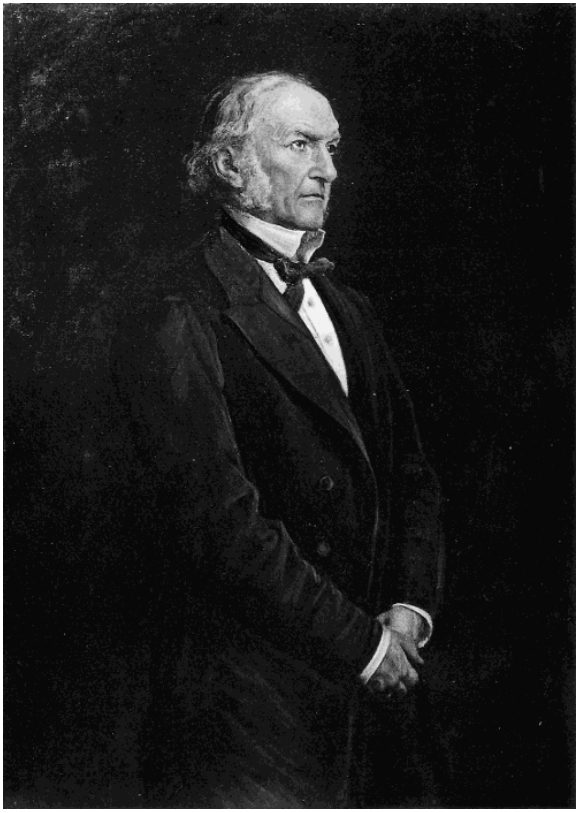

William Ewart Gladstone; from a painting by Sir J. E. Millais, P.R.A, in the National Gallery.

Book V. 1859-1868

Chapter I. The Italian Revolution. (1859-1860)

> Rarely, if ever, in the course of our history has there been such a mixture of high considerations, legislative, military, commercial, foreign, and constitutional, each for the most part traversing the rest, and all capable of exercising a vital influence on public policy, as in the long and complicated session of 1860. The commercial treaty first struck the keynote of the year; and the most deeply marked and peculiar feature of the year was the silent conflict between the motives and provisions of the treaty on the one hand, and the excitement and exasperation of military sentiment on the other.—GLADSTONE.[1]

This description extends in truth much beyond the session of a given year to the whole existence of the new cabinet, and through a highly important period in Mr. Gladstone's career. More than that, it directly links our biographic story to a series of events that created kingdoms, awoke nations, and re-made the map of Europe. The opening of this long and complex episode was the Italian revolution. Writing to Sir John Acton in 1864 Mr. Gladstone said to him of the budget of 1860, "When viewed as

[1] *Eng. Hist. Rev.* April 1887, p. 296.

a whole, it is one of the few cases in which my fortunes as an individual have been closely associated with matters of a public and even an historic interest." I will venture to recall in outline to the reader's memory the ampler background of this striking epoch in Mr. Gladstone's public life. The old principles of [002] the European state-system, and the old principles that inspired the vast contentions of ages, lingered but they seemed to have grown decrepit. Divine right of kings, providential pre-eminence of dynasties, balance of power, sovereign independence of the papacy,—these and the other accredited catchwords of history were giving place to the vague, indefinable, shifting, but most potent and inspiring doctrine of Nationality. On no statesman of this time did that fiery doctrine with all its tributaries gain more commanding hold than on Mr. Gladstone. "Of the various and important incidents," he writes in a memorandum, dated Braemar, July 16, 1892, "which associated me almost unawares with foreign affairs in Greece (1850), in the Neapolitan kingdom (1851), and in the Balkan peninsula and the Turkish empire (1853), I will only say that they all contributed to forward the action of those home causes more continuous in their operation, which, without in any way effacing my old sense of reverence for the past, determined for me my place in the present and my direction towards the future."

I

Doctrine Of Nationality

At the opening of the seventh decade of the century—ten years of such moment for our western world—the relations of the European states with one another had fallen into chaos. The perilous distractions of 1859-62 were the prelude to conflicts that after strange and mighty events at Sadowa, Venice, Rome, Sedan, Versailles, came to their close in 1871. The first breach in the ramparts of European order set up by the kings after Waterloo, was the independence of Greece in 1829. Then followed the

transformation of the power of the Turk over Roumanians and Serbs from despotism to suzerainty. In 1830 Paris overthrew monarchy by divine right; Belgium cut herself asunder from the supremacy of the Dutch; then Italians and Poles strove hard but in vain to shake off the yoke of Austria and of Russia. In 1848 revolts of race against alien dominion broke out afresh in Italy and Hungary. The rise of the French empire, bringing with it the principle or idiosyncrasy of its new ruler, carried
[003] this movement of race into its full ascendant. Treaties were confronted by the doctrine of Nationality. What called itself Order quaked before something that for lack of a better name was called the Revolution. Reason of State was eclipsed by the Rights of Peoples. Such was the spirit of the new time.

The end of the Crimean war and the peace of Paris brought a temporary and superficial repose. The French ruler, by strange irony at once the sabre of Revolution and the trumpet of Order, made a beginning in urging the constitution of a Roumanian nationality, by uniting the two Danubian principalities in a single quasi-independent state. This was obviously a further step towards that partition of Turkey which the Crimean war had been waged to prevent. Austria for reasons of her own objected, and England, still in her Turcophil humour, went with Austria against France for keeping the two provinces, although in fiscal and military union, politically divided. According to the fashion of that time—called a comedy by some, a homage to the democratic evangel by others—a popular vote was taken. Its result was ingeniously falsified by the sultan (whose ability to speak French was one of the odd reasons why Lord Palmerston was sanguine about Turkish civilisation); western diplomacy insisted that the question of union should be put afresh. Mr. Gladstone, not then in office, wrote to Lord Aberdeen (Sept. 10, 1857):—

> The course taken about the Principalities has grieved me. I

> do not mean so much this or that measure, as the principle on which it is to rest. I thought we made war in order to keep Russia out, and then suffer life, if it would, to take the place of death. But it now seems to be all but avowed, that the fear of danger, not to Europe, but to Islam,—and Islam not from Russia, but from the Christians of Turkey,—is to be a ground for stinting their liberties.

In 1858 (May 4) he urged the Derby government to support the declared wish of the people of Wallachia and Moldavia, and to fulfil the pledges made at Paris in 1856. "Surely the best resistance to be offered to Russia," he said, "is by the strength and freedom of those countries that will have to resist her. [004] You want to place a living barrier between Russia and Turkey. *There is no barrier like the breast of freemen.*" The union of the Principalities would raise up antagonists to the ambitions of Russia more powerful than any that could be bought with money. The motion was supported by Lord John Russell and Lord Robert Cecil, but Disraeli and Palmerston joined in opposing it, and it was rejected by a large majority. Mr. Gladstone wrote in his diary: "May 4.—H. of C.—Made my motion on the Principalities. Lost by 292:114; and with it goes another broken promise to a people." So soon did the illusions and deceptions of the Crimean war creep forth.

In no long time (1858) Roumania was created into a virtually independent state. Meanwhile, much against Napoleon's wish and policy, these proceedings chilled the alliance between France and England. Other powers grew more and more uneasy, turning restlessly from side to side, like sick men on their beds. The object of Russia ever since the peace had been, first to break down the intimacy between England and France, by flattering the ambition and enthusiasm of the French Emperor; next to wreak her vengeance on Austria for offences during the Crimean war, still pronounced unpardonable. Austria, in turn, was far too slow for a moving age; she entrenched herself behind forms

with too little heed to substance; and neighbours mistook her dulness for dishonesty. For the diplomatic air was thick and dark with suspicion. The rivalry of France and Austria in Italy was the oldest of European stories, and for that matter the Lombardo-Venetian province was a possession of material value to Austria, for while only containing one-eighth of her population, it contributed one-fourth of her revenue.

Napoleon III

The central figure upon the European stage throughout the time on which we are now about to enter was the ruler of France. The Crimean war appeared to have strengthened his dynasty at home, while faith in the depth of his political designs and in the grandeur of his military power had secured him predominance abroad. Europe hung upon his words; a sentence to an ambassador [005] at a public audience on new year's day, a paragraph in a speech at the opening of his parliament of puppets, a pamphlet supposed to be inspired, was enough to shake Vienna, Turin, London, the Vatican, with emotions pitched in every key. Yet the mind of this imposing and mysterious potentate was the shadowy home of vagrant ideals and fugitive chimeras. It was said by one who knew him well, *Scratch the emperor and you will find the political refugee*. You will find, that is to say, the man of fluctuating hope without firm calculation of fact, the man of half-shaped end with no sure eye to means. The sphinx in our modern politics is usually something of a charlatan, and in time the spite of fortune brought this mock Napoleon into fatal conflict with the supple, positive, practical genius of Italy in the person of one of the hardiest representatives of this genius that Italy ever had; just as ten years later the same nemesis brought him into collision with the stern, rough genius of the north in the person of Count Bismarck. Meanwhile the sovereigns of central and northern Europe had interviews at Stuttgart, at Teplitz, at Warsaw. It was at Warsaw that the rulers of Austria and Prussia met the Czar at the end of 1860,—Poland quivering as she saw the three crowned pirates choose the capital city of their victim

for a rendezvous. Russia declined to join what would have been a coalition against France, and the pope described the conference of Warsaw as three sovereigns assembling to hear one of them communicate to the other two the orders of the Emperor of the French. The French empire was at its zenith. Thiers said that the greatest compensation to a Frenchman for being nothing in his own country, was the sight of that country filling its right place in the world.

The reader will remember that at Turin on his way home from the Ionian Islands in the spring of 1859, Mr. Gladstone saw the statesman who was destined to make Italy. Sir James Hudson, our ambassador at the court of Piedmont, had sounded Cavour as to his disposition to receive the returning traveller. Cavour replied, "I hope you will do all you can to bring such a proceeding about. I set the highest value on the visit of a statesman so distinguished and such a friend of Italy as Mr. Gladstone." In conveying this message to Mr. Gladstone (Feb. [006] 7, 1859), Hudson adds, "I can only say I think your counsels may be very useful to this government, and that I look to your coming here as a means possibly of composing differences, which may, if not handled by some such calm unprejudiced statesman as yourself, lead to very serious disturbances in the European body politic." Mr. Gladstone dined at Cavour's table at the foreign office, where, among other things, he had the satisfaction of hearing his host speak of Hudson as *quel uomo italianissimo*. Ministers, the president of the chamber, and other distinguished persons were present, and Cavour was well pleased to have the chance of freely opening his position and policy to "one of the sincerest and most important friends that Italy had."[2]

Among Cavour's difficulties at this most critical moment was the attitude of England. The government of Lord Derby, true to the Austrian sympathies of his party, and the German sympathies

[2] *Il Conte di Cavour. Ricordi biografici.* Per G. Massari (Turin, 1875), p. 204.

of the court, accused Italy of endangering the peace of Europe. "No," said Cavour, "it is the statesmen, the diplomatists, the writers of England, who are responsible for the troubled situation of Italy; for is it not they who have worked for years to kindle political passion in our peninsula, and is it not England that has encouraged Sardinia to oppose the propaganda of moral influences to the illegitimate predominance of Austria in Italy?" To Mr. Gladstone, who had seen the Austrian forces in Venetia and in Lombardy, he said, "You behold for yourself, that it is Austria who menaces us; here we are tranquil; the country is calm; we will do our duty; England is wrong in identifying peace with the continuance of Austrian domination." Two or three days later the Piedmontese minister made one of those momentous visits to Paris that forced a will less steadfast than his own.

The French Emperor in his dealings with Cavour had entangled himself, in Mr. Gladstone's phrase, with "a stronger and better informed intellect than his own." "Two men," said Guizot, "at this
[007] moment divide the attention of Europe, the Emperor Napoleon and Count Cavour. The match has begun. I back Count Cavour." The game was long and subtly played. It was difficult for the ruler who had risen to power by bloodstained usurpation and the perfidious ruin of a constitution, to keep in step with a statesman, the inspiring purpose of whose life was the deliverance of his country by the magic of freedom. Yet Napoleon was an organ of European revolution in a double sense. He proclaimed the doctrine of nationality, and paid decorous homage to the principle of appeal to the popular voice. In time England appeared upon the scene, and by his flexible management of the two western powers, England and France, Cavour executed the most striking political transformation in the history of contemporary Europe. It brought, however, as Mr. Gladstone speedily found, much trouble into the relations of the two western powers with one another.

The overthrow of the Derby government and the accession of

the whigs exactly coincided in time with the struggle between Austria and the Franco-Sardinian allies on the bloody fields of Magenta and Solferino. A few days after Mr. Gladstone took office, the French and Austrian emperors and King Victor Emmanuel signed those preliminaries of Villafranca (July 11, 1859), which summarily ended an inconclusive war by the union of Lombardy to the Piedmontese kingdom, and the proposed erection of an Italian federation over which it was hoped that the pope might preside, and of which Venetia, still remaining Austrian, should be a member. The scheme was intrinsically futile, but it served its turn. The Emperor of the French was driven to peace by mixed motives. The carnage of Solferino appalled or unnerved him; he had revealed to his soldiers and to France that their ruler had none of the genius of a great commander; the clerical party at home fiercely assailed the prolongation of a war that must put the pope in peril; the case of Poland, the case of Hungary, might almost any day be kindled into general conflagration by the freshly lighted torch of Nationality; above all, Germany might stride forward to the Rhine to avenge the repulse of Austria on the Po and the Mincio.[3] [008]

Whatever the motive, Villafranca was a rude check to Italian aspirations. Cavour in poignant rage peremptorily quitted office, rather than share responsibility for this abortive end of all the astute and deep-laid combinations for ten years past, that had brought the hated Austrian from the triumph of Novara down to the defeat of Solferino. Before many months he once more grasped the helm. In the interval the movement went forward as if all his political tact, his prudence, his suppleness, his patience, and his daring, had passed into the whole population of central Italy. For eight months after Villafranca, it seemed as if the deep and politic temper that built up the old Roman Commonwealth, were again alive in Bologna, Parma, Modena,

[3] See *L'Empire Libéral*, by Émile Ollivier, iv. p. 217.

Florence. When we think of the pitfalls that lay on every side, how easily France might have been irritated or estranged, what unseasonable questions might not unnaturally have been forced forward, what mischief the voice and spirit of the demagogue might have stirred up, there can surely be no more wonderful case in history of strong and sagacious leaders, Cavour, Farini, Ricasoli, the Piedmontese king, guiding a people through the ferments of revolt, with discipline, energy, legality, order, self-control, to the achievement of a constructive revolution. Without the sword of France the work could not have been begun; but it was the people and statesmen of northern and central Italy who in these eight months made the consummation possible. And England, too, had no inconsiderable share; for it was she who secured the principle of non-intervention by foreign powers in Italian affairs; it was she who strongly favoured the annexation of central Italy to the new kingdom in the north. Here it was that England directly and unconsciously opened the way to a certain proceeding that when it came to pass she passionately resented. In the first three weeks of March (1860) Victor Emmanuel legalised in due form the annexation of the four central states to Piedmont and Lombardy, and in the latter half of April he made his entry into Florence. Cavour attended him, and strange as it sounds, he now for the first time in his life beheld the famed city,—centre of
[009] undying beauty and so many glories in the history of his country and the genius of mankind. In one spot at least his musings might well have been profound—the tomb of Machiavelli, the champion of principles three centuries before, to guide that armed reformer, part fox part lion, who should one day come to raise up an Italy one and independent. The Florentine secretary's orb never quite sets, and it was now rising to a lurid ascendant in the politics of Europe for a long generation to come, lighting up the unblest gospel that whatever policy may demand justice will allow.[4]

[4] It is a notable thing that in 1859 the provisional government of Tuscany

Annexation Of Savoy And Nice

On March 24 Cavour paid Napoleon a bitter price for his assent to annexation, by acquiescing in the cession to France of Savoy and Nice, provinces that were, one of them the cradle of the royal race, the other the birthplace of Garibaldi, the hero of the people. In this transaction the theory of the *plébiscite*, or direct popular vote upon a given question, for the first time found a place among the clauses of a diplomatic act. The *plébiscite*, though stigmatised as a hypocritical farce, and often no better than a formal homage paid by violence or intrigue to public right, was a derivative from the doctrines of nationality and the sovereignty of the people then ruling in Europe. The issue of the operation in Savoy and Nice was what had been anticipated. Italy bore the stroke with wise fortitude, but England when she saw the bargain closed for which she had herself prepared the way, took fierce umbrage at the aggrandisement of France, and heavy clouds floated into the European sky. As we have seen, the first act of the extraordinary drama closed at Villafranca. The curtain fell next at Florence upon the fusion of central with upper Italy. Piedmont, a secondary state, had now grown to be a kingdom with eleven or twelve millions of inhabitants. Greater things were yet to follow. Ten millions still remained in the south under the yoke of Bourbons and the Vatican. The third act, most romantic, most picturesque of all, an incomparable union of heroism with policy at double play with all the shifts of circumstance, opened a few weeks later. [010]

The great unsolved problem was the pope. The French ambassador at the Vatican in those days chanced to have had diplomatic experience in Turkey. He wrote to his government in Paris that the pope and his cardinals reminded him of nothing so much as the sultan and his ulemas—the same vacillation, the same shifty helplessness, the same stubborn impenetrability. The Cross seemed in truth as grave a danger in one quarter of

made a decree for the publication of a complete edition of Machiavelli's works at the cost of the state.

Europe as was the Crescent in another, and the pope was now to undergo the same course of territorial partition as had befallen the head of a rival faith. For ten years the priests had been maintained in their evilly abused authority by twenty thousand French bayonets—the bayonets of the empire that the cardinals with undisguised ingratitude distrusted and hated.[5] The Emperor was eager to withdraw his force, if only he were sure that no catastrophe would result to outrage the catholic world and bring down his own throne.

Unluckily for this design, Garibaldi interposed. One night in May (1860), soon after the annexation to Piedmont of the four central states, the hero whom an admirer described as "a summary of the lives of Plutarch," sailed forth from Genoa for the deliverance of the Sicilian insurgents. In the eyes of Garibaldi and his Thousand, Sicily and Naples marked the path that led to Rome. The share of Cavour as accomplice in the adventure is still obscure. Whether he even really desired the acquisition of the Neapolitan kingdom, or would have preferred, as indeed he attempted, a federation between a northern kingdom and a southern, is not established. How far he had made certain of the abstention of Louis Napoleon, how far he had realised the weakness of Austria, we do not authentically know. He was at least alive to all the risks to which Garibaldi's enterprise must instantly expose him in every quarter of the horizon—from Austria, deeming her hold upon Venetia at stake; from the French Emperor, with hostile clericals in France to face; from the
[011] whole army of catholics all over the world; and not least from triumphant Mazzinians, his personal foes, in whose inspirations he had no faith, whose success might easily roll him and his policy into mire and ruin. Now as always with consummate suppleness he confronted the necessities of a situation that he

[5] One of the pope's chamberlains gravely assured the English resident in Rome that he knew from a sure and trustworthy source that the French Emperor had made a bargain with the Devil, and frequently consulted him.

had not sought, and assuredly had neither invented nor hurried. The politician, he used to tell his friends, must above all things have the tact of the Possible. Well did Manzoni say of him, "Cavour has all the prudence and all the imprudence of the true statesman." Stained and turbid are the whirlpools of revolution. Yet the case of Italy was overwhelming. Sir James Hudson wrote to Mr. Gladstone from Turin (April 3, 1859)—"Piedmont cannot separate the question of national independence from the accidental existence of constitutional liberty (in Piedmont) if she would. Misgovernment in central Italy, heavy taxation and dearth in Lombardy, misgovernment in Modena, vacillation in Tuscany, cruelty in Naples, constitute the famous *grido di dolore*. The congress of Paris wedded Piedmont to the redress of grievances."

Garibaldi

In August (1860) Garibaldi crossed from Sicily to the mainland and speedily made his triumphant entry into Naples. The young king Francis withdrew before him at the head of a small force of faithful adherents to Capua, afterwards to Gaeta. At the Volturno the Garibaldians, meeting a vigorous resistance, drove back a force of the royal troops enormously superior in numbers. On the height of this agitated tide, and just in time to forestall a fatal movement of Garibaldi upon Rome, the Sardinian army had entered the territories of the pope (September 11).

II

In the series of transactions that I have sketched, the sympathies of Mr. Gladstone never wavered. From the appearance of his Neapolitan letters in 1851, he lost no opportunity of calling attention to Italian affairs. In 1854 he brought before Lord Clarendon the miserable condition of Poerio, Settembrini, and the rest. He took great personal trouble in helping to raise and invest a fund for the Settembrini family, and elaborate accounts [012] in his own handwriting remain. In 1855 he wrote to Lord John Russell, then starting for Vienna, as to a rumour of the adhesion

of Naples to the alliance of the western powers: "In any case I can conceive it possible that the Vienna conferences may touch upon Italian questions; and I sincerely rely upon your humanity as well as your love of freedom, indeed the latter is but little in question, to plead for the prisoners in the kingdom of the two Sicilies detained for political offences, real or pretended. I do not ask you to leave any greater duty undone, but to bear in mind the singular claims on your commiseration of these most unhappy persons, if occasion offers."

As we have already seen, it was long before he advanced to the view of the thoroughgoing school. Like nearly all his countrymen, he was at first a reformer, not a revolutionary. To the Marquis Dragonetti, Mr. Gladstone wrote from Broadstairs in 1854:—

> Naples has a government as bad as anarchy; Rome unites the evils of the worst government and the most entire anarchy. In those countries I can hardly imagine any change that would not be for the better. But in the wild opinions of some of your political sectaries, I see the best and most available defence of the existing system with its hideous mischiefs. Almost every Italian who heartily desires the removal from Italy and from the face of the earth of the immeasurable evils which your country now suffers through some of its governments, adopts Italian union and national independence for his watchwords.... Do not think it presumption, for it is the mere description of a fact, if I say, we in England cannot bring our minds to this mode of looking at the Italian question. All our habits, all our instincts, all our history lead us in another direction. In our view this is not building from the bottom upwards, but from the top downwards.... All our experience has been to the effect that the champion of liberty should take his ground, not upon any remote or abstract proposition, but upon the right of man, under every law divine and human, first to good government, and next to the institutions which are the necessary guarantees

> of it.... We sympathise strongly, I believe, with the victims of misgovernment, but the English mind is not shocked *in limine* at the notion of people belonging to one race and language, yet politically incorporated or associated with another; and of Italian unity, I think the language of this nation would be, We shall be glad if it proves to be feasible, but the condition of it must be gradually matured by a course of improvement in the several states, and by the political education of the people; if it cannot be reached by these means, it hardly will be by any others; and certainly not by opinions which closely link Italian reconstruction with European disorganisation and general war. [013]

So far removed at this date was Mr. Gladstone from the glorified democracy of the Mazzinian propaganda. He told Cobden that when he returned from Corfu in the spring of 1859, he found in England not only a government with strong Austrian leanings, but to his great disappointment not even the House of Commons so alive as he could have wished upon the Italian question. "It was in my opinion the authority and zeal of Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell in this question, that kindled the country."

While Europe was anxiously watching the prospects of war between France and Austria, Mr. Gladstone spoke in debate (April 18, 1859) upon the situation, to express his firm conviction that no plan of peace could be durable which failed to effect some mitigation of the sore evils afflicting the Italian peninsula. The course of events after the peace speedily ripened both his opinions and the sentiment of the country, and he was as angry as his neighbours at the unexpected preliminaries of Villafranca. "I little thought," he wrote to Poerio (July 15, 1859), "to have lived to see the day when the conclusion of a peace should in my own mind cause disgust rather than impart relief. But that day has come. I appreciate all the difficulties of the position both of the King of Sardinia and of Count Cavour. It is hardly possible for

me to pass a judgment upon his resignation as a political step: but I think few will doubt that the moral character of the act is high. The duties of England in respect to the Italian question are limited
[014] by her powers, and these are greatly confined. But her sentiments cannot change, because they are founded upon a regard to the deepest among those principles which regulate the intercourse of men and their formation into political societies." By the end of the year, he softened his judgment of the proceedings of the French Emperor.

Reform Not Unity

The heavy load of his other concerns did not absolve him in his conscience from duty to the Italian cause:—

> *Jan. 3, 1860.*—I sat up till 2 A.M. with my letter to Ld. J. Russell about Italy, and had an almost sleepless night for it. 4.—2-½ hours with the Prince Consort, *à deux reprises*, about the Italian question, which was largely stated on both sides. I thought he admitted so much as to leave him no standing ground. 5.—Went down to Pembroke Lodge and passed the evening with Lord John and his family. Lord John and I had much conversation on Italy.

In a cabinet memorandum (Jan. 3, 1860), he declared himself bound in candour to admit that the Emperor had shown, "though partial and inconsistent, indications of a genuine feeling for the Italians—and far beyond this he has committed himself very considerably to the Italian cause in the face of the world. When in reply to all that, we fling in his face the truce of Villafranca, he may reply—and the answer is not without force—that he stood single-handed in a cause when any moment Europe might have stood combined against him. We gave him verbal sympathy and encouragement, or at least criticism; no one else gave him anything at all. No doubt he showed then that he had undertaken a work to which his powers were unequal; but I do not think that, when fairly judged, he can be said to have given proof by that measure of insincerity or indifference." This was no more

than justice, it is even less; and both Italians and Englishmen have perhaps been too ready to forget that the freedom of Italy would have remained an empty hope if Napoleon iii. had not unsheathed his sword.

Napoleon's Share [015]

After discussing details, Mr. Gladstone laid down in his memorandum a general maxim for the times, that "the alliance with France is the true basis of peace in Europe, for England and France never will unite in any European purpose which is radically unjust." He put the same view in a letter to Lacaita a few months later (Sept. 16): "A close alliance between England and France cannot be used for mischief, and cannot provoke any dangerous counter combination; but a close alliance between England and other powers would provoke a dangerous counter combination immediately, besides that it could not in itself be trusted. My own leaning, therefore, is not indeed to place reliance on the French Emperor, but to interpret him candidly, and in Italian matters especially to recollect the great difficulties in which he is placed, (1) because, whether by his own fault or not, he cannot reckon upon strong support from England when he takes a right course. (2) Because he has his own ultramontane party in France to deal with, whom, especially if not well supported abroad, he cannot afford to defy."

As everybody soon saw, it was the relation of Louis Napoleon to the French ultramontanes that constituted the tremendous hazard of the Piedmontese invasion of the territories of the pope. This critical proceeding committed Cavour to a startling change, and henceforth he was constrained to advance to Italian unity. A storm of extreme violence broke upon him. Gortchakoff said that if geography had permitted, the Czar would betake himself to arms in defence of the Bourbon king. Prussia talked of reviving the holy alliance in defence of the law of nations against the overweening ambition of Piedmont. The French ambassador was recalled from Turin. Still no active intervention followed.

One great power alone stood firm, and Lord John Russell

wrote one of the most famous despatches in the history of our diplomacy (October 27, 1860). The governments of the pope and the king of the Two Sicilies, he said, provided so ill for the welfare of their people, that their subjects looked to their overthrow as a necessary preliminary to any improvement. Her Majesty's government were bound to admit that the Italians
[016] themselves are the best judges of their own interests. Vattel, that eminent jurist, had well said that when a people for good reasons take up arms against an oppressor, it is but an act of justice and generosity to assist brave men in the defence of their liberties. Did the people of Naples and the Roman States take up arms against their government for good reasons? Upon this grave matter, her Majesty's government held that the people in question are themselves the best judges of their own affairs. Her Majesty's government did not feel justified in declaring that the people of Southern Italy had not good reasons for throwing off their allegiance to their former governments. Her Majesty's government, therefore, could not pretend to blame the King of Sardinia for assisting them. So downright was the language of Lord John. We cannot wonder that such words as these spread in Italy like flame, that people copied the translation from each other, weeping over it for joy and gratitude in their homes, and that it was hailed as worth more than a force of a hundred thousand men.[6]

The sensation elsewhere was no less profound, though very different. The three potentates at Warsaw viewed the despatch with an emotion that was diplomatically called regret, but more resembled horror. The Prince Regent of Prussia, afterwards the Emperor William, told Prince Albert that it was a tough morsel, a disruption of the law of nations and of the holy ties that bind peoples to their sovereigns.[7] Many in England were equally shocked. Even Sir James Graham, for instance, said

[6] Walpole's *Russell*, ii. pp. 335-339.
[7] Martin's *Prince Consort*, v. p. 226.

that he would never have believed that such a document could have passed through a British cabinet or received the approval of a British sovereign; India, Ireland, Canada would await the application of the fatal doctrine that it contained; it was a great public wrong, a grave error; and even Garibaldi and Mazzini would come out of the Italian affair with cleaner hands. Yet to-day we may ask ourselves, was it not a little idle to talk of the holy ties that bind nations to their sovereigns, in respect of a system under which in Naples thousands of the most respectable of the subjects of the king were in prison or in exile; in the papal states ordinary justice was administered by rough-handed German soldiers, and young offenders shot by court-martial at the drumhead; and in the Lombardo-Venetian provinces press offences were judged by martial law, with chains, shooting, and flogging for punishment.[8] Whatever may be thought of Lord John and his doctrine, only those who hold to the converse doctrine, that subjects may never rise against a king, nor ever under any circumstances seek succour from foreign power, will deny that the cruelties of Naples and the iniquities connected with the temporal authority of the clergy in the states of the church, constituted an irrefragable case for revolt. [017]

The English Despatch

Within a few weeks after the troops of Victor Emmanuel had crossed the frontier (Sept. 1860), the papal forces had been routed, and a popular vote in the Neapolitan kingdom supported annexation to Piedmont. The papal states, with the exception of the patrimony of St. Peter in the immediate neighbourhood of Rome itself, fell into the hands of the king. Victor Emmanuel and Garibaldi rode into Naples side by side (Nov. 7). The Bourbon flag after a long stand was at last lowered at the stronghold of Gaeta (Feb. 14, 1861); the young Bourbon king became an exile for the rest of his life; and on February 18 the first parliament of united Italy assembled at Turin—Venice and Rome for a short

[8] *A General Review of the Different States of Italy*; prepared for the Foreign Office by Sir Henry Bulwer, January 1853.

season still outside. A few months before, Mr. Gladstone had written a long letter to d'Azeglio. It was an earnest exposition of the economic and political ideals that seemed to shine in the firmament above a nation now emerging from the tomb. The letter was to be shown to Cavour. "Tell that good friend of ours," he replied, "that our trade laws are the most liberal of the continent; that for ten years we have been practising the maxims that he exhorts us to adopt; tell him that he preaches to the converted."[9] Then one of those disasters happened that seem to shake the planetary nations out of their pre-appointed orbits. Cavour died.[10]

[018]

[9] Cavour to Marquis d'Azeglio, Dec. 9, 1860. *La Politique du Comte Camille de Cavour de 1852 à 1861*, p. 392.

[10] June 6, 1861.

Chapter II. The Great Budget. (1860-1861)

> It was said that by this treaty the British nation was about blindly to throw herself into the arms of this constant and uniform foe.... Did it not much rather, by opening new sources of wealth, speak this forcible language—that the interval of peace, as it would enrich the nation, would also prove the means of enabling her to combat her enemy with more effect when the day of hostility should come? It did more than this; by promoting habits of friendly intercourse and of mutual benefit, while it invigorated the resources of Britain, it made it less likely that she should have occasion to call forth these resources.—PITT (February 12, 1787).

I

As we survey the panorama of a great man's life, conspicuous peaks of time and act stand out to fix the eye, and in our statesman's long career the budget of 1860 with its spurs of appendant circumstance, is one of these commanding points. In the letter to Acton already quoted (p. 1), Mr. Gladstone says:—

> Before parliament met in 1860, the 'situation' was very greatly *tightened* and *enhanced* by three circumstances. First, the disaster in China.[11] Secondly, a visit of Mr. Cobden's to Hawarden, when he proposed to me in a garden stroll, the French treaty, and I, for myself and my share, adopted it (nor have I ever for a moment repented or had a doubt) as rapidly as the tender of office two months before. Thirdly, and the

[11] The disaster was the outcome of the Chinese refusal to receive Mr. Bruce, the British minister at Pekin. Admiral Hope in endeavouring to force an entrance to the Peiho river was repulsed by the fire of the Chinese forts (June 25, 1859). In the following year a joint Anglo-French expedition captured the Taku forts and occupied Pekin (Oct. 12, 1860).

gravest of all, the Savoy affair. If, as is supposed, I have Quixotism in my nature, I can assure you that I was at this [019] juncture much more than satiated, and could have wished with Penelope that the whirlwind would take me up, and carry me to the shore of the great stream of Ocean.[12] And the wish would in this point not have been extravagant: the whirlwind was there ready to hand. In and from the midst of it was born the budget of 1860.

The financial arrangements of 1859 were avowedly provisional and temporary, and need not detain us. The only feature was a rise in the income tax from fivepence to ninepence—its highest figure so far in a time of peace. "My budget," he wrote to Mrs. Gladstone (July 16), "is just through the cabinet, very kindly and well received, no one making objection but Lewis, who preached low doctrine. It confirms me in the belief I have long had, that he was fitter for most other offices than for that I now hold." "*July 21 or rather 22, one A.M.*—Just come back from a long night and stiff contention at the House of Commons.... It has been rather nice and close fighting. Disraeli made a popular motion to trip me up, but had to withdraw it, at any rate for the time. This I can say, it was not so that I used him. I am afraid that the truce between us is over, and that we shall have to pitch in as before."

The only important speech was one on Italy (August 8),[13] of which Disraeli said that though they were always charmed by the speaker's eloquence, this was a burst of even unusual brilliance, and it gave pleasure in all quarters. "Spoke for an *oretta* [short hour]," says the orator, "on Italian affairs; my best offhand speech." "The fish dinner," Mr. Gladstone writes, "went off very well, and I think my proposing Lord Palmerston's health (without speech) was decidedly approved. I have had a warm

[12] *Odyssey*, xx. 63.

[13] On a motion by Lord Elcho against any participation in a conference to settle the details of the peace between Austria and France.

message from Lord Lansdowne about my speech; and Lord P. told me that on Tuesday night as he went upstairs on getting home he heard Lady P. spouting as she read by candle-light; it turned out to be the same effusion."

Another incident briefly related to Mrs. Gladstone brings us on to more serious ground: "*Hawarden, Sept. 12.*—Cobden [020] came early. Nothing could be better than the luncheon, but I am afraid the dinner will be rather strong with local clergy. I have had a walk and long talk with Cobden who, I think, pleases and is pleased." This was the garden walk of which we have just heard, where Cobden, the ardent hopeful sower, scattered the good seed into rich ground. The idea of a commercial treaty with France was in the air. Bright had opened it, Chevalier had followed it up, Persigny agreed, Cobden made an opportunity, Gladstone seized it. Cobden's first suggestion had been that as he was about to spend a part of the winter in Paris, he might perhaps be of use to Mr. Gladstone in the way of inquiry. Conversation expanded this into something more definite and more energetic. Why should he not, with the informal sanction of the British government, put himself into communication with the Emperor and his ministers, and work out with them the scheme of a treaty that should at once open the way to a great fiscal reform in both countries, and in both countries produce a solid and sterling pacification of feeling? Cobden saw Palmerston and tried to see Lord John Russell, and though he hardly received encouragement, at least he was not forbidden to proceed upon his volunteered mission.[14] "Gladstone," wrote Cobden to Mr. Bright, "is really almost the only cabinet minister of five years' standing who is not afraid to let his heart guide his head a little at times." The Emperor had played with the idea of a more open trade for five or six years, and Cobden, with his union of economic, moral, and social elements,

[14] I may be forgiven for referring to my *Life of Cobden*, ii. chap. xi. For the French side of the transaction, see an interesting chapter in De La Gorce, *Hist. du Second Empire*, iii. pp. 213-32.

and his incomparable gifts of argumentative persuasion, was the very man to strike Napoleon's impressionable mind. Although, having alienated the clericals by his Italian policy, the ruler of France might well have hesitated before proceeding to alienate the protectionists also, he became a convert and did not shrink.

> Both Cobden and I, says Mr. Gladstone, were keenly in favour of such a treaty (I myself certainly), without intending thereby
> [021] to signify the smallest disposition to the promotion of tariff treaties in general. I had been an active party to the various attempts under Sir Robert Peel's government to conclude such treaties, and was as far as possible removed from any disposition to the renewal of labour which was in itself so profitless, and which was dangerously near to a practical assertion of a false principle, namely that the reductions of indirect taxation, permitted by fiscal considerations, are in themselves injurious to the country that makes them, and are only to be entertained when a compensation can be had for them.[15] ... The correspondence which would in the ordinary course have been exchanged between the foreign offices of the two countries, was carried through in a series of personal letters between Mr. Cobden and myself. I remember indeed that the Emperor or his government were desirous to conceal from their own foreign minister (Walewski) the fact that such a measure was in contemplation. On our side, the method pursued was only recommended by practical considerations. I contemplated including the conditions of the French treaty

[15] "I will undertake that there is not a syllable on our side of the treaty that is inconsistent with the soundest principles of free trade. We do not propose to reduce a duty which, on its merits, ought not to have been dealt with long ago. We give no concessions to France which do not apply to all other nations. We leave ourselves free to lay on any amount of internal duties and to put on an equal tax on foreign articles of the same kind at the custom-house. It is true we bind ourselves for ten years not otherwise to raise such of our customs as affect the French trade, or put on fresh ones; and this, I think, no true free trader will regret."—*Cobden to Bright.*

> in a new and sweeping revision of the tariff, the particulars of which it was of course important to keep from the public eye until they were ready to be submitted to parliament.

At the end of 1859 the question of the treaty was brought into the cabinet, and there met with no general opposition, though some objection was taken by Lewis and Wood, based on the ground that they ought not to commit themselves by treaty engagements to a sacrifice of revenue, until they had before them the income and the charges of the year. Writing to his wife about some invitation to a country house, Mr. Gladstone says (Jan. 11, 1860):—

> I cannot go without a clear sacrifice of public duty. For the measure is of immense importance and of no less nicety, and here it all depends on me. Lord John backs me most cordially [022] and well, but it is no small thing to get a cabinet to give up one and a half or two millions of revenue at a time when all the public passion is for enormous expenditure, and in a case beset with great difficulties. In *fact*, a majority of the cabinet is indifferent or averse, but they have behaved very well. I almost always agree with Lewis on other matters, but in trade and finance I do not find his opinions satisfactory. Till it is through, this vital question will need my closest and most anxious attention. [Two days later he writes:] The cabinet has been again on the French treaty. There are four or five zealous, perhaps as many who would rather be without it. It has required pressure, but we have got sufficient power now, if the French will do what is reasonable. Lord John has been excellent, Palmerston rather neutral. It is really a great European operation. [A fortnight later (*Jan. 28*):] A word to say I have opened the fundamental parts of my budget in the cabinet, and that I could not have hoped a better reception. Nothing decided, for I did not ask it, and indeed the case was not complete, but there was no general [resistance], no decided objection; the tone of questioning was favourable,

> Granville and Argyll delighted, Newcastle, I think, ditto. Thank God.
>
> *To Cobden, Jan. 28.*—Criticism is busy; but the only thing really formidable is the unavowed but strong conflict with that passionate expectation of war, which no more bears disappointment than if it were hope or love. *Feb. 6.*—Cobbett once compared an insignificant public man in an important situation to the linch-pin in the carriage, and my position recalls his very apt figure to my mind.

Of course in his zeal for the treaty and its connection with tariff reform, Mr. Gladstone believed that the operation would open a great volume of trade and largely enrich the country. But in one sense this was the least of it:—

> I had a reason of a higher order. The French Emperor had launched his project as to Savoy and Nice. It should have been plain to all those who desired an united Italy, that such an Italy ought not to draw Savoy in its wake; a country severed from it by the mountains, by language, by climate, and I suppose by pursuits. But it does not follow that Savoy should have been tacked on to France, while for the annexation of
> [023] Nice it was difficult to find a word of apology. But it could scarcely be said to concern our interests, while there was not the shadow of a case of honour. The susceptibilities of England were, however, violently aroused. Even Lord Russell used imprudent language in parliament about looking for other allies. A French panic prevailed as strong as any of the other panics that have done so much discredit to this country. For this panic, the treaty of commerce with France was the only sedative. It was in fact a counter-irritant; and it aroused the sense of commercial interest to counteract the war passion. It was and is my opinion, that the choice lay between the Cobden treaty and not the certainty, but the high probability, of a war with France. (*Undated memo.*)

II

Out of the commercial treaty grew the whole of the great financial scheme of 1860. By his first budget Mr. Gladstone had marked out this year for a notable epoch in finance. Happily it found him at the exchequer. The expiry of certain annuities payable to the public creditor removed a charge of some two millions, and Mr. Gladstone was vehemently resolved that this amount should not "pass into the great gulf of expenditure there to be swallowed up." If the year, in such circumstances, is to pass, he said to Cobden, "without anything done for trade and the masses, it will be a great discredit and a great calamity." The alterations of duty required for the French treaty were made possible by the lapse of the annuities, and laid the foundation of a plan that averted the discredit and calamity of doing nothing for trade, and nothing for the masses of the population. France engaged to reduce duties and remove prohibitions on a long list of articles of British production and export, iron the most important,—"the daily bread of all industries," as Cobden called it. England engaged immediately to abolish all duties upon all manufactured articles at her ports, and to reduce the duties on wine and brandy. The English reductions and abolitions extended beyond France to the commodities of all countries alike. Mr. Gladstone called 1860 the last of the cardinal and organic years of emancipatory fiscal legislation; it ended a series of which the four earlier terms had been reached in 1842, in 1845, in 1846, and 1853. With the French treaty, he used to say, the movement in favour of free trade reached its zenith. [024]

Outline Of The Scheme

The financial fabric that rose from the treaty was one of the boldest of all his achievements, and the reader who seeks to take the measure of Mr. Gladstone as financier, in comparison with any of his contemporaries in the western world, will find in this fabric ample material.[16] Various circumstances had led

[16] The reader who wishes to follow these proceedings in close detail will,

to an immense increase in national expenditure. The structure of warships was revolutionised by the use of iron in place of wood. It was a remarkable era in artillery, and guns were urgently demanded of new type. In the far East a quarrel had broken out with the Chinese. The threats of French officers after the plot of Orsini had bred a sense of insecurity in our own borders. Thus more money than ever was required; more than ever economy was both unpopular and difficult. The annual estimates stood at seventy millions; when Mr. Gladstone framed his famous budget seven years before, that charge stood at fifty-two millions. If the sole object of a chancellor of the exchequer be to balance his account, Mr. Gladstone might have contented himself with keeping the income-tax and duties on tea and sugar as they were, meeting the remissions needed by the French treaty out of the sum released by the expiry of the long annuities. Or he might have reduced tea and sugar to a peace rate, and raised the income-tax from ninepence to a shilling. Instead of taking this easy course, Mr. Gladstone after having relinquished upwards of a million for the sake of the French treaty, now further relinquished nearly a million more for the sake of releasing 371 articles from duties of customs, and a third million in order to abolish the vexatious excise duty upon the manufacture of paper. Nearly one million of all this loss he recouped by the imposition of certain small
[025] charges and minor taxes, and by one or two ingenious expedients of collection and account, and the other two millions he made good out of the lapsed annuities. Tea and sugar he left as they were, and the income-tax he raised from ninepence to tenpence. Severe economists, not quite unjustly, called these small charges a blot on his escutcheon. Time soon wiped it off, for in fact they were a failure.

The removal of the excise duty upon paper proved to be the

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of course, read the volume of *The Financial Statements* of 1853, 1860-63, containing also the speech on tax-bills, 1861, and on charities, 1863 (Murray, 1863).

chief stumbling-block, and ultimately it raised more excitement than any other portion of the scheme. The fiscal project became by and by associated with a constitutional struggle between Lords and Commons. In the Commons the majority in favour of abolishing the duty sank from fifty-three to nine; troubles with China caused a demand for new expenditure; the yield from the paper duty was wanted; and the Lords finding in all this a plausible starting-point for a stroke of party business, or for the assertion of the principle that to reject a repealing money bill was not the same thing as to meddle with a bill putting on a tax, threw it out. Then when the Lords had rejected the bill, many who had been entirely cool about taking off the 'taxes upon knowledge'—for this unfavourable name was given to the paper duty by its foes—rose to exasperation at the thought of the peers meddling with votes of money. All this we shall see as we proceed.

This was the broad outline of an operation that completed the great process of reducing articles liable to customs duties from 1052, as they stood in 1842 when Peel opened the attack upon them; from 466 as Mr. Gladstone found them in 1853; and from 419 as he found them now, down to 48, at which he now left them.[17] Simplification had little further to go. "Why did you not wait," he was asked, "till the surplus came, which notwithstanding all drawbacks you got in 1863, and then operate [026] in a quiet way, without disturbing anybody?"[18] His answer was that the surplus would not have come at all, because it was

[17] Strictly speaking, in 1845 the figure had risen from 1052 to 1163 articles, for the first operation of tariff reform was to multiply the number in consequence of the transition from *ad valorem* to specific duties, and this increased the headings under which they were described. In 1860 Mr. Gladstone removed the duties from 371 articles, reducing the number to 48, of which only 15 were of importance—spirits, sugar, tea, tobacco, wine, coffee, corn, currants, timber, chicory, figs, hops, pepper, raisins, and rice.

[18] See an interesting letter to Sir W. Heathcote in reply to other criticisms, in Appendix.

created by his legislation. “The principle adopted,” he said, “was this. We are now (1860) on a high table-land of expenditure. This being so, it is not as if we were merely meeting an occasional and momentary charge. We must consider how best to keep ourselves going during a *period* of high charge. In order to do that, we will aggravate a momentary deficiency that we may thereby make a *great and permanent addition to productive power*.” This was his ceaseless refrain—the steadfast pursuit of the durable enlargement of productive power as the commanding aim of high finance.

III

At the beginning of the year the public expectation was fixed upon Lord John Russell as the protagonist in the approaching battle of parliamentary reform, and the eager partizans at the Carlton Club were confident that on reform they would pull down the ministry. The partizans of another sort assure us that “the whole character of the session was changed by Mr. Gladstone's invincible resolution to come forward in spite of his friends, and in defiance of his foes, for his own *aristeia* or innings.” The explanation is not good-natured, and we know that it is not true; but what is true is that when February opened, the interest of the country had become centred at its highest pitch in the budget and the commercial treaty. As the day for lifting the veil was close at hand, Mr. Gladstone fell ill, and here again political benevolence surmised that his disorder was diplomatic. An entry or two from Phillimore's journal will bring him before us as he was:—

> *Jan. 29.*—Gladstone's emaciation in the past fortnight alarms me, as it has, I find, many other persons. *Feb. 5.*—Gladstone seriously ill; all the afternoon in Downing Street; a slight congestion of the lungs. Great treaty and financial speech put

off till Thursday. Was to have been to-morrow. Gladstone wished to see me, but I would only stay a minute by his bedside. He looked very pale. He must not speak for ten days, or Ferguson (his doctor) said, he will meet Canning's fate. *Feb. 6.*—With Gladstone in the evening. He is still in bed, but visibly better. *Feb. 7.*—With Gladstone a long time in the morning. Found him much better though still in bed. Annoyed at the publication of the new treaty with France in the Belgian papers, it being part of the scheme of his finance measure. *Feb. 8.*—Gladstone drove out to-day; bent on speaking the day after to-morrow. Ferguson allows him. I again protested. *Feb. 9.*—Saw Gladstone; he is better. But I am frightened at the proposed exertion of Friday. *Feb. 10.*—Saw Gladstone in the morning, radiant with expected success, and again at night at 10 o'clock in Downing Street still more radiant with triumph. Spoke for three hours and fifty minutes without suffering. Thinks that the House will accept all that is material in his finance scheme. *Feb. 13.*—Dined with Gladstone; ordered not to leave the house this week. *Feb. 25.*—Called on the Gladstones at breakfast time. Found them both exceedingly happy at the immense majority of 116 which affirmed last night the principle of his grand budget.[19] His hard dry cough distresses me. Gladstone thinks he has done what Pitt would have done but for the French Revolution. With characteristic modesty he said, "I am a dwarf on the shoulders of a giant."

Mr. Gladstone's own entries are these:—

Feb. 10, '60.—Spoke 5-9 without great exhaustion; aided by a great stock of egg and wine. Thank God! Home at 11. This was the most arduous operation I have ever had in parliament. *March 9.*—Spoke on various matters in the

[19] On Mr. Duncan's resolution against adding to an existing deficiency by diminishing ordinary revenue and against re-imposing the income-tax at an unnecessarily high rate. *Moved Feb. 21.*

> Treaty debate; voted in 282:56; a most prosperous ending to a great transaction in which I heartily thank God for having given me a share. *March 23.*—A long day of 16-½ hours' work.

Of the speech in which the budget was presented everybody agreed that it was one of the most extraordinary triumphs ever
[028] witnessed in the House of Commons. The casual delay of a week had raised expectation still higher; hints dropped by friends in the secret had added to the general excitement; and as was truly said by contemporaries, suspense that would have been fatal to mediocrity actually served Mr. Gladstone. Even the censorious critics of the leading journal found in the largeness and variety of the scheme its greatest recommendation, as suggesting an accord between the occasion, the man, and the measure, so marvellous that it would be a waste of all three not to accept them. Among other hearers was Lord Brougham, who for the first time since he had quitted the scene of his triumphs a generation before, came to the House of Commons, and for four hours listened intently to the orator who had now acquired the supremacy that was once his own. "The speech," said Bulwer, "will remain among the monuments of English eloquence as long as the language lasts." Napoleon begged Lord Cowley to convey his thanks to Mr. Gladstone for the copy of his budget speech he had sent him, which he said he would preserve "as a precious souvenir of a man who has my thorough esteem, and whose eloquence is of a lofty character commensurate with the grandeur of his views." Prince Albert wrote to Stockmar (March 17), "Gladstone is now the real leader of the House, and works with an energy and vigour almost incredible."[20]

Almost every section of the trading and political community looked with favour upon the budget as a whole, though it was true that each section touched by it found fault with its own

[20] Martin's *Life of Prince Consort*, v. pp. 35, 37, 51.

part. Mr. Gladstone said that they were without exception free traders, but not free traders without exception. The magnitude and comprehensiveness of the enterprise seized the imagination of the country. At the same time it multiplied sullen or uneasy interests. The scheme was no sooner launched, than the chancellor of the exchequer was overwhelmed by deputations. Within a couple of days he was besieged by delegates from the paper makers; distillers came down upon him; merchants interested in the bonding system, wholesale stationers, linen manufacturers, maltsters, licensed victuallers, all in turn thronged his ante-room. [029] He was now, says Greville (Feb. 15), "*the* great man of the day!" The reduction of duties on currants created lively excitement in Greece, and Mr. Gladstone was told that if he were to appear there he could divide honours with Bacchus and Triptolemus, the latest benefactors of that neighbourhood.

Political onlookers with whom the wish was not alien to their thought, soon perceived that in spite of admiration for splendid eloquence and incomparable dexterity, it would not be all sunshine and plain sailing. At a very early moment the great editor of the *Times* went about saying that Gladstone would find it hard work to get his budget through; if Peel with a majority of ninety needed it all to carry his budget, what would happen to a government that could but command a majority of nine?[21] Both the commercial treaty and the finance speedily proved to have many enemies. Before the end of March Phillimore met a parliamentary friend who like everybody else talked of Gladstone, and confirmed the apprehension that the whigs obeyed and trembled and were frightened to death. "We don't know where he is leading us," said Hayter, who had been whipper-in. On the last day of the month Phillimore enters: "*March 30.*—Gladstone has taken his name off the Carlton, which I regret. It is a marked and significant act of entire

Budget Introduced

[21] Greville, III.{FNS ii. p. 291.

separation from the *whole* party and will strengthen Disraeli's hands. The whigs hate Gladstone. The moderate conservatives and the radicals incline to him. The old tories hate him." For reasons not easy to trace, a general atmosphere of doubt and unpopularity seemed suddenly to surround his name.

The fortunes of the budget have been succinctly described by its author:—

> They were chequered, and they were peculiar in this, that the first blow struck was delivered by one of the best among its friends. Lord John Russell, keenly alive to the discredit of any tampering as in former years with the question of the franchise, insisted on introducing his Reform bill on March 1, when the
> [030] treaty and the financial proposals of the year, numerous and complex as they were, had not proceeded beyond their early stages. This was in flat violation of a rule of Lord Bacon's, even more weighty now than in his time, which Sir James Graham was fond of quoting: "Never overlap business." The enemies of the treaty were thus invited to obstruct it through prolonged debating on reform, and the enemies of reform to discharge a corresponding office by prolonged debating on the finance. A large majority of the House were in disguised hostility to the extension of the franchise. The discussions on it were at once protracted, intermittent, and languid. No division was taken against it. It was defeated by the pure *vis inertiæ* of the House skilfully applied: and it was withdrawn on June 11. But it had done its work, by delaying the *tail* of the financial measures until a time when the marriage effected by the treaty between England and France had outlived its parliamentary honeymoon. There had intervened the Savoy and Nice explosion; settlement with China was uncertain; the prospects of the harvest were bad; French invasion was apprehended by many men usually rational. The Paper Duty bill, which would have passed the Commons by a large majority in the beginning of March, only escaped defeat on

May 8 by a majority of nine.[22]

When Lord John had asked the cabinet to stop the budget in order to fix a day for his second reading, Mr. Gladstone enters in an autobiographic memorandum of his latest years[23]:—

> I said to him, "Lord John, I will go down on my knees to you, to entreat you not to press that request." But he persevered; and this although he was both a loyal colleague and a sincere friend to the budget and to the French treaty. When reform was at last got rid of, in order to prosecute finance we had much to do, and in the midst of it there came upon us the news of hostilities in China, which demanded at once an increase of outlay ... sufficient to destroy my accruing balance, and thus to disorganise the finance of the year. The opposition to the Paper bill now assumed most formidable dimensions.... [031]
> During a long course of years there had grown up in the House of Commons a practice of finally disposing of the several parts of the budget each by itself. And the House of Lords had shown so much self-control in confining itself to criticism on matters of finance, that the freedom of the House of Commons was in no degree impaired. But there was the opportunity of mischief; and round the carcass the vultures now gathered in overwhelming force. It at once became clear that the Lords would avail themselves of the opportunity afforded them by the single presentation of financial bills, and would prolong, and virtually re-enact a tax, which the representatives of the people had repealed.

On May 5 the diary reports: "Cabinet. Lord Palmerston spoke 3/4 hour against Paper Duties bill! I had to reply. Cabinet against him, except a few, Wood and Cardwell in particular. Three wild schemes of foreign alliance are afloat! Our old men (2) are

[22] *Eng. Hist. Rev.* April 1887, p. 301. The majority in the Lords was 193 to 104.
[23] Aug. 31, 1897.

unhappily our youngest." Palmerston not only spoke against the bill, as he had a right in cabinet to do, but actually wrote to the Queen that he was bound in duty to say that if the Lords threw out the bill—the bill of his own cabinet—"they would perform a good public service."[24]

Phillimore's notes show that the intense strain was telling on his hero's physical condition, though it only worked his resolution to a more undaunted pitch:—

> *May 9.*—Found Gladstone in good spirits in spite of the narrow majority on the paper duty last night, but ill with a cough. *May 15.*—The whigs out of office, and perhaps in, abusing Gladstone and lauding G. Lewis. I had much conversation with Walpole. Told me he, Henley, and those who went with them would have followed Gladstone if he had not joined this government, but added he was justified in doing so. *May 18.*—Gladstone is *ill*; vexed and *indignant* at the possible and probable conduct of the peers on Monday. Nothing will prevent him from denouncing them in the Commons, if they throw out the paper bill, as having violated in substance and practically the constitution. Meanwhile his unpopularity flows on.

[032]

IV

The rejection of the bill affecting the paper duty by the Lords was followed by proceedings set out by Mr. Gladstone in one of his political memoranda, dated May 26, 1860:—

> Though I seldom have time to note the hairbreadth 'scapes of which so many occur in these strange times and with

[24] Martin, v. p. 100.

our strangely constructed cabinet, yet I must put down a few words with respect to the great question now depending between the Lords and the English nation. On Sunday, when it was well known that the Paper Duties bill would be rejected, I received from Lord John Russell a letter which enclosed one to him from Lord Palmerston. Lord Palmerston's came in sum to this: that the vote of the Lords would not be a party vote, that as to the *thing done* it was right, that we could not help ourselves, that we should simply acquiesce, and no minister ought to resign. Lord John in his reply to this, stated that he took a much more serious view of the question and gave reasons. Then he went on to say that though he did not agree in the grounds stated by Lord Palmerston, he would endeavour to arrive at the same conclusion. His letter accordingly ended with practical acquiescence. And he stated to me his concurrence in Lord Palmerston's closing proposition.

Thereupon I wrote an immediate reply. We met in cabinet to consider the case. Lord Palmerston started on the line he had marked out. I think he proposed to use some meaningless words in the House of Commons as to the value we set on our privileges, and our determination to defend them if attacked, by way of garniture to the act of their abandonment. Upon this I stated my opinions, coming to the point that this proceeding of the House of Lords amounted to the establishment of a revising power over the House of Commons in its most vital function long declared exclusively its own, and to a divided responsibility in fixing the revenue and charge of the country for the year; besides aggravating circumstances upon which it was needless to dwell. In this proceeding nothing would induce me to acquiesce, though I earnestly desired that the mildest means of correction should be adopted. This was strongly backed in principle by Lord John; who thought that as public affairs would not admit of our at once confining ourselves to this subject, we should take it up the first thing next session, and send up a new bill. Practical, as well as [033]

> other, objections were taken to this mode of proceeding, and opposition was continued on the merits; Lord Palmerston keen and persevering. He was supported by the Chancellor, Wood, Granville (in substance), Lewis, and Cardwell, who thought nothing could be done, but were ready to join in resigning if thought fit. Lord John, Gibson, and I were for decided action. Argyll leaned the same way. Newcastle was for inquiry to end in a declaratory resolution. Villiers thought some step necessary. Grey argued mildly, inclined I think to inaction. Herbert advised resignation, opposed any other course. Somerset was silent, which I conceive meant inaction. At last Palmerston gave in, and adopted with but middling grace the proposition to set out with inquiries, and with the intention to make as little of the matter as he could.
>
> His language in giving notice, on Tuesday, of the committee went near the verge of saying, We mean nothing. An unsatisfactory impression was left on the House. Not a syllable was said in recognition of the gravity of the occasion. Lord John had unfortunately gone away to the foreign office. I thought I should do mischief at that stage by appearing to catch at a part in the transaction. Yesterday all was changed by the dignified declaration of Lord John. I suggested to him that he should get up, and Lord Palmerston, who had intended to keep the matter in his own hands, gave way. But Lord Palmerston was uneasy and said, "You won't pitch it into the Lords," and other things of the same kind. On the whole, I hope that in this grave matter at least we have turned the corner.

As we know, even the fighting party in the cabinet was forced to content itself for the moment with three protesting resolutions. Lord Palmerston and his chancellor of the exchequer both spoke in parliament. "The tone of the two remonstrances," says Mr. Gladstone euphemistically, "could not be in exact accord; but by careful steering on my part, and I presume on his, all occasion

of scandal was avoided." Not altogether, perhaps. Phillimore says:—

> *July 6.*—A strange and memorable debate. Palmerston moving resolution condemnatory of the Lords, and yet speaking in defence of their conduct. Gladstone most earnestly and [034]
> eloquently condemning them, and declaring that action and not resolutions became the House of Commons, and that though he agreed to the language and spirit of the resolutions, if action were proposed he would support the proposal, and taunted the conservatives with silently abetting "a gigantic innovation on the constitution." Loudly and tempestuously cheered by the radicals, and no one else. Yet he was the true conservative at this moment. But ought he to have spoken this as chancellor of the exchequer, and from the treasury bench, after the first lord of the treasury had spoken in almost totally opposite sense? The answer may be that it was a House of Commons, and not a government question. I fear he is very unwell, and I greatly fear killing himself. 17.—"I have lived," he said, speaking of the debate on the Lords and the paper duty, "to hear a radical read a long passage from Mr. Burke amid the jeers and scoffs of the so-called conservatives."

The struggle still went on:—

> *July 20.*—H. of C. Lost my Savings Bank Monies bill; my *first* defeat in a measure of finance in the H. of C. This ought to be very good for me; and I earnestly wish to make it so.
>
> *Aug. 6.*—H. of C. Spoke 1-½ hour on the Paper duty; a favourable House. Voted in 266-233. A most kind and indeed notable reception afterwards.
>
> *Aug. 7.*—This was a day of congratulations from many kind M.P.'s.

The occasion of the notable reception was the moving of his resolutions reducing the customs duty on imported paper to the level of the excise duty. This proceeding was made necessary

by the treaty, and was taken to be, as Mr. Gladstone intended that it should be, a clear indication of further determination to abolish customs duty and excise duty alike. The first resolution was carried by 33, and when he rose to move the second the cheering from the liberal benches kept him standing for four or five minutes—cheering intended to be heard the whole length of the corridor that led to another place.[25]

[035]

Revival Of Popularity

The great result, as Greville says in a sentence that always amused the chief person concerned, is "to give some life to half-dead, broken-down, and tempest-tossed Gladstone." In this rather tame fashion the battle ended for the session, but the blaze in the bosom of the chancellor of the exchequer was inextinguishable, as the Lords in good time found out. Their rejection of the Paper Duties bill must have had no inconsiderable share in propelling him along the paths of liberalism. The same proceeding helped to make him more than ever the centre of popular hopes. He had taken the unpopular side in resisting the inquiry into the miscarriages of the Crimea, in pressing peace with Russia, in opposing the panic on papal aggression, on the bill for divorce, and on the bill against church rates; and he represented with fidelity the constituency that was least of all in England in accord with the prepossessions of democracy. Yet this made no difference when the time came to seek a leader. "There is not," Mr. Bright said, in the course of this quarrel with the Lords, "a man who labours and sweats for his daily bread, there is not a woman living in a cottage who strives to make her home happy for husband and children, to whom the words of the chancellor of the exchequer have not brought hope, and to whom his measures, which have been defended with an eloquence few can equal and with a logic none can contest, have

[25] Bright wrote to Mr. Gladstone that he was inclined "to think that the true course for Lord John, yourself, and Mr. Gibson, and for any others who agreed with you, was to have resigned rather than continue a government which could commit so great a sin against the representative branch of our constitution."

not administered consolation."

At the end of the session Phillimore reports:—

> *Aug. 12.*—Gladstone is physically weak, requires rest, air, and generous living. He discoursed without the smallest reserve upon political affairs, the feebleness of the government, mainly attributable to the absence of any effective head; Palmerston's weakness in the cabinet, and his low standard for all public conduct. He said in Peel's cabinet, a cabinet minister if he had a measure to bring forward consulted Peel and then the cabinet. Nobody thought of consulting Palmerston first, but brought his measure at once to the cabinet. Gladstone said his work in the cabinet had been so [036] constant and severe that his work in the House of Commons was refreshing by comparison. I never heard him speak so strongly of the timidity and vacillation of his comrades. The last victory, which alone preserved the government from dropping to pieces, was won in spite of them.

V

In a contemporary memorandum (May 30, 1860) on the opinions of the cabinet at this date Mr. Gladstone sets out the principal trains of business with which he and his colleagues were called upon to deal. It is a lively picture of the vast and diverse interests of a minister disposed to take his cabinet duties seriously. It is, too, a curious chart of the currents and cross-currents of the time. Here are the seven heads as he sets them down:—

> (1) The Italian question—Austrian or anti-Austrian; (2) Foreign policy in general—leaning towards calm and peace, or brusqueness and war; (3) Defences and expenditure—alarm and money charges on the one side, modest and timid retrenchment with confidence in our position on the other; (4) Finance, as adapted to the one or the other of these groups of ideas

> and feelings respectively; (5) Reform—ultra-conservative on the one side, on the other, no fear of the working class and the belief that something *real* though limited, should be done towards their enfranchisement; (6) Church matters may perhaps be also mentioned, though there has been no collision in regard to them, whatever difference there may be—they have indeed held a very secondary place amidst the rude and constant shocks of the last twelve months; (7) Lastly, the *coup d'état* on the paper duties draws a new line of division.

Cabinet Currents

"In the many passages of argument and opinion," Mr. Gladstone adds, "the only person from whom I have never to my recollection differed on a serious matter during this anxious twelvemonth is Milner Gibson." The reader will find elsewhere the enumeration of the various parts in this complex dramatic piece.[26] Some of the most Italian members of the cabinet were also the most combative in foreign policy, the most martial in respect of defence, the most stationary in finance. In the matter of reform, some who were liberal as to the franchise were conservative as to redistribution. In matters ecclesiastical, those who like Mr. Gladstone were most liberal elsewhere, were (with sympathy from Argyll) "most conservative and church-like."

[037]

> On the paper duties there are, I think, only three members of the cabinet who have a strong feeling of the need of a remedy for the late aggression—Lord John Russell, Gibson, W. E. G.—and Lord John Russell leans so much upon Palmerston in regard to foreign affairs that he is weaker in other subjects when opposed to him, than might be desired. With us in feeling are, more or less, Newcastle, Argyll, Villiers. On the other side, and pretty decidedly—first and foremost, Lord Palmerston; after him, the Chancellor, Granville, Lewis, Wood, Cardwell, Herbert. It is easy to judge what an odd shifting of parts takes place in our discussions. We are not

[26] See Appendix.

> Mr. Burke's famous mosaic, but we are a mosaic in solution, that is to say, a kaleidoscope.[27] When the instrument turns, the separate pieces readjust themselves, and all come out in perfectly novel combinations. Such a cabinet ought not to be acephalous.

Before he had been a year and a half in office, Mr. Gladstone wrote to Graham (Nov. 27, '60): "We live in anti-reforming times. All improvements have to be urged in apologetic, almost in supplicatory tones. I sometimes reflect how much less liberal as to domestic policy in any true sense of the word, is this government than was Sir Robert Peel's; and how much the tone of ultra-toryism prevails among a large portion of the liberal party." "I speak a literal truth," he wrote to Cobden, "when I say that in these days it is more difficult to save a shilling than to spend a million." "The men," he said, "who ought to have been breasting and stemming the tide have become captains general of the alarmists," and he deplored Cobden's refusal of office when [038] the Palmerston government was formed. All this only provoked him to more relentless energy. Well might Prince Albert call it incredible.

VI

After the "gigantic innovation" perpetrated by the Lords, Mr. Gladstone read to the cabinet (June 30, 1860) an elaborate memorandum on the paper duty and the taxing powers of the two Houses. He dealt fully alike with the fiscal and the constitutional aspects of a situation from which he was "certain that nothing

[27] "He made an administration so checkered and speckled, he put together a piece of joinery so crossly indented and whimsically dovetailed, a cabinet so variously inlaid, such a piece of diversified mosaic, such a tessellated pavement without cement ... that it was indeed a very curious show, but utterly unsafe to touch and unsure to stand upon."—*Speech on American Taxation.*

could extricate them with credit, except the united, determined, and even authoritative action of the government." He wound up with a broad declaration that, to any who knew his tenacity of purpose when once roused, made it certain that he would never acquiesce in the pretensions of the other House. The fiscal consideration, he concluded, "is nothing compared with the vital importance of maintaining the exclusive rights of the House of Commons in matter of supply. There is hardly any conceivable interference of the Lords hereafter, except sending down a tax imposed by themselves, which would not be covered by this precedent. It may be said they are wise and will not do it. Assuming that they will be wise, yet I for one am not willing that the House of Commons should hold on sufferance in the nineteenth century what it won in the seventeenth and confirmed and enlarged in the eighteenth."

The intervening months did not relax this valiant and patriotic resolution. He wrote down a short version of the story in the last year of his life:—

> The hostilities in China reached a rather early termination, and in the early part of the session of 1861 it appeared almost certain that there would be a surplus for 1861-2 such as I thought would make it possible again to operate on the paper duties. Unfortunately, the income tax was at so high a rate that we could not reasonably hope to carry paper duty repeal without taking a penny off the tax. The double plan strained the probable means afforded by the budget. In this dilemma I received most valuable aid from the shrewd ingenuity of
> [039] Milner Gibson, who said: Why not fix the repeal of the paper duty at a later date than had been intended, say on the 10th of October, which will reduce the loss for the year? I gladly adopted the proposition, and proposed a budget reducing the income tax by one penny, and repealing the paper duties from October 10, 1861. With this was combined what was more essential than either—the adoption of a new practice with

respect to finance, which would combine all the financial measures of the year in a single bill. We had separate discussions in the cabinet on the constitutional proposal [the single bill]. It was not extensively resisted there, though quietly a good deal misliked. I rather think the chancellor, Campbell, took strong objection to it; and I well remember that the Duke of Newcastle gave valuable and telling aid. So it was adopted. The budget was the subject of a fierce discussion, in which Lord Palmerston appeared to me to lose his temper for the first and only time. The plan, however, to my great delight, was adopted. It was followed by a strange and painful incident. I received with astonishment from Lord Palmerston, immediately after the adoption of the budget, a distinct notice that he should not consider it a cabinet question in the House of Commons, where it was known that the opposition and the paper makers would use every effort to destroy the plan. I wrote an uncontroversial reply (with some self-repression) and showed it to Granville, who warmly approved, and was silent on the letter of Lord Palmerston. The battle in parliament was hard, but was as nothing to the internal fighting; and we won it. We likewise succeeded in the plan of uniting the financial proposals in one bill. To this Spencer Walpole gave honourable support; and it became a standing rule. The House of Lords, for its misconduct, was deservedly extinguished, in effect, as to all matters of finance.

Of the “internal fighting” we have a glimpse in the diary:—

April 10, '61.—Saw Lord Palmerston and explained to him my plans, which did not meet his views. A laborious and anxious day. 11.—Cabinet. Explained my case 1-3. Chaos! 12.—Cabinet 1-3. Very stiff. We 'broke up' in one sense and all but in another. 13.—Cabinet 3-3/4-6. My plan as now framed was accepted, Lord Palmerston yielding gracefully; Stanley of Alderley almost the only kicker. The plan of [040]
one bill was accepted after fighting. 15.—H. of C., financial

> statement for three hours. The figures rather made my head ache. It was the discharge of a long pent-up excitement. *May 13.*—Lord J.R. again sustained me most handsomely in debate. Lord P. after hearing Graham amended his speech, but said we must not use any words tending to make this a vote of confidence. 30.—H. of C. Spoke one hour on omission of clause IV. [that repealing the paper duty], and voted in 296-281. One of the greatest nights in the whole of my recollection. *June 1.*—Yesterday was a day of subsiding excitement. To-day is the same. Habit enables me to expel exciting thought, but not the subtler nervous action which ever comes with a crisis. 7.—To-day's debate in the H. of L. was a great event for me.

The abiding feature of constitutional interest in the budget of 1861 was this inclusion of the various financial proposals in a single bill, so that the Lords must either accept the whole of them, or try the impossible performance of rejecting the whole of them. This was the affirmation in practical shape of the resolution of the House of Commons in the previous year, that it possessed in its own hands the power to remit and impose taxes, and that the right to frame bills of supply in its own measure, manner, time, and matter, is a right to be kept inviolable. Until now the practice had been to make the different taxes the subject of as many different bills, thus placing it in the power of the Lords to reject a given tax bill without throwing the financial machinery wholly out of gear. By including all the taxes in a single finance bill the power of the Lords to override the other House was effectually arrested.

Defeat Of The Lords

In language of that time, he had carried every stitch of free-trade canvas in the teeth of a tempest that might have made the boldest financial pilot shorten sail. Many even of his friends were sorry that he did not reduce the war duty on tea and sugar, instead of releasing paper from its duty of excise. Neither friends nor foes daunted him. He possessed his soul in patience until the

hour struck, and then came forth in full panoply. Enthusiastic journalists with the gift of a poetic pen told their millions of [041] readers how, after weeks of malign prophecy, that the great trickster in Downing Street would be proved to have beggared the exchequer, that years of gloom and insolvency awaited us, suddenly, the moment the magician chose to draw aside the veil, the darkness rolled away; he had fluttered out of sight the whole race of sombre Volscians; and where the gazers dreaded to see a gulf they beheld a golden monument of glorious finance; like the traveller in the Arabian fable who was pursued in the Valley of Shadows by unearthly imprecations, he never glanced to right or left until he could disperse the shadows by a single stroke. "He is," says another onlooker, "in his ministerial capacity, probably the best abused and the best hated man in the House; nevertheless the House is honestly proud of him, and even the country party feels a glow of pride in exhibiting to the diplomatic gallery such a transcendent mouthpiece of a nation of shopkeepers. The audacious shrewdness of Lancashire married to the polished grace of Oxford is a felicitous union of the strength and culture of liberal and conservative England; and no party in the House, whatever may be its likings or antipathies, can sit under the spell of Mr. Gladstone's rounded and shining eloquence without a conviction that the man who can talk 'shop' like a tenth Muse is, after all, a true representative man of the market of the world."

In describing the result of the repeal of the paper duty a little after this,[28] he used glowing words. "Never was there a measure so conservative as that which called into vivid, energetic, permanent, and successful action the cheap press of this country." It was also a common radical opinion of that hour that if the most numerous classes acquired the franchise as well as cheap newspapers, the reign of peace would thenceforth be unbroken. In a people of bold and martial temper such as are the people of

[28] At Manchester, Oct. 14, 1864.

our island, this proved to be a miscalculation. Meanwhile there is little doubt that Mr. Gladstone's share in thus fostering the growth of the cheap press was one of the secrets of his rapid rise in popularity.

[042]

Chapter III. Battle For Economy. (1860-1862)

> The session of 1860, with its complement in the principal part of 1861, was, I think, the most trying part of my whole political life.—GLADSTONE (1897).
>
> In reading history, we are almost tempted to believe that the chief end of government in promoting internal quiet has been to accumulate greater resources for foreign hostilities.—CHANNING.

I

All this time the battle for thrifty husbandry went on, and the bark of the watch-dog at the exchequer sounded a hoarse refrain. "We need not maunder in ante-chambers," as Mr. Disraeli put it, "to discover differences in the cabinet, when we have a patriotic prime minister appealing to the spirit of the country; and when at the same time we find his chancellor of the exchequer, whose duty it is to supply the ways and means by which those exertions are to be supported, proposing votes with innuendo, and recommending expenditure in a whispered invective."

Resistance To Panic

Severer than any battle in parliament is a long struggle inside a cabinet. Opponents contend at closer quarters, the weapons are shorter, it is easier to make mischief. Mr. Gladstone was the least quarrelsome of the human race; he was no wrestler intent only on being a winner in Olympic games; nor was he one of those who need an adversary to bring out all their strength. But in a cause that he had at heart he was untiring, unfaltering, and indomitable. Parallel with his contention about budget and treaty in 1860 was persistent contention for economy. The financial crisis went on with the fortifications crisis. The battle was incessant. He had not been many months in office before those deep differences [043]

came prominently forward in temperament, tradition, views of national policy, that continued to make themselves felt between himself and Lord Palmerston so long as the government endured. Perhaps I should put it more widely, and say between himself and that vast body of excited opinion in the country, of which Lord Palmerston was the cheerful mouthpiece. The struggle soon began.

Sidney Herbert, then at the war office, after circulating a memorandum, wrote privately to Mr. Gladstone (Nov. 23, 1859), that he was convinced that a great calamity was impending in the shape of a war provoked by France. Officers who had visited that country told him that all thinking men in France were against war with England, all noisy men for it, the army for it, and above all, the government for it. Inspired pamphlets were scattered broadcast. Everything was determined except time and occasion. The general expectation was for next summer. French tradesmen at St. Malo were sending in their bills to the English, thinking war coming. "We have to do with a godless people who look on war as a game open to all without responsibility or sin; and there is a man at the head of them who combines the qualities of a gambler and a fatalist."

Mr. Gladstone replied in two letters, one of them (Nov. 27) of the stamp usual from a chancellor of the exchequer criticising a swollen estimate, with controversial doubts, pungent interrogatories, caustic asides, hints for saving here and paring there. On the following day he fired what he called his second barrel, in the shape of a letter, which states with admirable force and fulness the sceptic's case against the scare. This time it was no ordinary exchequer wrestle. He combats the inference of an English from an Italian war, by the historic reminder that a struggle between France and Austria for supremacy or influence in Italy had been going on for four whole centuries, so that its renewal was nothing strange. If France, now unable to secure our co-operation, still thought the Italian danger grave enough

to warrant single-handed intervention, how does that support the inference that she must certainly be ready to invade England next? He ridicules the conclusion that the invasion was at [044] our doors, from such contested allegations as that the Châlons farmers refused the loan of horses from the government, because they would soon be wanted back again for the approaching war with England. What extraordinary farmers to refuse the loan of horses for their ploughing and seed time, because they might be reclaimed for purposes of war before winter! Then why could we not see a single copy of the incendiary and anti-English pamphlets, said to be disseminated broadcast among the troops? What was the value of all this contested and unsifted statement? Why, if he were bent on a rupture, did the Emperor not stir at the moment of the great Mutiny, when every available man we had was sent to India, and when he had what might have passed for a plausible excuse in the Orsini conspiracy, and in the deliberate and pointed refusal of parliament to deal with it? With emphasis, he insists that we have no adequate idea of the predisposing power which an immense series of measures of preparation for war on our own part, have in actually begetting war. They familiarise ideas which when familiar lose their horror, and they light an inward flame of excitement of which, when it is habitually fed, we lose the consciousness.

This application of cool and reasoned common sense to actual probabilities seldom avails against imaginations excited by random possibilities; and he made little way. Lord Palmerston advanced into the field, in high anxiety that the cabinet should promptly adopt Herbert's proposal.[29] They soon came to a smart encounter, and Mr. Gladstone writes to the prime minister (Feb. 7, 1860): “There are, I fear, the most serious differences among us with respect to a loan for fortifications.... My mind is made up, and to propose any loan for fortifications would be, on my

[29] For his letter to Mr. Gladstone, Dec. 16, 1859, see Ashley, ii. p. 375.

part, with the views I entertain, a betrayal of my public duty." A vigorous correspondence between Mr. Gladstone and Herbert upon military charges followed, and the tension seemed likely to snap the cord.

Resistance To Panic [045]

If I may judge from the minutes of the members of the cabinet on the papers circulated, most of them stood with their chief, and not one of them, not even Milner Gibson nor Villiers, was ready to proceed onward from a sort of general leaning towards Mr. Gladstone's view to the further stage of making a strong stand-up fight for it. The controversy between him and his colleagues still raged at red heat over the whole ground of military estimates, the handling of the militia, and the construction of fortifications. He wrote memorandum upon memorandum with untiring energy, pressing the cabinet with the enormous rate in the increase of charge; with the slight grounds on which increase of charge was now ordinarily proposed and entertained; and, most of all, with the absence of all attempt to compensate for new and necessary expenditure by retrenchment in quarters where the scale of outlay had either always been, or had become unnecessary. He was too sound a master of the conditions of public business to pretend to take away from the ministers at the head of the great departments of expenditure their duty of devising plans of reduction, but he boldly urged the reconsideration of such large general items of charge as the military expenditure in the colonies, then standing at an annual burden of over two millions on the taxpayers of this country. He was keen from the lessons of experience, to expose the ever indestructible fallacy that mighty armaments make for peace.

Still the cabinet was not moved, and in Palmerston he found a will and purpose as tenacious as his own. "The interview with Lord Palmerston came off to-day," he writes to the Duke of Argyll (June 6, 1860). "Nothing could be more kind and frank than his manner. The *matter* was first to warn me of the evils and hazards attending, for me, the operation of resigning. Secondly,

to express his own strong sense of the obligation to persevere. Both of these I told him I could fully understand. He said he had had two great objects always before him in life—one the suppression of the slave trade, the other to put England in a state of defence. In short, it appears that he now sees, as he considers, the opportunity of attaining a long cherished object; and it is not unnatural that he should repel any proposal which should [046] defraud him of a glory, in and by absolving him from a duty.... I am now sure that Lord Palmerston entertained this purpose when he formed the government; but had I been in the slightest degree aware of it, I should certainly, but very reluctantly, have abstained from joining it, and helped, as I could, from another bench its Italian purposes. Still, I am far indeed from regretting to have joined it, which is quite another matter."

Now labouring hard in Paris month after month at the tariff, Cobden plied Mr. Gladstone with exhortations to challenge the alarmists on the facts; to compare the outlay by France for a dozen years past on docks, fortifications, arsenals, with the corresponding outlay by England; to show that our steam navy, building and afloat, to say nothing of our vast mercantile marine, was at least double the strength of France; and above all, to make his colleagues consider whether the French Emperor had not, as a matter of self-interest, made the friendship of England, from the first, the hinge of his whole policy. Cobden, as always, knew thoroughly and in detail what he was talking about, for he had sat for three successive sessions on a select committee upon army, navy, and ordnance expenditure. In another letter he turned personally to Mr. Gladstone himself: "Unconsciously," he says, "you have administered to the support of a system which has no better foundation than a gigantic delusion" (June 11, 1860). "You say unconsciously," Mr. Gladstone replies (June 13), "I am afraid that in one respect this is too favourable a description. I have consciously, as a member of parliament and as a member of the government, concurred in measures that provide for an

expenditure beyond what were it in my power I would fix.... But I suppose that the duty of choosing the lesser evil binds me; *the difficulty is to determine what the lesser evil is*."

Fortifications

[047]

My story grows long, and it ends as such stories in our politics usually end. A compromise was arranged on the initiative of the Duke of Somerset, keeping clear, as Mr. Gladstone supposed, of the fortification scheme as a whole, and not pledging future years.[30] "Never at any time in my life," Mr. Gladstone told Graham, "have I had such a sense of mental and moral exhaustion." The strain was not ended by the compromise, for in moving the resolution for a vote of two millions for fortifications (July 23), Lord Palmerston not only declared that he held it to be absolutely necessary to carry the whole scheme into effect—the very proposition which the compromise put aside—but defended it by a series of stringent criticisms particularly fitted to offend and irritate France. Mr. Gladstone was not present,[31] but he felt strongly that he had good grounds of complaint, and that faith had not been strictly kept. "Much dismayed," he wrote in his diary (July 24), "at the terms of Lord Palmerston's resolution."

[30] See Appendix. "This account," Mr. Gladstone writes, "contains probably the only reply I shall ever make to an account given or printed by Sir Theodore Martin in his *Life of the Prince Consort*, which is most injurious to me without a shadow of foundation: owing, I have no doubt, to defective acquaintance with the subject." The passage is in vol. v. p. 148. Lord Palmerston's words to the Queen about Mr. Gladstone are a curiously unedifying specimen of loyalty to a colleague.

[31] "It appears that he wrote his final opinion on the subject to the cabinet on Saturday, left them to deliberate, and went to the Crystal Palace. The Duke of Argyll joined him there and said it was all right. The Gladstones then went to Cliveden and he purposely did not return till late, twelve o'clock on Monday night, in order that Palmerston might make his speech as he pleased. I doubt the policy of his absence. It of course excited much remark, and does not in any way protect Gladstone. M. Gibson was also absent."—*Phillimore Diary*, July 23. In his diary Mr. Gladstone records: "*July 21*.—Cabinet 3 ½-5 1/4. I left it that the discussion might be free and went to Stafford House and Sydenham. There I saw, later, Argyll and S. Herbert, who seemed to bring good news. At night we went off to Cliveden."

It was now, however, too late to draw back.[32] Mr. Bright made a weighty and masterly attack (Aug. 2), hinting plainly that the thing was "a compromise to enable the government to avoid the rock, or get over the quick-sand, which this question has interjected into their midst," and quoting with excellent effect a pregnant passage from Peel: "If you adopt the opinion of military men, naturally anxious for the complete security of every available point; naturally anxious to throw upon you the whole responsibility for the loss in the event of war suddenly breaking out of some of our valuable possessions,—you would overwhelm this country with taxes in time of peace." But this was a Palmerstonian parliament. The year before, a remarkable [048] debate (July 21, 1859) had promised better things. Disraeli had opened it with emphatic declarations: "There is no country," he said, "that can go on raising seventy millions in time of peace with impunity. England cannot, and if England cannot, no country can." Bright followed with the assurance that Cobden and he might now consider Mr. Disraeli a convert to their views. Lord John Russell came next, agreeing with Bright; and even Palmerston himself was constrained to make a peace speech.

II

In May 1861 Mr. Gladstone notes "a day of over fourteen hours: thank God for the strength." The atmosphere around him would have depressed a weaker man. "At Brooks's," says Phillimore, "they hate Gladstone worse than at the Carlton." In the summer the strife upon expenditure was renewed. Eventually Mr. Gladstone was able to write to Graham from the cabinet room (July 20, 1861) that Castor and Pollux appeared aloft at the right moment, and the clouds had disappeared. In a letter to his close friend, Sir Walter James, in 1871 Mr. Gladstone

[32] For an interesting letter on all this to the Duke of Argyll, see Appendix.

says: “The storm of criticism and rebuke does not surprise nor discourage me. Doubtless much must be just; and what is not, is what we call in logic an ‘inseparable accident’ of politics. Time and reflection will, please God, enable us to distinguish between them. For my own part I *never* was so abused as in 1860; but it was one of the most useful or least useless years of my life.” The battle was as severe in 1861 as it had been the year before. In the middle of the session (May 9) Phillimore reports: “Found Gladstone in good spirits; he spoke with real greatness of mind of the attacks made on him.”

Correspondence With The Prime Minister

The next year Lord Palmerston wrote to express his concern at something that he came upon in a railway journey. “I read with much interest,” he wrote to his chancellor of the exchequer (April 29, 1862), “your able and eloquent speeches at Manchester, but I wish to submit to you some observations upon the financial part of the second speech.” He did not agree with Mr. Gladstone [049] that the nation had forced the cabinet and parliament into high expenditure, but if it were so, he regarded it not as matter of reproach, but as a proof of the nation's superior sagacity. Panic there had been none; governors and governed had for a long time been blind and apathetic; then they awoke. There was on the other side of the channel a people who, say what they may, hate us and would make any sacrifice to humiliate us, and they had now at their head an able, active, wary, council-keeping, but ever-planning sovereign [Napoleon III.]. “Have the parliament and the nation been wrong, and have Bright and Cobden and yourself been right?” All this being so, he could not but regret that Mr. Gladstone should by speeches in and out of parliament invite agitation to force the government of which he was a member, to retrace its steps taken deliberately and with full sense of responsibility.[33] To Palmerston's eight quarto pages, written in one of the finest hands of the time, Mr. Gladstone replied in

[33] This letter is printed in full by Mr. Ashley, ii. p. 413.

twelve.

> In all good humour, he said, I prefer not being classed with Mr. Bright, or even Mr. Cobden; first, because I do not know their opinions with any precision; and secondly, because as far as I do know or can grasp them, they seem to contemplate fundamental changes in taxation which I disapprove in principle, and believe also to be unattainable in practice, and reductions of establishment and expenditure for which I am not prepared to be responsible.... I think it a mean and guilty course to hold out vague and indefinite promises of vast retrenchment, but I think it will be a healthful day, both for the country and for the party over which you so ably preside, when the word retrenchment, of course with a due regard to altered circumstances, shall again take its place among their battle cries.

A spirited correspondence followed, for Lord Palmerston knew his business, and had abundant faculty of application; while Mr. Gladstone, for his part, was too much in earnest to forego rejoinder and even surrejoinder. “No claptrap reductions,” cried the prime minister. “You are feeding not only expenditure,” rejoined the chancellor of the exchequer, “but what is worse, [050] the spirit of expenditure.” “You disclaim political community of opinion with Bright and Cobden, and justly,” said Lord Palmerston, “but you cannot but be aware that owing to various accidental circumstances many people at home and abroad connect you unjustly with them, and this false impression is certainly not advantageous.”

“My dear Gladstone,” he wrote good-humouredly on another occasion, “You may not have seen how your name is taken in vain by people with whom I conceive you do not sympathise,—Yours sincerely,

PALMERSTON.”

Enclosed was a placard with many large capital letters, notes of exclamation, italics, and all the rest of the paraphernalia of political emphasis:—

> TAX PAYERS! Read Mr. Cobden's new pamphlet, the "THREE PANICS," and judge for yourselves. How long will you suffer Yourselves to be Humbugged by PALMERSTONI-ANISM, and Robbed by the "Services," and others interested in a War Expenditure, even in times of Peace? ... THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER APPEALS TO YOU TO HELP HIM. You have the power in your own hands if you will only exert it. Reform the House of Commons, AND DO IT THOROUGHLY THIS TIME.

Of the continuance of the struggle in 1862, a few items from the diary give an adequate picture:—

> *Jan. 30, 1862.*—A heavy blow in the announcement of increased military estimates from Sir George Lewis gave me a disturbed evening. 31.—Worked on the formidable subject of the estimates, and made known to the cabinet my difficulties. *Feb. 1.*—Cabinet 3-½—6. It went well; the tenth penny [on the income-tax] proved to be a strong physic; £750,000 of reductions ordered. 12.—Wrote mem. on possible reductions, etc., to dispense with income-tax. The whole question, I think, is, can we be satisfied (I think we ought and will) with 21 millions for army and navy instead of 27? *March 1.*—Cabinet 3-3/4—6-1/4, very stiff, on the Belgian negotiations I had to go to the ultima ratio. 31.—H. of C. The fortifications got their first blow.

By midsummer public feeling veered a little: "The tide has turned. Lord Palmerston is now 'the strong swimmer in his [051] agony.' "[34]

[34] Diary.

A candid and friendly observer has told us the situation: "When I was private secretary to Lord Palmerston," he says, "and Mr. Gladstone was his chancellor of the exchequer, it was a constant source of sorrow to me, and a perpetual cause of mystery, to note how they misunderstood one another, and how evidently each mistrusted the other, though perfectly cordial and most friendly in their mutual intercourse.... If the proposal was adhered to, Mr. Gladstone gave way. This seemed to Lord Palmerston a case of gratuitous difficulties put in his way, and attempts to thwart without the courage to resist."[35]

In closing this chapter, let us note that in spite of Lord Palmerston, he won no inconsiderable success. When 1866 came, and his financial administration ended, he had managed, with the aid of the reduction of debt charge after the lapse of the long annuities, to carry expenditure back to the level of 1857. Naval expenditure rose until 1861, and then began to fall; army expenditure rose until 1863, and then began to fall. In 1859, when he went to the exchequer, the total under these two heads was nearly twenty-six millions; when he quitted office in 1866 the total was twenty-four millions. In the middle years it had swelled to twenty-eight. After half a dozen years of panic and extravagance, all sedulously fostered by a strong prime minister, that he should still have left the cost of government little higher than he found it was no defeat, but an extremely satisfactory performance. "We must follow the nature of our affairs," Burke says, "and conform ourselves to our situation. Why should we resolve to do nothing because what I propose to you may not be the exact demand of the petition? If we cry, like children, for the moon, like children we must cry on."[36]

III

Savings Banks

[35] Mr. Evelyn Ashley in *National Review*, June 1898, pp. 536-40.
[36] Plan for Economical Reform.

[052] Ruminating in the late evening of life over his legislative work, Mr. Gladstone wrote: "Selecting the larger measures and looking only to achieved results, I should take the following heads: 1. The Tariffs, 1842-60. 2. Oxford University Act. 3. Post Office Savings Banks. 4. Irish Church Disestablishment. 5. Irish Land Acts. 6. Franchise Act. Although this excludes the last of all the efforts, viz., the Irish Government bill." The third item in the list belongs to the period (1861) at which we have now arrived.

> The points to be noted are three. 1. The whole of my action in 1859-65 was viewed with the utmost jealousy by a large minority and a section of the very limited majority. It was an object to me to get this bill passed *sub silentio*, a full statement of my expectations from it would have been absolutely fatal. I admit they have been more than realised. 2. The Trustee Savings Banks were doubly defective, nay trebly, for they sometimes broke. (1) Their principle was left in doubt—were the general funds in trust, or cash at a banker's? This was vital. (2) They never got or could get within the doors of the masses, for they smelt of class. It was necessary to provide for the savings of the people with (*a*) safety, (*b*) cheapness, (*c*) convenience. The banks *cost* money to the State. The Post Office Savings Banks bring in a revenue. 3. Behind all this I had an object of first-rate importance, which has been attained: to provide the minister of finance with a strong financial arm, and to secure his independence of the City by giving him a large and certain command of money.

A sequel to this salutary measure was a bill three years later with the apparently unheroic but really beneficent object of facilitating the acquisition of small annuities, without the risk of fraud or bankruptcy.[37] An eyewitness tells how (March 7, 1864) "Mr. Gladstone held the house for two hours enchained by his defence of a measure which avowedly will not benefit the class

[37] 27 and 28 Vict., chap. 43.

from which members are selected; which involves not only a ‘wilderness of figures,’ but calculations of a kind as intelligible to most men as equations to London cabdrivers; and which, though it might and would interest the nation, would never in the nature of things be made a hustings cry. The riveted attention of the House was in itself a triumph; the deep impression received by [053] the nation on the following day was a greater one. It was felt that here was a man who really could lead, instead of merely reflecting the conclusions of the popular mind.” The measure encountered a pretty stiff opposition. The insurance companies were vexed that they had neglected their proper business, others feared that it might undermine the poor law, others again took the pessimist's favourite line that it would be inoperative. But the case was good, Mr. Gladstone's hand was firm, and in due time the bill became law amid a loud chorus of approval.

Private Thrift And Public

Thus he encouraged, stimulated, and facilitated private and personal thrift, at the same time and in the same spirit in which he laboured his fervid exhortations to national economy. He was deeply convinced, he said and kept saying, “that all excess in the public expenditure beyond the legitimate wants of the country is not only a pecuniary waste, but a great political, and above all, a great moral evil. It is a characteristic of the mischiefs that arise from financial prodigality that they creep onwards with a noiseless and a stealthy step; that they commonly remain unseen and unfelt, until they have reached a magnitude absolutely overwhelming.” He referred to the case of Austria, where these mischiefs seemed to threaten the very foundations of empire.

[054]

Chapter IV. The Spirit Of Gladstonian Finance. (1859-1866)

> Nations seldom realise till too late how prominent a place a sound system of finance holds among the vital elements of national stability and well-being; how few political changes are worth purchasing by its sacrifice; how widely and seriously human happiness is affected by the downfall or the perturbation of national credit, or by excessive, injudicious, and unjust taxation.—LECKY.

I

In finance, the most important of all the many fields of his activity, Mr. Gladstone had the signal distinction of creating the public opinion by which he worked, and warming the climate in which his projects throve. In other matters he followed, as it was his business and necessity to follow, the governing forces of the public mind; in finance he was a strenuous leader. He not only led with a boldness sometimes verging on improvidence; apart from the merits of this or that proposal, he raised finance to the high place that belongs to it in the interest, curiosity, and imperious concern of every sound self-governing community. Even its narrowest technicalities by his supple and resplendent power as orator were suffused with life and colour. When ephemeral critics disparaged him as mere rhetorician—and nobody denies that he was often declamatory and discursive, that he often over-argued and over-refined—they forgot that he nowhere exerted greater influence than in that department of affairs where words out of relation to fact are most surely exposed. If he often carried the proper rhetorical arts of amplification and development to excess, yet the basis of fact was both sound and clear, and his digressions, as when, for example, he introduced an account of

the changes in the English taste for wine,[38] were found, and still remain, both relevant and extremely interesting. [055]

Creation Of Public Interest

One recorder who had listened to all the financiers from Peel downwards, said that Peel's statements were ingenious and able, but dry; Disraeli was clever but out of his element; Wood was like a cart without springs on a heavy road; Gladstone was the only man who could lead his hearers over the arid desert, and yet keep them cheerful and lively and interested without flagging. Another is reminded of Sir Joshua's picture of Garrick between tragedy and comedy, such was his duality of attitude and expression; such the skill with which he varied his moods in a single speech, his fervid eloquence and passion, his lightness and buoyancy of humour, his lambent and spontaneous sarcasm. Just as Macaulay made thousands read history who before had turned from it as dry and repulsive, so Mr. Gladstone made thousands eager to follow the public balance-sheet, and the whole nation became his audience, interested in him and his themes and in the House where his dazzling wonders were performed. All this made a magnificent contribution to the national spirit of his time. Such extraordinary power over others had its mainspring in the depths and zeal of his own conviction and concern. “For nine or ten months of the year,” he told Sir Henry Taylor in 1864, “I am always willing to go out of office, but in the two or three that precede the budget I begin to feel an itch to have the handling of it. Last summer I should have been delighted to go out; now [December] I am indifferent; in February, if I live as long, I shall, I have no doubt, be loath; but in April quite ready again. Such are my signs of the zodiac.” The eagerness of his own mind transmitted itself like an electric current through his audience.

Interest abroad was almost as much alive as the interest felt in England itself. We have already seen how keenly Cavour followed Mr. Gladstone's performances. His budget speeches

[38] *Financial Statements*, p. 151.

were circulated by foreign ministers among deputies and editors. Fould, one of the best of Napoleon's finance ministers, kept
[056] up a pretty steady correspondence with the English chancellor: appeals to him as to the sound doctrine on sugar drawbacks; is much struck by his proposals on Scotch banks; says mournfully to him (April 28, 1863), in a sentence that is a whole chapter in the history of the empire: “You are very fortunate in being able to give such relief to the taxpayers; if it had not been for the war in Mexico, I should perhaps have been able to do something of the same sort, and that would have been, especially in view of the elections, very favourable to the government of the Emperor.'”

When Mr. Gladstone came to leave office in 1866, he said to Fould (July 11): “The statesmen of to-day have a new mission opened to them: the mission of substituting the concert of nations for their conflicts, and of teaching them to grow great in common, and to give to others by giving to themselves. Of this beneficent work a good share has fallen to the departments with which we have respectively been connected.” Fould had already deplored his loss. “I counted,” he says, “on the influence of your wise doctrines in finance, to help me in maintaining our country in that system of order and economy, of which you were setting the example.” Alas, in France and in continental Europe generally at that time, selfish material interests and their class representatives were very strong, popular power was weak; in most of them the soldier was the master. Happily for our famous chancellor of the exchequer, England was different.

It has often been said that he ignored the social question; did not even seem to know there was one. The truth is, that what marks him from other chancellors is exactly the dominating hold gained by the social question in all its depth and breadth upon his most susceptible imagination. Tariff reform, adjustment of burdens, invincible repugnance to waste or profusion, accurate keeping and continuous scrutiny of accounts, substitution of a few good taxes for many bad ones,—all these were not merely

the love of a methodical and thrifty man for habits of business; they were directly associated in him with the amelioration of the hard lot of the toiling mass, and sprang from an ardent concern in improving human well-being, and raising the moral ideals of mankind. In his "musings for the good of man," Liberation of Intercourse, to borrow his own larger name for free trade, figured [057] in his mind's eye as one of the promoting conditions of abundant employment. "If you want," he said in a pregnant proposition, "to benefit the labouring classes and to do the maximum of good, it is not enough to operate upon the articles consumed by them; you should rather operate on the articles that give them the maximum of employment." In other words, you should extend the area of trade by steadily removing restrictions. He recalled the days when our predecessors thought it must be for man's good to have "most of the avenues by which the mind, and also the hand of man conveyed and exchanged their respective products," blocked or narrowed by regulation and taxation. Dissemination of news, travelling, letters, transit of goods, were all made as costly and difficult as the legislator could make them. "I rank," he said, "the introduction of cheap postage for letters, documents, patterns, and printed matter, and the abolition of all taxes on printed matter, in the catalogue of free trade legislation. These great measures may well take their place beside the abolition of prohibitions and protective duties, the simplifying of revenue laws, and the repeal of the Navigation Act, as forming together the great code of industrial emancipation."[39]

The True Social Question

It was not unnatural that fault should be found with him for not making a more resolute effort to lighten the burden of that heavy mortgage which, under the name of the National Debt, we

[39] See his elaborate article in the *Nineteenth Century* for February 1880, on *Free Trade, Railways, and Commerce*, in which he endeavours fairly to divide the credit of our material progress between its two great factors, the Liberation of Intercourse, and the Improvement of Locomotion. Under the head of new locomotive forces he counts the Suez canal.

have laid upon the industry and property of the nation. In 1866 he was keenly excited by Jevons's argument from the ultimate shrinkage of our coal supply, and he accepted the inference that we should vigorously apply ourselves by reduction of the debt to preparation for the arrival of the evil day. But, as he wrote to Jevons (March 16, 1866), "Until the great work of the liberation of industry was in the main effected, it would have been premature or even wrong to give too much prominence to
[058] this view of the subject. Nor do I regard that liberation as yet having reached the point at which we might say, we will now cease to make remission of taxes a principal element and aim in finance. But we are in my judgment near it. And I am most anxious that the public should begin to take a closer and more practical view of the topics which you have done so much to bring into prominence."

He was always thinking of the emancipation of commerce, like Peel and Cobden. His general policy was simple. When great expenditure demanded large revenue, he raised his money by high income-tax, and high rates of duty on a few articles, neither absolute necessities of life nor raw materials of manufacture. He left the income-tax at fourpence. In 1866, he told the House that the new parliament then about to be elected might dispense with the tax. "If," he said, "parliament and the country preferred to retain the tax, then the rate of fourpence is the rate at which in time of peace and in the absence of any special emergency, we believe it may be most justly and wisely so retained." While cordially embracing Cobden's policy of combining free trade with retrenchment, he could not withstand a carnal satisfaction at abundant revenue. Deploring expenditure with all his soul, he still rubs his hands in professional pride at the elasticity of the revenue under his management.

II

When it is asked, with no particular relevancy, what original contribution of the first order was made by Mr. Gladstone to the science of national finance, we may return the same answer as if it were asked of Walpole, Pitt, or Peel. It was for Adam Smith from his retreat upon the sea-beach of distant Kirkcaldy to introduce new and fruitful ideas, though he too owed a debt to French economists. The statesman's business is not to invent ideas in finance, but to create occasions and contrive expedients for applying them. “What an extraordinary man Pitt is,” said Adam Smith; “he understands my ideas better than I understand them myself.” Originality may lie as much in perception of opportunity as in invention. Cobden discovered [059] no new economic truths that I know of, but his perception of the bearings of abstract economic truths upon the actual and prospective circumstances of his country and the world, made him the most original economic statesman of his day. The glory of Mr. Gladstone was different. It rested on the practical power and tenacity with which he opened new paths, and forced the application of sound doctrine over long successions of countless obstacles.

Mark Of His Originality

If we probe his fame as financier to the core and marrow, it was not his power as orator, it was not his ingenuity in device and expedient, it was his unswerving faith in certain fixed aims, and his steadfast and insistent zeal in pursuing them, that built up the splendid edifice. Pitt performed striking financial feats, especially in the consolidation of duties, in reformed administration, and in the French treaty of 1786. But ill-fortune dragged him into the vortex of European war, and finance sank into the place of a secondary instrument, an art for devising aliments, some of them desperate enough, for feeding the war-chest of the nation. Sir Robert Walpole, Mr. Gladstone wrote, “had not to contend with like difficulties, and I think his administration should be compared with the early years of Pitt, in which way of judging he would come off second, though a man

of cool and sagacious judgment, while morally he stood low."[40]

In the happier conditions of his time, Mr. Gladstone was able to use wise and bold finance as the lever for enlarging all the facilities of life, and diffusing them over the widest area. If men sometimes smile at his extraordinary zeal for cheap wines and cheap books and low railway fares, if they are sometimes provoked by his rather harsh views on privileges for patents and copyrights for authors, restrictive of the common enjoyment, it is well to remember that all this and the like came from what was at once clear financial vision and true social feeling. "A financial experience," he once said, "which is long and wide, has profoundly convinced me that, as a rule, the state or individual
[060] or company thrives best which dives deepest down into the mass of the community, and adapts its arrangements to the wants of the greatest number." His exultation in the stimulus given by fiscal freedom to extended trade, and therefore to more abundant employment at higher wages, was less the exultation of the economist watching the intoxicating growth of wealth, than of the social moralist surveying multiplied access to fuller life and more felicity. I always remember, in a roving talk with him in 1891, when he was a very old man and ill, how he gradually took fire at the notion—I forget how it arose—of the iniquities under which the poor man suffered a generation ago. "See—the sons and daughters went forth from their homes; the cost of postage was so high that correspondence was practically prohibited; yet the rich all the time, by the privilege of franking, carried on a really immense amount of letter-writing absolutely free. Think what a softening of domestic exile; what an aid in keeping warm the feel of family affection, in mitigating the rude breach in the circle of the hearth." This vigorous sympathy was with Mr. Gladstone a living part of his Christian enthusiasm. "If you would gain mankind," said old Jeremy Bentham, "the best way

[40] From a letter to his son Herbert, March 10, 1876, containing some interesting remarks on Pitt's finance. See Appendix.

is to appear to love them, and the best way of appearing to love them, is to love them in reality." When he thought of the effect of his work at the exchequer, he derived "profound and inestimable consolation from the reflection that while the rich have been growing richer, the poor have become less poor." Yet, as my readers have by this time found out, there never was a man less in need of Aristotle's warning, that to be forever hunting after the useful befits not those of free and lofty soul.[41] As was noted by contemporaries, like all the followers of Sir Robert Peel he never thought without an eye to utilitarian results, but mixed with that attitude of mind he had "a certain refinement and subtlety of religiousness that redeemed it from the coldness, if it sometimes overshadowed the clearness, of mere statesmanlike prudence." On the other hand, he had "the Lancashire temperament."

[061]

III

Effect Upon The Public Service

This thought and feeling for the taxpayer was at the root of another achievement, no less original than the peculiar interest that he was able to excite by his manner of stating a financial case. Peel was only prime minister for five years, and only four months chancellor. Mr. Gladstone was prime minister for twelve—ten years short of Sir Robert Walpole in that office, seven years short of Pitt. But he was also chancellor of the exchequer under three other prime ministers for ten years. Thus his connection with the treasury covered a longer period than was attained by the greatest of his predecessors. His long reign at the treasury, and his personal predominance in parliament and the country, enabled him to stamp on the public departments administrative principles of the utmost breadth and strength. Thrift of public money,

[41] Τὸ ζητεῖν πανταχοῦ τὸ χρήσιμον ἥκιστα ἁρμόττει τοῖς ἐλευθεροῖς.—*Politics*, viii. 3.

resolute resistance to waste, rigid exactitude in time, and all the other aspects of official duty, conviction that in the working of the vast machinery of state nothing is a trifle—through the firm establishment of maxims and principles of this sort, Mr. Gladstone built up a strong and efficacious system of administrative unity that must be counted a conspicuous part of his very greatest work. "No chancellor of the exchequer," he once said, "is worth his salt who makes his own popularity either his first consideration, or any consideration at all, in administering the public purse. In my opinion, the chancellor of the exchequer is the trusted and confidential steward of the public. He is under a sacred obligation with regard to all that he consents to spend."[42] This tone of thinking and feeling about the service of the state spread under his magisterial influence from chancellors and the permanent officers that bear unobtrusive but effective sway in Whitehall, down to tide waiters and distributors of stamps. As Burke put the old Latin saw, he endeavoured to "give us a system of economy, which is itself a great revenue." The Exchequer and Audit Act of 1866 is a monument of his zeal and power in this
[062] direction. It converted the nominal control by parliament into a real control, and has borne the strain of nearly forty years.

He was more alive than any man at the exchequer had ever been before, to the mischiefs of the spirit of expenditure. As he told the House of Commons in 1863 (April 16): "I mean this, that together with the so-called increase of expenditure there grows up what may be termed a spirit of expenditure, a desire, a tendency prevailing in the country, which, insensibly and unconsciously perhaps, but really, affects the spirit of the people, the spirit of parliament, the spirit of the public departments, and perhaps even the spirit of those whose duty it is to submit the estimates to parliament." "But how," he wrote to Cobden (Jan. 5, 1864), "is the spirit of expenditure to be exorcised? Not by my preaching;

[42] Edinburgh, Nov. 29, 1879.

I doubt if even by yours. I seriously doubt whether it will ever give place to the old spirit of economy, as long as we have the income-tax. There, or hard by, lie questions of deep practical moment." This last pregnant reference to the income-tax, makes it worth while to insert here a word or two from letters of 1859 to his brother Robertson, an even more ardent financial reformer than himself:—

> Economy is the first and great article (economy such as I understand it) in my financial creed. The controversy between direct and indirect taxation holds a minor though important place. I have not the smallest doubt we should at this moment have had a smaller expenditure if financial reformers had not directed their chief attention, not to the question how much of expenditure and taxes we shall have, but to the question how it should be raised.... I agree with you that if you had only direct taxes, you would have economical government. But in my opinion the indirect taxes will last as long as the monarchy; and while we have them, I am deeply convinced that the facility of recurring to, and of maintaining, income-tax has been a main source of that extravagance in government, which I date from the Russian war (for before that a good spirit had prevailed for some twenty-five years).

Bagehot, that economist who united such experience and sense with so much subtlety and humour, wrote to Mr. Gladstone in 1868: "Indirect taxation so cramps trade and heavy direct taxation so impairs morality that a large expenditure becomes a great evil. I have often said so to Sir G. Lewis, but he always answered, 'Government is a very rough business. You must be content with very unsatisfactory results.' " This was a content that Mr. Gladstone never learned. [063]

Heroic In Economy

It was not only in the finance of millions that he showed himself a hero. "The chancellor of the exchequer," he said, "should boldly uphold economy in detail; and it is the mark of

a chicken-hearted chancellor when he shrinks from upholding economy in detail, when because it is a question of only two or three thousand pounds, he says that is no matter. He is ridiculed, no doubt, for what is called candle-ends and cheese-parings, but he is not worth his salt if he is not ready to save what are meant by candle-ends and cheese-parings in the cause of the country."[43] He held it to be his special duty in his office not simply to abolish sinecures, but to watch for every opportunity of cutting down all unnecessary appointments. He hears that a clerk at the national debt office is at death's door, and on the instant writes to Lord Palmerston that there is no necessity to appoint a successor. During the last twenty years, he said in 1863, "since I began to deal with these subjects, every financial change beneficial to the country at large has been met with a threat that somebody would be dismissed." All such discouragements he treated with the half scornful scepticism without which no administrative reformer will go far.

He did not think it beneath his dignity to appeal to the foreign office for a retrenchment in fly-leaves and thick folio sheets used for docketing only, and the same for mere covering despatches without description; for all these had to be bound, and the bound books wanted bookcases, and the bookcases wanted buildings, and the libraries wanted librarians. "My idea is that it would be quite worth while to appoint an official committee from various departments to go over the 'contingencies' and minor charges of the different departments into which abuse must always be
[064] creeping, from the nature of the case and without much blame to any one." Sir R. Bethell as attorney-general insisted on the duty incumbent on certain high officials, including secretaries of state, of taking out patents for their offices, and paying the stamp duties of two hundred pounds apiece thereon. "I shall deal with these eminent persons," he wrote to the chancellor of

[43] Edinburgh, Nov. 29, 1879.

the exchequer, “exactly as I should and do daily deal with John Smith accused of fraud as a distiller, or John Brown reported as guilty of smuggling tobacco.” Mr. Gladstone replies (1859):—

> I rejoice to see that neither the heat, the stench, nor service in the courts can exhaust even your superfluous vigour; and it is most ennobling to see such energies devoted to the highest of all purposes—that of replenishing her Majesty's exchequer. I hope, however, that in one point the case stands better than I had supposed. The proof of absolute contumacy is not yet complete, though, alas, the *animus furandi* stands forth in all its hideous colours. I spoke yesterday to Lord Palmerston on the painful theme; and he confessed to me with much emotion that he has not yet resorted to those mild means of exhortation—what the presbyterians call dealing with an erring brother—from which we had hoped much. The unhappy men may therefore yet come to their senses; in any case I rejoice to think that you, in the new capacity of mad doctor, are sure to cure them and abate the mischief, if the which do not happen (I quote the new Tennyson):—
>
> “some evil chance
> Will make the smouldering scandal break and blaze
> Before the people and our Lord the King.”[44]

After a due amount of amusing correspondence, the recusant confederacy struck their colours and paid their money.

> When he went to Corfu in the *Terrible* in 1858, some two or three sleeping cabins were made by wooden partitions put up round spaces taken off the deck. Thirteen years after, his unslumbering memory made this an illustrating point in an exhortation to a first lord of the admiralty not to disregard small outgoings. “I never in my life was more astonished than upon being told the sum this had cost; I think it was [065]

[44] *Guinevere*, 90-92.

> in hundreds of pounds, where I should have expected tens." Sometimes, no doubt, this thrift descended to the ludicrous. On this same expedition to Corfu, among the small pieces of economy enjoined by Mr. Gladstone on the members of his mission, one was to scratch out the address on the parchment label of the despatch bags and to use the same label in returning the bag to the colonial office in London. One day while the secretary was busily engaged in thus saving a few halfpence, an officer came into the room, having arrived by a special steamer from Trieste at a cost of between seven and eight hundred pounds. The ordinary mail-boat would have brought him a very few hours later. We can hardly wonder that the heroical economist denounced such pranks as "profligate" and much else. Though an individual case may often enough seem ludicrous, yet the system and the spirit engendered by it were to the taxpayer, that is to the nation, priceless.

IV

One of the few failures of this active and fruitful period was the proposal (1863) that charities should pay income-tax upon the returns from their endowments. What is their exemption but the equivalent of a gift to them from the general taxpayer? He has to make good the sum that ought in reason and equity to have been paid by them, as by other people, to the government that protects them. Why should this burden be compulsorily laid upon him? What is the quality of an endowment for a charitable purpose that constitutes a valid claim for such a boon? Into this case Mr. Gladstone threw himself with full force. The opposition to him was as heated and as vigorous as he ever provoked, and the violence of the resistance roused an answering vehemence in him. He speaks in his diary of his "deadly encounter with the so-called charities." "I was endeavouring," he says, "to uphold

the reality of truth and justice against their superficial and flimsy appearances." "Spoke from 5.10 to 8.20, with all my might, such as it was." This speech, with its fierce cogency and trenchant reasoning, was counted by good judges who heard it, to be among the two or three most powerful that he ever made, and [066] even to-day it may be read with the same sort of interest as we give to Turgot's famous disquisition on Foundations. It turns a rude searchlight upon illusions about charity that are all the more painful to dispel, because they often spring from pity and from sympathy, not the commonest of human elements. It affects the jurist, the economist, the moralist, the politician. The House was profoundly impressed by both the argument and the performance, but the clamour was too loud, all the idols of market-place and tribe were marched out in high parade, and the proposal at last was dropped.

Budget Of 1863

Though the idea of putting a tax on the income of charitable endowments was rejected, the budget of 1863 was the record of a triumph that was complete. The American civil war by arresting the supply of cotton had half ruined Lancashire. The same cause had diminished the export trade to America by six millions sterling. Three bad seasons spoiled the crops. There was distress in Ireland. Yet the chancellor had a revenue in excess of expenditure by the noble figure of three millions and three quarters. Mr. Gladstone naturally took the opportunity of surveying the effects of four years of his financial policy. He admitted that they had been four years of tension, and this tension had been enhanced by his large remissions of duty, and by taking in hand the completion of the great work of commercial legislation. The end of it all was a growth of wealth, as he called it, almost intoxicating. The value of British goods sent to France had risen from four millions and three quarters to nearly nine millions and one quarter, in other words had about doubled under the operations of the treaty of commerce.[45] If to this were added

[45] For his later views on the French treaty, see his speech at Leeds in 1881, an

foreign and colonial produce sent through us, and acquired by us in exchange for our own produce, the value had risen from nine and a half in 1859 to twenty-one and three quarters in 1862. In Mr. Gladstone's own description later, the export trade of 1860, in spite of a bad harvest, was so stimulated by the liberating
[067] customs act, that it rose at once from a hundred and thirty millions to a hundred and thirty-five. The next year it fell to a hundred and twenty-five, and in 1862 it fell by another million owing to the withdrawal, by reason of the American war, of the material of our greatest manufacture. In 1866 it rose to a hundred and eighty-eight millions.[46] Then under the head of income-tax, and comparing 1842 with 1862, over the same area, and with the same limitations, the aggregate amount of assessed income had risen from one hundred and fifty-six millions to two hundred and twenty-one. Other tests and figures need not detain us.

> *April 16, 1863.*—My statement lasted three hours, and this with a good deal of compression. It wound up, I hope, a chapter in finance and in my life. Thanks to God. 17.—The usual sense of relaxation after an effort. I am oppressed too with a feeling of deep unworthiness, inability to answer my vocation, and the desire of rest. 18.—To Windsor, had an audience of the Queen; so warm about Sir G. Lewis, and she warned me not to overwork.

Lewis had died five days before (April 13), and this is Mr. Gladstone's entry:—

> *April 14.*—Reached C.H.T. at 11-1/4, and was met by the sad news of the death of Sir George Lewis. I am pained to think of my differences with him at one time on finance; however, he took benefit by them rather than otherwise. A most able, most learned, most unselfish, and most genial man.

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extract from which is given in Appendix.

[46] *Nineteenth Century*, Feb. 1880, p. 381.

To Sir Gilbert Lewis, he wrote (April 18):—

> Like several eminent public men of our time, he had many qualities for which the outer world did not perhaps, though it may not have denied them, ever give him full positive credit. For example, his singular courtesy and careful attention to others in all transactions great and small; his thoroughly warm and most forthcoming and genial disposition; his almost unconsciousness of the vast stores of his mind, and of the great facility and marvellous precision with which he used them; and, if I may so say, the noble and antique simplicity of character which he united with such knowledge of men and of affairs.

[068]

The final budget of this most remarkable series was that of 1866, when he swept away the last of the old vexatious duties on timber. It contained another element as to which, as I have said, some thought he had not been keen enough. In the budget of 1866 he first started the scheme of a sinking fund, which, when amplified, and particularly when simplified by his successors, did so much to reduce the dead weight of debt.[47] The complication of his scheme was due to his desire to make sure of its stability, and undoubtedly he would have carried it if he had remained in office through the session. He is, however, entitled to credit for laying the foundation of an effective sinking fund.

One word more may be added on Mr. Gladstone as financier. He was far too comprehensive in his outlook to suppose that the great outburst of material prosperity during the years in which he controlled the exchequer and guided parliament in affairs of money, was wholly and without qualification due to budgets alone. To insist on ascribing complex results to single causes is the well-known vice of narrow and untrained minds. He was quite alive to the effects of “the enormous, constant,

[47] Mr. Courtney contributes a good account of this measure to the chapter on Finance in Ward's *Reign of Queen Victoria*, i. pp. 345-7.

rapid, and diversified development of mechanical power, and the consequent saving of labour by the extension of machinery." He was well aware of the share of new means of locomotion in the growth of industrial enterprise. But the special cause of what was most peculiar to England in the experience of this period he considered to be the wise legislation of parliament, in seeking every opportunity for abolishing restrictions upon the application of capital and the exercise of industry and skill. In this wise legislation his own energetic and beneficent genius played the master part.

[069]

Chapter V. American Civil War. (1861-1863)

> Then came the outbreak which had been so often foretold, so often menaced; and the ground reeled under the nation during four years of agony, until at last, after the smoke of the battlefield had cleared away, the horrid shape which had cast its shadow over a whole continent had vanished, and was gone for ever.—JOHN BRIGHT.

I

Sir Cornewall Lewis in a memorandum printed for the use of his colleagues both truly and impressively described the momentous struggle that at this time broke upon the family of civilised nations in both hemispheres. "It may be fairly asserted," says the particularly competent writer of it, "that the war in America is the greatest event that has occurred in the political world since the definitive fall of Napoleon in 1815. The expulsion of the elder branch of the Bourbons in 1830; the expulsion of Louis Philippe in 1848; the re-establishment of a republic, and the subsequent restoration of a Bonaparte to the imperial throne—were all important events, both to France and to the rest of Europe; but (with the exception of the recent annexation of Savoy and Nice) they have not altered the boundaries of France; and Europe still, in spite of minor changes, substantially retains the form impressed upon it by the treaty of Vienna.[48] With respect to the internal consequences of these changes, a French revolution has become a fight in the streets of Paris, in order to determine who shall be the occupant of the Tuileries.

[48] On this sentence in his copy of the memorandum Mr. Gladstone pencils in the margin as was his way, his favourite Italian corrective, *ma!*

The administrative body and the army—the two great governing powers of France—remain substantially unaffected; whereas
[070] the American civil war threatens a complete territorial re-arrangement of the Union; it also portends a fundamental change in the constitution, by which both its federal and state elements will be recast."

Of this immense conflict Mr. Gladstone, like most of the leading statesmen of the time, and like the majority of his countrymen, failed to take the true measure. The error that lay at the root of our English misconception of the American struggle is now clear. We applied ordinary political maxims to what was not merely a political contest, but a social revolution. Without scrutiny of the cardinal realities beneath, we discussed it like some superficial conflict in our old world about boundaries, successions, territorial partitions, dynastic preponderance. The significance of the American war was its relation to slavery. That war arose from the economic, social, and political consequences that flowed from slavery—its wasteful cultivation, the consequent need for extension of slave territory, the probable revival of the accursed African trade, the constitution of slave-holders as the sole depositaries of social prestige and political power. Secession was undertaken for the purpose of erecting into an independent state a community whose whole structure was moulded on a system that held labour in contempt, that kept the labourer in ignorance and cruel bondage, that demanded a vigilant censorship of the press and an army of watchmen and spies. And this barbaric state was to set itself up on the border of a great nation, founded on free industry, political equality, diffused knowledge, energetic progress. Such was the meaning of secession. "The rebellion," as Charles Sumner well said to Mr. Gladstone in 1864, "is slavery in arms, revolting, indecent, imperious." Therefore those who fought against secession fought against slavery and all that was involved in that dark burden, and whatever their motives may at

different times have been, they rendered an immortal service to humanity.[49]

[071]

General Ideas On The American War

At a very early period Mr. Gladstone formed the opinion that the attempt to restore the Union by force would and must fail. "As far as the *controversy* between North and South," he wrote to the Duchess of Sutherland (May 29, 1861) "is a controversy on the principle announced by the vice-president of the South, viz. that which asserts the superiority of the white man, and therewith founds on it his right to hold the black in slavery, I think that principle detestable, and I am wholly with the opponents of it.... No distinction can in my eyes be broader than the distinction between the question whether the Southern ideas of slavery are right, and the question whether they can justifiably be put down by war from the North." To Cyrus Field he wrote (Nov. 27, 1862): "Your frightful conflict may be regarded from many points of view. The competency of the Southern states to secede; the rightfulness of their conduct in seceding (two matters wholly distinct and a great deal too much confounded); the natural reluctance of Northern Americans to acquiesce in the severance of the union, and the apparent loss of strength and glory to their country; the bearing of the separation on the real interests and on the moral character of the North; again, for an Englishman, its bearing with respect to British interests;—all these are texts of which any one affords ample matter for reflection, but I will only state as regards the last of them, that I for one have never hesitated to maintain that, in my opinion, the separate and special

[49] Of course the literature of this great theme is enormous, but an English reader with not too much time will find it well worked out in the masterly political study, *The Slave Power*, by J. E. Cairnes (1861), that vigorous thinker and sincere lover of truth, if ever there was one. Besides Cairnes, the reader who cares to understand the American civil war should turn to F. L. Olmsted's *Journeys and Explorations in the Cotton Kingdom* (1861), and *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States* (1856)—as interesting a picture of the South on the eve of its catastrophe, as Arthur Young's picture of France on the eve of the revolution.

interests of England were all on the side of the maintenance of the old union, and if I were to look at those interests alone, and had the power of choosing in what way the war should end, I would choose for its ending by the restoration of the old union this very day."

In a letter to the Duchess of Sutherland (Nov. 7, 1862), he says: "A friendly correspondent writes to say he is sorry the South has my sympathies. But the South has not my sympathies, except in the sense in which the North has them also. I wish them both
[072] cordially well, which I believe is more than most Englishmen can at present say with truth. In both I see the elements of future power and good; in both I see also the elements of danger and mischief.' To another correspondent: 'I have never to my knowledge expressed any sympathy with the Southern cause in any speech at Newcastle or elsewhere, nor have I passed any eulogium upon President Davis. In dealing whether with South or North I have thought it out of my province to touch in any way the complicated question of praise and blame."

At a very early stage the Duke of Argyll sent him some letter of Mrs. Beecher Stowe's, and Mr. Gladstone in acknowledging it from Penmaenmawr (Aug. 26, 1861) writes expressing all possible respect for her character and talents, but thinks that she has lost intellectual integrity:—

> It seems to me that the South has two objects in view: firstly the liberation of its trade and people from the law of tribute to the North; secondly and perhaps mainly, the maintenance of the slave system without fear or risk of Northern interference. That on the other hand it is very difficult to analyse that movement of the North which Mrs. Stowe finds sublime, but which in my eyes is tumultuous. There is the anti-slavery motive impelling with great vehemence a small section, which she rather offensively calls the Christian people of the union; there is the spirit of protection and monopoly, unwilling to surrender future booty; there is the unquietness in the great

> towns, found in America as in all countries, and ever ready for a row; there is the fear which Mr. Motley described, that unless a firm front were shown against secession it would not stop where it had begun; there is last and (relatively to this subject matter) best of all the strong instinct of national life, and the abhorrence of nature itself towards all severance of an organised body. This last sentiment, as well as the first, deserved to be treated by us with great tenderness and respect.... As to the authority and title of the North it must be granted *primâ facie*, but on examination it is subject to a good deal of doubt, and I think it seems to have been the intention of the framers of the constitution not to lay down a rule for the solution of a great question of this kind, but to leave it open. And if so, I think they were wise; for such a [073] question could only arise for any practical purpose at a time when the foundations of the great social deep are broken up, and when the forces brought into unrestrained play are by far too gigantic to be controlled by paper conventions.

So much for his view of the case in its general aspect.

II

At one dangerous moment in the conflict it seemed possible that Great Britain might be forced to take a part. The commander of an American man-of-war boarded the *Trent* (Nov. 8, 1861), a British mail-boat, seized two emissaries from the Southern confederacy on their way to Europe, and carried them off to his own ship, whence they were afterwards landed and thrown into prison. This act was in direct violation of those rights of neutrals of which the United States hitherto had been the strictest champion against Great Britain; and nothing was to be gained by it, for the presence of the two commissioners was not in the least likely to effect any change in the policy of either England or France. Violent explosions of public feeling broke out on

both sides of the Atlantic; of anger in England, of exultation in America. Mr. Gladstone's movements at this critical hour are interesting. On Nov. 27, says Phillimore, "Gladstones dined here. Gladstone, with the account in his pocket from the evening papers of the capture of the Southern envoys out of the English mail-ship." The next two nights he was at court.

> *Nov. 28.*—Off at 6.30 to Windsor. The Queen and Prince spoke much of the American news.
>
> *Nov. 29* (Friday).—Came up to town for the cabinet on American news. Returned to Windsor for dinner, and reported to Queen and Prince.

Of this important cabinet, Mr. Gladstone wrote an account to the Duke of Argyll, then absent from London:—

> *Dec. 3, '61.*—The cabinet determined on Friday to ask reparation, and on Saturday they agreed to two despatches to Lord Lyons of which the one recited the facts, stated we
> [074] could not but suppose the American government would of itself be desirous to afford us reparation, and said that in any case we must have (1) the commissioners returned to British protection; and (2) an apology or expression of regret. The second of these despatches desired Lyons to come away within seven days if the demands are not complied with. *I thought and urged that we should hear what the Americans had to say before withdrawing Lyons, for I could not feel sure that we were at the bottom of the law of the case, or could judge here and now what form it would assume. But this view did not prevail.*

We may assume that Mr. Gladstone, in reporting these proceedings at Windsor, did not conceal his own arguments for moderation which had been overruled. On the following day the cabinet again met. "Nov. 30 (Sat.). Left Windsor at 11.25. Cabinet 3-5-½. Lord Russell's draft softened and abridged." That

is to say the draft was brought nearer, though not near enough, to the temper urged upon the cabinet and represented at court by Mr. Gladstone the day before.

The story of the first of these two critical despatches is pretty well known; how the draft initialled by Lord Russell was sent down the same night to Windsor; how the Prince Consort—then as it proved rapidly sinking down into his fatal illness—found it somewhat meagre, and suggested modifications and simplifications; how the Queen returned the draft with the suggestions in a letter to the prime minister; how Palmerston thought them excellent, and after remodelling the draft in the more temperate spirit recommended by the Prince, though dropping at least one irritating phrase in the Queen's memorandum,[50] sent it back to the foreign office, whence it was duly sent on (Dec. 1) to Lord Lyons at Washington. It seems, moreover, that a day's reflection had brought his colleagues round to Mr. Gladstone's mind, for Lord Russell wrote to Lord Lyons a private note (Dec. 1) in effect instructing him to say nothing about withdrawing in seven days.[51]

[075]

Progress Of The War By 1862

The British despatches were delivered to Lord Lyons at Washington at midnight on December 18; the reparation despatch was formally read to Mr. Seward on the 23rd; and on Christmas Day Lincoln had a meeting of his cabinet. Sumner was invited to attend, and he read long letters from Cobden and Bright. “At all hazards,” said Bright, “you must not let this matter grow to a war with England. Even if you are right and we are wrong, war will be fatal to your idea of restoring the union.... I implore you not, on any feeling that nothing can be conceded, and that England is arrogant and seeking a quarrel, to play the game of every enemy of your country.”[52] A French despatch in the English sense was

[50] See Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln*, v. p. 28. Also Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort*, v. p. 421.

[51] See Walpole's *Russell*, ii. p. 358.

[52] War-with England, or the probability of it, would have meant the raising of

also read. Seward and Sumner were in favour of giving up the men. The president, thinking of popular excitement, hesitated. In the end, partly because the case was bad on the merits, partly because they could not afford to have a second great war upon their hands, all came round to Seward's view.[53]

III

By the autumn of 1862 the war had lasted a year and a half. It was already entailing a cost heavier than our war with Napoleon at its most expensive period. The North had still failed to execute its declared purpose of reducing the South to submission. The blockade of the Southern ports, by stopping the export of cotton, was declared to have produced worse privations, loss, and suffering to England and France than were ever produced to neutral nations by a war. It was not in Mr. Gladstone's nature to sit with folded hands in sight of what he took to be hideous and unavailing carnage and havoc. Lord Palmerston, he tells Mrs. Gladstone (July 29, 1862), "has come exactly to my mind about some early representation of a friendly kind to America, if we
[076] can get France *and* Russia to join." A day or two later (Aug. 3) he writes to the Duke of Argyll: "My *opinion* is that it is vain, and wholly unsustained by precedent, to say nothing shall be done until both parties are desirous of it; that, however, we ought to avoid sole action, or anything except acting in such a combination as would morally represent the weight of impartial Europe; that with this view we ought to communicate with France and Russia; to make with them a friendly representation (if they are ready

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the blockade, the withdrawal of a large part of the troops from the Southern frontier, and substantially the leaving of the Confederates to a *de facto* independence.—Dana's *Wheaton*, p. 648.

[53] Rhodes, *History of the United States since 1850*, iii. p. 538. See also *Life of C. F. Adams*, by his son C. F. A., Boston, 1900, chapter xii., especially pp. 223-4.

to do it) of the mischief and the hopelessness of prolonging the contest in which both sides have made extraordinary and heroic efforts; but if they are not ready, then to wait for some opportunity when they may be disposed to move with us. The adhesion of other powers would be desirable if it does not encumber the movement."

"In the year 1862," says Mr. Gladstone in a fragment of autobiography, "I had emerged from very grave financial [budget] difficulties, which in 1860 and 1861 went near to breaking me down. A blue sky was now above me, and some of the Northern liberals devised for me a triumphant visit to the Tyne, which of course entailed as one of its incidents a public dinner." Seeing a visit to Newcastle announced, Lord Palmerston wrote (Sept. 24) to Mr. Gladstone, begging him on no account to let the chancellor of the exchequer be too sympathetic with the tax-payer, or to tell the country that it was spending more money than it could afford. A more important part of the letter was to inform Mr. Gladstone that he himself and Lord Russell thought the time was fast approaching when an offer of mediation ought to be made by England, France, and Russia, and that Russell was going privately to instruct the ambassador at Paris to sound the French government. "Of course," Lord Palmerston said, "no actual step would be taken without the sanction of the cabinet. But if I am not mistaken, you would be inclined to approve such a course." The proposal would be made to both North and South. If both should accept, an armistice would follow, and negotiations on the basis of separation. If both should decline, then Lord Palmerston assumed that they would acknowledge the independence of the South. The next day Mr. Gladstone replied. He was glad to learn what the prime minister had told him, and [077] for two reasons especially he desired that the proceedings should be prompt. The first was the rapid progress of the Southern arms and the extension of the area of Southern feeling. The second was the risk of violent impatience in the cotton-towns of Lancashire,

such as would prejudice the dignity and disinterestedness of the proffered mediation.[54] On September 17 Russell had replied to a letter from Palmerston three days earlier, saying explicitly, "I agree with you that the time is come for offering mediation to the United States government, with a view to the recognition of the independence of the Confederates. I agree further, that in case of failure, we ought ourselves to recognise the Southern states as an independent state."[55] So far, then, had the two heads of the government advanced, when Mr. Gladstone went to Newcastle.

On The Tyne

The people of the Tyne gave him the reception of a king. The prints of the time tell how the bells rang, guns thundered, a great procession of steamers followed him to the mouth of the river, ships flew their gayest bunting, the banks were thronged with hosts of the black-handed toilers of the forges, the furnaces, the coal-staiths, chemical works, glass factories, shipyards, eager to catch a glimpse of the great man; and all this not because he had tripled the exports to France, but because a sure instinct had revealed an accent in his eloquence that spoke of feeling for the common people.[56]

[078]

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rising seaport, than to any other class of commercial men in the north of England."—*Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, Oct. 11, 1862.

[54] In the summer of 1862 he took an active part in schemes for finding employment at Hawarden for Lancashire operatives thrown out of work by the cotton-famine. One of the winding-paths leading through some of the most beautiful spots of the park at Hawarden was made at this time by factory workers from Lancashire employed by Mr. Gladstone for purposes of relief.

[55] Walpole's *Life of Russell*, ii. p. 361.

[56] In a jingle composed for the occasion, the refrain is—

"Honour give to sterling worth,
Genius better is than birth,
So here's success to Gladstone."

In thanking a Newcastle correspondent for his reception, Mr. Gladstone writes (Oct. 20, 1862): "To treat these occurrences as matter of personal obligation to those who have taken a part in them would be to mistake the ground on which they rest. But I must say with unfeigned sincerity that I can now perceive I have been appropriating no small share of honour that is really due to the labour of others: of Mr. Cobden as to the French treaty, and of

Oct. 7, 1862.—Reflected further on what I should say about Lancashire and America, for both these subjects are critical.... At two we went to Newcastle and saw the principal objects, including especially the fine church and lantern, the gem of an old castle, and Grey Street—I think our best modern street. The photographer also laid hands on me. At six we went to a crowded and enthusiastic dinner of near 500. I was obliged to make a long oration which was admirably borne. The hall is not very easy to fill with the voice, but quite practicable. 8.—Reached Gateshead at 12, and after an address and reply, embarked in the midst of a most striking scene which was prolonged and heightened as we went down the river at the head of a fleet of some 25 steamers, amidst the roar of guns and the banks lined or dotted above and below with multitudes of people. The expedition lasted six hours, and I had as many speeches as hours. Such a pomp I shall probably never again witness; circumstances have brought upon me what I do not in any way deserve.... The spectacle was really one for Turner, no one else. 9.—Off to Sunderland. Here we had a similar reception and a progress through the town and over the docks and harbour works. I had to address the naval men, and then came a large meeting in the hall. Thence by rail to Middlesborough. At Darlington we were met by Lord Zetland, the mayor, and others. Middlesborough was as warm or even warmer. Another progress and steamboat procession and incessant flood of information respecting this curious place. The labour, however, is too much; giddiness came over me for a moment while I spoke at Sunderland, and I had to take hold of the table. At Middlesborough we had an address and reply in the town hall, then a public dinner, and we ended a day of over fifteen hours at Upleatham before

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the distinguished men who have in our day by their upright and enlightened public conduct made law and government names so dear to the people of England." "Indeed," says a contemporary journalist, "if Middlesborough did not do honour to Mr. Gladstone, we don't know who should, for the French treaty has been a greater boon to the iron manufacturers of that young but

> midnight. C. again holding out, and indeed she is a great part of the whole business with the people everywhere. I ought to be thankful, still more ought I to be ashamed. It was vain to think of reading, writing, or much reflecting on such a
> [079] day. I was most happy to lie down for fifteen minutes at Mr. Vaughan's in Middlesborough. 11.—Off at 8 A.M. to take the rail at Guisbro. At Middlesborough many friends had gathered at the station to give us a parting cheer. We came on to York, went at once to the mansion-house, and then visited the minister. At two came the "luncheon," and I had to address another kind of audience.

Unhappily, the slave must still go in the triumphal car to remind us of the fallibilities of men, and here the conqueror made a grave mistake. At the banquet in the town hall of Newcastle (Oct. 7), with which all these joyous proceedings had begun, Mr. Gladstone let fall a sentence about the American war of which he was destined never to hear the last: "We know quite well that the people of the Northern states have not yet drunk of the cup—they are still trying to hold it far from their lips—which all the rest of the world see they nevertheless must drink of. We may have our own opinions about slavery; we may be for or against the South; but there is no doubt that Jefferson Davis and other leaders of the South have made an army; they are making, it appears, a navy; and they have made what is more than either, they have made a nation."

Here the speaker was forgetful of a wholesome saying of his own, that "a man who speaks in public ought to know, besides his own meaning, the meaning which others will attach to his words." The sensation was immediate and profound. All the world took so pointed an utterance to mean that the government were about to recognise the independence of the South. The cotton men were thrown into a position of doubt and uncertainty that still further disturbed their trade. Orders for cotton were countermanded, and the supply of the precious material for a moment threatened

to become worse than ever. Cobden and Bright were twitted with the lapse of their favourite from a central article of their own creed and commandments. Louis Blanc, then in exile here, describing the feeling of the country, compares the sympathy for the North to a dam and the sympathy for the South to a torrent, and says he fears that Gladstone at Newcastle had yielded to the temptation of courting popularity.[57] The American minister [080] dropped a hint about passports.[58]

To the numerous correspondents who complained of his language Mr. Gladstone framed a form of reply, disclaiming responsibility for all the various inferences that people chose to draw from his language. "And generally," his secretary concluded, in phrases that justly provoked plain men to wrath, "Mr. Gladstone desires me to remark that to form opinions upon questions of policy, to announce them to the world, and to take or to be a party to taking any of the steps necessary for giving them effect, are matters which, though connected together, are in themselves distinct, and which may be separated by intervals of time longer or shorter according to the particular circumstances of the case."[59] Mr. Gladstone sent a copy of this enigmatical response to the foreign secretary, who was far too acute not to perceive all the mischief and the peril, but had his full share of that generosity of our public life that prevents a minister from bearing too hardly on a colleague who has got the boat and its crew into a scrape. Lord Russell replied from Walmer (Oct. 20):

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[57] *Letters on England*, pp. 146-78.

[58] Adams wrote in his diary: "*Oct. 8.* If Gladstone be any exponent at all of the views of the cabinet, then is my term likely to be very short. The animus, as it respects Mr. Davis and the recognition of the rebel cause, is very apparent. Oct. 9:—We are now passing through the very crisis of our fate. I have had thoughts of seeking a conference with Lord Russell, to ask an explanation of Gladstone's position; but, on reflection, I think I shall let a few days at least pass, and then perhaps sound matters incidentally."—Rhodes, iv. p. 340. *Life of Adams*, pp. 286-7.

[59] Oct. 18, 1862.

"I have forwarded to your private secretary your very proper answer to your very impertinent correspondent. Still, you must allow me to say that I think you went beyond the latitude which all speakers must be allowed, when you said that Jeff. Davis had made a nation. Recognition would seem to follow, and for that step I think the cabinet is not prepared. However, we shall soon meet to discuss this very topic." A week after the deliverance at Newcastle, Lewis, at Lord Palmerston's request as I have heard, put things right in a speech at Hereford. The Southern states, he [081] said, had not *de facto* established their independence and were not entitled to recognition on any accepted principles of public law.

Estimate Of His Error

It is superfluous for any of us at this day to pass judgment. Mr. Gladstone has left on record in a fragmentary note of late date his own estimate of an error that was in truth serious enough, and that has since been most of all exaggerated by those sections of society and opinion who at the time most eagerly and freely shared the very same delusion.

> I have yet to record, he writes (July 1896) in the fragment already more than once mentioned, an undoubted error, the most singular and palpable, I may add the least excusable of them all, especially since it was committed so late as in the year 1862, when I had outlived half a century. In the autumn of that year, and in a speech delivered after a public dinner at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, I declared in the heat of the American struggle that Jefferson Davis had made a nation, that is to say, that the division of the American Republic by the establishment of a Southern or secession state was an accomplished fact. Strange to say, this declaration, most unwarrantable to be made by a minister of the crown with no authority other than his own, was not due to any feeling of partizanship for the South or hostility to the North. The fortunes of the South were at their zenith. Many who wished well to the Northern cause despaired of its success. The

friends of the North in England were beginning to advise that it should give way, for the avoidance of further bloodshed and greater calamity. I weakly supposed that the time had come when respectful suggestions of this kind, founded on the necessity of the case, were required by a spirit of that friendship which, in so many contingencies of life, has to offer sound recommendations with a knowledge that they will not be popular. Not only was this a misjudgment of the case, but even if it had been otherwise, I was not the person to make the declaration. I really, though most strangely, believed that it was an act of friendliness to all America to recognise that the struggle was virtually at an end. I was not one of those who on the ground of British interests desired a division of the American Union. My view was distinctly opposite. I thought that while the Union continued it never could [082] exercise any dangerous pressure upon Canada to estrange it from the empire—our honour, as I thought, rather than our interest forbidding its surrender. But were the Union split, the North, no longer checked by the jealousies of slave-power, would seek a partial compensation for its loss in annexing, or trying to annex, British North America. Lord Palmerston desired the severance as a diminution of a dangerous power, but prudently held his tongue.

That my opinion was founded upon a false estimate of the facts was the very least part of my fault. I did not perceive the gross impropriety of such an utterance from a cabinet minister, of a power allied in blood and language, and bound to loyal neutrality; the case being further exaggerated by the fact that we were already, so to speak, under indictment before the world for not (as was alleged) having strictly enforced the laws of neutrality in the matter of the cruisers. My offence was indeed only a mistake, but one of incredible grossness, and with such consequences of offence and alarm attached to it, that my failing to perceive them justly exposed me to very severe blame. It illustrates vividly that incapacity which my mind so long retained, and perhaps still exhibits, an incapacity

of viewing subjects all round, in their extraneous as well as in their internal properties, and thereby of knowing when to be silent and when to speak.

I am the more pained and grieved, because I have for the last five-and-twenty years received from the government and people of America tokens of goodwill which could not fail to arouse my undying gratitude. When we came to the arbitration at Geneva, my words were cited as part of the proof of hostile *animus*. Meantime I had prepared a lengthened statement to show from my abundant declarations on other occasions that there was and could be on my part no such *animus*. I was desirous to present this statement to the arbitrators. My colleagues objected so largely to the proceeding that I desisted. In this I think they probably were wrong. I addressed my paper to the American minister for the information of his government, and Mr. Secretary Fish gave me, so far as
[083] intention was concerned, a very handsome acquittal.

And strange to say,*post hoc* though, perhaps not *propter hoc*, the United States have been that country of the world in which the most signal marks of public honour have been paid me, and in which my name has been the most popular, the only parallels being Italy, Greece, and the Balkan Peninsula.

Among the many calumnies poured upon him in this connection was the charge that he had been a subscriber to the Confederate Loan. “The statement,” he wrote to a correspondent (Oct. 17, 1865), “is not only untrue, but it is so entirely void of the slightest shadow of support in any imaginable incident of the case, that I am hardly able to ascribe it to mere error, and am painfully perplexed as to the motives which could have prompted so mischievous a forgery.”

IV

As I have already said, the American minister had hinted at passports. Ten days after Mr. Gladstone's speech Mr. Adams saw Lord Russell. Having mentioned some minor matters he came to the real object of the interview. "If I had trusted," he said, "to the construction given by the public to a late speech, I should have begun to think of packing my carpet bag and trunks. His lordship at once embraced the allusion, and whilst endeavouring to excuse Mr. Gladstone, in fact admitted that his act had been regretted by Lord Palmerston and the other cabinet officers. Still he could not disavow the sentiments of Mr. Gladstone; so far as he understood them (his meaning) was not that ascribed to him by the public. Mr. Gladstone was himself willing to disclaim that. He had written to that effect to Lord Palmerston.... His lordship said that the policy of the government was to adhere to a strict neutrality, and to leave this struggle to settle itself.... I asked him if I was to understand that policy as not now to be changed. He said, Yes."[60]

If this relation be accurate, then the foreign secretary did not construe strict neutrality as excluding what diplomatists call good offices. On October 13, Lord Russell circulated a memorandum [084] to the cabinet setting out in an argumentative tone all the adverse and confused aspects of the situation and outlook in America, and ending in the emphatic conclusion that it had now become a question for the great Powers of Europe whether it was not their duty to ask both parties to agree to a suspension of arms for the purpose of weighing calmly the advantages of peace. Cornewall Lewis (Oct. 17), while expressing an opinion that a peaceful separation between North and South would in the end have been best for the North, and while apparently believing that the war must one day end in Southern independence, met Russell's suggestion by cogent arguments against action on our part.[61]

[60] Rhodes, iv. p. 340. Also *Life of C. F. Adams*, p. 287.

[61] Lewis, throughout 1861, used language of characteristic coolness about the war: "It is the most singular action for the restitution of conjugal rights that

A week later (Oct. 24), Mr. Gladstone circulated a rejoinder to Lewis, arguing for representation to the two combatants from England, France, and Russia—a representation with moral authority and force, of the opinion of the civilised world upon the conditions of the case.

A Balanced Speech

This pretty nearly concludes all that need be said upon the attitude taken by Mr. Gladstone in that mighty struggle. We may at least add that if, and where, it differed from that of the majority of his countrymen, it did not differ for the worse. In November (1862) the French Emperor renewed proposals of joint mediation. The Emperor had objects of his own to serve. He was entangled in the coils of the Mexican adventure that was to give the first shock to his throne and to add another to the long scroll of tragedies in the house of Hapsburg. From the first the government of the American Union had scowled upon the intervention of Europe in the affairs of Mexico, just as the same government had refused to intervene in a European protest on behalf of Poland. The civil war between North and South
[085] kept American hands tied, and Napoleon well knew that the success of the North and the consolidation of the Union would overthrow his designs in Mexico. He cast restlessly about for any combination that promised aid to the Southern confederates, who, whether they should emerge strong or weak from the struggle, would be a useful instrument for his future purposes. So now he pressed England and Russia to join him in a project of mediation. Russia declined. The London cabinet was divided.[62]

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the world ever heard of." "You may conquer an insurgent province, but you cannot conquer a seceding state" (Jan. 21, '61). "The Northern states have been drifted, or rather plunged into war without having any intelligible aim or policy. The South fight for independence; but what do the North fight for, except to gratify passion or pride?"—*Letters*, p. 395, etc. See also preface to his *Administration of Great Britain* (p. xix), where he says, in 1856, he sees no solution but separation.

[62] There is a story, not very accurate, I should suppose, about Mr. Disraeli's concurrence in the Emperor's view, told from Slidell's despatches in an article

Mr. Gladstone writes home in these important days.—"*Nov. 11.* We have had our cabinet to-day and meet again to-morrow. I am afraid we shall do little or nothing in the business of America. But I will send you definite intelligence. Both Lords Palmerston and Russell are *right*.—*Nov. 12.* The United States affair has ended and not well. Lord Russell rather turned tail. He gave way without resolutely fighting out his battle. However, though we decline for the moment, the answer is put upon grounds and in terms which leave the matter very open for the future.—*Nov. 13.* I think the French will make our answer about America public; at least it is very possible. But I hope they may not take it as a positive refusal, or at any rate that they may themselves act in the matter. It will be clear that we concur with them, that the war should cease. Palmerston gave to Russell's proposal a feeble and half-hearted support. As to the state of matters generally in the cabinet, I have never seen it smoother; and they look pretty well, I think, as regards my department, though the distress tells upon me."

The only speech, I believe, delivered by Mr. Gladstone upon the war in parliament, while resisting the motion for the recognition of the confederacy, was curiously balanced.[63] As to the South, he said, not a few must sympathise with a resistance as heroic as ever was offered in the history of the world on [086] the part of a weaker body against the overpowering forces of a stronger. On the other hand, the cause of the South was so connected with slavery that a strong counter-current of feeling must arise in the mind. Then again, it is impossible for any Englishman not to have a very strong feeling of sympathy with

by O. F. Aldus, in *North American Review*, October 1879.

[63] June 30, 1863. *Hansard*, vol. 171, p. 1800. On four other occasions Mr. Gladstone gave public utterance to his opinion "on the subject of the war and the disruption"—at Leith, Jan. 11, 1862, at Manchester, April 24, 1862, at Newcastle, Oct. 7, 1862, and once in parliament when a member spoke of the bursting of the American bubble, he says, "I commented on the expressions with a reproof as sharp as I could venture to make it" (May 27, 1861).

those in the North who saw exalted visions of the great future of their country, now threatened with destruction. He had never agreed with those who thought it a matter of high British interest that the old American union should be torn in pieces. He had always thought that, involved as England was both in interest and in duty and honour with Canada, the balanced state of the American union which caused the whole of American politics to turn on the relative strength of the slavery and Northern interests, was more favourable to our colonial relations in North America, than if the said union were to be divided into a cluster of Northern and a cluster of Southern states. The North would endeavour to re-establish their territorial grandeur by seeking union with the British possessions in North America. He dwelt upon the horrid incidents of war. He insisted once more that the public opinion of this country was unanimous that the restoration of the American union by force was unattainable. Some cries of "No" greeted this declaration about unanimity, but he would not qualify it further than to say that at any rate it was almost unanimous. The other chief speakers that night were Mr. Forster (who played a brave and clear-sighted part throughout), Lord Robert Cecil, who attacked the "vague and loose" arguments of the chancellor of the exchequer, and Mr. Bright, who made perhaps the most powerful and the noblest speech of his life.

[087]

Chapter VI. Death Of Friends—Days At Balmoral. (1861-1884)

> Itaque veræ amicitiæ difficillime reperiuntur in iis qui in honoribus reque publica versantur.—CICERO.
>
> True friendships are hard to find among men who busy themselves about politics and office.

I

Within a few months of one another, three of Mr. Gladstone's closest friends and allies were lost to him. Lord Aberdeen died at the end of 1860. The letter written by Mr. Gladstone to the son of his veteran chief is long, but it deserves reproduction.[64] As a writer, though an alert and most strenuous disputant, he was apt to be diffuse and abstract. Partly, these defects were due to the subjects with which, in his literary performances, he mostly chose to deal. Perhaps one secret was that he forgot the famous word of Quintilian, that the way to write well is not to write quickly, but if you take trouble to write well, in time you can write as quickly as you like.[65] His character of Lord Aberdeen, like his beautiful letter in a similar vein about Hope-Scott,[66] where also his feelings were deeply moved, is very different from his more formal manner, and may claim high place among our literary portraits. It is penetrating in analysis, admirable in diction, rich in experience of life and human nature, and truly inspiring in those noble moralities that are the lifeblood of style, and of greater things than mere style can ever be.

Then, in the autumn of 1861, both Graham and Sidney [088]

[64] See Appendix.
[65] x. iii. 10.
[66] *Memoirs of J. R. Hope-Scott*, ii. pp. 284-293.

Herbert died; the former the most esteemed and valued of all his counsellors; the latter, so prematurely cut off, "that beautiful and sunny spirit," as he called him, perhaps the best beloved of all his friends. "Called on Gladstone," says Phillimore on this last occasion (Aug. 3); "found him at breakfast alone; very glad to see me. His eyes filled with tears all the time he spoke to me in a broken voice about his departed friend. The effect upon him has been very striking, increased no doubt by recent political differences of opinion." "It is difficult to speak of Herbert," Mr. Gladstone said later, "because with that singular harmony and singular variety of gifts—every gift of person, every gift of position, every gift of character with which it pleased Providence to bless him—he was one of whom we may well recite words that the great poet of this country has applied to a prince of our early history, cut off by death earlier than his countrymen would have desired:—

> "A sweeter and a lovelier gentleman,
> Framed in the prodigality of nature,
> The spacious world cannot again afford."[67]

The void thus left was never filled. Of Graham he wrote to the Duchess of Sutherland:—

> *Oct. 26.*—This most sad and unexpected news from Netherby rises up between me and your letter, I have lost a friend whom I seem to appreciate the more because the world appreciated him so inadequately; his intellectual force could not be denied, but I have never known a person who had such signal virtues that were so little understood. The remainder of my political career be it what it may (and I trust not over long) will be passed in the House of Commons without one old friend who is *both* political and personal. This is the gradual withdrawal of the props preparing for what is to follow. Let me not,

[67] *Richard III.* I.{FNS sc. ii. At Salisbury, Sept. 7, 1866.

> however, seem to complain, for never, I believe, was any one blessed so entirely beyond his deserts in the especial and capital article of friendships.

Not many months later (June 1862) he had to write to Mr. Gordon, "We are all sorely smitten by Canning's death," whose fame, he said, would "bear the scrutinising judgment of posterity, under whose keen eye so many illusions are doomed to fade away."[68] [089]

Aberdeen, Graham, And Herbert

In the December of 1861 died the Prince Consort. His last communication to Mr. Gladstone was a letter (Nov. 19) proposing to recommend him as an elder brother of the Trinity House in place of Graham. Of Mr. Gladstone's first interview with the Queen after her bereavement, Dean Wellesley wrote to him that she was greatly touched by his evidence of sympathy. "She saw how much you felt for her, and the mind of a person in such deep affliction is keenly sensitive and observant. Of all her ministers, she seemed to me to think that you had most entered into her sorrows, and she dwelt especially upon the manner in which you had parted from her." To the Duchess of Sutherland Mr. Gladstone writes:—

> *March 20, 1862.*—I find I must go out at four exactly. In any case I do not like to trust to chance your knowing or not knowing what befell me yesterday. Your advice was excellent. I was really bewildered, but that all vanished when the Queen came in and kept my hand a moment. All was beautiful, simple, noble, touching to the very last degree. It was a meeting, for me, to be remembered. I need only report the first and last words of the personal part of the conversation. The first (after a quarter of an hour upon affairs) was (putting down her head and struggling) "the nation has been very good

[68] His school friend, and later, governor-general of India.

> to me in my time of sorrow"; and the last, "I earnestly pray it may be long before you are parted from one another."[69]

In the spring he took occasion at Manchester to pronounce a fine panegyric on the Prince,[70] for which the Queen thanked him in a letter of passionate desolation, too sacred in the anguish of its emotion to be printed here. "Every source of interest or pleasure," she concludes, "causes now the acutest pain. Mrs. [090] Gladstone, who, the Queen knows, is a most tender wife, may in a faint manner picture to herself what the Queen suffers." Mr. Gladstone replies:—

> It may not be impertinent in him to assure your Majesty that all the words to which your Majesty refers were received with deep emotion by the whole of a very large assembly, who appeared to feel both your Majesty's too conspicuous affliction, and the solemnity of its relation to the severe and, alas! darkening circumstances of the district.[71]
>
> In presuming to touch upon that relation, and in following the direction which his subject gave him towards very sacred ground, he was especially desirous to avoid using even a phrase or a word of exaggeration, and likewise to speak only as one who had seen your Majesty's great sorrow in no other way than as all your Majesty's subjects beheld it.
>
> In speaking thus he knew that he must fall short of the truth; and indeed, even were it becoming to make the attempt, he would in vain labour to convey the impression made upon his mind by the interview to which he was admitted at Windsor, and by the letter now in his hands.

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[69] *March 19.*—Reading, conversation, and survey in the house filled the morning at Cliveden. At four we went to Windsor ... I had an audience of the Queen ... I had the gratification of hearing, through Lady A. Bruce, that it was agreeable to H. M.—(*Diary.*)

[70] *Gleanings*, i.

[71] The Lancashire cotton famine.

More follows in the vein and on the topics that are usual in letters of mourning sympathy, and the effect was what the writer sought. From Balmoral came a note (May 6, 1862): “The Queen wishes Princess Alice to thank Mr. Gladstone in her name for the kind letter he wrote to her the other day, which did her aching heart good. Kind words soothe, but nothing can lessen or alleviate the weight of sorrow she has to bear.”

Many years later he sat down to place on record his thoughts about the Prince Consort, but did not proceed beyond a scanty fragment, which I will here transcribe:—

> My praise will be impartial: for he did not fascinate, or command, or attract me through any medium but that of judgment and conscience. There was, I think, a want of freedom, nature, and movement in his demeanour, due partly to a faculty and habit of reflection that never intermitted, partly to an inexorable watchfulness over all he did and said, which produced something that was related to stillness and dullness in a manner which was notwithstanding, invariably modest, [091]
> frank, and kind, even to one who had no claims upon him for the particular exhibition of such qualities. Perhaps I had better first disburden myself of what I have to set down against him. I do not think he was a man without prejudices, and this particularly in religion. His views of the church of Rome must, I think, have been illiberal. At any rate, I well remember a conversation with him at Windsor respecting the papal decree imposing the belief in the immaculate conception, somewhere about the time when it came forth. He said he was glad of it, as it would tend to expose and explode the whole system. I contended, with a freedom which he always seemed to encourage, that we all had an interest in the well being and well doing, absolute or relative, of that great Christian communion, and that whatever indicated or increased the predominance of the worse influences within her pale over the better was a thing we ought much to deplore. No assent,

even qualified, was to be got.[72]

The death of the Prince Consort was a greater personal calamity to Mr. Gladstone than he could then foresee. Perhaps the disadvantage was almost as real as the death of the consort of King George II. to Sir Robert Walpole. Much as they might differ in political and religious opinion, yet in seriousness, conscience, and laborious temperament, the Prince and he were in exact accord, and it is impossible to doubt that if the Prince had survived at the Queen's right hand, certain jars might have been avoided that made many difficulties for the minister in later times.

II

I may as well here gather into a chapter some short pieces, mainly from letters to Mrs. Gladstone during the period covered by this fifth book. The most interesting of them, perhaps, are the little pictures of his life as minister in attendance at Balmoral; but there are, besides, two or three hints of a simplicity in his faculty of enjoyment in regions outside of graver things, that may shock critics of more complex or fastidious judgment. Readers will
[092] benevolently take them all as they come. He made a curious entry in his diary upon his birthday at the end of 1860: "*'Dec. 29.* Began my fifty-second year. I cannot believe it. I feel within me the rebellious unspoken word, I will not be old. The horizon enlarges, the sky shifts, around me. It is an age of shocks; a discipline so strong, so manifold, so rapid and whirling that only when it is at an end, if then, can I hope to comprehend it." Yet nearly all the most conspicuous scenes still lay before him.

[72] See the three articles on the Life of the Prince Consort in *Gleanings*, i. PP. 23-130.

October 18, 1860.—I did not get to the play last night from finding *The Woman in White* so very interesting. It has no dull parts, and is far better sustained than *Adam Bede*, though I do not know if it rises quite as high. The character drawing is excellent.

Downing Street, Dec. 15.—The chancellor says (keep this from view) that Prince Albert said to him at Windsor: "We Germans have no boundaries; our only boundary is the Quadrilateral," *i.e.* fortress in the heart of Italy. This, I fear, must be true, and, if so, is sad enough, because he evidently spoke his mind out unsuspiciously.

Dec. 18.—I actually went last night five mortal miles to Hoxton to see "Eily O'Connor," the Colleen Bawn in another shape! It was not without interest, though very inferior, and imitated in some cases with a ludicrous closeness. The theatre is a poor working man's theatre. I paid 1s. for a very aristocratic place. To-night I am going with Phillimore to the Westminster play, a Latin one, which I am afraid is rather long.

Jan. 18, 1861.—I write a few lines to you in the train, near Harrow. We shall not be in till four; all safe; and immense care evidently taken on account of the frost, though I do not feel it much in the air. I have had other matters to keep me warm. Among the letters given me this morning at Hawarden was one from Lord John, in which he quietly informs me that since the cabinet separated *he* has agreed to guarantee a loan, and for Morocco! This I mean to resist, and have managed to write a letter in the carriage to tell him so. What will come of it, I do not know. It is a very serious affair. I am afraid he has committed himself egregiously. I am very bad now; but what *shall* I be at sixty-eight? [093]

Jan. 19.—Indeed, this is a strange world. Yesterday it seemed Lord J. Russell might go out, or more likely I might, or even the cabinet might go to pieces. To-day he writes to me that he supposes he must find a way out of his proposal! So that is over.

Jan. 23.—You seem to have taken great pains about stable affairs, and I am quite satisfied. The truth indeed, alas, is, I am not fit at this critical time to give any thought to such matters. The embarrassment of our vast public expenditure, together with the ill effects of the bad harvest, are so thick upon me, together with the arrangements for next year and the preparation of my own bills for improvements, which, though a laborious, are a healthy and delightful part of my work.

Jan. 24.—I expect Argyll to share my mutton to-night, and we shall, I dare say, have a comfortable talk. Last night I saw Herbert. I think he looks much better. He did not open the subject of estimates, nor did I, before *her*, but I told him what I am sorry to say is true, that the prospects of revenue grow much worse. Up to a certain point, I must certainly make a stand. But I think he is rather frightened about expenditure, and not so panic-stricken about France; so that we may come together.

Jan. 25.—I write from the cabinet. I am in the midst of a deadly struggle about the estimates; the only comfort this year is, that I think the conflict will be more with the navy than the army. Herbert has told me to-day, with a simplicity and absence of egotism, which one could not but remark in his graceful character, the nature of his complaint. You will quickly guess. As to cabinets, Lord John says we had better meet frequently, and it will be on Tuesday *if* I am able to come down next week, but this is full of uncertainty. I hear that the Prince is *wild* about the Danish question.

Jan. 26.—Another cabinet on Monday. It is just possible they may relax after that day. I have had two long days of hard fighting. By dint of what, after all, might be called threat of resignation, I have got the navy estimates a little down, and I am now *in* the battle about the army. About the reduction [094] in the navy, Palmerston criticised, Lord John protested, and Cardwell! I think went farther than either. Never on any single occasion since this government was formed has his voice been raised in the cabinet for economy. What a misfortune it is

that Herbert has no nerve to speak out even in a private conversation. He told me yesterday of his reduction, but did not tell me that more than half of it was purely nominal! The article in the *Quarterly* is clever; and what it says, moreover, on the merits of the income-tax is true. I suspect, I might say I fear, it is written by Northcote.

Feb. 5.—Yesterday, in the carriage from Kidderminster, I heard in part a dialogue, of which I gathered so much. *First worthy*, "I suppose we shall have to pay twopence or threepence more income-tax." *Second worthy*, "Gladstone seems to be a totally incompetent man." *Third*, "Then he always wraps himself in such mystery. But now I do not see what else he can do; he has cut away the ground from under his feet"—with a growl about the conservative party. Such is the public opinion of Worcestershire beyond all doubt.

Hawarden, May 24.—The house looks cleanliness itself, and altogether being down here in the fresh air, and seeing nature all round me so busy with her work so beneficent and beautiful, makes me very sick of London and its wrathful politics, and wish that we were all here, or hereabouts once more.

July 20.—The political storm has blown over, but I do not think it seems an evening for riding to Holly House, nor can I honestly say that a party there would be a relaxation for my weary bones, and wearier nerves and brain.

Aug. 4.—I have been at All Saints this morning. Though London is empty, as they say, it was absolutely crammed. Richards preached an excellent sermon. But I certainly should not wish to be an habitual attendant there. The intention of the service is most devout, but I am far from liking wholly the mode of execution. My neighbour in church whispered to me, "Is the Bishop of London's jurisdiction acknowledged here?" I think he seemed to wish it should not be.

Oct. 22.—Tell Harry [his son] he is right, Latin is difficult, and it is in great part because it is difficult that it is useful. [095] Suppose lie wanted to make himself a good jumper; how

would he do it? By trying *first*, indeed, what was easy, but after that always what was difficult enough to make him exert himself to the uttermost. If he kept to the easy jumps, he would never improve. But the jumps that are at first difficult by and bye become easy. So the Latin lessons, which he now finds difficult, he will find easy when once his mind has been improved and strengthened by those very lessons. See if he understands this.

Dec. 29.—The strangest feeling of all in me is a rebellion (I know not what else to call it) against growing old.

Cliveden, Maidenhead, Jan. 14, 1862.—I have written to John [his brother], and if he is in town I shall go up and see him tomorrow. Meantime I have mentioned Locock, as recommended by you. I fear the dark cloud is slowly gathering over him [his wife's illness], as we have seen it lately gather over so many and then break. I am amazed at the mercy of God towards us, and towards me in particular. I think of all the children, and of their health in body and in mind. It seems as if it could not last; but this is all in God's hand.

Here are the Argylls, Lady Blantyre and a heap of young. We have been busy reading translations of Homer this morning, including some of mine, which are approved. Tennyson has written most noble lines on the Prince. Lord Palmerston is reported well.

Jan. 18.—I lifted Hayward last night back from dinner. He is full of the doctrine that Lord Palmerston is not to last another year. Johnny is then to succeed, and I to lead (as he says by the universal admission of the whigs) in the H. of C. It is rather hard before the death thus to divide the inheritance. But that we may not be too vain, it is attended with this further announcement, that when that event occurs, the government is shortly to break down.

Cabinet Room, Feb. 1.—The cabinet has gone well.[73] It is rather amusing. I am driving the screw; Lewis yields point by

[73] On the estimates for 1862-68.

point. I think in substance the question is ruled in my favour. Thank God for the prospect of peace; but it will not positively be settled till Monday. Lewis's last dying speech, 'Well, we will see what can be done.' [096]

Bowden, Wilts., Feb. 19.—The funeral is over [the wife of his brother]. Nothing could be better ordered in point of taste and feeling. It was one of the most touching, I think the most touching, scene I ever witnessed, when the six daughters weeping profusely knelt around the grave, and amidst their sobs and tears just faltered out the petitions of the Lord's Prayer in the service. John, sensible of his duty of supporting others, went through it all with great fortitude. On the whole, I must say I can wish no more for any family, than that when the stroke of bereavement comes, they meet it as it has been met here.

Nov. 18.—I have sat an hour with Lord Lyndhurst. He is much *older* than when I saw him last, but still has pith and life in him, as well as that astonishing freshness of mind which gives him a charm in its way quite unrivalled. He was very kind, and what is more, he showed, I think, a seriousness of tone which has been missed before.

Last night I saw "Lord Dundreary." I think it—the part and the player, not the play—quite admirable. It is a thoroughly refined piece of acting, such as we hardly ever see in England; and it combines with refinement intense fun. My face became with laughing like what Falstaff says he will make Prince Henry's face, "like a wet cloak ill laid up"[74] (*Phillimore*).

Windsor Castle, Dec. 10.—Here I am with six candles blazing! of which I shall put out a larger proportion when no longer afraid of a visit from the great people about the passages. I got your letter this morning, but I am amazed at your thinking I have the pluck to ask the Princess of Wales! or the Queen!!! about photographs promised or not promised.

In came the Dean; after that, a summons to the Queen,

[74] 2 *Henry IV.*, v. sc. i.

with whom I have been an hour. She is well in health and in spirits, and when she speaks of the Prince does it with a free, natural, and healthy tone, that is most pleasing. I am to see the Prince of Wales after dinner. I now therefore make sure of leaving to-morrow. The Queen asked kindly about you, and I saw little Princess Beatrice.

[097]

III

Aug. 31, 1863.—Walked 24-3/4 miles. Found it rather too much for my stiffening limbs. My day of long stretches is, I think, gone by.

Balmoral, Sept. 26.—This place is on the whole very beautiful and satisfactory; and Deeside at large has lost for me none of its charms, with its black-green fir and grey rock, and its boundless ranges of heather still almost in full bloom. The Queen spends a good many hours out, and looks well, but older. I had a long conversation or audience to-day, but as regards the form and mode of life here, so far as I see, it does not differ for visitors from Windsor. All meals and rooms are separate, but sometimes, it appears, some are invited to dine with the Queen. The household circle is smaller here than at Windsor, and so less formal and dull. I doubt your doctrine about your message, but I will give it if a good opportunity occurs. She talked very pleasantly and well upon many matters public and other—(Do not go on reading this aloud or give it to others). As to politics, she talked most of America and Germany; also some Lancashire distress. She feels an immense interest in Germany, her recollections of the Prince's sentiments being in that, as in other matters, a barometer to govern her sympathies and affections. She said (when I hoped she had received benefit from the air here) that she thought she had been better in Germany than anywhere,

though it was excessively hot. She asked where I had been, and about our living at Hawarden, and where it was. I told her I thought she had been there, at least driving through from Eaton (was it not so?) when she was Princess, and at last she seemed to remember it, and said it was thirty-one years ago. Princess Alice has got a black boy here who was given to her, and he produces a great sensation on the Deeside, where the people never saw anything of the kind and cannot conceive it. A woman, and an intelligent one, cried out in amazement on seeing him, and said she would certainly have fallen down but for the Queen's presence. She said nothing would induce her to wash his clothes *as the black would come off*! This story the Queen told me in good spirits.

She said that some people after heavy bereavement disliked seeing those whom they had known well before, and who [098] reminded them of what had been, but with her it was exactly the opposite; it was the greatest effort and pain to her to see any one who had [not] known *them* before, and their mode of living. As an instance, she said it cost her much to see the Emperor of Austria, whom the Prince had never known. Evidently this clinging to things old will form itself into a habit, but I am afraid it may hereafter, when more have died off, be a matter of difficulty to her. It is impossible to help seeing that she mistrusts Lord Russell's judgment in foreign affairs, indeed I have already had clear proof of this. She likes Lord Palmerston's better; thinks he looks very old, and will not allow that it is all owing to an accident. But dinner is drawing near, so good-bye. We have had a good day, and have been up to the pyramid put on a hill-top as a memorial to the Prince, with the beautiful inscription.

Sept. 27.—I do not think Sunday is the best of days here. I in vain inquired with care about episcopal services; there did not seem to be one within fifteen miles, if indeed so near. We had something between family prayer and a service in the dining-room at ten; it lasted about forty minutes. Dr. Caird gave a short discourse, good in material, though over florid

in style for my taste. The rest of the day I have had to myself. The Prince and Princess of Hesse I think went to the parish church. You are better off at Penmaenmawr.... I saw the two princes last night. They were playing billiards. The Prince of Wales asked particularly, as always, about you and Willy.

Sept. 28.—I must be brief as I have been out riding with Sir C. and Miss Phipps to Alt-na-Guisach (the Queen's cottage), and came in *late*. Be assured all is very comfortable and restful here. I think too that I feel the air very invigorating, my room is pleasant and cheerful on the ground floor, with a turret dressing-room. ... I am pretty much master of my time. To-day I have heard nothing of the Queen. Last evening I was summoned to dine, as was Lady Churchill. It was extremely interesting. We were but seven in all, and anything more beautifully domestic than the Queen and her family it was impossible to conceive. The five were her Majesty, Prince and Princess Louis, Prince Alfred, and Princess Helena. Princess
[099] Louis (whom the Queen in speaking of still calls Princess Alice) asked about you all. I had the pleasure of hearing the good report of Lucy altogether confirmed from her lips and *the Queen's*. The Queen thinks her like her dear mother. She talked about many things and persons; among others the Lyttelton family, and asked about the boys *seriatim*, but pulled me up at once when, in a fit of momentary oblivion, I said the New Zealander was the third. She spoke of the chancellor and of Roundell Palmer; I had a good opportunity of speaking him *up*, and found she had his book of hymns. She spoke very freely about the chancellor; and I heard from her that the attorney-general resigns on the score of health—of course Palmer succeeds. Prince Alfred is going to Edinburgh to study; he is a smart fellow, and has plenty of go in him.

Sept. 29.—I have just come in at 6-½ from a fine hill walk of over three hours, quite ready for another were there light and opportunity.

Sept. 30.—I am come in from a nineteen mile walk to the Lake of Lochnagar with Dr. Bekker, as fresh as a lark! Very

wet. The Queen sent me a message not to go up Lochnagar (top) if there was mist; and mist there was, with rain to boot. I find the resemblance to Snowdon rather striking. It is 3800 feet; we went up about 3300. You forgot to tell me for what pious object you picked Lord P.'s pocket. Nor do you distinctly tell me where to address, but as you say three nights I suppose it should be Penmaenmawr. Last night we went down to Abergeldie to the gillies' ball. There was a dance called the perpetual jig, nearly the best fun I ever witnessed. The princes danced with great activity after deer-stalking, and very well; Prince Alfred I thought beautifully. They were immensely amused at having passed me on the way home and offered me a lift, to which I replied (it was dark) thinking they were General Grey and a household party. The Princess did not dance—asked about you—is taking great care, and the Prince very strict about it also. She does not ride or fatigue herself. The event, according to Dr. Jenner, should take place in March or early in April. You see his authority and yours are at variance. The Queen was (according to Mrs. Bruce, who dined with her) very low last night, on account of the ball, which naturally recalled so much. [100]

Oct. 3.—It happened oddly yesterday I was sent for while out. I had had a message from the Queen in the morning which made me think there would be no more, so I went out at a quarter past three. I am very sorry this happened. I am to see her, I believe, this evening.

Oct. 4.—The service at Ballater has made a great difference in favour of this Sunday. It was celebrated in the Free Kirk school-room for girls! and with a congregation under twenty, most attentive though very small, and no one left the room when we came to the Holy Communion. The Knollys family and people were one half or so. I gave Mrs. Knollys and one daughter a lift in *my* drag back to Birkhall (2-½ miles which they all loyally walk to and fro) and had luncheon there. I had Thomas with me. The sermon was *extremely* good; but the priest had a *few* antics. I believe

this is about the first expedition ever made from Balmoral to an episcopal service. Perhaps encouraged by my example, Captain W. got a drag to Castleton this morning, being a Roman. There was *no* chaplain here to-day, and so no dining-room service, which for many I fear means no service at all.

I dined with the Queen again last night; also Lady Augusta Bruce—seven, again, in all. The Crown Princess had a headache, as well she might, so they were not there. The same royalties as before, and everything quite as pleasing. The Queen talked Shakespeare, Scott, the use of the German language in England (and there I could not speak out *all* my mind), Guizot's translation of the Prince's speeches, and his preface (which the Queen has since sent me to look at), the children's play at Windsor (when Princess Alice acted a high priest, with great success—in "Athalie," I think), the Prussian children (the Queen says the baby is not pretty—the little boy on coming yesterday called them all stumpfnase, pugnose), handwritings, Lord Palmerston's to wit, Mr. Disraeli's style in his letters to the Queen, the proper mode of writing, on what paper, etc., and *great* laudation of Lady Lyttelton's letters. Princess Alice declares her baby is pretty, and says she shall show it me. The Queen was very cheerful, and seemed for the time happy. A statue of the Prince is about to be set up at Aberdeen, and she is then to attend and receive an address, with Sir G. Grey present in due form. The household life is
[101] really very agreeable when one comes to know them. One way and another they have a great deal in them.

Oct. 5.—I have been riding to Invercauld House and up above it. The beauty there even surpassed my high expectations, and made everything here look quite pale in comparison. They were very kind, and offered me deer-stalking; we drank tea and ate scones.

I have only time to tell you two things. First, the Queen is on Friday to do her first public act, to attend at the 'inauguration' of the statue of the Prince, and to receive

an address. I am to be there officially. I have telegraphed for my uniform. I go on to Aberdeen and Trinity College at night, and on Saturday evening to Edinburgh. There was fear that it might be on Saturday, and that I should be kept, but this could not be, as Saturday is a 'fast' for the periodical sacrament on Sunday. I told you the Queen talked about German on Saturday at dinner, among other things Schiller's and Coleridge's *Wallenstein*. Next morning she sent me, through Lady A. Bruce, the book, with a passage of which I have hastily translated the most important part. It is easy to conceive how it answers to her feelings.

"Too well I know the treasure I have lost.
From off my life the bloom is swept away;
It lies before me cold and colourless;
For he, that stood beside me like my youth,
He charmed reality into a dream,
And over all the common face of things
He shed the golden glow of morning's blush;
And in the fire of his affection
Dull forms, that throng the life of every day,
Yea to mine own amazement, tow'red aloft.
Win what I may henceforth, the Beautiful
Is gone, and gone without return."[75]

You will say this was an opening. In reading another part of the book I found lines which I have turned as follows, no better than the others:—

"For nothing other than a noble aim
Up from its depths can stir humanity;
The narrow circle narrows, too, the mind,
And man grows greater as his ends are great."[76]

[102]

Now, I thought, can I in reply call the Queen's attention to these significant words, a noble sermon? I asked Lady Augusta (of course I mean the German words) and she would not venture it. Had I a *viva voce* chance, I would try.

Oct. 6.—I am sorry you quitted Penmaenmawr in the sulks—I mean him in the sulks, not you. Your exploit was great; was it not rather over-great? I have been out to-day for a real good seven hours in the open air, going up Lochnagar. The day was glorious. We went five gentlemen, at least men. E. H. was keen to go, but the Queen would not let her. Thomas also went up with a party from here, and his *raptures* are such as would do you good. He says there is nothing it was not worth, and he has no words to describe his pleasure. Our party drove to Loch Muich, and then went up, some of us on ponies, some riding. I walked it all, and am not in the least tired, but quite ready, if there were need, to set out for it again. We saw towards the north as far as Caithness. I could not do all that the others did in looking down the precipices, but I managed a little. We had a very steep side to come down, covered with snow and very slippery; I was put to it, and had to come very slow, but Lord C. Fitzroy, like a good Samaritan, kept me company. The day was as lovely (after frost and snow in the night) as anything could be, and the whole is voted a great success. Well, there is a cabinet fixed for Tuesday; on the whole, this may be better than having it hang over one's head.

Oct. 7.—The Queen's talk last night (only think, she wants to read the French Jesuit—don't know this) was about Guizot's comparison of the Prince and King William, about Macaulay, America and the ironclads, where she was very

[75] *Death of Wallenstein*, Act v. Sc. 3. In Coleridge, v. 1.

[76] Denn nur der grosse Gegenstand vermag
Den tiefen Grund der Menschheit aufzuregen,
Im engen Kreis verengert sich der Sinn.
Es wächst der Mensch mit seinen grössern Zwecken.
Prologue to Wallenstein, stanza 5.

national and high-spirited; and Schleswig-Holstein, in which she is intensely interested, because the Prince thought it a great case of justice on the side rather opposite to that of Lord Palmerston and the government policy. She spoke about this with intense earnestness, and said she considered it a legacy from him.

Princess Alice's baby lives above me, and I believe never cries. I never hear it. We have been out riding to Birkhall to-day, and I had much talk with Lady Churchill about the Queen. She (Lady C.) feels and speaks most properly about her. I told Lady Augusta last night, *à propos* to the lines I [103] wanted to mention, that I had been a great coward, *and she too*. She was very submissive at dinner in her manner to the Queen, and I told her it made me feel I had been so impudent. Only think of this: both through her and through General Grey it has come round to me that the Queen thinks she was too cheerful on the night I last dined. This she feels a kind of sin. She said, however, to Lady Augusta she was sure I should understand it.... I am very glad and a little surprised that Mrs. Bruce should say I have a good name here. The people are, one and all, very easy to get on with, and Windsor, I suppose, stiffens them a little.

Oct. 8.—The Queen has had a most providential escape. The carriage, a sociable, very low and safe, was overturned last night after dark, on her way back from an expedition of seven or eight hours. Princesses Louis of Hesse and Helena were with her. They were undermost, and not at all hurt. The Queen was shot out of the carriage, and received a contusion on the temple and sprained a thumb. When she got in, I think near ten o'clock, Dr. Jenner wished her to go to bed, but she said it was of no use, and she would not. She was very confident, however, about performing the duties of the ceremonial in Aberdeen to-morrow. But now this evening it is given up, and I do not doubt this is wise, but much inconvenience will be caused by so late a postponement. I have been up to the place to-day.... The Queen should give

up these drives after dark; it is impossible to guarantee them. But she says she feels the hours from her drive to dinner such weary hours.

Little Princess Victoria paid me a visit in my bedroom, which is also sitting-room, to-day. She is of sweet temper, decidedly pretty, very like both the Queen and her mother. Then I went to see the three Prussian children, and the two elder ones played with my rusty old stick of twenty or twenty-five years' standing.

Holyrood, Oct. 11.—On Friday morning, as I expected, I talked to the Queen until the last moment. She did give me opportunities which might have led on to anything, but want of time hustled me, and though I spoke abruptly enough, and did not find myself timid, yet I could [not] manage it at all to my satisfaction. She said the one purpose of her life was
[104] gone, and she could not help wishing the accident had ended it. This is hardly qualified by another thing which she said to Lady Churchill, that she should not like to have died in that way. She went on to speak of her life as likely to be short. I told her that she would not give way, that duty would sustain her (this she quite recognised), that her burden was altogether peculiar, but the honour was in proportion, that no one could wonder at her feeling the present, which is near, but that the reward is *there*, though distant.... Then about politics, which will keep. She rowed me for writing to Lord Palmerston about her accident, and said, "But, dear Mr. Gladstone, that was quite wrong." The secret is kept wonderfully, and you must keep it. I hinted that it would be a very bad thing to have G. Grey away from such a cabinet on Tuesday, but all I could get was that I might arrange for any other minister (some one there certainly ought to be). I lectured her a little for driving after dark in such a country, but she said all her habits were formed on the Prince's wishes and directions, and she could not alter them.

Hawarden, Dec. 29.—I am well *past half* a century. My life has not been inactive. But of what kind has been

its activity? Inwardly I feel it to be open to this general observation: it seems to have been and to be a series of efforts to be and to do what is beyond my natural force. This of itself is not condemnation, though it is a spectacle effectually humbling when I see that I have not according to Schiller's figure enlarged with the circle in which I live and move. [*Diary.*]

IV

Jan. 2, 1864.—The cabinet was on matters of great importance connected with Denmark, and has decided rightly to seek the co-operation of France and other powers before talking about the use, in any event, of force.[77] Lord Palmerston has gout sharply in the hand. The Queen wrote a letter, which I think did her great credit. Her love of truth and wish to do right prevent all prejudices from effectually warping her.

The Queen talked much about the Danish question, and is very desirous of a more staid and quiet foreign policy. For the first time I think she takes a just credit to herself for having [105] influenced beneficially the course of policy and of affairs in the late controversy.

Balmoral, Sept. 28.—I thought the Queen's state of health and spirits last night very satisfactory. She looks better, more like what she used to look, and the spirits were very even; with the little references to the Prince just as usual. Whenever she quotes an opinion of the Prince, she looks upon the question as completely shut up by it, for herself and all the world. Prince Alfred is going to Germany for nine weeks—to study at Bonn, and to be more or less at Coburg. The Queen asked for you, of course. She has not said a syllable about public affairs to me since I came, but talked pleasantly of all manner of things.

[77] See Walpole's *Life of Russell*, ii. p. 402.

Sept. 29.—The Queen sent to offer a day's deer-stalking, but I am loth to trust my long eyesight.

Oct. 2.—At dinner last night there was a great deal of conversation, and to-day I have been near an hour with the Queen after coming back from Ballater. She was as good and as gracious as possible. I can hardly tell you all the things talked about—Prince Humbert, Garibaldi, Lady Lyttelton, the Hagley boys, Lucy, smoking, dress, fashion, Prince Alfred, his establishment and future plans, Prince of Wales's visit to Denmark, revenue, Lancashire, foreign policy, the newspaper press, the habits of the present generation, young men, young married ladies, clubs, Clarendon's journey, the Prince Consort on dress and fashion, Prince of Wales on ditto, Sir R. Peel, F. Peel, Mrs. Stonor, the rest of that family, misreading foreign names and words, repute of English people abroad, happy absence of foreign office disputes and quarrels.

Oct. 3.—I am just in from a sixteen mile walk, quite fresh, and pleased with myself! for having in my old age walked a measured mile in twelve minutes by the side of this beautiful Dee.

Oct. 7.—I have just come in from a delightful twenty-five miles ride with General Grey and another companion. I had another long interview with the Queen to-day. She talked
[106] most, and very freely and confidentially, about the Prince of Wales; also about Lord Russell and Lord Palmerston, and about Granville and Clarendon, the latter perhaps to an effect that will a little surprise you. Also the Dean of Windsor. It was a kind of farewell audience.

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Chapter VII. Garibaldi—Denmark. (1864)

> There are in Europe two great questions: the question called social and the question of nationalities.... The map of Europe has to be re-made.... I affirm with profound conviction that this movement of nationalities has attained in Italy, in Hungary, in Vienna, in a great part of Germany, and in some of the Slavonian populations, a degree of importance that must at no distant period produce decisive results.... The first war-cry that arises will carry with it a whole zone of Europe.—MAZZINI (1852).

I

"My confidence in the Italian parliament and people," Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lacaita at the end of 1862, "increases from day to day. Their self-command, moderation, patience, firmness, and forethought reaching far into the future, are really beyond all praise." And a few days later, again to Lacaita—"Your letter proves that the king has not merely got the constitutional lesson by rote—though even this for an Italian king would be much; but that the doctrine has sunk into the marrow and the bone." The cause was won, and the work of construction went forward, but not on such lines as Cavour's master-hand was likely to have traced. Very early Mr. Gladstone began to be uneasy about Italian finance. "I am sure," he wrote to Lacaita in April 1863, "that Italian freedom has no greater enemy in the Triple Crown or elsewhere, than large continuing deficits."

As events marched forward, the French occupation of Rome became an ever greater scandal in Mr. Gladstone's eyes. He writes to Panizzi (October 28, 1862):—

> My course about the Emperor has been a very simple one. It is not for me to pass gratuitous opinions upon his character

> or that of French institutions, or on his dealings with them. [108]
> I believe him to be firmly attached to the English alliance, and I think his course towards us has been, on almost every occasion, marked by a friendliness perhaps greater and more conspicuous than we have always deserved at his hands. It is most painful to me to witness his conduct with regard to Italy.... He conferred upon her in 1859 an immense, an inestimable boon. He marred this boon in a way which to me seemed little worthy of France by the paltry but unkind appropriation of Nice in particular. But in the matter of Rome he inflicts upon Italy a fearful injury. And I do not know by what law of ethics any one is entitled to plead the having conferred an unexpected boon, as giving a right to inflict a gross and enduring wrong.[78]

It was in 1862 that Mr. Gladstone made his greatest speech on Italian affairs.[79] "I am ashamed to say," he told the House, "that for a long time, I, like many, withheld my assent and approval from Italian yearnings." He amply atoned for his tardiness, and his exposure of Naples, where perjury was the tradition of its kings; of the government of the pope in the Romagna, where the common administration of law and justice was handed over to Austrian soldiery; of the stupid and execrable lawlessness of the Duke of Modena; of the attitude of Austria as a dominant and conquering nation over a subject and conquered race;—all this stamped a decisive impression on the minds of his hearers. Along with his speech on Reform in 1864, and that on the Irish church in the spring of 1865, it secured Mr. Gladstone's hold upon all of the rising generation of liberals who cared for the influence and the good name of Great Britain in Europe, and who were capable

[78] A memorandum of Mr. Gladstone's of March 1863 on the Roman Question is republished in Minghetti's posthumous volume, *La Convenzione di Settembre*, Bologna, 1899.

[79] April 11, 1862. That of March 7, 1861, is also worth turning over.

of sympathising with, popular feeling and the claims of national justice.

II

Reception Of Garibaldi

[109]

The Italian sentiment of England reached its climax in the reception accorded to Garibaldi by the metropolis in April 1864. "I do not know what persons in office are to do with him," Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Palmerston (March 26), "but you will lead, and we shall follow suit." The populace took the thing into their own hands. London has seldom beheld a spectacle more extraordinary or more moving. The hero in the red shirt and blue-grey cloak long associated in the popular mind with so many thrilling stories of which they had been told, drove from the railway at Vauxhall to Stafford House, the noblest of the private palaces of the capital, amid vast continuous multitudes, blocking roadways, filling windows, lining every parapet and roof with eager gazers. For five hours Garibaldi passed on amid tumultuous waves of passionate curiosity, delight, enthusiasm. And this more than regal entry was the arrival not of some loved prince or triumphant captain of our own, but of a foreigner and the deliverer of a foreign people. Some were drawn by his daring as a fighter, and by the picturesque figure as of a hero of antique mould; many by sight of the sworn foe of Giant Pope; but what fired the hearts of most was the thought of him as the soldier who bore the sword for human freedom. The western world was in one of its generous moments. In those days there were idealists; democracy was conscious of common interests and common brotherhood; a liberal Europe was then a force and not a dream.

"We who then saw Garibaldi for the first time," Mr. Gladstone said nearly twenty years after, "can many of us never forget the marvellous effect produced upon all minds by the simple nobility of his demeanour, by his manners and his acts.... Besides

his splendid integrity, and his wide and universal sympathies, besides that seductive simplicity of manner which never departed from him, and that inborn and native grace which seemed to attend all his actions, I would almost select from every other quality this, which was in apparent contrast but real harmony in Garibaldi—the union of the most profound and tender humanity with his fiery valour."[80] He once described the Italian chief to me as "one of the finest combinations of
[110] profound and unalterable simplicity with self-consciousness and self-possession. I shall never forget an occasion at Chiswick; Palmerston, John Russell, and all the leaders were awaiting him on the *perron*; he advanced with perfect simplicity and naturalness, yet with perfect consciousness of his position; very striking and very fine." Garibaldi dined with Mr. Gladstone, and they met elsewhere. At a dinner at Panizzi's, they sat by one another. "I remember," said Mr. Gladstone, "he told a story in these words: 'When I was a boy,' he said, 'I was at school in Genoa. It was towards the close of the great French Revolution. Genoa was a great military post—a large garrison always in the town, constant parades and military display, with bands and flags that were beyond everything attractive to schoolboys. All my schoolfellows used to run here and there all over the town to see if they could get sight of one of these military parades and exhibitions. I never went to one. It struck me then as a matter of pain and horror, that it should be necessary that one portion of mankind should be set aside to have for their profession the business of destroying others.' "

Another side of Garibaldi was less congenial. A great lady wrote to Mr. Gladstone of a conversation with him. "I talked to Garibaldi with regret that Renan was so much read in Italy. He said '*Perche?*' and showed that he did not dislike it, and that he has also in leaving Rome left very much else. I know

[80] Speech at Stafford House. June 2, 1883.

that woman's words are useless: the more men disbelieve, the more they think it well that women should be ‘superstitious.’ You are not likely to have *arguments* with him, but I would give much that he should take away with him some few words that would bring home to him the fact that the statesman he cares for most would think life a miserable thing without faith in God our Saviour.” To another correspondent on this point Mr. Gladstone wrote:—

> The honour paid him was I think his due as a most singularly simple, disinterested, and heroic character, who had achieved great things for Italy, for liberty well-understood, and even for mankind. His insurrection we knew and lamented, and treated as exceptional. No Mazzinian leanings of his were known. I read the speech at the luncheon with surprise and concern.[81] [111]
> As to his attenuated belief, I view it with the deepest sorrow and concern, I need not repeat an opinion, always painful to me to pronounce, as to the principal causes to which it is referable, and as to the chief seat of the responsibility for it. As to his Goddess Reason, I understand by it simply an adoption of what are called on the continent the principles of the French Revolution. These we neither want nor warmly relish in England, but they are different from its excesses, and the words will bear an innocent and even in some respects a beneficial meaning.

The diary records:—

> *April 12*.—To Chiswick and met Garibaldi. We were quite satisfied with him. He did me much more than justice. 14.—Went by a desperate push to see Garibaldi welcomed at the opera. It was good, but not like the *people*. 17.—At Stafford House 5-1/4—6-½ and 9-1/4—12-½ on Garibaldi's movements. In a conversation he agreed to give up the provincial tour. 20.—In the evening the great entertainment

[81] Speech not discoverable by me.

> to Garibaldi came off. Before the door at night say a thousand people all in the best of humour, the hall and stair full before dinner. A hostile demonstration invaded us at ten, but we ejected them. I settled about to-morrow with Garibaldi, the Duke of Sutherland, Lord Palmerston, and Lord Shaftesbury. My nerves would not let me—hardened as I am—sleep till after five.

Garibaldi's Departure

Suddenly one morning the country was surprised to learn that Garibaldi was at once departing. Dark suspicions rose instantly in the minds of his more democratic friends. It had always been rather bitter to them that he should be the guest of a duke. They now insisted that the whig aristocrats were in a panic lest he should compromise himself with the radicals, and that he was being hustled out of the country against his will. This suspicion next grew into something blacker still. A story spread that the Emperor of the French had taken umbrage, and signified to the government that the reception of Garibaldi was distasteful to France. Lord Clarendon promptly denied the fable. He told the House of Lords that the Emperor (of whom he had recently had an audience) had even expressed his admiration for the feeling of which the reception was a sign. Lord Palmerston in the other House explained that Garibaldi was going away earlier than had been expected, because at home he went to bed at eight and rose at five, and to a person of these habits to dine at half past eight and to remain in a throng of admirers until midnight must necessarily be injurious. Still the fog hung heavy on the public mind. A rider was now added to the tale, that it was the chancellor of the exchequer who out of deference to the Emperor, or to please the whigs, or out of complaisance to the court, had induced the hero to take his hurried leave. Mr. Gladstone was forced to explain to the House of Commons, seldom reluctant to lighten its graver deliberations with a personal incident, that the Duke of Sutherland had carried him to Stafford House; there he found that Garibaldi had accepted invitations to thirty provincial towns and

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that the list was growing longer every day; the doctors declared that the general's strength would never stand the exhaustion of a progress on such a scale; and the friends there present begged him to express his own opinion to Garibaldi. This Mr. Gladstone accordingly did, to the effect that the hero's life and health were objects of value to the whole world, and that even apart from health the repetition all over England of the national reception in London would do something to impair a unique historical event.[82] The general was taken to show excellent sense by accepting advice not to allow himself to be killed by kindness. At any rate he firmly declared that if he could not go to all the places that invited him, it was impossible for him to draw a line of preference, and therefore he would go to none. His radical friends, however, seem to have instilled some of their own suspicions into his mind, for two days later (April 23) Mr. Gladstone writes to Lord Clarendon: "I am to see Garibaldi at Cliveden this evening, and it is possible that some occasion may offer there for obtaining from him a further declaration. But since I received your note the following circumstance has occurred. Clarence Paget has been to me, and reports that Mrs. ——, a well-known and zealous but anti-Mazzinian liberal in Italian [113] matters, who is also a friend of Garibaldi's, has acquainted him that Garibaldi himself has made known to her that according to his own painful impression the English government do consider the prolongation of his stay in England very embarrassing, and are very anxious that he should go. What a pity, if this be so, that this simple and heroic man could not speak his mind plainly out to me, but wrapped himself in the depths of diplomatic reserve, instead of acting like Lord Aberdeen, who used to say, 'I have a habit of believing people.' "[83] After three or four

[82] *Hansard*, April 19, 1864, pp. 1277, 1290. April 21, p. 1423.

[83] This was in reply to a letter from Lord Clarendon to Mr. Gladstone, April 23, '64, asking him: "Do not you think that he ought in a letter to some personal friends to state frankly the reasons which have induced him to go?

days at Cliveden the general still held to his purpose. "*April 24.*—Cliveden. Conversation with Garibaldi. The utmost I could get from him was that it would be sad if the Italian people should lose its faith." So Garibaldi forthwith sailed away from our shores.[84]

When all was over, an Italian statesman wrote to Panizzi that though he thought Garibaldi one of the choicest natures ever created,—enterprising, humane, disinterested, eminent in national service, yet neither he nor any other citizen was entitled to set himself above the laws of his country, and that such a man should be officially received by the heir to the throne and by secretaries of state, was a thing to be bitterly deplored by every sensible man.[85] Still history can afford to agree with [114] Mr. Gladstone when he said of Garibaldi—"His name is indeed illustrious, it remains inseparably connected with the not less illustrious name of the great Cavour, and these two names are

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He alone can put a stop to all these mischievous reports.... He ought to say that no government, English or foreign, has to do with his departure, and that he goes solely because the state of his health does not permit him to fulfil his engagements."

[84] The story has been told from the radical point of view by Sir James Stansfeld in *Review of Reviews*, June 1895, p. 512. Another account by Mr. Seely, M.P., was furnished to the *Times* (April 21, 1864). Lord Shaftesbury, who was a staunch Garibaldian, presumably on high protestant grounds, also wrote to the *Times* (April 24): "The solid, persevering and hearty attachment of Mr. Gladstone to the cause of Italy and General Garibaldi is as notorious as it is generous and true, and I declare in the most solemn manner and on the word of a gentleman, my firm belief that we were all of us animated by the same ardent desire (without reference to anything and anybody but the General himself) to urge that and that only, which was indispensable to his personal welfare. It was, I assert, the General's own and unsuggested decision to give up the provincial journey altogether."

[85] Fagan's *Panizzi*, ii. p. 252. The same view was reported to be taken at the English Court, and a story got abroad that the Queen had said that for the first time she felt half ashamed of being the head of a nation capable of such follies. Mérimée, *Lettres à Panizzi*, ii. p. 25. On the other hand, the diary has this entry: *Oct. 1, 1864.* Dined with H.M. She spoke good-humouredly of

again associated with the name of Victor Emmanuel. These three together form for Italians a tricolour as brilliant, as ever fresh, and I hope as enduring for many and many generations, as the national flag that now waves over united Italy."

III

The tide of vast events in this momentous period now rolled heavily away from the Danube and the Bosphorus, from Tiber and Po and Adriatic sea, to the shores of the Baltic and the mouths of the Elbe. None of the fascination of old-world history lends its magic to the new chapter that opened in 1863. Cavour had gone. Bismarck with sterner genius, fiercer purpose, more implacable designs, and with a hand as of hammered iron, strode into the field. The Italian statesman was the author of a singular prediction. In 1861 when Cavour was deprecating angry protests from the European powers against his invasion of the Marches, he used words of extraordinary foresight to the representative of Prussia. "I am sorry," he said, "that the cabinet of Berlin judges so severely the conduct of the King of Italy and his government. I console myself by thinking that on this occasion I am setting an example that probably in no long time, Prussia will be very glad to imitate."[86] So the world speedily found out.

Nationality And Schleswig-Holstein

The torch of nationality reached material for a flame long smouldering in two duchies of the remote north, that had been incorporated in Denmark by solemn European engagements in 1852, but were inhabited by a population, one of them wholly and the other mainly, not Scandinavian but German. Thus the same question of race, history, language, sentiment, that had worked in Italy, Poland, the Balkan states, rose up in this miniature case. The circumstances that brought that case into such fatal

Garibaldi.

[86] *Le Comte de Cavour*: par Charles de Mazade (1877), p. 389.

prominence do not concern us here. The alleged wrongs of her
[115] brethren in Schleswig-Holstein unchained such a tempest of excitement in central Germany, that the German courts could hardly have resisted if they would. Just as powerless was the Danish government in face of the Scandinavian sentiment of its subjects and their neighbours of the race. Even the liberals, then a power in Germany and Bismarck's bitter foes, were vehemently on the national side against the Danish claim; and one of the most striking of all Bismarck's feats was the skill with which he now used his domestic enemies to further his own designs of national aggrandisement. How war broke out between the small power and the two great powers of Austria and Prussia, and how the small power was ruthlessly crushed; by what infinite and complex machinations the diplomacy of Europe found itself paralysed; how Prussia audaciously possessed herself of territory that would give her a deep-water port, and the head of a channel that would unite two great seas; how all this ended in Prussia, "the Piedmont of the north," doing what Cavour in his Piedmont of the south had foretold that she would be glad to do; how at Sadowa (July 3, 1866) Austria was driven out of her long hegemony, and Hanover incorporated; and to what a train of amazing conflicts in western Europe, to what unexpected victories, territorial change, dynastic ruin, this so resistlessly led up—here is a narrative that belongs to the province of history. Yet it has a place in any political biography of the Palmerston administration.

In such an era of general confusion, the English cabinet found no powerful or noble part to play. Still they went far—almost too far to recede—towards embarking in a continental war on behalf of Denmark, that would have been full of mischief to herself, of little profit to her client, and could hardly have ended otherwise than in widespread disaster. Here is one of the very few instances in which the public opinion of the country at the eleventh hour reined back a warlike minister. Lord Palmerston told the House of Commons in the summer of 1863 that, if any violent attempt

were made to overthrow the rights of Denmark or to interfere with its independence and integrity, he was convinced that those who made the attempt would find in the result that "it would not [116] be Denmark alone with which they would have to contend."[87] This did indeed sound like a compromising declaration of quite sufficient emphasis.

> It seems, says Mr. Gladstone,[88] that this statement was generally and not unnaturally interpreted as a promise of support from England. Lord Palmerston does not seem to have added any condition or reservation. Strange as it may appear, he had spoken entirely of his own motion and without the authority or knowledge of his cabinet, in which indeed, so far as my memory serves, nothing had happened to render likely any declaration of any kind on the subject. I have no means of knowing whether he spoke in concert with the foreign secretary, Earl Russell, with whom his communications, agreeably to policy and to established usage, were, I believe, large and constant. When the question was eventually disposed of by the war which Prussia and Austria waged against Denmark, there was much indignation felt against England for the breach of her engagement to give support in the case of war, to the small power so egregiously in need of it. And there was no one to raise a voice in our favour.
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> As the year advanced (1863) and the prospect of war came nearer, the subject was very properly brought before the cabinet. I believe that at the time I was not even aware of Lord Palmerston's declaration, which, owing to the exhausted period of the session, had I believe attracted no great amount of attention in England. Whether my colleagues generally were as little aware of what happened as myself I do not know, but unquestionably we could not all have missed learning it.

[87] July 23, 1863.
[88] Memorandum of 1897.

> However we did not as a body recognise in any way the title of the prime minister to bind us to go to war. We were, however, indignant at the conduct of the German powers who, as we thought, were scheming piracy under cover of pacific correspondence. And we agreed upon a very important measure, in which Lord Palmerston acquiesced, when he had failed, if I remember right, in inducing the cabinet to go farther. We knew that France took the same view of the question as we did, and we framed a communication to her to the following effect. We were jointly to insist that the claim of the Duke of Augustenburg should be peacefully settled on
> [117] juridical grounds; and to announce to Prussia and Austria that if they proceeded to prosecute it by the use of force against Denmark, we would jointly resist them with all our might.[89]
>
> This communication was accordingly made to Louis Napoleon. He declined the proposal. He said that the question was one of immense importance to us, who had such vast interests involved, and that the plan was reasonable from our point of view; but that the matter was one of small moment for France, whom accordingly we could not ask to join in it. The explanation of this answer, so foolish in its terms, and so pregnant with consequences in this matter, was, I believe, to be found in the pique of Louis Napoleon at a reply we had then recently given to a proposal of his for an European conference or congress.[90] We all thought that his plan was wholly needless and would in all likelihood lead to mischief. So we declined it in perfect good faith and without implying by our refusal any difference of policy in the particular matter.

Throughout the session of 1864 the attention of the country was fixed upon this question whether England should or should not take part in the war between Germany and Denmark. The week before the time arrived for the minister to announce the decision

[89] See Walpole's *Russell*, ii. pp. 402-404.

[90] For the revision of the Treaty of Vienna. See Ashley's *Palmerston*, ii. p. 424.

of the cabinet, it became clear that public opinion in the great English centres would run decisively for non-intervention. Some of the steadiest supporters of government in parliament boldly told the party whips that if war against Germany were proposed, they would vote against it. The cabinet met. Palmerston and Lord Russell were for war, even though it would be war single-handed. Little support came to them. The Queen was strongly against them. They bemoaned to one another the timidity of their colleagues, and half-mournfully contrasted the convenient ciphers that filled the cabinets of Pitt and Peel, with the number of able men with independent opinions in their own administration. The prime minister, as I have heard from one who was present, held his head down while the talk proceeded, and then at last [118] looking up said in a neutral voice, "I think the cabinet is against war." Here is Mr. Gladstone's record:—

> *May 7, '64.*—Cabinet. The war "party" as it might be called—Lord Palmerston, Lord Russell, Lord Stanley of Alderley, and the chancellor (Lord Westbury). All went well. *June 11.*—Cabinet. Very stiff on the Danish question, but went well. *June 24.*—Cabinet. A grave issue well discussed. *June 25.*—Cabinet. We divided, and came to a tolerable, not the best, conclusion.

It seems almost incredible that a cabinet of rational men could have debated for ten minutes the question of going to war with Prussia and Austria, when they knew that twenty thousand men were the largest force that we could have put into the field when war began, though moderate additions might have been made as time went on—not, however, without hazardous denudation of India, where the memories of the mutiny were still fresh. The Emperor of the French in fact had good reason for fearing that he would be left in the lurch again, as he thought that he had been left before in his attempts for Poland. Your intervention, he said to England, will be naval; but we may have to fight a people

of forty millions on land, and we will not intervene unless you engage to send troops.[91] The dismemberment of Denmark was thought an odious feat, but the localisation of the war was at least a restriction of the evils attending it.

Cabinet And Non-Intervention

A high parliamentary debate followed (July 4) on a motion made by Mr. Disraeli, "to express to Her Majesty our great regret that while the course pursued by the government had failed to maintain their avowed policy of upholding the independence and integrity of Denmark, it has lowered the just influence of this country in the councils of Europe, and thereby diminished the securities for peace."[92] Cobden taunted both front benches pretty impartially with the equivocal and most dishonourable position into which their policy had brought the country, by encouraging a small power to fight two great ones and then straightway leaving her to get out as best she might. The government was only saved by Palmerston's appeal to its financial triumphs—the very triumphs that he had himself made most difficult to achieve. The appeal was irrelevant, but it was decisive, and ministers escaped a condemnation by no means unmerited on the special issue, by a majority of eighteen. The Manchester men agreed to help in the result, because in Cobden's words they were convinced that a revolution had been at last wrought in the mischievous policy of incessant intervention. Mr. Disraeli's case was easy, but to propound an easy case when its exposition demands much selection from voluminous blue-books is often hard, and the orator was long and over-elaborate. The excitement of an audience, aware all the time that actual danger hovered over the ministry, revived afresh when Disraeli sat down and Gladstone rose. The personal emulation of powerful rivals lends dramatic elements to disputation. Lord Palmerston had written to Mr. Gladstone beforehand—"We shall want a great gun to follow Disraeli. Would you be ready to follow him?"

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[91] See Ollivier's *Empire Libéral*, vii. 71; De la Gorce, iv. 512.

[92] July 4, 1864.

> *July 3.*—I was happy enough, aided by force of habit, to drive bodily out of my head for the whole day everything Dano-German. But not out of my nerves. I delivered during the night a speech in parliament on the Roman question.
>
> *July 4.*—H. of C. Replied to Disraeli. It took an hour and thirty-five minutes. I threw overboard all my heavy armament and fought light.

Nobody who is not historian or biographer is likely to read this speech of Mr. Gladstone's to-day, but we may believe contemporary witnesses who record that the orator's weight of fact, his force of argument, his sarcastic play of personal impulse and motive, his bold and energetic refutation of hostile criticism, his defiant statement of the ministerial case, so impressed even a sceptical and doubting House that, though his string of special pleas did not amount to a justification, "they almost reached the height of an excuse," and they crushed the debate. The basis was the familiar refrain upon Mr. Gladstone's lips,—"The steps taken by the government, what were they but endeavours to bind together the powers of Europe for fulfilment and maintenance [120] of an important European engagement?" Still history, even of that sane and tempered school that is content to take politics as often an affair of second-best, will probably judge that Mr. Disraeli was not wrong when he said of the policy of this era that, whether we looked to Russia, to Greece, to France, there had been exhibited by ministers a confusion, an inconsistency of conduct, a contrariety of courses with regard to the same powers and a total want of system in their diplomacy.[93] It is true, however, that just the same confusion, inconsistency, and contrariety marked Russia, France, and Austria themselves. Another speaker of the same party, as mordant as Disraeli, and destined like him to rise to the chief place in the councils of the nation, went further, and said, in following Cobden in the debate, "If Mr. Cobden had

[93] Feb. 4, 1864.

been foreign secretary, instead of Lord Russell, I fully believe this country would occupy a position proud and noble compared to that which she occupies at this moment. She would at least have been entitled to the credit of holding out in the name of England no hopes which she did not intend to fulfil, of entering into no engagements from which she was ready to recede."[94] Well might Mr. Gladstone enter in his diary:—

> *July 8.*—This debate ought to be an epoch in foreign policy. We have all much to learn. Lord Palmerston's speech was unequivocally weak in the mental and the bodily sense. I think it was to-day that the Prince of Wales rode with Granville and me; he showed a little Danism.

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[94] Lord Robert Cecil, July 4, 1864.

Chapter VIII. Advance In Public Position And Otherwise. (1864)

> The best form of government is that which doth actuate and dispose every part and member of a state to the common good. If, instead of concord and interchange of support, one part seeks to uphold an old form of government, and the other part introduce a new, they will miserably consume one and other. Histories are full of the calamities of entire states and nations in such cases. It is, nevertheless, equally true that time must needs bring about some alterations.... Therefore have those commonwealths been ever the most durable and perpetual which have often formed and recomposed themselves according to their first institution and ordinance.—PYM.

I

A rapid and extraordinary change began to take place in Mr. Gladstone's position after the year 1863. With this was associated an internal development of his political ideas and an expansion of social feeling, still more remarkable and interesting. As we have seen, he reckoned that a little earlier than this he had reached his lowest point in public estimation. He had now been more than thirty years in parliament. He had sat in three cabinets, each of a different colour and different connections from the other two. It was not until he had seen half a century of life on our planet, and more than quarter of a century of life in the House of Commons, that it was at all certain whether he would be conservative or liberal, to what species of either genus he would attach himself, or whether there might not from his progressive transmutations be evolved some variety wholly new.

I have already given his picture of the Palmerston cabinet as a kaleidoscope, and the same simile would be no bad account

of his own relation to the political groups and parties around him. The Manchester men and the young radicals from the West Riding of Yorkshire were his ardent adherents when he preached economy and peace, but they were chilled to the core by his neutrality or worse upon the life and death struggle across the Atlantic. His bold and confident finance was doubted by the whigs, and disliked by the tories. But then the tories, apart from their wiser leader, were delighted by his friendly words about the Confederates, and the whigs were delighted with his unflagging zeal for the deliverance of Italy. Only, zeal for the deliverance of Italy lost him the friendship of those children of the Holy Father who came from Ireland. Then again the City was not easy at the flash of activity and enterprise at the exchequer, and the money-changers did not know what disturbance this intrepid genius might bring into the traffic of their tables. On the other hand, the manufacturers and the merchants of the midlands and the north adored a chancellor whose budgets were associated with expanding trade and a prosperity that advanced by leaps and bounds. The nonconformists were attracted by his personal piety, though repelled by its ecclesiastical apparel. The high churchmen doubtless knew him for their own, yet even they resented his confederacy with an erastian and a latitudinarian like John Russell, or a Gallio like Lord Palmerston, who distributed mitres and crown benefices at the ultra-evangelical bidding of Lord Shaftesbury. To borrow a figure from a fine observer of those days,—the political molecules were incessantly forming and re-forming themselves into shifting aggregates, now attracted, now repelled by his central force; now the nucleus of an organised party, then resolved again in loose and distant satellites. [122]

The great families still held ostensibly the predominance in the liberal party which they had earned by their stout and persistent fidelity to parliamentary reform. Their days of leadership, however, were drawing towards an end, though the process has not been rapid. They produced some good administrators, but

nobody with the gifts of freshness and political genius. The three originating statesmen of that era, after all, were Cobden, Gladstone, Disraeli, none of them born in the purple of the directing class. A Yorkshire member, destined to a position of prominence, entered the House in 1861, and after he had been there a couple of years he wrote to his wife, that "the want of the liberal party of a new man was great, and felt to be great; the old whig leaders were worn out; there were no new whigs; Cobden and Bright were impracticable and un-English, and there were hardly any hopeful radicals. There was a great prize of power and influence to be aimed at."[95]

[123]
A Wonderful Combination

This parliamentary situation was the least part of it. No man could guide the new advance, now so evidently approaching, unless he clearly united fervour and capacity for practical improvements in government to broad and glowing sympathies, alike with the needs and the elemental instincts of the labouring mass. Mr. Gladstone offered that wonderful combination. "If ever there was a statesman," said Mill, about this time, "in whom the spirit of improvement is incarnate, and in whose career as a minister the characteristic feature has been to seek out things that require or admit of improvement, instead of waiting to be pressed or driven to do them, Mr. Gladstone deserves that signal honour." Then his point of view was lofty; he was keenly alive to the moving forces of the hour; his horizons were wide; he was always amply founded in facts; he had generous hopes for mankind; his oratory seized vast popular audiences, because it was the expression of a glowing heart and a powerful brain. All this made him a demagogue in the same high sense in which Pericles, Demosthenes, John Pym, Patrick Henry were demagogues.

It is easy to see some at any rate of the influences that were bringing Mr. Gladstone decisively into harmony with the

[95] *Life of W. E. Forster*, i. p. 362.

movement of liberal opinions, now gradually spreading over Great Britain. The resurrection of Italy could only be vindicated on principles of liberty and the right of a nation to choose its own rulers. The peers and the ten-pound householders who held power in England were no Bourbon tyrants; but just as in 1830 the overthrow of the Bourbon line in France was followed by
[124] the Reform bill here, so the Italian revolution of 1860 gave new vitality to the popular side in England. Another convulsion, far away from our own shores, was still more directly potent alike in quickening popular feeling, and by a strange paradox in creating as a great popular leader the very statesman who had failed to understand it. It was impossible that a man so vigilant and so impressionable as Mr. Gladstone was, should escape the influence of the American war. Though too late to affect his judgment on the issues of the war, he discerned after the event how, in his own language, the wide participation of the people in the choice of their governors, by giving force and expression to the national will in the United States, enabled the governors thus freely chosen to marshal a power and develop an amount of energy in the execution of that will, such as probably have never been displayed in an equal time and among an equal number of men since the race of mankind sprang into existence.[96] In this judgment of the American civil war, he only shared in a general result of the salvation of the Union; it reversed the fashionable habit of making American institutions English bugbears, and gave a sweeping impulse to that steady but resistless tide of liberal and popular sentiment that ended in the parliamentary reform of 1867.

The lesson from the active resolution of America was confirmed by the passive fortitude of Lancashire. “What are the questions,” Mr. Gladstone asked in 1864, “that fit a man for the exercise of a privilege such as the franchise? Self-command, self-

[96] Speech at Liverpool, April 6, 1866.

control, respect for order, patience under suffering, confidence in the law, regard for superiors; and when, I should like to ask, were all these great qualities exhibited in a manner more signal, even more illustrious, than in the conduct of the general body of the operatives of Lancashire under the profound affliction of the winter of 1862?" So on two sides the liberal channel was widened and deepened and the speed of its currents accelerated.

[125]
Springs Of New Liberalism

Besides large common influences like these, Mr. Gladstone's special activities as a reformer brought him into contact with the conditions of life and feeling among the workmen, and the closer he came to them, the more did his humane and sympathetic temper draw him towards their politics and the ranks of their party. Looking back, he said, upon the years immediately succeeding the fall of Napoleon in 1815, he saw the reign of ideas that did not at all belong to the old currents of English history, but were a reaction against the excesses of the French revolution. This reaction seemed to set up the doctrine that the masses must be in standing antagonism to the law, and it resulted in severities that well justified antagonism. "To-day the scene was transformed; the fixed traditional sentiment of the working man had become one of confidence in the law, in parliament, even in the executive government." In 1863 he was busy in the erection of the post office savings banks. A deputation of a powerful trades union asked him to modify his rules so as to enable them to place their funds in the hands of the government. A generation before, such confidence would have been inconceivable. In connection with the Government Annuities bill a deputation of workmen came to him, and said, "If there had been any suspicion or disinclination towards it on the part of the working classes, it was due to the dissatisfaction with parliament as to suffrage." When he replied with something about the alleged indifference and apparent inaction of the working classes as to suffrage, they said, "Since the abolition of the corn laws we have given up political agitation; we felt we might place confidence in

parliament; instead of political action, we tried to spend our evenings in the improvement of our minds." This convinced him that it was not either want of faith in parliament, or indifference to a vote, that explained the absence of agitation.

II

The outcome of this stream of new perceptions and new feeling in his mind was a declaration that suddenly electrified the political world. A Yorkshire liberal one afternoon (May 11, 1864) brought in a bill for lowering the franchise, and Mr. Gladstone spoke for the government. He dwelt upon the facts, historic and
[126] political. The parliamentary history of reform for the thirteen years, since Locke King's motion in 1851 upset a government, had been most unsatisfactory, and to set aside all the solemn and formal declarations from 1851 down to the abortive Reform bill of 1860 would be a scandal. Then, was not the state of the actual case something of a scandal, with less than one-tenth of the constituencies composed of working men, and with less than one-fiftieth of the working men in possession of the franchise? How could you defend a system that let in the lower stratum of the middle class and shut out the upper stratum of the working class? In face of such dispositions as the workmen manifested towards law, parliament, and government, was it right that the present system of almost entire exclusion should prevail? Then came the sentence that, in that stagnant or floundering hour of parliamentary opinion, marked a crisis. "I call upon the adversary to show cause, and *I venture to say that every man who is not presumably incapacitated by some consideration of personal unfitness or of political danger, is morally entitled to come within the pale of the constitution.* Of course, in giving utterance to such a proposition, I do not recede from the protest I have previously made against sudden, or violent, or excessive, or intoxicating change."

He concluded in words that covered much ground, though when closely scrutinised they left large loopholes. “It is well,” he said, “that we should be suitably provided with armies and fleets and fortifications; it is well, too, that all these should rest upon and be sustained, as they ought to be, by a sound system of finance, and out of a revenue not wasted by a careless parliament or by a profligate administration. But that which is better and more weighty still is that hearts should be bound together by a reasonable extension, at fitting times and among *selected* portions of the people, of every benefit and every privilege that can be justly conferred upon them.”

The thunderbolt of a sentence about every man's moral title to a vote startled the House with an amazement, half delight and half consternation, that broke forth in loud volleys of cheering and counter-cheering. It was to little purpose that the orator in the next breath interposed his qualifications. One of the fated words had been spoken that gather up wandering forces of time and occasion, and precipitate new eras. A conservative speaker instantly deplored the absence of the prime minister, and the substitution in his stead of his “intractable chancellor of the exchequer.” An important liberal speaker, with equal promptitude, pointed out that one effect of the speech would be, in the first place, loss of conservative support to the government, and, in the second place, a very great gain to the health and vigour of the liberal party. Two whigs ran off to tell Phillimore that Gladstone had said something that would make his hair stand on end. Speculations began to hum and buzz whether the oracular deliverance would not upset the government. In the press a tremendous storm broke. Mr. Gladstone was accused of ministering aliments to popular turbulence and vanity, of preaching the divine right of multitudes, and of encouraging, minister of the crown though he was, a sweeping and levelling democracy. They charged him with surveying mankind in the abstract and suffrage in the abstract, and in that kingdom of

[127]
A Decisive Utterance

shadows discovering or constructing vast universal propositions about man's moral rights. Mr. Disraeli told him that he had revived the doctrine of Tom Paine. The radicals were as jubilant as whigs and tories were furious. They declared that the banner he had raised aloft was not what the tories denounced as the standard of domestic revolution, but the long lost flag of the liberal party. "There is not a statesman in England of the very first rank," said one newspaper, "who has dared to say as much, and Mr. Gladstone, in saying it, has placed himself at the head of the party that will succeed the present administration." This was true, but in the meantime the head of the existing administration was still a marvel of physical vigour, and though at the moment he was disabled by gout, somebody must have hurried to Cambridge House and told him the desperate tidings. On the very instant he sent down a note of inquiry to Mr. Gladstone, asking what he had really said. A brisk correspondence followed, neither heated nor unfriendly. [128]

In the morning Lord Palmerston had written him a premonitory note, not to commit himself or the government to any particular figure of borough franchise; that a six pound franchise had gone to the bottom; that if they should ever have to bring in a reform bill, they ought to be free from fresh pledges; that the workmen would swamp the classes above them; that their influx would discourage the classes above from voting at all; and that the workmen were under the control of trade unions directed by a small number of agitators. All this was the good conservative common form of the time. The speech itself, when the prime minister came to see it, proved no sedative.

Lord Palmerston to Mr. Gladstone.

May 12, 1864.—I have read your speech, and I must frankly say, with much regret; as there is little in it that I can agree with, and much from which I differ. You lay down broadly the doctrine of universal suffrage which I can never accept. I entirely deny that every sane and not disqualified

man has a moral right to a vote. I use that expression instead of "the pale of the constitution," because I hold that all who enjoy the security and civil rights which the constitution provides are within its pale. What every man and woman too has a right to, is to be well governed and under just laws, and they who propose a change ought to show that the present organisation does not accomplish those objects....

You did not pronounce an opinion in favour of a specified franchise; but is there any essential difference between naming a six pound franchise and naming the additional numbers which a six pound franchise was calculated to admit? I am not going to perform the duty which Whiteside assigned to me of answering your speech, but, if you will not take it amiss, I would say, that it was more like the sort of speech with which Bright would have introduced the Reform bill which he would like to propose, than the sort of speech which might have been expected from the treasury bench in the present state of things. Your speech may win Lancashire for you, though that is doubtful, but I fear it will tend to lose England for you. [129]

Mr. Gladstone to Lord Palmerston.

11 Carlton House Terrace, May 13, 1864.—It is not easy to take ill anything that proceeds from you; and, moreover, frankness between all men, and especially between those who are politically associated, removes, as I believe, many more difficulties than it causes. In this spirit I will endeavour to write. I agree in your denial "that every sane and not disqualified man has a moral right to vote." But I am at a loss to know how, as you have read my speech, you can ascribe this opinion to me. My declaration was, taken generally, that all persons ought to be admitted to the franchise, who can be admitted to it with safety.... I hold by this proposition. It seems to me neither strange, nor new, nor extreme. It requires, I admit, to be construed; but I contend that the interpretation is amply given in the speech, where I have declared (for example) that the admission I desire is of the same character

> or rather extent as was proposed in 1860.... I have never exhorted the working man to agitate for the franchise, and I am at a loss to conceive what report of my speech can have been construed by you in such a sense.
>
> Having said this much to bring down to its true limits the difference between us, I do not deny that difference. I regret it, and I should regret it much more if it were likely to have (at least as far as I can see) an early bearing upon practice. In the cabinet I argued as strongly as I could against the withdrawal of the bill in 1860, and in favour of taking the opinion of the House of Commons upon that bill. I think the party which supports your government has suffered, and is suffering, and will much more seriously suffer, from the part which as a party it has played within these recent years, in regard to the franchise. I have no desire to press the question forward. I hope no government will ever again take it up except with the full knowledge of its own mind and a reasonable probability of carrying it. But such influence as argument and statement without profession of political intentions can exercise upon the public mind, I heartily desire to see exercised in favour of extension of the franchise....

On the following day Lord Palmerston wrote to him, "I have
[130] no doubt that you have yourself heard a great deal about the bad effect of your speech, but I can assure you that I hear from many quarters the unfavourable impression it has produced even upon many of the liberal party, and upon all persons who value the maintenance of our institutions."

To others, Mr. Gladstone wrote in less formal style, for instance to an eminent nonconformist minister: "May 14. I have unwarily, it seems, set the Thames on fire. But I have great hopes that the Thames will, on reflection perceive that he had no business or title to catch the flame, and will revert to his ordinary temperature accordingly." And to his brother Robertson, he writes from Brighton, three days later:—

> Many thanks for all you say respecting my speech on the franchise bill. I have been astounded to find it the cause or occasion of such a row. It would have been quite as intelligible to me had people said, "Under the exceptions of personal unfitness and political danger you exclude or may exclude almost everybody, and you reduce your declaration to a shadow."

In the diary he says: "*May 11*.—Spoke on the franchise bill. Some sensation. It appears to me that it was due less to me, than to the change in the hearers and in the public mind from the professions at least if not the principles of 1859." Much against Lord Palmerston's wish, the speech was published, with a short preface that even staunch friends like Phillimore found obscure and not well written.

Speeches In Lancashire

An address, significant of the general feeling in the unenfranchised classes, was presented to him from the workmen of York a month after his speech in parliament. They recalled his services to free trade when he stood by the side of Peel; his budget of 1860; his conspicuous and honourable share in abolishing the taxes on knowledge. "We have marked," they said, "your manifestations of sympathy with the down-trodden and oppressed of every clime. You have advanced the cause of freedom in foreign lands by the power and courage with which you have assailed and exposed the misdeeds and cruelties of continental tyrants. To the provident operative you have by your Post Office Savings Bank bill given security for his small savings, [131] and your Government Annuities bill of this session is a measure which will stimulate the people to greater thrift and forethought. These acts, together with your speeches on the last named, and on the Borough Franchise bill, make up a life that commands our lasting gratitude." Such was the new popular estimate of him. In framing his reply to this address Mr. Gladstone did his best to discourage the repetition of like performances from other places; he submitted the draft to Lord Palmerston, and followed

his advice in omitting certain portions of it. It was reduced to the conventional type of such acknowledgment.

III

In the autumn of 1864 Mr. Gladstone made a series of speeches in his native county, which again showed the sincerity and the simplicity of his solicitude for the masses of his countrymen. The sentiment is common. Mr. Disraeli and the Young Englanders had tried to inscribe it upon a party banner twenty years before. But Mr. Gladstone had given proof that he knew how to embody sentiment in acts of parliament, and he associated it with the broadest ideas of citizenship and policy. These speeches were not a manifesto or a programme; they were a survey of the principles of the statesmanship that befitted the period.

At Bolton (Oct. 11) he discoursed to audiences of the working class upon the progress of thirty years, with such freshness of spirit as awoke energetic hopes of the progress for the thirty years that were to follow. The next day he opened a park with words from the heart about the modern sense of the beauties of nature. The Greeks, he said, however much beauty they might have discerned in nature, had no sympathy with the delight in detached natural objects—a tree, or a stream, or a hill—which was so often part of the common life of the poorest Englishman. Even a century or less ago "communion with nature" would have sounded an affected and unnatural phrase. Now it was a sensible part of the life of the working classes. Then came moralising, at [132] that date less trite than it has since become, about the social ties that ought to mark the relations between master and workman.

Speeches In Lancashire

The same night at a banquet in Liverpool, and two days later at Manchester, he advanced to high imperial ground. He told them how, after an experience now becoming long, the one standing pain to the political man in England is a sense of the inequality of his best exertions to the arduous duty of government and

legislation. England had undertaken responsibilities of empire such as never before lay on the shoulders or the minds of men. We governed distant millions many times outnumbering ourselves. We were responsible for the welfare of forty or forty-five separate states. Again, what other nation was charged with the same responsibility in the exercise of its moral influence abroad, in the example it is called upon to set, in the sympathy it must feel with the cause of right and justice and constitutional freedom wherever that cause is at issue? As for our fellow subjects abroad, we had given them practical freedom. It was our duty to abstain as far as may be from interference with their affairs, to afford them the shelter and protection of the empire, and at the same time to impress upon them that there is no grosser mistake in politics than to suppose you can separate the blessings and benefits of freedom from its burdens. In other words, the colonies should pay their own way, and if the old dream of making their interests subservient to those of the mother country had passed away, it was just as little reasonable that the mother country should bear charges that in equity belonged to them, and all the more if the colonies set up against the industry and productions of England the mischiefs and obstructions of an exploded protective system. On foreign policy he enforced the principles that, after all, had given to Europe forty years of peace, and to England forty years of diplomatic authority and pre-eminence. "It is impossible that to a country like England the affairs of foreign nations can ever be indifferent. It is impossible that England, in my opinion, ever should forswear the interest she must naturally feel in the cause of truth, of justice, of order, and of good government." The final word was an admonition [133] against "political lethargy." For the first time, I think, he put into the forefront the tormenting question that was to haunt him to the end. "They could not look at Ireland," he told them, "and say that the state of feeling there was for the honour and the advantage of the united kingdom."

> *Oct. 14, '64.*—So ended in peace an exhausting, flattering, I hope not intoxicating circuit. God knows I have not courted them. I hope I do not rest on them. I pray I may turn them to account for good. It is, however, impossible not to love the people from whom such manifestations come, as meet me in every quarter.... Somewhat haunted by dreams of halls, and lines of people, and great assemblies.

It was observed of this Lancashire tour, by critics who hardly meant to praise him, that he paid his hearers the high compliment of assuming that they could both understand his arguments, and feel his appeal to their moral sympathies. His speeches, men said, were in fact lay sermons of a high order, as skilfully composed, as accurately expressed, as if they were meant for the House of Commons. This was singularly true, and what an eulogy it was for our modern British democracy that the man whom they made their first great hero was an orator of such a school. Lord Lyttelton, his brother-in-law, informed him of the alarm and odium that his new line of policy was raising. Mr. Gladstone (April, 1865) replied: "After all, you are a peer, and Peel used to say, speaking of his peer colleagues, that they were beings of a different order. Please to recollect that we have got to govern millions of hard hands; that it must be done by force, fraud, or good will; that the latter has been tried and is answering; that none have profited more by this change of system since the corn law and the Six Acts, than those who complain of it. As to their misliking me, I have no fault to find with them for that. It is the common lot in similar circumstances, and the very things that I have done or omitted doing from my extreme and almost irrational reluctance to part company with them, become an aggravation when the parting is accomplished." "Gladstone, I
[134] think," says Bishop Wilberforce (Dec. 7), "is certainly gaining power. You hear now almost every one say he must be the future premier, and such sayings tend greatly to accomplish themselves."

IV

The Protestant Dissenters

It was about this time that Mr. Gladstone first found himself drawing to relations with the protestant dissenters, that were destined to grow closer as years went on. These relations had no small share in the extension of his public power; perhaps, too, no small share in the more abiding work upon the dissenters themselves, of enlarging what was narrow, softening what was hard and bitter, and promoting a healing union where the existence of a church establishment turned ecclesiastical differences into lines of social division. He had alarmed his friends by his action on a measure (April 15, 1863) for remedying an old grievance about the burial of dissenters. Having served on a select committee appointed in the rather quixotic hope that a solution of the difficulty might be found by the somewhat unparliamentary means of "friendly conversation among candid and impartial men," he had convinced himself that there was a wrong to be set right, and he voted and spoke accordingly. "It will most rudely shake his Oxford seat," says Phillimore. The peril there was becoming daily more apparent. Then in 1864 and on later occasions he met leading nonconformist clergy at the house of Mr. Newman Hall—such men as Binney, Allon, Edward White, Baldwin Brown, Henry Reynolds, and that most admirable friend, citizen, and man, R.W. Dale, so well known as Dale of Birmingham. Their general attitude was described by Mr. Newman Hall as this: they hoped for the ultimate recognition of the free church theory, and meditated no political action to bring it about; they looked for it to come as the result of influence within the church of England, not of efforts from without. "Many dissenters," one of them told him (Nov. 20, 1864), "would enter the church whatever their theory about establishment, if such slight modifications were made as would allow them to do so conscientiously—holding the essentials of the faith far more soundly than many within the established [135]

church." Another regretted, after one of these gatherings, that they never got to the core of the subject, "namely that there run through the prayer-book from beginning to end ideas that are not accepted by numbers who subscribe, and which cannot *all* be admitted by any one."

All this once more brought Mr. Gladstone into a curious position. Just as at Oxford he had in 1847 been the common hope of ultra-clericals on one hand and ultra-liberals on the other, so now he was the common hope of the two antagonistic schools of religious comprehension—the right, who looked towards the formularies, system, discipline, and tradition either of the Orthodox church or the Latin, and the left, who sought reunion on the basis of puritanism with a leaven of modern criticism. Always the devoted friend of Dr. Pusey and his school, he was gradually welcomed as ally and political leader by men like Dale and Allon, the independents, and Spurgeon, the baptist, on the broad ground that it was possible for all good men to hold, amid their differences about church government, the more vital sympathies and charities of their common profession. They even sounded him on one occasion about laying the foundation stone of one of their chapels. The broad result of such intercourse of the nonconformist leaders with this powerful and generous mind, enriched by historic knowledge and tradition, strengthened by high political responsibility, deepened by meditations long, strenuous, and systematic, was indeed remarkable. Dr. Allon expressed it, with admirable point, in a letter to him some fourteen years after our present date (April 15, 1878):—

> The kind of intercourse that you have kindly permitted with nonconformists, has helped more consciously to identify them with movements of national life, and to diminish the stern feeling of almost defiant witness-bearing that was strong a generation or two ago. It is something gained if ecclesiastical and political differences can he debated within a common circle of social confidence and identity.... Their confidence

> in you has made them amenable to your lead in respect of methods and movements needing the guidance of political insight and experience.

[136]

V

A man's mind seldom moves forward towards light and freedom on a single line, and in Mr. Gladstone's case the same impulses that made him tolerant of formal differences as to church government led slowly to a still wider liberality in respect of far deeper differences. Readers may remember the shock with which in his youth he found that one person or another was a Unitarian. To Mr. Darbishire, a member of the Unitarian body who was for many years his friend, he wrote about some address of James Martineau's (Dec. 21, 1862):—

> From, time to time I have read works of Mr. Martineau's, or works that I have taken for his, with great admiration, with warm respect for the writer, and moreover, with a great deal of sympathy. I should greatly like to make his acquaintance. But attached as I am to the old Christian dogma, and believing it as I do, or rather believing the Person whom it sets forth, to be the real fountain of all the gifts and graces that are largely strewn over society, and in which Mr. Martineau himself seems so amply to share, I fear I am separated from him in the order of ideas by an interval that must be called a gulf. My conviction is that the old creeds have been, and are to be, the channel by which the Christian religion is made a reality even for many who do not hold it, and I think that when we leave them we shall leave them not for something better, but something worse. Hence you will not be surprised that I regard some of Mr. Martineau's propositions as unhistorical and untrue.

And to the same gentleman a year or two later (Jan. 2, 1865):—

> I am sorry to say I have not yet been able to read Mr. Martineau's sermon, which I mean to do with care. I am, as you know, one altogether attached to dogma, which I believe to be the skeleton that carries the flesh, the blood, the life of the blessed thing we call the Christian religion. But I do not believe that God's tender mercies are restricted to a small portion of the human family. I dare not be responsible for Dr. Newman, nor would he thank me; but I hope he does not so
> [137] believe, and this the more because I have lately been reading Dr. Manning's letter to Dr. Pusey; and, though Dr. Manning is far more exaggerated in his religion than Dr. Newman, and seems to me almost to caricature it, yet I think even he has by no means that limited view of the mercies of God.
>
> I have no mental difficulty in reconciling a belief in the Church, and what may be called the high Christian doctrine, with that comforting persuasion that those who do not receive the greatest blessings (and each man must believe his religion to be greatest) are notwithstanding the partakers, each in his measure, of other gifts, and will be treated according to their use of them. I admit there are schools of Christians who think otherwise. I was myself brought up to think otherwise, and to believe that salvation depended absolutely upon the reception of a particular and a very narrow creed. But long, long have I cast those weeds behind me. Unbelief may in given conditions be a moral offence; and only as such, only like other disobedience, and on like principles, can it be punishable.

To not a few the decisive change in Mr. Gladstone's mental history is the change from the “very narrow creed” of his youth to the “high Christian doctrine” of his after life. Still more will regard as the real transition the attainment of this “comforting persuasion,” this last word of benignity and tolerance. Here

we are on the foundations. Tolerance is far more than the abandonment of civil usurpations over conscience. It is a lesson often needed quite as much in the hearts of a minority as of a majority. Tolerance means reverence for all the possibilities of Truth; it means acknowledgment that she dwells in diverse mansions, and wears vesture of many colours, and speaks in strange tongues; it means frank respect for freedom of indwelling conscience against mechanic forms, official conventions, social force; it means the charity that is greater than even faith and hope. Marked is the day for a man when he can truly say, as Mr. Gladstone here said, “Long, long have I cast those weeds behind me.”

[138]

Chapter IX. Defeat At Oxford—Death Of Lord Palmerston—Parliamentary Leadership. (1865)

> In public life a man of elevated mind does not make his own self tell upon others simply and entirely. He must act with other men; he cannot select his objects, or pursue them by means unadulterated by the methods and practices of minds less elevated than his own. He can only do what he feels to be second-best. He labours at a venture, prosecuting measures so large or so complicated that their ultimate issue is uncertain.—CARDINAL NEWMAN.

I

The faithful steward is a chartered bore alike of the mimic and the working stage; the rake and spendthrift carries all before him. Nobody knew better than Mr. Gladstone that of all the parts in public life, the teasing and economising drudge is the most thankless. The public only half apprehends, or refuses to apprehend at all; his spending colleagues naturally fight; colleagues who do not spend, have other business and prize a quiet life. All this made Mr. Gladstone's invincible tenacity as guardian of the national accounts the more genuinely heroic. In a long letter from Balmoral, in the October of 1864, he began what was destined to be the closing battle of the six years' war. To Mrs. Gladstone he wrote:—

> I have fired off to-day my letter to Lord Palmerston about expenditure. For a long time, though I did not let myself worry by needlessly thinking about it, I have had it lying on me like a nightmare. I mean it to be moderate (I shall have the copy when we meet to show you), but unless he concurs

> it may lead to consequences between this time and February. What is really painful is to believe that he will not agree unless through apprehension, his own leanings and desires being in favour of a large and not a moderate expenditure.... [139]

Figures, details, points, were varied, but the issue was in essence the same, and the end was much the same. Lord Palmerston took his stand on the demands of public opinion. He insisted (Oct. 19) that anybody who looked carefully at the signs of the times must see that there were at present two strong feelings in the national mind—the one a disinclination to organic changes in our representative system, the other a steady determination that the country should be placed and kept in an efficient condition of defence. He pointed to the dead indifference of the workmen themselves to their own enfranchisement as evidence of the one, and to the volunteer movement as evidence of the other.

Mr. Gladstone rejoined that it was Lord Palmerston's personal popularity, and not the conviction or desire of the nation, that kept up estimates. Palmerston retorted that this was to mistake cause and effect. "If I have in any degree been fortunate enough to have obtained some share of the goodwill and confidence of my fellow-countrymen, it has been because I have rightly understood the feelings and opinion of the nation.... You may depend upon it that any degree of popularity that is worth having can be obtained only by such means, and of that popularity I sincerely wish you the most ample share." The strain was severe:—

> *Oct. 1, 1864.*—I still feel much mental lassitude, and not only shrink from public business, but from hard books. It is uphill work. *Oct. 21.*—A pamphlet letter from Lord Palmerston about defence holds out a dark prospect. *Oct. 22.*—Wrote, late in the day, my reply to Lord Palmerston in a rather decisive tone, for I feel conscious of right and of necessity.
>
> *To Mrs. Gladstone.*

Nov. 9.—After more than a fortnight's delay, I received yesterday evening the enclosed very unfavourable letter from Lord Palmerston. I send with it the draft of my reply. Please to return them to-morrow by Willy—for they ought not to be
[140] even for that short time out of my custody, but I do not like to keep you in the dark. I suppose the matter may now stand over as far as debate is concerned until next month, or even till the middle of January. I fear you will not have much time for reading or writing to-morrow before you start for Chatsworth.

This *sort* of controversy keeps the nerves too highly strung. I am more afraid of running away than of holding my ground. But I do not quite forget how plentifully I am blessed and sustained, and how mercifully spared other and sorer trials.

To-morrow comes the supper of the St. Martin's Volunteers; and after that I hope to close my lips until February. The scene last night[97] was very different from that of Monday; but very remarkable, and even more enthusiastic. I was the only layman among five hundred lawyers; and it made me, wickedly, think of my position when locked alone in the Naples gaol.

Jan. 19, 1865.—The cabinet has been to-day almost as rough as any of the roughest times. In regard to the navy estimates, I have had no effective or broad support; platoon-firing more or less in my sense from Argyll and Gibson, four or five were silent, the rest hostile. Probably they will appoint a committee of cabinet, and we may work through, but on the other hand we may not. My *opinion* is manifestly in a minority; but there is an unwillingness to have a row. I am not well able to write about other things—these batterings are sore work, but I must go through. C. Paget and Childers hold their ground.

Jan. 28.—The morning went fast but wretchedly. Seldom, thank God, have I a day to which I could apply this epithet.

[97] The dinner in honour of M. Berryer.

> Last night I could have done almost anything to shut out the thought of the coming battle. This is very weak, but it is the effects of the constant recurrence of these things. Estimates always settled at the dagger's point.—(*Diary.*)
>
> *Osborne, Jan. 31.*—I hope you got my note last night. The weather here is mild, and I sit with open window while writing. The Queen and Princess both ask about you abundantly. I have been most pertinacious about seeing the baby prince. I tried to make the request twice to the Princess, but I think she did not understand my words. Determined not to be beat, I applied to the Prince, who acceded with glee, but I don't [141] know what will come of it. He talked with good sense last night about Greece, Ionian Islands, and Canada; and I was his partner at whist. We came off quits. I dined last night, and also saw the Queen before dinner, but only for a quarter of an hour or so. She talked about Japan and Lord Palmerston, but there was not time to get into swing, and nothing said of nearer matters.

The sort of success that awaited his strenuous endeavour has been already indicated.[98]

II

In the spring Mr. Gladstone made the first advance upon what was to be an important journey. All through February and March he worked with Phillimore and others upon the question of the Irish church. The thing was delicate, for his constituency would undoubtedly be adverse. His advisers resolved that he should speak on a certain motion from a radical below the gangway, to the effect that the present position of the Irish church establishment was unsatisfactory, and called for the early attention of the government. It is hard to imagine two propositions

[98] Above, p. 53.

on the merits more indisputable, but a parliamentary resolution is not to be judged by its verbal contents only. Dillwyn's motion was known to mean disestablishment and nothing less. In that view, Mr. Gladstone wrote a short but pregnant letter to Phillimore—and this too meant disestablishment and nothing less. It was the first tolerably definite warning of what was to be one of the two or three greatest legislative acts of his career.

To Robert Phillimore.

Feb. 13, 1865.—I would treat the Irish church, as a religious body, with the same respect and consideration as the church of England, and would apply to it the same liberal policy as regards its freedom of action. But I am not loyal to it as an establishment. It exists, and is virtually almost unchallenged as to its existence in that capacity; it may long (I cannot quite say long may it) outlive me; I will never be a party, knowingly, to what I may call frivolous acts of
[142] disturbance, nor to the premature production of schemes of change: but still comes back the refrain of my song: "*I am not loyal to it as an Establishment.*" I could not renew the votes and speeches of thirty years back. A quarter of a century of not only fair but exceptionally fair trial has wholly dispelled hopes to which they had relation; and I am bound to say I look upon its present form of existence as no more favourable to religion, in any sense of the word, than it is to civil justice and to the contentment and loyalty of Ireland.

Lord Palmerston got wind of the forthcoming speech, and wrote a short admonitory note. He had heard that Mr. Gladstone was about to set forth his views as an individual, and not as a member of the government, and this was a distinction that he reckoned impracticable. Was it possible for a member of a government speaking from the treasury bench so to sever himself from the body corporate to which he belonged, as to be able to express decided opinions as an individual, and leave himself free to act upon different opinions, or abstain from acting on those

opinions, when required to act as a member of the government taking part in the divisions of the body? And again, if his opinions happened not to be accepted by a colleague on the same bench, would not the colleague have either to acquiesce, or else to state in what respect his own opinion differed? In this case would not differences in a government be unnecessarily and prematurely forced upon the public? All this was the sound doctrine of cabinet government. Mr. Gladstone, replying, felt that "he could not as a minister, and as member for Oxford, allow the subject to be debated an indefinite number of times and remain silent." His indictment of the Irish church was decisive. At the same time he was careful to explain in public correspondence that the question was out of all bearing on the practical politics of the day. Meanwhile, as spokesman for the government, Mr. Gladstone deprecated the responsibility of raising great questions at a time when they could not be seriously approached. One acute observer who knew him well, evidently took a different view of the practical politics of the day, or at any rate, of the morrow. Manning wrote to Mr. Gladstone two days after the speech was made and begged to be allowed to see him: "I read your speech on the Irish church, which set me musing and forecasting. It was a real grapple with the question." [143]

III

Death Of Cobden

Not many days after this speech Cobden died. To his brother, Robertson, Mr. Gladstone wrote:—

> *April 5.*—What a sad, sad loss is this death of Cobden. I feel in miniature the truth of what Bright well said yesterday—ever since I really came to know him, I have held him in high esteem and regard as well as admiration; but till he died I did not know how high it was. I do not know that I have ever seen in public life a character more truly simple, noble, and

unselfish. His death will make an echo through the world, which in its entireness he has served so well.

April 7.—To Mr. Cobden's funeral at W. Lavington. Afterwards to his home, which I was anxious to know. Also I saw Mrs. Cobden. The day was lovely, the scenery most beautiful and soothing, the whole sad and impressive. Bright broke down at the grave. Cobden's name is great; it will be greater.—(*Diary.*)

A few months before this Mr. Gladstone had lost a friend more intimate. The death of the Duke of Newcastle, he says (Oct. 19, 1864), "severs the very last of those contemporaries who were also my political friends. How it speaks to me 'Be doing, and be done.' "

To Mrs. Gladstone.

Oct. 19.—Dr. Kingsley sent me a telegram to inform me of the sad event at Clumber; but it only arrived two hours before the papers, though the death happened last night. So that brave heart has at last ceased to beat. Certainly in him more than in any one I have known, was exhibited the character of our life as a dispensation of pain. This must ever be a mystery, for we cannot see the working-out of the purposes of God. Yet in his case I have always thought some glimpse of them seemed to be permitted. It is well to be permitted also to believe that he is now at rest for ever, and that the cloud is at length removed
[144] from his destiny.

Clumber, Oct. 26.—It is a time and a place to feel, if one could feel. He died in the room where we have been sitting before and after dinner—where, thirty-two years ago, a stripling, I came over from Newark in fear and trembling to see the duke, his father; where a stiff horseshoe semi-circle then sat round the fire in evenings; where that rigour melted away in Lady Lincoln's time; where she and her mother sang so beautifully at the pianoforte, in the same place where it now stands. The house is full of local memories.

IV

On July 6 (1865) parliament was dissolved. Four years before, Mr. Gladstone had considered the question of retaining or abandoning the seat for the university. It was in contemplation to give a third member to the southern division of Lancashire, and, in July 1861, he received a requisition begging his assent to nomination there, signed by nearly 8000 of the electors—a number that seemed to make success certain. His letters to Dr. Pusey and others show how strongly he inclined to comply. Flesh and blood shrank from perpetual strife, he thought, and after four contested elections in fourteen years at Oxford, he asked himself whether he should not escape the prolongation of the series. He saw, as he said, that they meant to make it a life-battle, like the old famous college war between Bentley and the fellows of Trinity. But he felt his deep obligation to his Oxford supporters, and was honourably constrained again to bear their flag. In the same month of 1861 he had declined absolutely to stand for London in the place of Lord John Russell.

At Oxford the tories this time had secured an excellent candidate in Mr. Gathorne Hardy, a man of sterling character, a bold and capable debater, a good man of business, one of the best of Lord Derby's lieutenants. The election was hard fought, like most of the four that had gone before it. The educated residents were for the chancellor of the exchequer, as they had always been, and he had both liberals and high churchmen on his side. One feature was novel, the power of sending votes by post. Mr. Gladstone had not been active in the House against this change, [145] but only bestowed upon it a parting malediction. It strengthened the clerical vote, and as sympathy with disestablishment was thrust prominently forward against Mr. Gladstone, the new privilege cost him his seat. From the first day things looked ill, and when on the last day (July 18) the battle ended, he was one

hundred and eighty votes behind Mr. Hardy.[99]

> *July 16, '65.*—Always in straits the Bible in church supplies my needs. To-day it was in the 1st lesson, Jer. i. 19, "And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee."
>
> *July 17.*—Again came consolation to me in the Psalms—86:16; it did the same for me April 17, 1853. At night arrived the telegram announcing my defeat at Oxford as virtually accomplished. A dear dream is dispelled. God's will be done.

Valedictory Address

His valedictory address was both graceful and sincere: "After an arduous connection of eighteen years, I bid you respectfully farewell. My earnest purpose to serve you, my many faults and shortcomings, the incidents of the political relation between the university and myself, established in 1847, so often questioned in vain, and now, at length, finally dissolved, I leave to the judgment of the future. It is one imperative duty, and one alone, which induces me to trouble you with these few parting words—the duty of expressing my profound and lasting gratitude for indulgence as generous, and for support as warm and enthusiastic in itself, and as honourable from the character and distinctions of those who have given it, as has in my belief ever been accorded by any constituency to any representative."

He was no sooner assured of his repulse at Oxford, than he started for the Lancashire constituency, where a nomination had been reserved for him.

> *July 18.*—Went off at eleven ... to the Free Trade Hall which was said to have 6000 people. They were in unbounded enthusiasm. I spoke for 1-1/4 hr., and when the meeting concluded went off to Liverpool.... Another meeting of 5000

[146]

[99] Heathcote, 3236; Hardy, 1904; Gladstone, 1724.

> at the Amphitheatre, if possible more enthusiastic than that at Manchester.

In the fine hall that stands upon the site made historic by the militant free-traders, he used a memorable phrase. "At last, my friends," he began, "I am come among you, and I am come among you 'unmuzzled.' " The audience quickly realised the whole strength of the phrase, and so did the people of the country when it reached them. Then he opened a high magnanimous exordium about the Oxford that had cast him out. The same evening at Liverpool, he again dwelt on the desperate fondness with which he had clung to the university seat, but rapidly passed to the contrast. "I come into South Lancashire, and find here around me different phenomena. I find the development of industry. I find the growth of enterprise. I find the progress of social philanthropy. I find the prevalence of toleration. I find an ardent desire for freedom. If there be one duty more than another incumbent upon the public men of England, it is to establish and maintain harmony between the past of our glorious history and the future that is still in store for her."

> *July 20.*—Robertson and I went in early and polled. He was known, and I through him, and we had a scene of great popular enthusiasm. We then followed the polls as the returns came in, apparently triumphant, but about midday it appeared that the figures of both parties were wrong, ours the worst. Instead of being well and increasingly at the head I was struggling with Egerton at 1 P.M., and Turner gaining on me.... Off to Chester. In the evening the figures of the close came in and gave me the second place. The volunteers in the park cheered loudly, the church bells rung, the people came down with a band and I had to address them.
>
> *To the Duchess of Sutherland.*
>
> I am by far too sorry about Oxford to feel the slightest temptation to be angry, even were there cause. I only feel

that I love her better than ever. There is great enthusiasm here, stimulated no doubt by the rejection. I have just been polling amid fervid demonstrations. The first return at nine
[147] o'clock—but you will know all when this reaches you—is as follows.... This of course says little as to the final issue. Ten o'clock. My majority so far increases, the others diminish. But it is hard running. Eleven. My majority increases, the others diminish. Egerton is second. One of our men third. Twelve thousand four hundred have polled. My seat looks well.

I interrupt here to say you would have been *pleased* had you heard Willy, at a moment's notice, on Tuesday night, address five thousand people no one of whom had ever seen him; he was (forgive me) so modest, so manly, *so ready*, so judicious.

Since writing thus far everything has been overset in a chaos of conflicting reports. They will all be cleared up for you before this comes. I hope I am not in a fool's paradise. All I yet know is an apparently hard fight between Egerton and me for the head of the poll, but my seat tolerably secure. I have had *such* letters!

When the votes were counted Mr. Gladstone was third upon the poll, and so secured the seat, with two tory colleagues above him.[100]

The spirit in which Mr. Gladstone took a defeat that was no mere electioneering accident, but the landmark of a great severance in his extraordinary career, is shown in his replies to multitudes of correspondents. On the side of his tenacious and affectionate attachment to Oxford, the wound was deep. On the other side, emancipation from fetters and from contests that he regarded as ungenerous, was a profound relief. But the relief touched him less than the sorrow.

[100] Egerton 9171; Turner, 8806; Thompson (L.), 7703; Heywood (L.), Gladstone, 8786; Legh (C.), 8476; 7653.

Manning wrote:—

> Few men have been watching you more than I have in these last days; and I do not know that I could wish you any other result. But you have entered upon a new and larger field as Sir It. Peel did, to whose history yours has many points of likeness. You say truly that Oxford has failed to enlarge itself to the progress of the country. I hope this will make you enlarge yourself to the facts of our age and state—and I believe it will. Only, as I said some months ago, I am anxious about you, lest you should entangle yourself with extremes. [148] This crisis is for you politically what a certain date was for me religiously.

Mr. Gladstone replied:—

> *Hawarden, July 21*.—I thank you very much for your kind letter, and I should have been very glad if it had contained all that it merely alludes to. From Oxford and her children I am overwhelmed with kindness. My feelings towards her are those of sorrow, leavened perhaps with pride. But I am for the moment a stunned man; the more so because without a moment of repose I had to plunge into the whirlpools of South Lancashire, and swim there for my life, which as you will see, has been given me.
>
> I do not think I can admit the justice of the caution against extremes. The greatest or second greatest of what people call my extremes, is one which I believe you approve. I profess myself a disciple of Butler: the greatest of all enemies to extremes. This indeed speaks for my intention only. But in a cold or lukewarm period, and such is this in public affairs, everything which moves and lives is called extreme, and that by the very people (I do not mean or think that you are one of them) who in a period of excitement would far outstrip, under pressure, those whom they now rebuke. Your caution about self-control, however, I do accept—it is very valuable—I am sadly lacking in that great quality.

At both Liverpool and Manchester, he writes to Dr. Jacobson, I had to speak of Oxford, and I have endeavoured to make it unequivocally clear that I am here as the same man, and not another, and that throwing off the academic cap and gown makes no difference in the figure.

"Vixi, et quem dederat cursum fortuna peregi."[101]

And when I think of dear old Oxford, whose services to me I can never repay, there comes back to me that line of Wordsworth in his incomparable Ode, and I fervently address her with it—

"Forbode not any severing of our loves."

To Sir Stafford Northcote, July 21.—I cannot withhold myself from writing a line to assure you it is not my fault, but
[149] my misfortune, that you are not my successor at Oxford. My desire or impulse has for a good while, not unnaturally, been to escape from the Oxford seat; not because I grudged the anxieties of it, but because I found the load, added to other loads, too great. Could I have seen my way to this proceeding, had the advice or had the conduct of my friends warranted it, you would have had such notice of it, as effectually to preclude your being anticipated. I mean no disrespect to Mr. Hardy; but it has been a great pain to me to see in all the circulars a name different from the name that should have stood there, and that would have stood there, but for your personal feelings.

Ibid. July 22.—The separation from friends in politics is indeed very painful.... I have been instructed, perhaps been hardened, by a very wide experience in separation.—No man has been blessed more out of proportion to his deserts than I have in friends: in πολυφιλία, in χρηστοφιλία;[102] but when with regard to those of old standing who were nearest to me, I ask where are they, I seem to see around me a little

[101] *Aen.* iv. 653. I have lived my life, my fated course have run.
[102] Aristotle, *Rhet.* i. 5, 4.

waste, that has been made by politics, by religion, and by death. All these modes of severance are sharp. But the first of them is the least so, when the happy conviction remains that the fulfilment of duty, such as conscience points to it, is the object on both sides. And I have suffered so sorely by the far sharper partings in death, and in religion after a fashion which practically almost comes to death, that there is something of relief in turning to the lighter visitation. It is, however, a visitation still.

To the Bishop of Oxford, July 21.—... Do not join with others in praising me, because I am not angry, only sorry, and that deeply. For my revenge—which I do not desire, but would battle if I could—all lies in that little word "future" in my address, which I wrote with a consciousness that it is deeply charged with meaning, and that that which shall come will come. There have been two great deaths or transmigrations of spirit in my political existence. One, very slow, the breaking of ties with my original party. The other, very short and sharp, the breaking of the tie with Oxford. There will probably be a third, and no more.... Again, my dear Bishop, I thank you for bearing with my waywardness, and manifesting, in the day of need, your confidence and attachment. [150]

The bishop naturally hinted some curiosity as to the third transmigration. "The oracular sentence," Mr. Gladstone replied, "has little bearing on present affairs or prospects, and may stand in its proper darkness." In the same letter the bishop urged Mr. Gladstone to imitate Canning when he claimed the post of prime minister. "I think," was the reply (July 25) "that if you had the same means of estimating my position, jointly with my faculties, as I have, you would be of a different opinion. It is my fixed determination never to take any step whatever to raise myself to a higher level in official life, and this not on grounds of Christian self-denial which would hardly apply, but on the double ground, first, of my total ignorance of my capacity, bodily or mental, to

hold such a higher level, and, secondly—perhaps I might say especially—because I am certain that the fact of my seeking it would seal my doom in taking it."[103]

Truly was it said of Mr. Gladstone that his rejection at Oxford, and his election in Lancashire, were regarded as matters of national importance, because he was felt to have the promise of the future in him, to have a living fire in him, a capacity for action, and a belief that moving on was a national necessity; because he was bold, earnest, impulsive; because he could sympathise with men of all classes, occupations, interests, opinions; because he thought nothing done so long as much remained for him to do. While liberals thus venerated him as if he had been a Moses beckoning from Sinai towards the promised land, tories were described as dreading him, ever since his suffrage speech, as continental monarchs dreaded Mazzini—"a man whose name is at once an alarm, a menace, and a prediction." They hated him partly as a deserter, partly as a disciple of Manchester. Throughout the struggle, the phrase "I believe in Mr. Gladstone" served as the liberal *credo*, and "I distrust Mr. Gladstone" as the condensed commination service of the tories upon all manner of change.[104]

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V

Death Of Lord Palmerston

On October 18, the prime minister died at Brocket. The news found Mr. Gladstone at Clumber, in performance of his duties as Newcastle trustee. For him the event opened many possibilities,

[103] *Life of Wilberforce*, in. pp. 161-164. The transcriber has omitted from Mr. Gladstone's second letter a sentence about Archbishop Manning's letter—"To me it seemed *meant* in the kindest and most friendly sense; but that the man is gone out, φροῦδος and has left nothing but the priest. No shirt collar ever took such a quantity of starch."

[104] See *Saturday Review*, July 29; *Spectator*, June 24, etc.

and his action upon it is set out in two or three extracts from his letters:—

> *To Lord Russell. Clumber, Oct. 18, 1865.*—I have received tonight by telegraph the appalling news of Lord Palmerston's decease. None of us, I suppose, were prepared for this event, in the sense of having communicated as to what should follow. The Queen must take the first step, but I cannot feel uncertain what it will be. Your former place as her minister, your powers, experience, services, and renown, do not leave reason for doubt that you will be sent for. Your hands will be entirely free—you are pledged probably to no one, certainly not to me. But any government now to be formed cannot be wholly a continuation, it must be in some degree a new commencement.
>
> I am sore with conflicts about the public expenditure, which I feel that other men would have either escaped, or have conducted more gently and less fretfully. I am most willing to retire. On the other hand, I am bound by conviction even more than by credit to the principle of progressive reduction in our military and naval establishments and in the charges for them, under the favourable circumstances which we appear to enjoy. This I think is the moment to say thus much in subject matter which greatly appertains to my department. On the general field of politics, after having known your course in cabinet for eight and a half years, I am quite willing to take my chance under your banner, in the exact capacity I now fill, and I adopt the step, perhaps a little unusual, of saying so, because it may be convenient to you at a juncture when time is precious, while it can, I trust, after what I have said above, hardly be hurtful.
>
> *To Mr. Panizzi, Oct. 18.—Ei fu!*[105] Death has indeed laid low the most towering antlers in all the forest. No man [152] in England will more sincerely mourn Lord Palmerston than

[105] Ei fu! siccome immobile, etc. First line of Manzoni's ode on the death of Napoleon.

you. Your warm heart, your long and close friendship with him, and your sense of all he had said and done for Italy, all so bound you to him that you will deeply feel this loss; as for myself I am stunned. It was plain that this would come; but sufficient unto the day is the burden thereof, and there is no surplus stock of energy in the mind to face, far less to anticipate, fresh contingencies. But I need not speak of this great event—to-morrow all England will be ringing of it, and the world will echo England. I cannot forecast the changes which will follow; but it is easy to see what the first step should be.

To Mrs. Gladstone, Oct. 20.—I received two letters from you today together. The first, very naturally full of plans, the second written when those plans had been blown into the air by the anticipation (even) of Lord Palmerston's death. This great event shakes me down to the foundation, by the reason of coming trouble. I think two things are clear. 1. The Queen should have come to London. 2. She should have sent for Lord Russell. I fear she has done neither. Willy telegraphs to me that a letter from Lord Russell had come to Downing Street. Now had he heard from the Queen, he would (so I reason) either have telegraphed to me to go up, or sent a letter hither by a messenger instead of leaving it to kick its heels in Downing Street for a day. And we hear nothing of the Queen's moving; she is getting into a groove, out of which some one ought to draw her.

Oct. 21.—As far as political matters are concerned, I am happier this morning. Lord Russell, pleased with my letter, writes to say he has been commissioned to carry on the present government as first lord, wishes me to co-operate "in the capacity I now fill as a principal member of the administration." I think that I have struck a stroke for economy which will diminish difficulty when we come to estimates for the year. I *hope* from his letter that he means to ask George Grey to lead, which would be very acceptable to me. Though he does not summon me to London, I think I

ought to go, and shall do so accordingly to-day. I am sorry that this is again more vexation and uncertainty for you.

Oct. 22.—I came up last night and very glad I am of it. I found that Lord Palmerston's funeral was almost to be private, not because the family wished it, but because nothing had been proposed to them. I at once sent—down to Richmond and Pembroke Lodge with a letter, and the result is that Evelyn Ashley has been written to by Lord Russell and authorised to telegraph to Balmoral to propose a funeral in Westminster Abbey. It is now very late, and all the preparations must have been made at Romsey. But in such a matter especially, better late than never. [153]

You will have been amused to see that on Friday the *Times* actually put me up for prime minister, and yesterday knocked me down again! There is a rumour that it was the old story, Delane out of town. I was surprised at the first article, not at the second. All, I am sorry to say, seem to take for granted that I am to lead the House of Commons. But this is not so simple a matter. First, it must be offered to Sir George Grey. If he refuses, then secondly, I do not think I can get on without a different arrangement of treasury and chancellor of exchequer business, which will not be easy. But the worst of all is the distribution of offices as between the two Houses. It has long been felt that the House of Commons was too weak and the House of Lords too strong, in the share of the important offices, and now the premiership is to be carried over, unavoidably. No such thing has ever been known as an administration with the first lord, foreign secretary, secretary for war, and the first lord of the admiralty, in the House of Lords.[106] *This* is really a stiff business.

To Lord Russell. Carlton House Terrace, Oct. 23.—You having thought fit to propose that I should lead the House of Commons, I felt it necessary first to be assured that Sir

[106] First lord, Earl Russell; foreign secretary, Lord Clarendon; secretary for war. Earl de Grey; first lord of the admiralty, Duke of Somerset.

George Grey, who was in constructive possession of that office, and under whom I should have served with perfect satisfaction, could not be induced to accept the duty. Of this your letter seemed to contain sufficient proof. Next, I felt it to be necessary that some arrangement should be made for relieving me of a considerable and singularly disabling class of business, consisting of the cases of real or supposed grievance, at all times arising in connection with the collection
[154] of the public revenue under its several heads.... The third difficulty which I named to you in the way of my accepting your proposal, is what I venture to call the lop-sided condition of the government, with the strain and stress of administration in the House of Commons, and nearly all the offices about which the House of Commons cares, represented by heads in the House of Lords. It weighs very seriously on my mind, and I beg you to *consider* it.... I have rather particular engagements of a public nature next week; at Edinburgh on the 2nd and 3rd in connection with the university business, and at Glasgow on the 1st, to receive the freedom. I am anxious to know whether I may now finally confirm these engagements?

To Mrs. Gladstone, Oct. 23.—I think I see my way a little now. Lord Russell agrees that cabinets should be postponed after Saturday, for a good fortnight. I can therefore keep my engagements in Scotland, and write to-day to say so.

Lord Palmerston is to be buried in the Abbey on Friday; the family are pleased. I saw W. Cowper as well as Evelyn Ashley to-day. They give a good account of Lady Palmerston.... Lord Russell offers me the lead—I must probably settle it to-morrow. His physical strength is low, but I suppose in the Lords he may get on. The greatest difficulty is having almost all the important offices in the Lords.

Oct. 24.—Lord Russell now proposes to adjourn the cabinets till Nov.14th, but I must be here for the Lord Mayor's dinner on the 9th. You will therefore see my programme as it now stands. I send you a batch of eight letters, which please keep carefully to yourself, and return in their bundle

forthwith. There are divers proposals on foot, but I think little will be finally settled before Friday. Sir R. Peel will probably have a peerage offered him. I have not yet accepted the lead formally, but I suppose it must come to that. The main question is whether anything, and what, can be done to improve the structure of the government as between the two Houses.

Oct. 25.—Nothing more has yet been done. I consider my position virtually fixed. I am afraid of Lord Russell's rapidity, but we shall try to rein it in, There seems to be very little venom in the atmosphere. I wish Sir G. Grey were here. The Queen's keeping so long at Balmoral is a sad mistake. [155]

Leader In The Commons

He received, as was inevitable, plenty of letters from admirers regretting that he had not gone up higher. His answer was, of course, uniform. "It was," he told them, "my own impartial and firm opinion that Lord Russell was the proper person to succeed Lord Palmerston. However flattered I may be, therefore, to hear of an opinion such as you report and express, I have felt it my duty to co-operate to the best of my power in such arrangements as might enable the government to be carried on by the present ministers, with Lord Russell at their head."

On the other hand, doubts were abundant. To Sir George Grey, one important friend wrote (Oct. 30): "I think you are right on the score of health, to give him [Gladstone] the lead of the House; but you will see, with all his talents, he will not perceive the difference between leading and driving." Another correspondent, of special experience, confessed to "great misgivings as to Gladstone's tact and judgment." "The heart of all Israel is towards him," wrote his good friend Dean Church; "he is very great and very noble. But he is hated as much as, or more than, he is loved. He is fierce sometimes and wrathful and easily irritated; he wants knowledge of men and speaks rashly. And I look on with some trembling to see what will come of this his first attempt to lead the Commons

and prove himself fit to lead England."[107] It was pointed out that Roundell Palmer was the only powerful auxiliary on whom he could rely in debate, and should the leader himself offend the House by an indiscretion, no colleague was competent to cover his retreat or baffle the triumph of the enemy. His first public appearance as leader of the House of Commons and associate premier was made at Glasgow, and his friends were relieved and exultant. The point on which they trembled was caution, and at Glasgow he was caution personified.

The changes in administration were not very difficult. Lowe's
[156] admission to the cabinet was made impossible by his declaration against any lowering of the borough franchise. The inclusion of Mr. Goschen, who had only been in parliament three years, was the subject of remark. People who asked what he had done to merit promotion so striking, did not know his book on foreign exchanges, and were perhaps in no case competent to judge it.[108] Something seems to have been said about Mr. Bright, for in a note to Lord Russell (Dec. 11) Mr. Gladstone writes: "With reference to your remark about Bright, he has for many years held language of a studious moderation about reform. And there

[107] Church's *Letters*, p. 171.

[108] Once at Hawarden I dropped the idle triviality that Mr. Pitt, Mr. Goschen, and a third person, were the three men who had been put into cabinet after the shortest spell of parliamentary life. (They were likewise out again after the shortest recorded spell of cabinet life.) "I don't believe any such thing," said Mr. Gladstone. "Well, who is your man?" "What do you say," he answered, "to Sir George Murray? Wellington put him into his cabinet (1828); he had been with him in the Peninsula." On returning to London, I found that Murray had been five years in parliament, and having written to tell Mr. Gladstone so, the next day I received a summary postcard—"Then try Lord Henry Petty." Here, as far as I make out, he was right.

"It is very unusual, I think," Mr. Gladstone wrote to the prime minister (Jan. 6, 1866) "to put men into the cabinet without a previous official training. Lord Derby could not help himself. Peel put Knatchbull, but that was on political grounds that seemed broad, but proved narrow enough. Argyll was put there in '52-3, but there is not the same opportunity for previous training in the case of peers."

is something odious in fighting shy of a man, so powerful in talent, of such undoubted integrity. Without feeling, however, that he is permanently proscribed, I am under the impression that in the present critical state of feeling on your own side with respect to the franchise, his name would sink the government and the bill together." When Palmerston invited Cobden to join his cabinet in 1859, Cobden spoke of Bright, how he had avoided personalities in his recent speeches. "It is not personalities that we complained of," Palmerston replied; "a public man is right in attacking persons. But it is his attacks on *classes* that have given offence to powerful bodies, who can make their resentment felt."[109]

Mr. Gladstone's first few weeks as leader of the House were almost a surprise. "At two," he says (Feb. 1, 1867), "we went down to choose the Speaker, and I had to throw off in my new capacity. If mistrust of self be a qualification, God knows I have it." All opened excellently. Not only was he [157] mild and conciliatory, they found him even tiresome in his deference. Some onlookers still doubted. Everybody, they said, admired and respected him, some loved him, but there were few who understood him. "So far," said a conservative observer, "Gladstone has led the House with great good temper, prosperity, and success, but his rank and file and some of his colleagues, seem to like him none the better on that account."[110] Meanwhile, words of friendly encouragement came from Windsor. On Feb. 19: "The Queen cannot conclude without expressing to Mr. Gladstone her gratification at the accounts she hears from all sides of the admirable manner in which he has commenced his leadership in the House of Commons."

He found the speech for a monument to Lord Palmerston in the Abbey "a delicate and difficult duty" (Feb. 22). "It would have worn me down beforehand had I not been able to exclude

[109] *Life of Cobden*, ii. p. 232.
[110] *Life of Sir Charles Murray*, p. 300.

it from my thoughts till the last, and then I could only feel my impotence." Yet he performed the duty with grace and truth. He commemorated Palmerston's share in the extension of freedom in Europe, and especially in Italy, where, he said, Palmerston's name might claim a place on a level with her most distinguished patriots. Nor had his interest ever failed in the rescue of the "unhappy African race, whose history is for the most part written only in blood and tears." He applauded his genial temper, his incomparable tact and ingenuity, his pluck in debate, his delight in a fair stand-up fight, his inclination to avoid whatever tended to exasperate, his incapacity of sustained anger.

[158]

Chapter X. Matters Ecclesiastical. (1864-1868)

ὦ γῆς ὄχημα κὰπὶ γῆς ἔχων ἕδραν,
ὅστις ποτ᾽ εἶ σύ, δυστόπαστος εἰδέναι,
Ζεὺς, εἴτ᾽ ἀνάγκη φύσεος εἴτε νοῦς βροτῶν,
προσηυξάμην σε; πάντα γὰρ δι᾽ ἀψόφου
βαίνων κελεύθου κατὰ δίκην τὰ θνήτ᾽ ἄγεις.

—EUR., *Troades*, 884.

O thou, upholder of the earth, who upon earth hast an abiding place, whosoever thou art, inscrutable, thou Zeus, whether thou be necessity of nature, or intelligence of mortal men, on thee I call; for, treading a noiseless path, in righteousness dost thou direct all human things.

I

The reader will have surmised that amidst all the press and strain in affairs of state, Mr. Gladstone's intensity of interest in affairs of the church never for an instant slackened. Wide as the two spheres stood apart, his temper in respect of them was much the same. In church and state alike he prized institutions and the great organs of corporate life; but what he thought of most and cared for and sought after most, was not their mechanism, though on that too he set its value, but the living spirit within the institution. In church and state alike he moved cautiously and tentatively. In both alike he strove to unite order, whether temporal order in the state or spiritual order in the church, with his sovereign principle of freedom. Many are the difficulties in the way of applying Cavour's formula of a free church in a free state, as most countries and their governors have by now found out. Yet to have a vivid sense of the supreme importance

of the line between temporal power and spiritual is the note of
[159] a statesman fit for modern times. "The whole of my public life," he wrote to the Bishop of Oxford in 1863, "with respect to matters ecclesiastical, for the last twenty years and more, has been a continuing effort, though a very weak one, to extricate her in some degree from entangled relations without shock or violence."

Temper Of His Churchmanship

The general temper of his churchmanship on its political side during these years is admirably described in a letter to his eldest son, and some extracts from it furnish a key to his most characteristic frame of mind in attempting to guide the movements of his time:—

To W. H. Gladstone.

April 16, 1865.—You appeared to speak with the supposition, a very natural one, that it was matter of duty to defend all the privileges and possessions of the church; that concession would lead to concession; and that the end of the series would be its destruction.... Now, in the first place, it is sometimes necessary in politics to make surrenders of what, if not surrendered, will be wrested from us. And it is very wise, when a necessity of this kind is approaching, to anticipate it while it is yet a good way off; for then concession begets gratitude, and often brings a return. The *kind* of concession which is really mischievous is just that which is made under terror and extreme pressure; and unhappily this has been the kind of concession which for more than two hundred years, it has been the fashion of men who call (and who really think) themselves "friends of the church" to make.... I believe it would be a wise concession, upon grounds merely political, for the church of England to have the law of church rate abolished in all cases where it places her in fretting conflict with the dissenting bodies.... I say all this, however, not to form the groundwork of a conclusion, but only in illustration of a general maxim which is applicable to political questions.

But next, this surely is a political question. Were we asked to surrender an article of the creed in order to save the rest, or to consent to the abolition of the episcopal order, these things touch the faith of Christians and the life of the church, and cannot in any measure become the subject of compromise. But the external possessions of the church were given it for the more effectual promotion of its work, and may be lessened or abandoned with a view to the same end.... Now [160] we have lived into a time when the great danger of the church is the sale of her faith for gold.... In demanding the money of dissenters for the worship of the church, we practically invest them with a title to demand that she should be adapted to their use in return, and we stimulate every kind of interference with her belief and discipline to that end. By judiciously waiving an undoubted legal claim, we not only do an act which the understood principles of modern liberty tend to favour and almost require, but we soothe ruffled minds and tempers, and what is more, we strengthen the case and claim of the church to be respected as a religious body.... I am convinced that the only hope of making it possible for her to discharge her high office as stewardess of divine truth, is to deal tenderly and gently with all the points at which her external privileges *grate* upon the feelings and interests of that unhappily large portion of the community who have almost ceased in any sense to care for her. This is a principle of broad application, broader far than the mere question of church rates. It is one not requiring precipitate or violent action, or the disturbance prematurely of anything established; but it supplies a rule of the first importance for dealing with the mixed questions of temporal and religious interest when they arise. I am very anxious to see it quietly but firmly rooted in your mind. It is connected with the dearest interests not only of my public life, but as I believe of our religion.... I am in no way anxious that you should take my opinions in politics as a model for your own. Your free concurrence will be a lively pleasure to me. But above all I wish you to be free. What I have now

> been dwelling upon is a matter higher and deeper than the region of mere opinion. It has fallen to my lot to take a share larger than that of many around me, though in itself slight, in bringing the principle I have described into use as a ground of action. I am convinced that if I have laboured to any purpose at all it has been in great part for this. It is part of that business of reconciling the past with the new time and order, which seems to belong particularly to our country and its rulers.

He then goes on to cite as cases where something had been
[161] done towards securing the action of the church as a religious body, Canada, where clergy and people now appointed their own bishop; a recent judgment of the privy council leading to widespread emancipation of the colonial church; the revival of convocation; the licence to convocation to alter the thirty-sixth canon; the bestowal of self-government on Oxford. "In these measures," he says, "I have been permitted to take my part; but had I adopted the rigid rule of others in regard to the temporal prerogatives, real or supposed, of the church, I should at once have lost all power to promote them."

"As to disruption," he wrote in these days, "that is the old cry by means of which in all times the temporal interests of the English church have been upheld in preference to the spiritual. The church of England is much more likely of the two, to part with her faith than with her funds. It is the old question, which is the greater, the *gold* or the altar that sanctifies the gold. Had this question been more boldly asked and more truly answered in other times, we should not have been where we now are. And by continually looking to the gold and not the altar, the dangers of the future will be not diminished but increased."[111]

Abolition Of Church Rates

In 1866 Mr. Gladstone for the first time voted for the abolition of church rates. Later in the session he introduced his own plan, not in his capacity as minister, but with the approval of the

[111] To Sir W. Farquhar, April 4, 1864.

Russell cabinet. After this cabinet had gone out, Mr. Gladstone in 1868 introduced a bill, abolishing all legal proceedings for the recovery of church rates, except in cases of rates already made, or where money had been borrowed on the security of the rates. But it permitted voluntary assessments to be made, and all agreements to make such payments on the faith of which any expense was incurred, remained enforcible in the same manner as contracts of a like character. Mr. Gladstone's bill became law in the course of the summer, and a struggle that had been long and bitter ended.

In another movement in the region of ecclesiastical machinery, from which much was hoped, though little is believed to have come, Mr. Gladstone was concerned, though I do not gather [162] from the papers that he watched it with the zealous interest of some of his friends. Convocation, the ancient assembly or parliament of the clergy of the church of England, was permitted in 1852 to resume the active functions that had been suspended since 1717. To Mr. Gladstone some revival or institution of the corporate organisation of the church, especially after the Gorham judgment, was ever a cherished object. Bishop Wilberforce, long one of the most intimate of his friends, was chief mover in proceedings that, as was hoped, were to rescue the church from the anarchy in which one branch of her sons regarded her as plunged. Some of Mr. Gladstone's correspondence on the question of convocation has already been made public.[112] Here it is enough to print a passage or two from a letter addressed by him to the bishop (Jan. 1, 1854) setting out his view of the real need of the time. After a generous exaltation of the zeal and devotion of the clergy, he goes on to the gains that might be expected from their effective organisation:—

> First as to her pastoral work, her warfare against sin, she would put forth a strength, not indeed equal to it, but at

[112] *Life of Wilberforce*, ii. pp. 136-46; *Life of Shaftesbury*, ii. p. 404.

least so much less unequal than it now is, that the good fight would everywhere be maintained, and she would not be as she now is, either hated or unknown among the myriads who form the right arm of England's industry and skill. As to her doctrine and all that hangs upon it, such questions as might arise would be determined by the deliberate and permanent sense of the body. Some unity in belief is necessary to justify association in a Christian communion. Will that unity in belief be promoted or impaired by the free action of mind within her, subjected to order? If her case really were so desperate that her children had no common faith, then the sooner that imposture were detected the better; but if she has, then her being provided with legitimate, orderly, and authentic channels, for expressing and bringing to a head, as need arises, the sentiments of her people, will far more clearly manifest, and while manifesting will extend, deepen, and consolidate, that unity. It is all very well to sneer at councils: but who [163] among us will deny that the councils which we acknowledge as lawful representatives of the universal church, were great and to all appearance necessary providential instruments in the establishment of the Christian faith?

But, say some, we cannot admit the laity into convocation, as it would be in derogation of the rights of the clergy; or as others say, it would separate the church from the state. And others, more numerous and stronger, in their fear of the exclusive constitution of the convocation, resist every attempt at organising the church, and suffer, and even by suffering promote, the growth of all our evils. I will not touch the question of convocation except by saying that, in which I think you concur, that while the present use is unsatisfactory and even scandalous, no form of church government that does not distinctly and fully provide for the expression of the voice of the laity either can be had, or if it could would satisfy the needs of the church of England. But in my own mind as well as in this letter, I am utterly against all premature, all rapid conclusions.... It will be much in our day if, towards the

> cure of such evils, when we die we can leave to our children the precious knowledge that a beginning has been made—a beginning not only towards enabling the bishops and clergy to discharge their full duty, but also, and yet more, towards raising the real character of membership in those millions upon millions, the whole bulk of our community, who now have its name and its name alone.

II

In 1860 a volume appeared containing seven "essays and reviews" by seven different writers, six of them clergymen of the church of England. The topics were miscellaneous, the treatment of them, with one exception,[113] was neither learned nor weighty, the tone was not absolutely uniform, but it was as a whole mildly rationalistic, and the negations, such as they were, exhibited none of the fierceness or aggression that had marked the old controversies about Hampden, or Tract Ninety, or Ward's *Ideal*. A storm broke upon the seven writers, that they little intended to provoke. To the apparent partnership among them was severely imputed a sinister design. They were styled "the [164] Septem contra Christum"—six ministers of religion combining to assail the faith they outwardly professed—seven authors of an immoral rationalistic conspiracy. Two of them were haled into the courts, one for casting doubt upon the inspiration of the Bible, the other for impugning the eternity of the future punishment of the wicked. The Queen in council upon appeal was advised to reverse a hostile judgment in the court below (1864), and Lord Chancellor Westbury delivered the decision in a tone described in the irreverent epigram of the day as "dismissing eternal punishment with costs." This carried further, or completed, the principle of the Gorham judgment fourteen

[113] Pattison's *Tendencies of Religious Thought in England, 1688-1750*. Reprinted in his *Essays*, vol. ii.

years before, and just as that memorable case determined that neither the evangelical nor the high anglican school should drive out the other, so the judgment in the case of *Essays and Reviews* determined that neither should those two powerful sections drive out the new critical, rationalistic, liberal, or latitudinarian school. "It appears to me," Mr. Gladstone wrote to the Bishop of London (April 26, 1864), "that the spirit of this judgment has but to be consistently and cautiously followed up, in order to establish, as far as the court can establish it, a complete indifference between the Christian faith and the denial of it. I do not believe it is in the power of human language to bind the understanding and conscience of man with any theological obligations, which the mode of argument used and the principles assumed [in the judgment] would not effectually unloose." To Bishop Hamilton of Salisbury, who had taken part in one of the two cases, he wrote:—

> *Feb. 8, 1864.*—This new and grave occurrence appertains to a transition state through which the Christian faith is passing. The ship is at sea far from the shore she left, far from the shore she is making for. This or that deflection from her course, from this or that wind of heaven, we cannot tell what it is, or whether favourable or adverse to her true work and destination, unless we know all the stages of the experience through which she has yet to pass. It seems to me that these judgments are most important in their character as illustrations
> [165] of a system, or I should rather say, of the failure of a system, parts of a vast scheme of forces and events in the midst of which we stand, which seem to govern us, but which are in reality governed by a hand above. It may be that this rude shock to the mere scripturism which has too much prevailed, is intended to be the instrument of restoring a greater harmony of belief, and of the agencies for maintaining belief. But be that as it may, the valiant soldier who has fought manfully should be, and I hope will be, of good cheer.

In the same connection he wrote to Sir W. Farquhar, a friend from earliest days:—

> *Jan. 31, 1865.*—I have never been much disposed to a great exaltation of clerical power, and I agree in the necessity of taking precautions against the establishment, especially of an insular and local though in its sphere legitimate authority, of new doctrines for that Christian faith which is not for England or France but for the world; further, I believe it has been a mistake in various instances to institute the coercive proceedings which have led to the present state of things. I remember telling the Archbishop of York at Penmaenmawr, when he was Bishop of Gloucester, that it seemed to me we had lived into a time when, speaking generally, penal proceedings for the maintenance of divine truth among the clergy would have to be abandoned, and moral means alone depended on. But, on the other hand, I feel that the most vital lay interests are at stake in the definite teaching and profession of the Christian faith, and the general tendency and effect of the judgments has been and is likely to be hostile to that definite teaching, and unfavourable also to the moral tone and truthfulness, of men who may naturally enough be tempted to shelter themselves under judicial glosses in opposition to the plain meaning of words. The judgments of the present tribunal continued in a series would, I fear, result in the final triumph (in a sense he did not desire) of Mr. Ward's non-natural sense; and the real question is whether our objection to non-natural senses is general, or is only felt when the sense favoured is the one opposed to our own inclinations.

III

No theological book, wrote Mr. Gladstone in 1866, that has appeared since the *Vestiges of Creation* twenty years before [166] (1844), had attracted anything like the amount of notice bestowed

upon "the remarkable volume entitled *Ecce Homo*," published in 1865. It was an attempt, so Mr. Gladstone described it, to bring home to the reader the impression that there is something or other called the Gospel, "which whatever it may be," as was said by an old pagan poet of the Deity,[114] has formidable claims not merely on the intellectual condescension, but on the loyal allegiance and humble obedience of mankind. The book violently displeased both sides. It used language that could not be consistently employed in treating of Christianity from the orthodox point of view. On the other hand, it constituted "a grave offence in the eyes of those to whom the chequered but yet imposing fabric of actual Christianity, still casting its majestic light and shadow over the whole civilised world, is a rank eyesore and an intolerable offence." Between these two sets of assailants Mr. Gladstone interposed with a friendlier and more hopeful construction.[115] He told those who despised the book as resting on no evidence of the foundations on which it was built, and therefore as being shallow and uncritical, that we have a right to weigh the nature of the message, apart from the credentials of the messenger. Then he reassured the orthodox by the hope that "the present tendency to treat the old belief of man with a precipitate, shallow, and unexamining disparagement" is only a passing distemper, and that to the process of its removal the author of the book would have the consolation and the praise of having furnished an earnest, powerful, and original contribution.[116] Dean Milman told him that he had brought to life again a book that after a sudden and brief yet brilliant existence seemed to be falling swiftly into oblivion. The mask of the anonymous had much to do, he thought, with its popularity, as had happened to the

[114] See the lines from *Euripides* at the head of the chapter.

[115] In a series of articles published in *Good Words* in January, February, March 1868, and reprinted, in volume form the same year. Reprinted again in *Gleanings*, vol. iii.

[116] *Gleanings*, iii. p. 41.

Vestiges of Creation. Undoubtedly when the mask fell off, interest dropped.

"Ecce Homo" [167]

Dr. Pusey found the book intensely painful. "I have seldom," he told Mr. Gladstone, "been able to read much at a time, but shut the book for pain, as I used to do with Renan's." What revolted him was not the exhibition of the human nature of the central figure, but of a human nature apart from and inconsistent with its divinity; the writer's admiring or patronising tone was loathsome. "What you have yourself written," Pusey said, "I like much. But its bearings on *Ecce Homo* I can hardly divine, except by way of contrast." Dr. Newman thought that here was a case where *materiam superabat opus*, and that Mr. Gladstone's observations were more valuable for their own sake, than as a recommendation or defence of the book:—

> *Jan. 9, 1868.*—I hope I have followed you correctly, says Newman: your main proposition seems to be, that whereas both Jew and Gentile had his own notion of an heroic humanity, and neither of them a true notion, the one being political, the other even immoral, the first step necessary for bringing in the idea of an Emmanuel into the world, was to form the human mould into which it 'might drop,' and thus to supplant both the Judaic and the heathen misconception by the exhibition of the true idea. Next, passing from antecedent probabilities to history, the order of succession of the synoptical and the fourth gospels does in fact fulfil this reasonable anticipation. This seems to me a *very great* view, and I look forward eagerly to what you have still to say in illustration of it. The only objection which I see can be made to it is, that it is a clever controversial expedient after the event for accounting for a startling fact. This is an objection not peculiar to it, but to all explanations of the kind. Still, the question remains—whether it is a fact that the sacred writers recognise, however indirectly, the wise economy which you assert, or whether it is only an hypothesis?

As to the specific principles and particular opinions in Mr. Gladstone's criticism of what we now see to have been a not very effective or deeply influential book, we may think as we will. But the temper of his review, the breadth of its outlook on Christian thought, tradition, and society, show no mean elements in the composition of his greatness. So, too, does the bare fact that under the pressure of office and all the cares of a party leader in a crisis, his mind should have been free and disengaged enough [168] to turn with large and eager interest to such themes as these. This was indeed the freedom of judgment with which, in the most moving lines of the poem that he loved above all others, Virgil bidding farewell to Dante makes him crowned and mitred master of himself—*Perch' io te sopra te corono e mitrio.*[117]

IV

Bishop Colenso

Other strong gusts swept the high latitudes, when Dr. Colenso, Bishop of Natal, published certain destructive criticisms upon the canonical Scriptures. His metropolitan at Cape Town pronounced sentence of deprivation; Colenso appealed to the Queen in council; and the Queen in council was advised that the proceedings of the Bishop of Cape Town were null and void, for in law there was no established church in the colony, nor any ecclesiastical court with lawful jurisdiction.[118] This triumph of heresy was a heavy blow. In 1866 Bishop Colenso brought an action against Mr. Gladstone and the other trustees of the colonial bishoprics fund, calling upon them to set aside a sum of ten thousand pounds for the purpose of securing the income of the Bishop of Natal, and to pay him his salary, which they had withheld since his wrongful deprivation. "We," said

[117] *Purgatorio,* xxvii. 126-42.

[118] A concise account of this transaction is in Lord Selborne's *Memorials Family and Personal,* ii. pp. 481-7. See also Anson's *Law and Custom of the Constitution,* ii. p. 407.

Mr. Gladstone to Miss Burdett Coutts, "founding ourselves on the judgment, say there is no see of Natal in the sense of the founders of the fund, and therefore, of course, no bishop of such a see." Romilly, master of the rolls, gave judgment in favour of Colenso. These perplexities did not dismay Mr. Gladstone. "Remembering what the churches in the colonies were some forty years back, when I first began (from my father's having a connection with the West Indies), to feel an interest in them, I must own that they present a cheering, a remarkable, indeed a wonderful spectacle." "I quite feel with you," he says to Miss Burdett Coutts, "a great uneasiness at what may follow from the exercise of judicial powers by synods merely ecclesiastical, [169] especially if small, remote, and unchecked by an active public opinion. But in the American episcopal church it has been found practicable in a great degree to obviate any dangers from such a source." Ten years after this, in one of the most remarkable articles he ever wrote, speaking of the protestant evangelical section of the adherents of the Christian system, he says that no portion of this entire group seems to be endowed with greater vigour than this in the United States and the British colonies, which has grown up in new soil, "*and far from the possibly chilling shadow of national establishments of religion*."[119]

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[119] "The Courses of Religious Thought" in *Gleanings*, iii. p. 115.

Chapter XI. Popular Estimates. (1868)

> Die Mitlebenden werden an vorzüglichen Menschen gar leicht irre; das Besondere der Person stört sie, das laufende bewegliche Leben verrückt ihre Standpunkte und hindert das Kennen und Anerkennen eines solchen Mannes.—GOETHE.
>
> The contemporaries of superior men easily go wrong about them. Peculiarity discomposes them; the swift current of life disturbs their points of view, and prevents them from understanding and appreciating such men.

I

It must obviously be interesting, as we approach a signal crisis in his advance, to know the kind of impression, right or wrong, made by a great man upon those who came nearest to him. Friends like Aberdeen and Graham had many years earlier foreseen the high destinies of their colleague. Aberdeen told Bishop Wilberforce in 1855 that Gladstone had some great qualifications but some serious defects. "The chief, that when he has convinced himself, perhaps by abstract reasoning of some view, he thinks that every one else ought at once to see it as he does, and can make no allowance for difference of opinion."[120] About the same time Graham said of him that he was "in the highest sense of the word *Liberal*; of the greatest power; very much the first man in the House of Commons; detested by the aristocracy for his succession duty, the most truly conservative measure passed in my recollection.... He must rise to the head in such a government as ours, even in spite of all the hatred of him." Three years later Aberdeen still thought him too obstinate and, if such a thing be possible, too honest. He does not enough think of what other men think. Does not enough look out of the

[120] *Life of Bishop Wilberforce*, ii. p. 286.

window. "Whom will he lead?" asked the bishop.[121] "Oh! it is impossible to say! Time must show, and new combinations." By 1863 Cardwell confidently anticipated that Mr. Gladstone must become prime minister, and Bishop Wilberforce finds all coming to the conclusion that he must be the next real chief.[122] [171]

Judgement Of Friends

On the other side Lord Shaftesbury, to whom things ecclesiastical were as cardinal as they were to Mr. Gladstone, ruefully reflected in 1864 that people must make ready for great and irrevocable changes. Palmerston was simply the peg driven through the island of Delos: unloose the peg, and all would soon be adrift. "His successor, Gladstone, will bring with him the Manchester school for colleagues and supporters, a hot tractarian for chancellor, and the Bishop of Oxford for ecclesiastical adviser. He will succumb to every pressure, except the pressure of a constitutional and conservative policy." "He is a dangerous man," was one of Lord Palmerston's latest utterances, "keep him in Oxford and he is partially muzzled; but send him elsewhere and he will run wild."[123] "The long and short of our present position is," said Shaftesbury, "that the time has arrived (*novus sæclorum nascitur ordo*) for the triumph of the Manchester school, of which Gladstone is the disciple and the organ. And for the nonce they have a great advantage; for, though the majority of the country is against them, the country has no leaders in or out of parliament; whereas they are all well provided and are equally compact in purpose and action."[124] Somewhat earlier cool observers "out of hearing of the modulation of his voice or the torrent of his declamation" regarded him "in spite of his eloquence unsurpassed in our day, perhaps in our century, in spite of his abilities and experience, as one most dangerous to that side to which he belongs. Like the elephant given by some

[121] *Life of Bishop Wilberforce*, ii. p. 412.
[122] *Ibid.*, iii. pp. 92, 101.
[123] *Life of Lord Shaftesbury*, iii. pp. 171, 188.
[124] *Ibid.*, iii. pp. 201-2.

eastern prince to the man he intends to ruin, he is an inmate too costly for any party to afford to keep long."[125]

[172] "One great weight that Gladstone has to carry in the political race," wrote his friend Frederick Rogers (Dec. 13, 1868), "is a *character* for want of judgment, and every addition to that is an impediment." And indeed it is true in politics that it often takes more time to get rid of a spurious character, than to acquire the real one. According to a letter from Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone (Feb. 11, 1867):—

> Lowe described as perfectly unjust and unfounded the criticisms which had been made of your leadership. You had always been courteous and conciliatory with the whole House and with individual members, including himself. He had seen Palmerston do and say more offensive things every week, than you have during the whole session.

Still people went on saying that he had yet to gain the same hold over his party in parliament that he had over the party in the nation; he had studied every branch of government except the House of Commons; he confounded the functions of leader with those of dictator; he took counsel with one or two individuals instead of conferring with the party; he proclaimed as edicts what he ought to have submitted as proposals; he lacked "the little civilities and hypocrisies" of political society. Such was the common cant of the moment. He had at least one friend who dealt faithfully with him:—

> *T. D. Acland to Mr. Gladstone.*
>
> *Jan. 24, 1868.*—Now I am going to take a great liberty with you. I can hardly help myself. I have heard a lot of grumbling lately about you, and have several times asked myself whether it would be *tanti* to tease you by repeating it. Well, what is pressed on me is, that at the present time

[125] *Edinburgh, Review*, April 1857, p. 567.

when every one is full of anxiety as to the future, and when your warmest supporters are longing for cohesion, there is an impression that you are absorbed in questions about Homer and Greek words, about *Ecce Homo*, that you are not reading the newspapers, or feeling the pulse of followers. One man personally complained that when you sought his opinion, you spent the whole interview in impressing your own view on him, and hardly heard anything he might have to say. It is with a painful feeling and (were it not for your generous and truly modest nature it would be) with some anxiety as to how you would take it that I consented to be the funnel of all this grumbling. As far as I can make out, the feeling resolves itself into two main points: 1. Whatever your own tastes may be for literature, and however strengthening and refreshing to your own mind and heart it may be to dig into the old springs, still the people don't understand it; they consider you their own, as a husband claims a wife's devotion; and it gives a bad impression if you are supposed to be interested, except for an occasional slight recreation, about aught but the nation's welfare at this critical time, and that it riles them to see the walls placarded with your name and *Ecce Homo*.... 2. (*a*) The other point is (pray forgive me if I go too far, I am simply a funnel) a feeling that your entourage is too confined, and too much of second-rate men; that the strong men and the *rising* men are not gathered round you and known to be so; (*b*) and besides that there is so little easy contact with the small fry, as when Palmerston sat in the tea-room, and men were gratified by getting private speech with their leader. But this is a small matter compared with (*a*). [173]

Mr. Gladstone to T. D. Acland.

Hawarden, Jan. 30, '68.—Be assured I cannot feel otherwise than grateful to you for undertaking what in the main must always be a thankless office. It is new to me to have critics such as those whom you represent under the first head, and who complain that I do not attend to my business, while the complaint is illustrated by an instance in which, professing

to seek a man's opinion, I poured forth instead the matter with which I was overflowing. Nor do I well know how to deal with those who take out of my hands the direction of my own conduct on such a question as the question whether I ought to have undertaken a mission to Sheffield to meet Roebuck on his own ground. I am afraid I can offer them little satisfaction. I have been for near thirty-six years at public business, and I must myself be the judge how best to husband what little energy of brain, and time for using it, may remain to me. If I am told I should go to Sheffield instead of writing on *Ecce Homo*, I answer that it was my Sunday's work, and change
[174] of work is the chief refreshment to my mind. It is true that literature is very attractive and indeed seductive to me, but I do not *knowingly* allow it to cause neglect of public business. Undoubtedly it may be said that the vacation should be given to reading up and preparing materials for the session. And of my nine last vacations *this one only* has in part been given to any literary work, if I except the preparation of an address for Edinburgh in 1865. But I am sincerely, though it may be erroneously, impressed with the belief that the quantity of my public work cannot be increased without its quality being yet further deteriorated. Perhaps my critics have not been troubled as I have with this plague of quantity, and are not as deeply impressed as I am with the belief that grinding down the mental powers by an infinity of detail, is what now principally dwarfs our public men, to the immense detriment of the country. This conviction I cannot yield; nor can I say more than that, with regard to the personal matters which you name, I will do the best I can. But what I have always supposed and understood is that my business in endeavouring to follow other and better men, is to be thoroughly open to all members of parliament who seek me, while my seeking them must of necessity be limited.... We have before us so much business that I fear a *jumble*. Reform, Education, and Ireland each in many branches will compete; any of these alone would be enough. The last is in my mind the imperious

> and overpowering subject.... The aspect of this letter is, I think, rather combative. It would have been much less so but that I trust entirely to your indulgence.

In a second letter, after mentioning again some of these complaints, Acland says: "On the other hand I know you are held by some of the best men (that dear, noble George Grey I am thinking of) to have the great quality of leadership: such clear apprehension of the points in council, and such faithful exactness in conveying the result agreed on, truly a great power for one who has such a *copia verborum*, with its temptations." He still insists that a leader should drop into the tea-room and have afternoon chats with his adherents; and earnestly wishes him to belong to the Athenæum club, "a great centre of intellect and criticism," where he would be sure to meet colleagues and [175] the principal men in the public service.

The Rising Star

All this was good advice enough, and most loyally intended. But it was work of supererogation. The House of Commons, like all assemblies, is even less affected by immediate displays than by the standing impression of power. Mr. Gladstone might be playful, courteous, reserved, gracious, silent, but the House always knew that he had a sledge-hammer behind his back, ready for work on every anvil in that resounding forge. His sheer intellectual strength, his experience and power in affairs, the tremendous hold that he had now gained upon the general public out of doors, made the artful genialities of the tea-room pure superfluity. Of the secret of the rapidity with which his star was rising, and of the popular expectations thereby signified, an admirable contemporary account was traced by an excellent observer,[126] and it would be idle to transcribe the pith of it in words other than his own:—

> Mr. Gladstone's policy is coming to be used as the concrete expression of a whole system of thought, to mean something for

[126] Mr. M. Townsend in the *Spectator*.

itself, and something widely different from either the policy pursued by whigs, or the policy attributed to Lord Palmerston. This is the more remarkable because Mr. Gladstone has done less to lay down any systematised course of action than almost any man of his political standing, has a cautiousness of speech which frequently puzzles his audience even while they are cheering his oratory, and perceives alternatives with a clearness which often leaves on his own advice an impression of indecision.... Those who are applauding the chancellor of the exchequer, in season and out of season, seem, however they may put their aspirations, to expect, should he lead the House of Commons, two very important changes. They think that he will realise two longings of which they are deeply conscious, even while they express their hopelessness of speedy realisation. They believe, with certain misgivings, that he can offer them a new and more satisfactory system of foreign policy; and, with no misgivings, that he will break up the
[176] torpor which has fallen upon internal affairs. Mr. Gladstone, say his admirers, may be too much afraid of war, too zealous for economy, too certain of the status of England as a fact altogether independent of her action. But he is sure to abandon those traditional ideas to which we have adhered so long: the notion that we are a continental people, bound to maintain the continental system, interested in petty matters of boundary, concerned to dictate to Germany whether she shall be united or not, to the Christians of Servia whether they shall rebel against the Turk or obey him, to everybody whether they shall or shall not develop themselves as they can. He is sure to initiate that temporary policy of abstention which is needed to make a breach in the great chain of English traditions, and enable the nation to act as its interests or duties or dignity may require, without reference to the mode in which it has acted heretofore. Mr. Gladstone, for example, certainly would not support the Turk as if Turkish sway were a moral law, would not trouble himself to interfere with the project for cutting an Eider Canal, would not from very haughtiness of

> temperament protest in the face of Europe unless he intended his protests to be followed by some form of action.... That impression may be true or it may be false, but it exists; it is justified in part by Mr. Gladstone's recent speeches, and it indicates a very noteworthy change in the disposition of the public mind: a weariness of the line of action called "a spirited foreign policy." ... The expectation as to internal affairs is far more definite and more strong.... All his speeches point to the inauguration of a new activity in all internal affairs, to a steady determination to improve, if possible, both the constitution and the condition of the millions who have to live under it. Most ministers have that idea in their heads, but Mr. Gladstone has more than the idea, he has plans, and the courage to propose and maintain them. He is not afraid of the suffrage, as he indicated in his celebrated speech; he is not alarmed at risking the treasury as his reductions have proved; does not hesitate to apply the full power of the state to ameliorate social anomalies, as he showed by creating state banks, state insurance offices, and state annuity funds for the very poor. He of all men alive could most easily reduce our anarchical ecclesiastical system into something like order; he, perhaps, alone among statesmen would have the art and the energy to try as a deliberate plan to effect the final conciliation of Ireland....[127]

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Francis Newman—Church—Brig

A letter from Francis Newman to Mr. Gladstone is a good illustration of the almost passionate going out of men's hearts to him in those days:—

> Until a practical reason for addressing you arose out of ... I did not dare to intrude on you sentiments which are happily shared by so many thousands of warm and simple hearts; sentiments of warm admiration, deep sympathy, fervent hope, longing expectation of lasting national blessing from your certain elevation to high responsibility. The rude, monstrous,

[127] *Spectator*, October 29, 1864.

> shameful and shameless attacks which you have endured, do but endear you to the nation. In the moral power which you wield, go on to elevate and purify public life, and we shall all bless you, dear sir, as a regenerator of England. Keep the hearts of the people. *They* will never envy you and never forsake you.

Church, afterwards the dean of St. Paul's, a man who united in so wonderful a degree the best gifts that come of culture, sound and just sense, and unstained purity of spirit, said of Mr. Gladstone at the moment of accession to power, "There never was a man so genuinely admired for the qualities which deserve admiration—his earnestness, his deep popular sympathies, his unflinching courage; and there never was a man more deeply hated both for his good points and for undeniable defects and failings. But they love him much less in the House than they do out of doors. A strong vein of sentiment is the spring of what is noblest about his impulses; but it is a perilous quality too."[128] An accomplished woman with many public interests met Mr. Bright in Scotland sometime after this. "He would not hear a word said against Mr. Gladstone. He said it was just because people were not good enough themselves to understand him that he met such abuse, and then he quoted the stanza in the third canto of *Childe Harold*:—

> "He who ascends to mountain-tops, shall find
> The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow;
> He who surpasses or subdues mankind,
> Must look down on the hate of those below."

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I asked if he did not think sometimes his temper carried Mr. Gladstone away. He said, 'Think of the difference between a great cart horse, and the highest bred most sensitive horse you can imagine, and then, under lashing of a whip, think of the

[128] *Life of Dean Church*, pp. 179, 188.

difference between them.' " After a stay with Mr. Gladstone in a country house, Jowett, the master of Balliol, said of him, "It is the first time that any one of such great simplicity has been in so exalted a station."[129]

In one of his Lancashire speeches, Mr. Gladstone described in interesting language how he stood:—

> I have never swerved from what I conceive to be those truly conservative objects and desires with which I entered life. I am, if possible, more attached to the institutions of my country than I was when, as a boy, I wandered among the sandhills of Seaforth, or frequented the streets of Liverpool. But experience has brought with it its lessons. I have learnt that there is a wisdom in a policy of trust, and folly in a policy of mistrust. I have not refused to acknowledge and accept the signs of the times. I have observed the effect that has been produced upon the country by what is generally known as liberal legislation. And if we are told, as we are now truly told, that all the feelings of the country are in the best and broadest sense conservative—that is to say, that the people value the country and the laws and institutions of the country—honesty compels me to admit that this happy result has been brought about by liberal legislation. Therefore, I may presume to say that since the year 1841, when Sir Robert Peel thought fit to place me in a position that brought me into direct, immediate, and responsible contact with the commercial interests of the country, from that time onward I have never swerved nor wavered, but have striven to the best of my ability to advance in the work of improving the laws, and to labour earnestly and fearlessly for the advantage of the people.[130]

"Always A Learner"

Five-and-twenty years later, when his course was almost run, and the achievements of the long laborious day were over, he said:—

[129] *Life of Jowett*, i. 406.
[130] Liverpool, July 18, 1865.

I have been a learner all my life, and I am a learner still; but
[179] I do wish to learn upon just principles. I have some ideas that may not be thought to furnish good materials for a liberal politician. I do not like changes for their own sake, I only like a change when it is needful to alter something bad into something good, or something which is good into something better. I have a great reverence for antiquity. I rejoice in the great deeds of our fathers in England and in Scotland. It may be said, however, that this does not go very far towards making a man a liberal. I find, however, that the tories when it suits their purpose have much less reverence for antiquity than I have. They make changes with great rapidity, provided they are suitable to the promotion of tory interests. But the basis of my liberalism is this. It is the lesson which I have been learning ever since I was young. I am a lover of liberty; and that liberty which I value for myself, I value for every human being in proportion to his means and opportunities. That is a basis on which I find it perfectly practicable to work in conjunction with a dislike to unreasoned change and a profound reverence for everything ancient, provided that reverence is deserved. There are those who have been so happy that they have been born with a creed that they can usefully maintain to the last. For my own part, as I have been a learner all my life, a learner I must continue to be.[131]

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[131] Norwich, May 16, 1890.

Chapter XII. Letters. (1859-1868)

> There is no saying shocks me so much as that which I hear very often; that a man does not know how to pass his time. 'Twould have been but ill spoken by Methusalem, in the nine hundred sixty-ninth year of his life; so far it is from us, who have not time enough to attain to the utmost perfection of any part of any science, to have cause to complain that we are forced to be idle for want of work.—COWLEY.

Too Busy For Epistolary Gift

As I said in our opening pages, Mr. Gladstone's letters are mostly concerned with points of business. They were not with him a medium for conveying the slighter incidents, fugitive moods, fleeting thoughts, of life. Perhaps of these fugitive moods he may have had too few. To me, says Crassus in Cicero, the man hardly seems to be free, who does not sometimes do nothing.[132] In table-talk he could be as disengaged, as marked in ease and charm, as any one; he was as willing as any one to accept topics as they came, which is the first of all conditions for good conversation. When alone in his temple of peace it was not his practice to take up his pen in the same sauntering and devious humour. With him the pen was no instrument of diversion. His correspondence has an object, and a letter with an object is not of a piece with the effusions of Madame de Sévigné, Cowper, Scott, FitzGerald, and other men and women whose letters of genial satire and casual play and hints of depth below the surface, people will read as long as they read anything. We have to remember a very intelligible fact mentioned by him to Lord Brougham, who had asked him to undertake some public address (April 25, 1860):— [181]

[132] "Quid igitur? quando ages negotium publicum? quando amicorum? quando tuum? *quando denique nihil ages*? Tum illud addidi, mihi enim liber esse non videtur qui non aliquando nihil agit."—CIC.{FNS, *Orat.* ii. 42.

> You have given me credit for your own activity and power of work: an estimate far beyond the truth. I am one of those who work very hard while they are at it, and are then left in much exhaustion. I have been for four months overdone, and though my general health, thank God, is good, yet my brain warns me so distinctly that it must not be too much pressed, as to leave me in prudence no course to take except that which I have reluctantly indicated.

We might be tempted to call good letter-writing one of "the little handicraft of an idle man"; but then two of the most perfect masters of the art were Cicero and Voltaire, two of the most occupied personages that ever lived. Of course, sentences emerge in Mr. Gladstone's letters that are the fruits of his experience, well worthy of a note, as when he says to Dr. Pusey: "I doubt from your letter whether you are aware of the virulence and intensity with which the poison of suspicion acts in public life. All that you say in your letter of yesterday I can readily believe, but I assure you it does not alter in the slightest degree the grounds on which my last letter was written."

He thanks Bulwer Lytton for a volume of his republished poems, but chides him for not indicating dates:—

> This I grant is not always easy for a conscientious man, for example when he has almost re-written. But I need not remind you how much the public, if I may judge from one of its number, would desire it when it can be done. For in the case of those whom it has learned to honour and admire, there is a biography of the mind that is thus signified, and that is matter of deep interest.

On external incidents, he never fails in a graceful, apt, or feeling word. When the author of *The Christian Year* dies (1866), he says: "Mr. Liddon sent me very early information of Mr. Keble's death. The church of England has lost in him a poet, a scholar, a philosopher, and a saint. I must add that he always

appeared to me, since I had the honour and pleasure of knowing him, a person of most liberal mind. I hope early steps will be taken to do honour to his pure and noble memory." [182]

To the widow of a valued official in his financial department he writes in commemorative sentences that testify to his warm appreciation of zeal in public duty:—

> The civil service of the crown has beyond all question lost in Mr. Arbuthnot one of the highest ornaments it ever possessed. His devotion to his duties, his identification at every point of his own feelings with the public interests, will, I trust, not die with him, but will stimulate others, and especially the inheritors of his name, to follow his bright example.... Nor is it with a thought of anything but thankfulness on his account, that I contemplate the close of his labours; but it will be long indeed before we cease to miss his great experience, his varied powers, his indefatigable energy, and that high-minded loyal tone which he carried into all the parts of business.

In another letter, by the way, he says (1866): "I am far from thinking very highly of our rank as a nation of administrators, but perhaps if we could be judged by the post office alone, we might claim the very first place in this respect." In time even this 'most wonderful establishment' was to give him trouble enough.

The Duchess Of Sutherland

Among the letters in which Mr. Gladstone exhibits the easier and less strenuous side, and that have the indefinable attraction of intimacy, pleasantness, and the light hand, are those written in the ten years between 1858 and 1868 to the Duchess of Sutherland. She was the close and lifelong friend of the Queen. She is, said the Queen to Stockmar, "so anxious to do good, so liberal-minded, so superior to prejudice, and so eager to learn, and to improve herself and others."[133] The centre of a brilliant and powerful social circle, she was an ardent sympathiser with Italy, with Poland, with the Abolitionists and the North, and with

[133] Martin's *Prince Consort*, ii. p. 245 *n.*

humane causes at home. She was accomplished, a lover of books meritorious in aim though too often slight in work—in short, with emotions and sentiments sometimes a little in advance of definite ideas, yet a high representative of the virtue, purity, [183] simplicity, and sympathetic spirit of the Tennysonian epoch. Tennyson himself was one of her idols, and Mr. Gladstone was another. Bishop Wilberforce too was often of the company, and the Duke of Argyll, who had married a daughter of the house. Her admiration for Gladstone, says the son of the duchess, "was boundless, and the last years of her life were certainly made happier by this friendship. His visits to her were always an intense pleasure, and even when suffering too much to receive others, she would always make an effort to appear sufficiently well to receive him. I find in a letter from her written to me in 1863, after meeting Mr. Gladstone when on a visit to her sister, Lady Taunton, at Quantock, in Somersetshire, the following: 'The Gladstones were there; he was quite delightful, pouring out such floods of agreeable knowledge all day long, and singing admirably in the evening. Nobody makes me feel more the happiness of knowledge and the wish for it; one must not forget that he has the happiness of the peace which passeth all understanding.' "[134] The Gladstones were constant visitors at the duchess's various princely homes—Stafford House in the Green Park, Trentham, Cliveden, and Chiswick on the Thames, Dunrobin on the Dornoch Firth.

A little sheaf of pieces from Mr. Gladstone's letters to her may serve to show him as he was, in the midst of his labours in the Palmerston government—how little his native kindliness of heart and power of sympathy had been chilled or parched either by hard and ceaseless toil, or by the trying atmosphere of public strife.

1859

[134] 1: Lord Ronald Gower, *Reminiscences*, pp. 114-5.

Aug. 30.—I am much concerned to lose at the last moment the pleasure of coming to see you at Trentham—but my wife, who was not quite well when I came away but hoped a day's rest would make her so, writes through Agnes to say she hopes I shall get back to-day. The gratification promised me must, therefore, I fear, stand over. I will write from Hawarden, and I now send this by a messenger lest (as you might be sure I should not fail through carelessness) you should think anything very bad had happened. Among other things, I [184] wanted help from you through speech about Tennyson. I find *Maud* takes a good deal of trouble to understand, and is hardly worth understanding. It has many peculiar beauties, but against them one sets the strange and nearly frantic passages about war; which one can hardly tell whether he means to be taken for sense or ravings. Frank Doyle, who is essentially a poet though an unwrought one, declares *Guinevere* the finest poem of modern times.

1860

Hawarden, Oct. 3.—We are exceedingly happy at Penmaenmawr, between Italy, health, hill, and sea all taken together. I do not know if you are acquainted with the Welsh coast and interior; but I am sure you would think it well worth knowing both for the solitary grandeur of the Snowdon group, and for the widely diffused and almost endless beauty of detail. It is a kind of landscape jewellery.

The Herberts send us an excellent account of Lord Aberdeen. I have a very interesting letter from Lacaita, fresh from Panizzi, who again was fresh from Italy, and sanguine about the Emperor. But what a calamity for a man to think, or find himself forced to be double faced even when he is not double minded; and this is the best supposition. But Warsaw is surely the point at which for the present we must look with suspicion and aversion. To-day's papers give good hope that Garibaldi has been misrepresented and does not mean to play into Mazzini's hands.

Thanks for your condolences about the *Times*. I have

had it both ways, though more, perhaps, of the one than the other. Some of the penny press, which has now acquired an enormous expansion, go great lengths in my favour, and I read some eulogies quite as wide of fact as the interpretations.

Oct. 19.—I think Mr. or Sir something Burke (how ungrateful!) has been so kind as to discover the honours of my mother's descent in some book that he has published on royal descents. But the truth is that time plays strange tricks backwards as well as forwards, and it seems hardly fair to pick the results. The arithmetic of those questions is very curious: at the distance of a moderate number of centuries everybody has some hundred thousand ancestors, subject, however, to
[185] deduction.

Nov. 1.—... There is one proposition which the experience of life burns into my soul; it is this, that man should beware of letting his religion spoil his morality. In a thousand ways, some great some small, but all subtle, we are daily tempted to that great sin. To speak of such a thing seems dishonouring to God; but it is not religion as it comes from Him, it is religion with the strange and evil mixtures which it gathers from abiding in us. This frightful evil seems to rage in the Roman church more than anywhere else, probably from its highly wrought political spirit, the virtues and the vices of a close organisation being much associated with one another. That same influence which keeps the mother from her child teaches Montalembert to glorify the corruption, cruelty, and baseness which in the government of the papal states put the gospel itself to shame.

1861

11 Carlton H. Terrace, March 5.—I dare scarcely reply to your letter, for although the scene at Trentham [the death of the Duke of Sutherland] is much upon my mind, it is, amidst this crowd and pressure of business, an image reflected in ruffled waters, while it is also eminently one that ought to be kept true. A sacred sorrow seems to be profaned by bringing it within the touch of worldly cares. Still I am able, I hope

not unnaturally, to speak of the pleasure which your letter has given me, for I could not wish it other than it is.

I am not one of those who think that after a stroke like this, it is our duty to try and make it seem less than it is. It is great for all, for you it is immense, for there has now been first loosened and then removed, the central stay of such a continuation of domestic love as I should not greatly exaggerate in calling without rival or example; and if its stay centred in him, so did its fire in you. I only wish and heartily pray that your sorrow may be a tender and gentle one, even as it is great and strong. I call it great and strong *more* than sharp, for then only the fierceness of Death is felt when it leaves painful and rankling thoughts of the departed, or when it breaks the kindly process of nature and reverses the order in which she would have us quit the place of our pilgrimage, by ravishing away those whose life is but just opened or is yet unfulfilled. But you are now yearning over a Death [186] which has come softly to your door and gone softly from it; a death in ripeness of years, ripeness of love and honour and peace, ripeness above all in character.... A part of your letter brings to my mind a letter of St. Bernard on the death of his brother (remember he was a monk and so what a brother might be to him) which when I read it years ago seemed to me the most touching and beautiful expression of a natural grief that I had ever known—I will try to find it, and if I find it answers my recollection, you shall hear of it again.[135] I always think Thomas à Kempis a golden book for all times, but most for times like these; for though it does not treat professedly of sorrow, it is such a wonderful exhibition of the Man of Sorrows....

1862

April 4.—I am grateful to you and to your thoughts for the quality they so eminently possess; the Latins have a word for it, but we have none, and I can only render it by a rude

[135] See Morison's *Life of St. Bernard* (Ed. 1868), ii. ch. v.

conversion into "sequacious," or thoughts given to following.

My labours of yesterday [budget speech] had no title to so kind a reception as they actually met with. Quiet my office in these times cannot be, but this year it promises me the boon of comparative peace, at least in the outer sphere. The world believes that this is what I cannot endure; I shall be glad of an opportunity of putting its opinion to the test.

All words from you about the Queen are full of weight and value even when they are not so decidedly words of consolation. In her, I am even glad to hear of the little bit of symbolism. That principle like others has its place, and its applications I believe are right when they flow from and conform to what is within. I cannot but hope she will have much refreshment in Scotland. Such contact with Nature's own very undisguised and noble self, in such forms of mountain, wood, breeze, and water! These are continual preachers, and so mild that they can bring no weariness. They come straight from their Maker's hand, and how faithfully they speak of Him in their strength, their majesty, and their calm.

As for myself I am a discharged vessel to-day, A load of figures has a suffocating effect upon the brain until they are
[187] well drilled and have taken their places. Then they are as digestible as other food of that region; still it is better when they are off, and it is always a step towards liberty.

I must at some time try to explain a little more my reference to Thomas à Kempis. I have given that book to men of uncultivated minds, who were *also* presbyterians, but all relish it. I do not believe it is possible for any one to read that book earnestly from its beginning, and think of popish, or non-popish, or of anything but the man whom it presents and brings to us.

May 8.—Unfortunately I can give you no light on the question of time. I, a bear chained to a stake, cannot tell when the principal run will be made at me, and as I can only scratch once I must wait if possible till then. The only person

who could give you *des renseignements suffisants* is Disraeli. Tennyson's note is charming. I return it, and with it a touching note from Princess Alice, which reached me this evening. Pray let me have it again.

1863

Jan. 23.—I am so sorry to be unable to come to you, owing to an engagement to-night at the admiralty. I am ashamed of being utterly destitute of news—full of figures and all manner of dulnesses.... I went, however, to the Drury Lane pantomime last night, and laughed beyond measure; also enjoyed looking from a third row, unseen myself, at your brother and the Blantyre party.

Bowden Park, Chippenham, Feb. 7.—I feel as if your generous and overflowing sympathies made it truly unkind to draw you further into the sorrows of this darkened house. My brother [John] closed his long and arduous battle in peace this morning at six o'clock; and if the knowledge that he had the love of all who knew him, together with the assurance that he is at rest in God, could satisfy the heart, we ought not to murmur. But the visitation is no common one. Eight children, seven of them daughters, of whom only one is married and most are young, with one little boy of seven, lost their mother last February, and now see their father taken. He dies on his marriage day, we are to bury him on the first anniversary of his wife's death. Altogether it is piteous beyond belief. It was affectionate anxiety in her illness that undermined his health; it was reluctance to make his children uneasy that [188] made him suffer in silence, and travel to Bath for advice and an operation when he should have been in his bed. In this double sense he has offered up his life. The grief is very sharp, and as yet I am hardly reconciled to it.... But enough and too much. Only I must answer your question. He was the brother next above me; we were not brothers only but very intimate friends until we married, and since then we have only been separated in the relative sense in which our marriages and my public life in particular, implied. He was a man of high spirit

and uncommon goodness, and for *him* I have not a thought that is not perfect confidence and peace.

March 1.—Even you could not, I am persuaded, do otherwise than think me rather a savage on Wednesday evening, for the opinion I gave about helping a bazaar for the sisters of charity of the Roman community at some place in England. Let me say what I meant by it and what I did not mean. I did not mean to act as one under the influence of violent anti-Roman feeling. I rejoice to think in community of faith among bodies externally separated, so far as it extends, and it extends very far; most of all with ancient churches of the greatest extent and the firmest organisation. But the proselytising agency of the Roman church in this country I take to be one of the worst of the religious influences of the age. I do not mean as to its motives, for these I do not presume to touch, nor feel in any way called upon to question. But I speak of its effects, and they are most deplorable. The social misery that has been caused, not for truth, but for loss of truth, is grievous enough, but it is not all, for to those who are called converts, and to those who have made them, we owe a very large proportion of the mischiefs and scandals within our own communion, that have destroyed the faith of many, and that are I fear undermining the very principle of faith in thousands and tens of thousands who as yet suspect neither the process nor the cause. With this pernicious agency I for my own part wish to have nothing whatever to do; although I am one who thinks lightly, in comparison with most men, of the *absolute* differences in our belief from the formal documents of the church of Rome, and who wish for that church, on her own ground, as for our own, all health that she can desire, all
[189] reformation that can be good for her. The object, however, of what I have said is not to make an argument, but only to show that if I spoke strongly, I was not also speaking lightly on such a subject.

April 20.—I am afraid I shall not see you before Wednesday—when you are to do us so great a kindness—but

I must write a line to tell you how exceedingly delighted we both are with all we have seen at Windsor. The charm of the princess, so visible at a distance, increases with the increase of nearness; the Queen's tone is delightful. All seems good, delighted, and happy in the family. As regards the Queen's physical strength, it must be satisfactory. What is more fatiguing than interviews? Last night, however, I saw her at half-past seven, after a long course of them during the day. She was quite fresh.

May 10.—I can answer you with a very good conscience. The affair of Friday night [his speech on Italy] was on my part entirely drawn forth by the speech of Disraeli and the wish of Lord Palmerston. It is D.'s practice, in contravention of the usage of the House, which allows the minister to wind up, to lie by until Lord Palmerston has spoken, and then fire in upon him. So on this occasion I was a willing instrument; but my wife, who was within ten minutes' drive, knew nothing.

We dined at Marlborough House last night. The charm certainly does not wear off with renewed opportunity. Clarendon, who saw her for the first time, *fully* felt it. Do you know, I believe they are actually disposed to dine with us some day. Do you think you can *then* be tempted? We asked the Bishop of Brechin to meet you on Thursday. Another bishop has volunteered: the Bishop of Montreal, who is just going off to America. You will not be frightened. Both are rather notable men. The other guests engaged are Cobden, Thackeray, and Mr. Evarts, the new U.S. coadjutor to Adams.

July 10.—I knew too well the meaning of your non-appearance, and because I knew it, was sorry for your indisposition as well as for your absence. We had the De Greys, Granville, Sir C. Eastlake, Fechter[136] and others, with the Comte de Paris, who is as simple as ever, but greatly developed and come on. He talked much of America. I hope we may come to-morrow, not later than by the 5.5 train, to [190]

[136] A French actor who pleased the town in those days.

which I feel a kind of grateful attachment for the advantage and pleasure it has so often procured me. We are glad to have a hope of you next week. All our people are charmed with Mr. Fechter.—Yours affectionately.

July 29.—I am greatly concerned to hear of your suffering. You are not easily arrested in your movements, and I fear the time has been sharp. But (while above all I trust you will not stir without free and full permission) I do not abandon the hope of seeing you ... I have been seeing Lady Theresa Lewis. It was heartrending woe; such as makes one ashamed of having so little to offer. She dwells much upon employing herself.... I greatly mistrust compulsion in the management of children, and under the circumstances you describe, I should lean as you do. ... Many thanks for the carnations you sent by my wife; they still live and breathe perfume.... You spoke of our difference about slavery. I hope it is not very wide. I stop short of war as a means of correction. I have not heard you say that you do otherwise.

11 Carlton House Terrace (*no date*).—I am glad my wife saw you yesterday, for I hope a little that she may have been bold enough to lecture you about not taking enough care of yourself. If this sounds rather intrusive, pray put it down to my intense confidence in her as a doctor. She has a kind of divining power springing partly from a habitual gift and partly from experience, and she hardly ever goes wrong. She is not easy about your going to Vichy alone. The House of Commons, rude and unmannerly in its arrangements at all times, is singularly so in its last kicks and plunges towards the death of the session; but after to-morrow we are free and I look forward to seeing you on Wednesday according to the hope you give.... Soon after this reaches you I hope to be at Hawarden. On Wednesday I am to have luncheon at Argyll Lodge to meet Tennyson. Since I gave him my translation of the first book of the *Iliad*, I have often remembered those words of Kingsley's to his friend Mr.——, “My dear friend, your verses are not good but bad.” The Duc d'Aumale

breakfasted with us on Thursday and I had some conversation about America. He is, I think, pleased with the good opinions which the young princes have won so largely, and seems to have come very reluctantly to the conclusion that the war is [191] hopeless. Our children are gone and the vacant footfall echoes on the stair. My wife is waiting here only to see Lady Herbert.

Hawarden, Aug. 21.—We have had Dr. Stanley here with his sister. He was charming, she only stayed a moment. He gave a good account of the Queen. They go to Italy for September and October. When any one goes there I always feel a mental process of accompanying them. We have got Mr. Woolner here too. He took it into his head to wish to make a bust of me, and my wife accepted his offer, at least by her authority caused me to accept it. He has worked very quickly and I think with much success, but he bestows immense labour before closing. He is a poet too, it seems, and generally a very good companion.... My journey to Balmoral will not be for some five weeks. I am dreadfully indolent as to any exertion beyond reading, but I look forward to it with interest.... Indeed your scruples about writing were misplaced. There is no holiday of mine to leave unbroken so far as post is concerned, and well would it be with me, even in the time of an exhaustion which requires to be felt before it can pass away, if the words of my other letters were, I will not say like, but more like, yours. However, the murmur which I thus let escape me is ungrateful. I ought to be thankful for the remission that I get, but treasury business is the most odious that I know, and hence it is that one wishes that the wheel would for a little time cease its drive altogether, instead of merely lowering it.

Penmaenmawr, Sept. 20.—It was so kind of you to see our little fellows on their way through town. I hope they were not troublesome. Harry is rather oppressed, I think, with the responsibilities of his captainship—he is the head of seven boys!

We went yesterday to visit the Stanleys, and saw the

South Stack Lighthouse with its grand and savage rocks. They are very remarkable, one part for masses of sheer precipices descending in columns to the sea, the other for the extraordinary contortions which the rocks have undergone from igneous action and huge compressing forces. Our weather has been and continues cold for the season, which draws onwards, however, and the gliding days recall to mind
[192] the busy outer world from which we are so well defended.

1864

Jan. 4.—Often as I have been struck by the Queen's extraordinary integrity of mind—I know of no better expression—I never felt it more than on hearing and reading a letter of hers on Saturday (at the cabinet) about the Danish question. Her determination in this case as in others, not inwardly to "sell the truth" (this is Robert Pollok) overbears all prepossessions and longings, strong as they are, on the German side, and enables her spontaneously to hold the balance, it seems to me, tolerably even.

Jan. 14.—I am glad you were not scandalised about my laxity as to the "public house." But I expected from you this liberality. I really had no choice. How can I who drink good wine and bitter beer every day of my life, in a comfortable room and among friends, coolly stand up and advise hardworking fellow-creatures to take "the pledge"? However, I have been reading Maguire's *Life of Father Matthew*, with a most glowing admiration for the Father. Every one knew him to be good, but I had no idea of the extent and height of his goodness, and his boundless power and thirst not for giving only but for loving.

June 27.—Just at this time when the press and mass of ordinary business ought to be lessening, the foreign crisis you see comes upon us, and drowns us deeper than ever. I fully believe that England *will* not go to war, and I am sure she *ought* not. Are you not a little alarmed at Argyll on this matter? Of the fate of the government I cannot speak with much confidence or with much anxious desire; but on the

whole I *rather* think, and *rather* hope, we shall come through.

Three marriages almost in as many weeks among your own immediate kin! I look for a dinner at Woolner's with Tennyson to-day: *a sei occhi*. Last night Manning spent three hours with me; the conversation must wait. He is sorely anti-Garibaldian. How beautiful is the ending of Newman's *Apologia*, part VII.

Oct. 23.—Singularly happy in my old and early political friendships, I am now stripped of every one of them. It has indeed been my good lot to acquire friendships in later life, which I could not have hoped for; but at this moment I seem to see the spirits of the dead gathered thick around me, "all along the narrow valley," the valley of life, over and into [193] which the sun of a better, of a yet better life, shines narrowly. I do not think our political annals record such a removal of a generation of statesmen before its time as we have witnessed in the last four years. I could say a great deal about Newcastle. He was a high and strong character, very true, very noble, and, I think, intelligible, which (as you know) I think rare in politicians. My relations with him will be kept up in one sense by having to act, and I fear act much, as his executor and trustee, with De Tabley, an excellent colleague, who discharged the same duty for the Duke of Hamilton and for Canning.

Dec. 28.—I cannot give you a full account of Lord Derby's translation [of the *Iliad*], but there is no doubt in my mind that it is a very notable production. He always had in a high degree the inborn faculty of a scholar, with this he has an enviable power of expression, and an immense command of the English tongue; add the quality of dash which appears in his version quite as much as in his speeches. Undoubtedly if he *wrought* his execution as Tennyson does, results might have been attained beyond the actual ones; but, while I will not venture to speak of the precision of the version, various passages in the parts I have read are of very high excellence. Try to find out what Tennyson thinks of it.

1865

Aug. 8.—My reading has been little, but even without your question I was going to mention that I had caught at the name of "*L'Ami Fritz*," seeing it was by the author of the *Conscrit*, and had read it. I can recommend it too, though the subject does not at first sight look ravishing: it tells how a middle-aged middle-class German bachelor comes to marry the daughter of his own farm bailiff. Some parts are full of grace; there is a tax-gatherer's speech on the duty of paying taxes, which came home to *my* heart. Though it a little reminds me of a sermon which I heard preached in an aisle of the Duomo of Milan to the boys of a Sunday school (said to have been founded by St. Charles Borromeo) on the absolute necessity of paying tithes! The golden breadths of harvest are now a most lively joy to me. But we have had great official troubles in the death of Mr. Arbuthnot, a *pillar* of the treasury, and a really notable man. [194]

Sept. 12.—I am working off my post as well as I can with the bands playing and flags fluttering outside. By and by I am going to carve rounds of beef for some part of four hundred diners. The ladies are only allowed tea. Our *weather* anxieties are great, but all is going well. The new telegram and announcement that you will come on Friday is very welcome. Indeed, I did not say anything about the marriage, because, without knowing more, I did not know what to say, except that I most sincerely wish them all good and all happiness. The rest must keep till Friday. The characters you describe are quite, I think, on the right ground. It was the great glory of the Greeks that they had those full and large views of man's nature, not the narrow and pinched ones which are sometimes found even among Christians. Lord Palmerston's abandoning his trip to Bristol is rather a serious affair. There is more in it, I fear, than gout.

Oct. 24.—If you were well enough, and I had wings, there is nothing I should more covet at this moment than to appear at Inveraray and compare and correct my impressions of Lord

Palmerston's character by yours. Death of itself produces a certain tendency to view more warmly what was before admired, and more slightly anything that was not. And by stirring the thought of the nation through the press it commonly throws lights upon the subject either new in themselves or new in their combination. *Twelve* cabinet ministers I have already reckoned in my mind, all carried off by the rude hand of death in the last five years, during which three only have been made. They are: Lord Dalhousie, Lord Aberdeen, Lord Herbert, Sir J. Graham, Lord Canning, Lord Elgin, Sir G. Lewis, Lord Campbell, Lord Macaulay, Mr. Ellice, Lord Lyndhurst, Lord Palmerston. This, in the political world, and to me especially, is an extraordinary desolation.

I hope you are at least creeping on. It was so kind of you to think about my little neuralgic affairs; thank God, I have had no more.

1866

Hawarden, Jan. 4.—We have been pleased with some partial accounts of improvement, and I can the better speak my wish to you for a happy new year. Next Wednesday I hope to inquire for myself. I have been much laden and a good deal [195] disturbed. We have the cattle plague in full force here, and it has even touched my small group of tenants. To some of them it is a question of life and death; and my brother-in-law, who is by nature one of the most munificent persons I ever knew, is sorely straitened in mind at not being able to do all he would like for his people. But do not let this sound like complaint from me. Few have such cause for ceaseless and unbounded thankfulness.

...If you come across Armstrong's poems[137] pray look at

[137] Edmund John Armstrong (1841-65). Republished in 1877. Sir Henry Taylor, *Edinburgh Review*, July 1878, says of this poet: "Of all the arts Poetic, that which was least understood between the Elizabethan age and the second quarter of this century was the art of writing blank verse.

"Armstrong's blank verse [The Prisoner of Mount Saint Michael] not otherwise than good in its ordinary fabric, affords by its occasional excellence

them. An Irish youth cut off at twenty-four. By the by, Wortley's children have admirable acting powers, which they showed in charades very cleverly got up by his wife as stage manager. Grosvenor seconds the speech, and F. Cavendish moves the address. We have had divers thrushes singing here, a great treat at this season. I like them better than hothouse strawberries.

July 7.—I cannot feel unmixedly glad for yourself that you are returning to Chiswick. For us it will be a great gain.... Disraeli and I were affectionate at the Mansion House last night. Poor fellow, he has been much tried about his wife's health. The King of the Belgians pleases me, and strikes me more as to his personal qualities on each successive visit. God bless you, my dear duchess and precious friend, affectionately yours.

1867

Hawarden, April 29.—We both hope to have the pleasure of dining at Chiswick on Wednesday. We assume that the hour will be 7.30 as usual. I shall be so glad to see Argyll, and to tell him the little I can about the literary department of the *Guardian*. I write from the "Temple of Peace." It is a sore wrench to go away. But I am thankful to have had such a quiet Easter. The false rumour about Paris has had a most beneficial effect, and has spared me a multitude of demands. The birds are delightful here. What must they be at
[196] Cliveden.—Ever affectionately yours.

Holker Hall, Sept. 22.—We find this place very charming. It explains at once the secret of the great affection they all have for it. It has a singular combination of advantages—sea, hill, home ground, and views, access, and the house such an excellent living house; all the parts, too, in such good keeping and proportion. We much admire your steps. The inhabitants would be quite enough to make any place pleasant. We have

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a strong presumption that, had he lived, he would have attained to a consummate mastery of it."

just been at that noble old church of Cartmel. These churches are really the best champions of the men who built them.

Nov. 23.—I cannot let the moment pass at which I would have been enjoying a visit to you after your severe illness without one word of sympathy.... Our prospects are uncertain; but I cling to the hope of escaping to the country at the end of next week, unless the proposals of the government as to the mode of providing for the expense of this unhappy war should prove to be very exceptionable, which at present I do not expect. I saw Lord Russell last night. He seemed very well but more deaf. Lady Russell has had some partial failure of eyesight. Lord R. is determined on an educational debate, and has given notice of resolutions; all his friends, I think, are disposed to regret it. I am told the exchequer is deplorably poor. Poor Disraeli has been sorely cut up; and it has not yet appeared that Mrs. Disraeli is out of danger, though she is better. Her age seems to be at the least seventy-six. I have been to see my china exhibited in its new home at Liverpool, where it seemed pretty comfortable.

1868

31 Bloomsbury Square, Jan. 3.—I promised to write to you in case I found matters either bad or good. I lament to say they are bad. He [Panizzi] is weaker, more feverish (pulse to-day at 122 about noon), and very restless. The best will be a severe struggle and the issue is *likely* to be unfavourable. At the same time he is not given over. I said, I shall come to-morrow. He said, You will not find me alive. I replied that was wrong. I believe there is no danger to-morrow, but what next week may do is another matter. He is warm and affectionate as ever, and very tender. He is firm and resigned, not stoically, but with trust in God. I am very sad at the thought of losing this very true, trusty, hearty friend. I must [197] go to-morrow, though of course I should stay if I could be of any use.[138]

[138] Panizzi recovered and lived for eleven years. See *Life*, ii. p. 299.

This year the end came, and a few lines from his diary show the loss it was to Mr. Gladstone:—

> *Oct. 28.*—The post brought a black-bordered letter which announced the death of the Dowager Duchess of Sutherland. I have lost in her from view the warmest and dearest friend, surely, that ever man had. Why this noble and tender spirit should have had such bounty for me and should have so freshened my advancing years, my absorbed and divided mind, I cannot tell. But I feel, strange as it might sound, ten years the older for her death. May the rest and light and peace of God be with her ever more until *that day*. None will fill her place for me, nor for many worthier than I.

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Chapter XIII. Reform. (1866)

> L'aristocratie, la démocratie ne sont pas de vaines doctrines livrées a nos disputes; ce sont des puissances, qu'on n'abat point, qu'on n'élève point par la louange ou par l'injure; avant que nous parlions d'elles, elles sont ou ne sont pas.—ROYER-COLLARD.
>
> Aristocracy, democracy, are not vain doctrines for us to dispute about; they are powers; you neither exalt them nor depress them by praise or by blame; before we talk of them, they exist or they do not exist.

I

Mr. Denison, the Speaker, had a conversation with Mr. Gladstone almost immediately after the death of Lord Palmerston, and he reported the drift of it to Sir George Grey. The Speaker had been in Scotland, and found no strong feeling for reform or any other extensive change, while there was a general decline of interest in the ballot:—

> Gladstone said, "Certainly, as far as my constituents go, there is no strong feeling for reform among them. And as to the ballot, I think it is declining in favour." He spoke of the difficulties before us, of the embarrassment of the reform question. "With a majority of 80 on the liberal side, they will expect some action." I answered, "No doubt a majority of 80, agreed on any point, would expect action. At the time of the first Reform bill, when the whole party was for the bill, the course was clear. But is the party agreed now? The point it was agreed upon was to support Lord Palmerston's government. But was that in order to pass a strong measure of reform? Suppose that the country is satisfied with the foreign policy, and the home policy, and the financial policy, and

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> wants to maintain these and their authors, and does not want great changes of any kind?" I was, on the whole, pleased with the tone of Gladstone's conversation. It was calm, and for soothing difficulties, not for making them.... I should add that Gladstone spoke with great kindness about yourself, and about your management of the House of Commons, and said that it would be his wish that you should lead it.[139]

Position Of The Question

The antecedents of the memorable crisis of 1866-7 were curious. Reform bills had been considered by five governments since 1849, and mentioned in six speeches from the throne. Each political party had brought a plan forward, and Lord John Russell had brought forward three. Mr. Bright also reduced his policy to the clauses of a bill in 1858. In 1859 Lord Derby's government had introduced a measure which old whigs and new radicals, uniting their forces, had successfully resisted. This move Mr. Gladstone—who, as the reader will recollect, had on that occasion voted with the tories[140]—always took to impose a decisive obligation on all who withstood the tory attempt at a settlement, to come forward with proposals of their own. On the other hand, in the new parliament, the tory party was known to be utterly opposed to an extension of the franchise, and a considerable fringe of professing liberals also existed who were quite as hostile, though not quite as willing to avow hostility before their constituents. All the leaders were committed, and yet of their adherents the majority was dubious or adverse. The necessity of passing a Reform bill through an anti-reform parliament thus produced a situation of unsurpassed perplexity. Some thought that formidable susceptibilities would be soothed, if the government were reconstructed and places found for new men. Others declared that the right course would be first to weld the party together by bills on which everybody was agreed;

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[139] *Grey Papers*, Oct. 22, 1865.

[140] See vol. i. p. 625.

to read a good Reform bill a first time; then in the recess the country would let ministers see where they were, and the next session would find them on firm ground. But Lord Russell knew that he had little time to spare—he was now close upon seventy-four—and Mr. Gladstone was the last man to try to hold him back. [200]

The proceedings of the new government began with a familiar demonstration of the miserable failure of English statesmen to govern Ireland, in the shape of the twentieth coercion bill, since the union. This need not detain us, nor need the budget, the eighth of the series that made this administration so memorable in the history of national finance. It was naturally quite enough for parliament that the accounts showed a surplus of £1,350,000; that the last tax on raw material vanished with the repeal of the duty on timber; that a series of commercial treaties had been successfully negotiated; and that homage should be paid to virtue by the nibbling of a mouse at the mountain of the national debt. The debt was eight hundred millions, and it was now proposed to apply half-a-million a year towards its annihilation. Reform, however, was the fighting question, and fighting questions absorb a legislature.

The New Reform Bill

The chancellor of the exchequer introduced the Reform bill (March 12) in a speech that, though striking enough, was less impassioned than some of his later performances in the course of this famous contest. He did not forget that "the limbo of abortive creations was peopled with the skeletons of reform bills"; and it was his cue in a House so constituted as the one before him, to use the language and arguments of moderation and safety. Franchise was the real question at stake, and to that branch of reform the bill was limited. The other question of redistributing seats he likened to fighting in a wood, where there may be any number of partial encounters, but hardly a great and deciding issue. The only point on which there was a vital difference was the figure of the borough franchise. In 1859

Mr. Disraeli invented a quackish phrase about lateral extension and vertical extension, and offered votes to various classes who mainly had them already, without extending downwards; but whatever else his plan might do, it opened no door for the workmen. In 1860 the Palmerston government proposed a six pound occupation franchise for boroughs, and ten pounds for counties. The proposal of 1866 was seven pounds for boroughs, and fourteen for counties. We may smile at the thought that [201] some of the most brilliant debates ever heard in the House of Commons now turned upon the mighty puzzle whether the qualification for a borough voter should be occupancy of a ten, a seven, or a six pound house;—nay, whether the ruin or salvation of the state might not lie on the razor-edge of distinction between rating and rental. Ministers were taunted with having brought in Mr. Bright's bill. Mr. Bright replied that he could not find in it a single point that he had recommended. He was never in favour of a six pound franchise; he believed in a household franchise; but if a seven pound franchise was offered, beggars could not be choosers, and seven pounds he would take. In a fragmentary note of later years Mr. Gladstone, among other things, describes one glittering protagonist of the hour:—

> Lord Russell adhered with great tenacity to his ideas, in which he was strongly supported by me as his leader in the Commons, and by Granville and others of the cabinet. Bright, the representative man of popular ideas, behaved with an admirable combination of discretion and loyalty. Lowe was an outspoken opponent, so superstitiously enamoured of the ten pound franchise as to be thrown into a temper of general hostility to a government which did not recognise its finality and sanctity. He pursued our modest Reform bill of 1866 with an implacable hostility, and really supplied the whole brains of the opposition. So effective were his speeches that, during this year, and this year only, he had such a command of the House as had never in my recollection been surpassed.

> Nor was there any warrant for imputing to him dishonesty of purpose or *arrière-pensée*. But his position was one, for the moment, of personal supremacy, and this to such an extent that, when all had been reconciled and the time for his peerage came, I pressed his viscountcy on the sovereign as a tribute to his former elevation, which, though short-lived, was due to genuine power of mind, as it seemed to me that a man who had once soared to those heights trodden by so few, ought not to be lost in the common ruck of official barons.

The first trial of strength arose upon a device of one of the greatest of the territorial whigs, seconded by a much more eminent man in the ranks of territorial tories. Lord Grosvenor announced a motion that they would not proceed with the [202] franchise, until they were in possession of the ministerial intentions upon seats. Lord Stanley, the son of the tory leader, seconded the motion. Any other form would have served equally well as a test of conflicting forces. The outlook was clouded. Mr. Brand, the skilful whip, informed the cabinet, that there were three classes of disaffected liberals, who might possibly be kept in order; first, those who, although opposed to reform, were averse to a change of government; next, those who doubted whether ministers really intended to deal with the seats at all; and finally, those who felt sure that when they came to deal with seats, they would be under the baleful influence of Bright. The first of the three sections could best be kept right by means of a stiff line against Grosvenor and Stanley, and the other two sections by the simple production of the seats bill before taking the committee on franchise. The expert's counsels were followed. Mr. Gladstone told the House that Lord Grosvenor's motion would be treated as a vote of want of confidence, but that he would disclose the whole plan as soon as the franchise bill had passed its second reading. The mutterings only grew louder. At a great meeting in Liverpool (April 6), accompanied by some of his colleagues Mr. Gladstone roused the enthusiasm of his audience to the utmost

pitch by declaring that the government would not flinch, that they had passed the Rubicon, broken the bridges, burned their boats. Still the malcontents were not cowed.

"Our Own Flesh And Blood"

The leader himself rose in warmth of advocacy as the struggle went on. The advocates of privilege used language about the workers, that in his generous and sympathetic mind fanned the spark into a flame. Lowe asked an unhappy question, that long stood out as a beacon mark in the controversy—whether "if you wanted venality, ignorance, drunkenness—if you wanted impulsive, unreflecting, violent people—where do you look for them? Do you go to the top or to the bottom?" Harsh judgments like this of the conditions of life and feeling in the mass of the nation—though Lowe was personally one of the kindest of men—made Mr. Gladstone stand all the more ardently by [203] the objects of such sweeping reproach. In a discussion upon electoral statistics, he let fall a phrase that reverberated through the discussion inside parliament and out. Some gentlemen, he said, deal with these statistics, as if they were ascertaining the numbers of an invading army. "But the persons to whom their remarks apply are our fellow-subjects, our fellow-Christians, *our own flesh and blood*, who have been lauded to the skies for their good conduct."[141] This was instantly denounced by Lord Cranborne[142] as sentimental rant, and inquiries soon followed why kinship in flesh and blood should be strictly limited by a seven pound rental. Speedily Mr. Gladstone passed from steady practical argument in the ministerial key, to all the topics of popular enthusiasm and parliamentary invective. His impulsiveness, said critical observers, "betrays him at times into exaggeration or incaution; but there is a generous quality in it." Mr. Bright once talked of his own agitation for reform as no better than flogging a dead horse. The parliamentary

[141] *Hans.*, Mar. 23, 1866, p. 873.

[142] Lord Robert Cecil had on the death of his elder brother in 1865 become Lord Cranborne.

struggle, led by Mr. Gladstone, brought the dead horse to life, stirred the combative instincts, and roused all the forces of reform. Lowe was glittering, energetic, direct, and swift. Mr. Disraeli, contented to watch his adversaries draw their swords on one another, did not put forth all his power. In a moment of unwisdom he taunted Mr. Gladstone with his stripling's speech at the Oxford Union five-and-thirty years before. As Aberdeen once said, "Gladstone is terrible on the rebound,"[143] and anybody less imperturbable than Disraeli would have found his retort terrible here. His speech on the second reading (April 27), as a whole, ranks among the greatest of his performances. "Spoke," he says, "from one to past three, following Disraeli. It was a toil much beyond my strength, but I seemed to be sustained and borne onwards I knew not how." The party danger, the political theme, the new responsibility of command, the joy of battle, all seemed to transfigure the orator before the vision of the House, as if he were the Greek hero sent forth to combat by Pallas Athene, [204] with, flame streaming from head and shoulders, from helmet and shield, like the star of summer rising effulgent from the sea. One personal passage deserves a biographic place:—

> My position, Sir, in regard to the liberal party, is in all points the opposite of Earl Russell's.... I have none of the claims he possesses. I came among you an outcast from those with whom I associated, driven from them, I admit, by no arbitrary act, but by the slow and resistless forces of conviction. I came among you, to make use of the legal phraseology, *in formâ pauperis*. I had nothing to offer you but faithful and honourable service. You received me, as Dido received the shipwrecked Æneas—
>
> "... Ejectum littore, egentem
> Excepi,"

[143] Above, i. p. 613.

> and I only trust you may not hereafter at any time have to complete the sentence in regard to me—
>
> "Et regui demens in parte locavi."[144]
>
> You received me with kindness, indulgence, generosity, and I may even say with some measure of confidence. And the relation between us has assumed such a form that you can never be my debtors, but that I must for ever be in your debt.

The closing sentences became memorable: "You cannot fight against the future," he exclaimed with a thrilling gesture, "time is on our side. The great social forces which move onwards in their might and majesty, and which the tumult of our debates does not for a moment impede or disturb—those great social forces are against you; they are marshalled on our side; and the banner which we now carry in this fight, though perhaps at some moment it may droop over our sinking heads, yet it soon again will float in the eye of Heaven, and it will be borne by the firm hands of the united people of the three kingdoms, perhaps not to an easy, but to a certain and to a not far distant victory."

A Cause And A Man

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A drama, as good critics tell us, is made not by words but by situations. The same is the truth of the power of the orator. Here the speaker's trope was a sounding battle-cry, not a phrase; it disclosed both a cause and a man. For the hour neither man nor cause prospered. Neither fervour nor force of argument prevailed against the fears and resentments of the men of what Mr. Bright called the Cave of Adullam, "to which every one was invited who was distressed, and every one who was discontented." After eight nights of debate (April 27) Lord Grosvenor was beaten, and ministers were saved—but only by the desperate figure of five. Some thirty of the professed supporters of government voted against their leaders. A scene of delirious triumph followed the announcement of the numbers, and Mr. Lowe believed for the

[144] *Aen.* iv. 373: "The exile on my shore I sheltered and, fool as I was, shared with him my realm."

moment that he had really slain the horrid Demogorgon. Two men knew much better—the leader of the House and the leader of the opposition.

The cabinet, which was not without an imitation cave of its own, hesitated for an hour or two, but the two chief men in it stood firm. Mr. Gladstone was as resolute as Lord Russell, that this time nobody should say reform was only being played with, and they both insisted on going on with the bill. The chances were bad, for this was a Palmerstonian parliament, and the Gladstonian hour had not yet struck. As an honourable leader among the conservatives admitted, not one of the divisions against the bill was taken in good faith. If Mr. Gladstone gave way, he was taunted with cringing; if he stood his ground, it was called bullying; if he expressed a desire to consult the views of the House, Mr. Disraeli held up ministers to scorn as unhappy men without minds of their own. In introducing the bill, says Mr. Gladstone, "I struggled with studious care to avoid every word that could give offence." The only effect of this was to spread the tale that he was not in earnest, and did not really care for the bill. Such was the temper in which ministers were met. And the whole operation was conducted upon the basis of a solemn, firm, and formal understanding between the regular opposition and the cave men, that were it proposed to reduce the ten pound qualification no lower than nine pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence, even that change should be resisted. [206]

Meanwhile, for the leader of the House vexation followed vexation. "The worst incident in the history of our reform struggle," Mr. Gladstone wrote to the prime minister from the House, on May 28, "has occurred to-night. A most barefaced proposal further to load the bill by an instruction to insert clauses respecting bribery has been carried against us by a majority of 10; the numbers were 248 to 238. This is extremely discouraging, and it much reduces the usual strength and authority of the government. This defeat alters our position with reference to

fresh defeats." The air was thick with ideas and schemes for getting rid of the bill and yet keeping the ministers. "I cannot," Mr. Gladstone says to Lord Russell (June 4), "divest such ideas and proposals of the aspect of dishonour." They were told, he said, to introduce an amended plan next year. How would the case be altered? They would have to introduce a plan substantially identical, to meet the same invidious opposition, made all the more confident by the success of its present manœuvres.

At length an end came. On June 18, on a question raised by Lord Dunkellin, of rateable value as against gross estimated rental for the basis of the new seven-pound franchise, ministers were beaten. The numbers were 315 against 304, and in this majority of 11 against government were found no fewer than 44 of their professed supporters. The sensation was almost beyond precedent. "With the cheering of the adversary there was shouting, violent flourishing of hats, and other manifestations which I think novel and inappropriate," Mr. Gladstone says. The next morning, in a note to a friend, he observed: "The government has now just overlived its seven years: a larger term than the life of any government of this country since that of Lord Liverpool. Many circumstances show that it was time things should come to a crisis—none so much as the insidious proceedings, and the inconstant and variable voting on this bill."

Defeat Of The Bill

It had been decided in the cabinet a couple of days before this defeat, that an adverse vote on the narrow issue technically raised by Lord Dunkellin was not in itself to be treated in debate as a vital question, for the rating value could easily have been adjusted to the figure of rental proposed by the government. The debate, however, instead of being confined to a narrow question raised technically, covered the whole range of the bill. Taken together with the previous attempts to get rid of the thing, and the increasing number of the disaffected, all this seemed to extinguish hope, and after what had been said about crossing Rubicons and burning boats, most thought no course open but

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resignation. They might appeal to the country. But Mr. Brand, the expert whip, told the prime minister that he felt so strongly on the impolicy of dissolution that he could not bring himself to take a part in it. The proceeding would be unpopular with their own friends, who had been put to great expense at their election only a few months before. It would, moreover, break the party, because at an election they would have to bring out men of more extreme views to fight the whigs and liberals who had deserted them on reform, and who might thus be driven permanently to the other side. Such were the arguments, though Mr. Gladstone seems not to have thought them decisive. At hardly any crisis in his life, I think, did Mr. Gladstone ever incline to surrender, short of absolute compulsion. To yield was not his temper. When he looked back upon this particular transaction in later years, he blamed himself and his colleagues for too promptly acquiescing in advice to throw down the reins.

> I incline to believe that we too readily accepted our defeat by an infinitesimal majority, as a ground for resignation. There were at least four courses open to us: first, resignation; secondly, dissolution; thirdly, to deny the finality of the judgment and reverse the hostile vote on report; fourthly, to take shelter under a general vote of confidence which Mr. Crawford, M.P. for the City of London, was prepared to move. Of these, the last was the worst, as disparaging to political character. Lord Russell, secretly conscious, I suppose, that he had arrived at the last stage of his political existence, and desirous that it should not be forcibly abbreviated, inclined to adopt it. Granville and I were so decidedly set against it that we allowed ourselves, I think, to be absorbed in its defeat, and set up against it what was undoubtedly the readiest and simplest [208]
> expedient, namely, immediate withdrawal. To dissolve would have been a daring act, an appeal from a shuffling parliament to an unawakened people. Yet it is possible, even probable, that such an appeal, unhesitatingly made, would have evoked

> a response similar, though not equal, to that of 1831. Or again, a re-trial of the question, with a call of the House, would in all likelihood have resulted in victory. By our retirement we opened the door for that series of curious deceptions and intrigues within the tory party, which undoubtedly accelerated the arrival of household suffrage.

Resignation Of Office

Lord Russell tendered their resignation to the Queen, then far away at Balmoral. The Queen received the communication with the greatest concern, and asked them to reconsider. "The state of Europe," she said, "was dangerous; the country was apathetic about reform; the defeat had only touched a matter of detail; the question was one that could never be settled unless all sides were prepared to make concessions." In London three or four days were passed in discussing the hundred ingenious futilities by which well-meaning busy-bodies on all such occasions struggle to dissolve hard facts by soft words. In compliance with the Queen's request, the cabinet reopened their own discussion, and for a day or two entertained the plan of going on, if the House would pass a general vote of confidence. Mr. Gladstone, as we have seen, was on the morrow of the defeat for resignation, and from the first he thought ill of the new plan. The true alternatives were to try either a fresh parliament or a fresh ministry. Bright—not then a member of the government—wrote to Mr. Gladstone (June 24) in strong terms in favour of having a new parliament. Mr. Brand, he says, "makes no allowance for the force of a moral contest through the country for a great principle and a great cause. Last Easter showed how much feeling your appeals could speedily arouse.... I do not believe in your being beaten. Besides there is something far worse than a defeat, namely to carry on your government with a party poisoned and enfeebled by the baseness of the forty traitors [elsewhere in the same letter called the 'forty thieves']. In great contingencies something must be risked. You will have a great party well compacted together, and great future. Mr. Brand's figures should be forgotten for the moment.... You

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must not forget the concluding passage of your great speech on the second reading of the bill. Read it again to nerve you to your great duty." The Duke of Argyll was strong in the same sense. He saw no chance of "conducting opposition with decent sincerity or possible success, except in a parliament in which we know who are our friends and who are our enemies on this question." In the end resignation carried the day:—

> *June 25.*—Cabinet 2-½-4-½ .... The final position appeared to be this, as to alternatives before the cabinet. 1. Dissolution, only approved by three or four. 2. A vote of confidence with vague assurances as to future reform—desired by seven, one more acquiescing reluctantly, six opposing. *W. E. G. unable to act on it.* 3. Lord Russell's proposal to rehabilitate the clause—disapproved by seven, approved by six, two ready to acquiesce. 4. Resignation generally accepted, hardly any strongly dissenting. I have had a great weight on me in these last days, and am glad the matter draws near its close.

This decision greeted the Queen on her arrival at Windsor on the morning of June 26. Both the prime minister and the chancellor of the exchequer had audiences the same day. "Off at 11.30 to Windsor with Lord Russell, much conversation with him. Single and joint audiences with the Queen, who showed every quality required by her station and the time. We had warm receptions at both stations." Mr. Gladstone's memorandum of the interview is as follows:—

> *Windsor Castle, June 26.*—H.M. expressed her regret that this crisis could not be averted; stated she had wished that this question could have been postponed altogether to another year; or that upon finding the strength and tenacity of the opposition to the measure, it could have been withdrawn. I reminded H.M. that she had early expressed to me her hope that if we resumed the subject of the reform of parliament, we should prosecute it to its completion. Also, I said that in my

opinion, from all the miscarriages attending the past history of this question, not ministries alone, and leaders of parties,
[210] nor parties alone, but parliament itself and parliamentary government were discredited. The Queen was impressed with this, and said there was certainly great force in it. She had previously seen Lord Russell, and spoke of his proposal further to amend the clause. Such a proposal she considered advisable, subject to two conditions: (1.) The general assent and concurrence of the cabinet; (2.) The reasonable chance of its being carried. If the proposal were made she was quite willing it should be said, with the approval of the cabinet, that she had observed that the issue taken was on a point apparently one of detail, and that it was just to the H. of C. that it should have an opportunity of voting upon the substance. Lord Russell wished in any case to state, and H.M. approved, that the Queen had founded her hesitation to accept the resignation (1.) on the fact that the decision was on a matter of detail; (2.) on the state of the continent[145] (and the difficulty of bringing a new ministry in such a state of things at once into the position of the old). The Queen offered to write what she had said about Lord Russell's proposed amendment. Lord Russell waived this. But thinking it desirable, I afterwards revived the question, and H.M. said she thought it would be better, and went to do it.

I said to Lord Russell, "It is singular that the same members of the cabinet (generally speaking) who were prematurely eager for resignation after the division on Lord Grosvenor's motion, are now again eager to accept almost anything in the way of a resolution as sufficient to warrant our continuing in office." He replied, "Yes, but I am afraid at the root of both proceedings there is a great amount of antipathy to our Reform bill. They were anxious to resign when resignation would have been injurious to it, and now they are anxious to avoid resignation because resignation will be beneficial to it."

[145] Prussia had declared war on Austria, June 18.

> Lord Russell showed me a letter he had written to Clarendon justifying me for my unwillingness to accept Mr. Crawford's motion of confidence. He also said that if the Queen should desire the revival of his plan for a further vote, he thought it ought to be proposed.

"On returning," Mr. Gladstone enters in the diary, "we went to consult Brand and then to the cabinet, when resignation was finally decided on, and a telegram was sent to Windsor. At [211] six I went down and made my explanation for the government. I kept to facts without epithets, but I thought as I went on that some of the words were scorching. A crowd and great enthusiasm in Palace Yard on departure." Lord Derby was sent for, accepted the royal commission, and finding Mr. Lowe and the Adullamites not available, he formed his third administration on regular conservative lines, with Mr. Disraeli as its foremost man.

> *July 6.*—Went to Windsor to take my leave. H.M. short but kind. H. of C. on return, took my place on the opposition bench, the first time for fifteen years.[146] ... Finished in Downing Street. Left my keys behind me. Somehow it makes a void. *July 19.*—H. of C. Made a little dying speech on reform. *Sept. 14*—. Woburn. Morning *sederunt* with Lord Russell and Brand on reform and other matters. We agreed neither to egg on the government nor the reverse.

Rise Of The Popular Tide

Turbulent scenes had already occurred in the metropolis, and it speedily became evident that whatever value the workmen might set on the franchise for its own sake, they would not brook the refusal of it. They chose Mr. Gladstone for their hero, for, as a good observer remarked, he was the first official statesman who had convinced the working classes that he really cared for them.

[146] Mr. Gladstone had sat on the front opposition bench from 1847 to the defeat of the Russell government in Feb. 1852. See footnote vol. i. p. 631.

On the occasion of one popular assemblage the crowd thronged (June 28) to Carlton House Terrace, shouting for Gladstone and liberty. The head of the house was away. Police officers sent up word to Mrs. Gladstone that the multitude would speedily disperse if she would appear for a moment or two on the balcony. In compliance with their request and for the public convenience, she appeared, and all passed off. The incident was described by newspapers that ought to have known better, as the ladies of his family courting an ovation from persons of the lowest class. Mr. Gladstone was compared to Wilkes and Lord George Gordon. With characteristic tenacity he thought it worth while to contradict the story, but not in the columns where the offensive
[212] tale had been invented. In July, declining an invitation to speak at a demonstration in Hyde Park Mr. Gladstone said he believed the resignation of the government to be a fresh and important step towards final success. "In the hour of defeat I have the presentiment of victory."

An interesting glimpse of Mr. Gladstone in the height of these distractions is given in a passage from the diaries of Mr. Adams, still the American minister:—[147]

> *Thursday, 7th June 1866.*—The other evening at the Queen's ball Mrs. Gladstone asked me as from her husband, to come to breakfast this morning, at the same time that Colonel Holmes,[148] was invited.... I decided to go. I found no cause to regret the decision, for the company was very pleasant. The Duke and Duchess of Argyll, Lord Lyttelton, Lord Houghton, Lord Frederick Cavendish with his wife, and one of his uncles, and several whom I did not know. I forgot Lord Dufferin. We sat at two round tables, thus dividing the company; but Mr. Gladstone took ours, which made all the difference in the world. His characteristic is the most extraordinary facility of

[147] *Charles Francis Adams.* By his Son, p. 368.

[148] Son of Oliver Wendell Holmes, afterwards chief justice of Massachusetts, and in 1902 appointed a judge of the United States Supreme Court.

> conversation on almost any topic, with a great command of literary resources, which at once gives it a high tone. Lord Houghton, if put to it, is not without aptness in keeping it up; whilst the Duke of Argyll was stimulated out of his customary indifference to take his share. Thus we passed from politics, the House of Commons, and Mr. Mill, to English prose as illustrated from the time of Milton and Bacon down to this day, and contrasted with German, which has little of good, and with French. In the latter connection Mr. Gladstone asked me if I had read the *Conscrit* of Erckmann-Chatrian. Luckily for me, who have little acquaintance with the light current literature, I could say "Yes," and could contrast it favourably with the artificial manner of Hugo. It is a cause of wonder to me how a man like Gladstone, so deeply plunged in the current of politics, and in the duties of legislation and official labour, can find time to keep along with the ephemeral literature abroad as well as at home. After an hour thus spent we rose, and on a question proposed by Colonel Holmes [213] respecting a group of figures in china which stood in a corner, Mr. Gladstone launched forth into a disquisition on that topic, which he delights in, and illustrated his idea of the art by showing us several specimens of different kinds. One a grotesque but speaking figure in Capo di Monte, another a group of combatants, two of whom were lying dead with all the aspect of strained muscle stiffening; and lastly, a very classical and elegant set of Wedgwood ware, certainly finer than I ever saw before. This is the pleasantest and most profitable form of English society.

Towards the close of the session (July 21) Mr. Gladstone presided over the annual dinner of the club founded in honour of Cobden, who had died the year before. As might have been foretold, he emphasised the moral rather than the practical results of Cobden's work. "Public economy was with Cobden," he said, "nothing less than a moral principle. The temper and spirit of Mr. Cobden in respect to questions of public economy was a

temper and a spirit that ought to be maintained, encouraged, and propagated in this country—a temper and spirit far more in vogue, far more honoured and esteemed and cultivated by both political parties twenty or thirty years ago than it is at the present moment." An intense love of justice, a singleness of aim, a habit of judging men fairly and estimating them favourably, an absence of the suspicion that so often forms the bane of public life—these elements and all other such elements were to be found in the character of Cobden abundantly supplied. Mr. Cobden's was a mind incapable of entertaining the discussion of a question without fully weighing and estimating its moral aspects and results. In these words so justly applied to Cobden, the orator was doubtless depicting political ideals of his own.

II

In the autumn Mr. Gladstone determined on going abroad with his wife and daughters. "One among my reasons for going," he told Mr. Brand, "is that I think I am better out of the way of politics during the recess. In England I should find it
[214] most difficult to avoid for five minutes attending some public celebration or other, especially in Lancashire. I think that I have said already in one way or other, all that I can usefully say, perhaps more than all. So far as I am concerned, I now leave the wound of the liberal party to the healing powers of nature.... If we cannot arrive in sufficient strength at a definite understanding with respect to the mode of handling the question of the franchise, then our line ought to be great patience and quietude in opposition. If we can, then certainly the existing government might at any time disappear, after the opening of the session I mean, with advantage." "The journey to Italy," says Phillimore, "was really a measure of self-defence, to escape the incessant persecution of correspondence, suggestions, and solicitations."

Journey To Rome

They left England in the last week of September, and proceeded direct to Rome. The Queen had given as one good reason against a change of ministers the dangerous outlook on the continent of Europe. This was the year of the Seven Weeks' War, the battle of Sadowa (July 3), and the triumph of Prussia over Austria, foreshadowing a more astonishing triumph four years hence. One of the results of Sadowa was the further consolidation of the Italian kingdom by the transfer of Venetia. Rome still remained outside. The political situation was notoriously provisional and unstable, and the French troops who had gone there in 1849 were still in their barracks at the Castle of St. Angelo. But this was no immediate concern of his. "Nothing can be more unlikely," he wrote to Acton (Sept. 11), "than that I should meddle with the prisons, or anything else of the kind. The case of Rome in 1866 is very different from that of Naples in 1850, when the whole royal government was nothing but one gross and flagrant illegality. I have seen Archbishop Manning repeatedly," he continues, "and my impression is that he speaks to me after having sought and received his cue from Rome. He is to put me in communication with Cardinal Antonelli and others. I consider myself bound to good conduct in a very strict sense of the word." We now know that the archbishop took pains to warn his friends at Rome to show their visitor all the [215] kindness possible. "Gladstone," he wrote, "does not come as an enemy, and may be made friendly, or he might become on his return most dangerous." The liberals would be very jealous of him on the subject of the temporal power of the pope. Meanwhile Gladstone fully held that the Holy Father must be independent. "Towards us in England," said Manning, "and towards Ireland he is the most just and forgiving of all our public men. He is very susceptible of any kindness, and his sympathies and respect religiously are all with us."[149]

[149] Purcell, ii. p. 398.

To the Duchess of Sutherland.

Rome, Oct. 13.—We had for five days together last week, I will not say a surfeit or a glut, for these imply excess and satiety, but a continuous feast of fine scenery; all the way from Pontarlier by Neuchâtel to Lucerne, and then by the St. Gothard to Como. Since then we have had only the passage of the Apennines by the railway from Ancona to Rome. This is much finer than the old road, according to my recollection. It has three grand stages, one of them rising from the north and east, the others through close defiles from Foligno to Terni, and from Spoleto to Narni, where we went close by the old bridge. As to the St. Gothard I think it the finest in scenery of all the Alpine passes I have seen, and I have seen all those commonly traversed from the Stelvio downwards (in height) to the Brenner, except the Bernardina. A part of the ascent on the Italian side may perhaps compete with the Via Mala which it somewhat resembles. We were also intensely delighted with the Lake of Lugano, which I had never seen before, and which appeared to me the most beautiful of the Italian lakes.

Here we find Rome solitary, which we wished, but also wet and dirty, which we did not. We hope it will soon be clear and dry. No scenery and no city can stand the stripping off its robe of atmosphere. And Rome, which is not *very* rich in its natural features, suffers in a high degree. We caught sight of the pope yesterday on the steps of St. Peter's, made our obeisance, and received that recognition with the hand which is very appropriate, and I imagine to him not at all troublesome. Next week I hope to see Cardinal Antonelli. We
[216] have been to-day to St. Paul's. Its space is amazing, and at particular points it seems to vie with or exceed St. Peter's. But there can be no real comparison in magnificence, and St. Peter's is the more churchlike of the two. The exterior of St. Paul's [beyond the walls] is very mean indeed, and is in glaring contrast with the gorgeousness within.

Rome, Oct. 30.—... I observe reserve in conversation,

except with such persons as cardinals. To two of them who wished me to speak freely I have spoken without any restraint about the great question immediately pending here. And next to them my most free and open conversation has been with the pope, but of course I did not go further than he led me, and on the affairs of Italy this was nearly all the way. I have seen him twice, once in an audience *quattr' occhi*, and once with my wife and daughters, Lady A. Stanley accompanying us. Nothing can be more pleasant than the impression made by his demeanour and language. He looks well and strong, but seems to have a slight touch of deafness.[150] You ask about our "apartment," and I send you (partly to inform the Argylls, in the hope that they might take one of the floors) first a sketch of our general position, nearly opposite the Europa, and secondly a rude plan of the rooms. Half a bedroom unfortunately is cut off from bad management, and the Frattina rooms are much too small. Besides three rooms which we occupy there is another which we do not. We are boarded too, which saves much trouble, and we have the Stanleys here. We go quietly about our work of seeing Rome. The Vatican has been much enriched since I was here. The sculpture gallery is really wonderful in its superiority to all others. I think if I were allowed to choose two pieces I should perhaps take the Demosthenes and the Torso. The pictures have also secured valuable additions. The Palace of the Caesars since the French *scavi*, not by any means finished yet, offers a new world to view, and we expect to see another, probably next week, in the catacombs. Among modern works seen as yet I am most pleased with Tenerani's Psyche fainting. A German, Löwenthal, has done a very good picture of Gibson, and there has come up a singularly interesting portrait believed to be [217] of Harvey. But it is idle to attempt to write of all the beauties

[150] *Oct. 22.*—Saw the pope. *Oct. 28.*—We went at 3 (reluctantly) to the pope. Lady Augusta Stanley accompanied us. We had a conversation in French, rather miscellaneous. He was gracious as usual. N.B. his reference to the papal coinages.—(*Diary*)

and the marvels. The church here is satisfactory; the new clergyman, Mr. Crowther, introduced himself on Sunday with an admirable sermon. We expect the Clarendons to-night. We do Dante every morning, and are in the sixteenth canto.

Dec 4.—At last we have got the Argylls, and I need not say what an addition they are, even amidst the surpassing and absorbing interests that surround us. I hope for your approbation in that I have recommended to his notice a beautiful set of old Sèvres dinner plates, soft paste, which with great spirit he has purchased for little more, I believe, than half what the proprietor refused for them a while ago. I shall be much disappointed if you do not think them a valuable acquisition. I own that I should never have passed them on to a second purchaser had I not, when I first saw them, already got much too near the end of my own little tether. But Sèvres plates and all other 'objects' are of small interest in comparison with the great events that hang as great thick clouds in the heaven around us, yet tipped with broad gleams of light. To-day we are at length assured unconditionally of the departure of the French; in which I believed already on some grounds, including this, that General Count Montebello had ordered sixteen boxes to be packed with the spoils of Rome, or his share of them. This departure of the might of France represented in the garrison, takes a weight off Roman wills and energies, which has for seventeen years bowed them to the ground. With what kind of bound will they spring up again, and what ugly knocks may be given in the process?

The trip was not in every respect successful. On Christmas day, he writes to Brand: "We have had some discomforts. Our apartments twice on fire, a floor burnt through each time. Then I was laid down with a most severe influenza: very sore throat, a thing quite new to me. The Roman climate is as bad for me as can be." I have been told by one who saw much of the party during the Roman visit, that Mr. Gladstone seemed to care little or not at all about wonders of archaeology alike in Christian and

pagan Rome, but never wearied of hearing Italian sermons from priests and preaching friars. This was consonant with the whole temper of his life. He was a collector of ivories, of china, of [218] Wedgwood, but in architecture in all its high historic bearings I never found him very deeply interested. I doubt if he followed the controversies about French, Gothic and Italian, about Byzantine and Romanesque, with any more concern than he had in the controversies of geology. He had two audiences of Pope Pius IX., as we have seen, as had others of his colleagues then in Rome; and Mr. Gladstone used to tell with much glee in what diverse fashion they impressed the pontiff. "I like but I do not understand Mr. Gladstone," the pope said; "Mr. Cardwell I understand, but I do not like; I both like and understand Lord Clarendon; the Duke of Argyll I neither understand nor like." He saw ten of the cardinals, and at Florence he had an audience of the king "who spoke very freely"; he had two long interviews with Ricasoli; and some forty or fifty members of the Italian parliament gave him the honour of a dinner at which Poerio made a most eloquent speech. To the Duchess of Sutherland he wrote:—

> *Florence, Jan. 13, 1867.*—Yesterday Argyll, Cardwell, and I went to the king. He spoke with an astounding freedom; freely concerning the pope and the emperor, hopeful about Italy in general, rather feebly impressed with the financial difficulty, and having his head stuffed full of military notions which it would be very desirable to displace. We have rumours from England of reform and of no reform; but we do not trouble ourselves overmuch about these matters. To-morrow I am to be entertained by a number of the deputies in memory especially of the Naples letters. I shrank from this, as I have long ago been much overpraised and overpaid for the affair, but I could not find a proper ground for refusing. The dinner is to be a private one, but I suppose some notice of it will find its way into the journals. It is a curious proof of the way in which a free and open press has taken hold here, that the

> newspapers are ordinarily habitually cried in the streets until near midnight!

Monte Cassino

Among other objects of his keen and active interest was the preservation for its established uses of the famous monastery founded by St. Benedict thirteen centuries before at Monte Cassino,—the first home of that great rule and institute which for long ages played so striking part in the history of civilisation in the western world. He now visited Monte Cassino in the company of Padre Tosti. The historian of this venerable nursery of learning was his friend long before now—they met first at Naples in 1850—and he had induced Mr. Gladstone to subscribe for the reparation of the tomb of the founder. In 1863 Dean Stanley visited the monastery with a letter from Mr. Gladstone: "It secured for me not only the most hospitable reception, but an outpouring of Padre Tosti's whole soul on pope and church, and Italy and Europe, past and present, in an almost unbroken conversation of three hours." In 1866, it seemed as if the hand of the Italian government were about to fall as heavily on Monte Cassino as on any other monastic establishment. Mr. Gladstone besides doing his best with Ricasoli and others, wrote a letter of admirable spirit to his friend Sir James Lacaita:— [219]

> It seems, he said, as if one of the lamps of learning were put out; much promise for the future extinguished; and a sacred link of union, with the past broken. If it be asked why Englishmen should speak and feel on this Italian subject, my answer would be this: that the foundation and history of Monte Cassino have the interest for us which the Americans of the States feel in Alfred, in Edward III., in Henry V. They are part of the great current of Italian civilisation which has been diffused and distributed over all European lands. Much of my life has been devoted to the promotion of public wealth, and of that vast exterior activity which distinguishes the age; but I am deeply anxious for the preservation of all those centres, not too

> numerous, at which the power of thought may be cultivated, and the inner and higher life of man maintained. It has, as you know, been pressed upon me that I should endeavour to make a respectful appeal to the Italian government on this subject through the medium of a discussion in the House of Commons. But I shrink from taking such a course, as I fear that the general effect might be to present all appearance of intrusive and impertinent interference with the affairs of a foreign country, and that the very country towards which I should least wish to offer the appearance of a slight I cannot [220] likewise refuse to cherish, the hope that the enlightened mind of Baron Ricasoli and his colleagues may lead them either to avert or mitigate this blow.

On his return he passed through Paris. The previous year a signal honour had been bestowed upon him by the illustrious Institute of France—founded on that Academy, in which Richelieu had crowned the fame of arms and statesmanship by honour to purity in national language and competence in letters.[151] In acknowledging the election, he wrote to Mignet, the historian, then perpetual secretary:—

> *11 Carlton House Terrace, March 9, 1865.*—I have already expressed although in an imperfect manner to your distinguished colleagues Count Wolowski and M. Guizot, the sentiments of gratitude with which I accept the signal and most unexpected honour of my election as a foreign associate of the Institute of France. Even the pressure, and what I might call the tumult, of my daily occupations do not render me insensible to the nature of this distinction, which carries with it a world-wide fame. I will not, however, dwell further on the

[151] Mr. Gladstone was elected by 27 votes out of 29, two being cast for J. S. Mill. The minister of instruction wrote: "Veuillez croire, monsieur, qu'il n'est pas de décret que j'aie contresigné avec plus de bonheur que celui qui rattache à notre Institut de France un homme dont le savoir littéraire, l'habileté politique, et l'éloquence sont l'orgueil de l'Angleterre."

> nature of the honour, or on my own unworthiness to receive it: except to refer for a moment to the gentleman whose name was placed in competition with my own. I cannot but be aware of his superior claims. I fear that, for once, the judgment of the Academy has erred, and that in preferring me to Mr. Mill, its suffrages have taken a wrong direction. I am only consoled by reflecting that such a body, with such renown, and with its ranks so filled, can afford to suffer the detriment attaching to a single mistake. I have the honour to be, etc.

Member Of The Institute

This distinction brought with it the duty of attending the funeral of a writer eminent among the philosophers and men of letters of his day. It had been said of him that three days in the week he was absurd, three days mediocre, and one day sublime. [221] The verdict seems to be confirmed.

> *Jan. 23.*—From 10 to 3.45 at the successive stages of Victor Cousin's interment, in my character of member of the Institute. It was of great interest. I saw many most eminent Frenchmen, so many that they remained as a cloud upon my recollection, except Berryer, Thiers, and some whom I had known before. *Jan. 26.*—Attended the meeting of the Institute 12-2. Spent the rest of the afternoon with M. Jules Simon in seeing certain quarters of Paris.

"Yesterday," he wrote to Mr. Brand (Jan. 27), "a dinner was given to Cardwell and me at the Grand Hotel, by the Society of Political Economists of France, and I did my best to improve the occasion in terms which might imply censure on the military measures here and the new turn of affairs. Also I am a known accomplice of M. Fould's. So I let all this be balanced by dining with the Emperor to-day, and with Rouher to-morrow." Of the reception at court, he says, "Dined at the Tuileries, and was surprised at the extreme attention and courtesy of both their majesties, with whom I had much interesting conversation." The fates with no halting foot were drawing near. The palace was a

heap of ashes, host and hostess were forlorn exiles, before in no long span of time they met their guest again.

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Chapter XIV. The Struggle For Household Suffrage. (1867)

> First of all we had a general intimation and promise that something would be done; then a series of resolutions, which strutted a brief hour upon the stage and then disappeared; then there was a bill, which we were told, on the authority of a cabinet minister, was framed in ten minutes, and which was withdrawn in very little more than ten minutes; and lastly, there was a bill which—undergoing the strangest transformations in its course through parliament—did, I will not say, become the law of the land, but was altered into something like that which became the law of the land.—GLADSTONE.

I

From Rome Mr. Gladstone kept a watchful eye for the approaching political performances at Westminster. He had written to Mr. Brand a month after his arrival:—

> *51 P. di Spagna, Oct. 30, '66.*—The Clarendons are to be here this evening to stay for a fortnight or three weeks. Dean and Lady A. Stanley are in the house with us. I doubt if there are any other English parties in Rome.
>
> The reform movement is by degrees complicating the question. It is separating Bright from us, and in one sense thus clearing our way. But then it may become too strong for us; or at least too strong to be stayed with our bill of last year. I do not envy Lord Derby and his friends their reflections this autumn on the course they have pursued. Meanwhile I wish that our press, as far as we may be said to have one, would write on this text: *that a bill from them, to be accepted by the people, must be larger, and not smaller, than would have been, or even would be, accepted from us*. For confidence, or

credit, stands in politics in lieu of ready money. If, indeed, your enemy is stronger than you are, you must take what he gives you. But in this case he is weaker, and not stronger. A [223] good bill from them would save us much trouble and anxiety. A straightforward bill, such an £8 franchise without tricks, would be easily dealt with. But their bill will be neither good nor straightforward. The mind of Disraeli, as leader of the House of Commons, and standing as he does among his compeers, will predominate in its formation. Now he has made in his lifetime three attempts at legislation—the budget of 1852, the India bill of 1858, the Reform bill of 1859. All have been thoroughly tortuous measures. And the Ethiopian will not change his skin. His Reform bill of 1867 will be tortuous too. But if you have to drive a man out of a wood, you must yourself go into the wood to drive him. We may have to meet a tortuous bill by a tortuous motion. This is what I am afraid of, and what I am, for one, above all things anxious to avoid. In 1859 the liberal party had to play the obstructive, and with evil consequences. It would be most unfortunate if they should be put into such a position again. Pray consider this. I do not like what I see of Bright's speeches. We have no claim upon him, more than the government have on us; and I imagine he will part company the moment he sees his way to more than we would give him.

II

Operations Of 1867

The general character of the operations of 1867, certainly one of the most curious in our parliamentary history, was described by Mr. Gladstone in a fragment written thirty years after. Time had extinguished the volcanic fires, and the little outline is sketched with temper and a sort of neutrality:—

When the parliament reassembled in 1867, parties and groups were curiously distributed. The two great bodies were the

regular supporters of the Tory ministry, and those grouped around us who had been expelled. The first did not know what course they would have to take; that depended on the secret counsels of another mind. To keep to the *drapeau* was the guiding motive, as has been since the creed and practice of Peel were subverted by the opposite principles of Disraeli, who on a franchise question had his peer colleagues at his feet. Besides these, other divisions had to be recognised. The [224] Salisbury secession from the government, supported by Sir W. Heathcote and Beresford Hope, was high in character, but absolutely insignificant in numbers. There was Lowe, so great among the Adullamites of 1866, but almost alone among them in the singleness and strength of his opposition to reform. There was the bulk of the Adullamite body, unable to place themselves in declared opposition to the liberal mass, but many of them disposed to tamper with the question, and to look kindly on the tory government as the power which would most surely keep down any enlargement of the franchise to its minimum. It would be idle to discuss the successive plans submitted by the government to the House of Commons with an unexampled rapidity. The governing idea of the man who directed the party seemed to be not so much to consider what ought to be proposed and carried, as to make sure that, whatever it was, it should be proposed and carried by those now in power. The bill on which the House of Commons eventually proceeded was a measure, I should suppose, without precedent or parallel, as, on the other hand it was, for the purpose of the hour, and as the work of a government in a decided minority, an extraordinary stroke of parliamentary success. Our position, on the other hand, was this: (1) We felt that if household suffrage were to be introduced into the boroughs, it ought to be a real household suffrage. (2) The existing state of our legislation, under which a large majority of the householders made no disbursement of rates, but paid them without distinction in their rent, showed that a bill professedly for household suffrage, but taking no

notice of compounding, would be in the first place a lottery, and in the second an imposture. Some towns would have large enfranchisement, some none at all, and no principle but the accidental state of local law would determine on which side of the line any town was to be found. And the aggregate result would be ludicrously small as a measure of enfranchisement. Of such a measure we could not approve. We did not wish to make at once so wide a change as that involved in a genuine household suffrage (always in our minds involving county as well as town), and we could not fairly separate ourselves from Bright on such a point. (3) So we adhered to our idea of an extension, considerable but not violent, and performing all it promised. [225]

But the Adullamite spirit went to work, and finding that the bill had the popular recommendation of a great phrase [household suffrage], combined with the recommendation to them of a narrow sphere of practical operation, determined to support the principle of the bill and abandon our plan, although our mode of operation had been warmly approved at party meetings held at my house. The result was in a tactical sense highly damaging to us. Perhaps we ought to have recognised that the idea of household suffrage, when the phrase had once been advertised by a government as its battle-ground, was irresistible, and that the only remaining choice was whether it should be a household suffrage cribbed, cabined, and confined by the condition of personal ratepaying, or a household suffrage fairly conforming in substance and operation to the idea that the phrase conveyed. The first was in our view totally inadmissible; the second beyond the wants and wishes of the time. But the government, it must be admitted, bowled us over by the force of the phrase; and made it our next duty to bowl them over by bringing the reality of the bill into correspondence with its great profession. This we were able to do in some degree, when we reached the committee, for some of the restrictions included in the measure were such as the double-facing liberal fringe did

not venture to uphold against the assaults of their own party. But the grand question of compound householding, which was really to determine the character of our legislation, was one on which we could not reckon upon either the conscientious or the intimidated and prudential support of our liberal fringe. The government were beyond all doubt, at least for the moment, masters of the situation. The question was raised, if not in its fullest breadth yet in a form of considerable efficiency, by a proposal from Mr. Hodgkinson, member for Newark, and a local solicitor little known in the House.[152] He went there to support it, but without an idea that it could be carried, and anticipating its defeat by a majority of a hundred. Never have I undergone a stranger emotion of surprise than when, as I was entering the House, our whip met me and stated that
[226] Disraeli was about to support Hodgkinson's motion. But so it was, and the proposition was adopted without disturbance, as if it had been an affair of trivial importance.

How it came about I partially learned at a later date. A cabinet was held after the fact, which Sir John Lambert, the great statistician of the day, was summoned to attend. The cabinet had had no idea that the Hodgkinson amendment was to be accepted; the acceptance was the sole act of Mr. Disraeli; and when it had been done the ministers assembled in order to learn from Sir John Lambert what was the probable addition that it would make to the constituency.

I do not suppose that in the whole history of the 'mystery-man,' this proceeding can be surpassed. The tories, having been brought to accept household suffrage on the faith of the limitation imposed by personal payment of the rates, found at a moment's notice that that limitation had been thrown overboard, and that their leader had given them a bill virtually far larger than any that Mr. Bright had sought to impose upon them. It was certainly no business of ours to complain, and

[152] This proposal was in effect to abolish compounding in the limits of parliamentary boroughs. Carried May 27.

> they made it no business of theirs. I imagine that they still relied upon rectification of the bill by the House of Lords. And the Lords did rectify it largely; but these rectifications were all rejected when the bill returned to us, except the minority [representation], which Mr. Disraeli was strong enough to secure by means of the votes of a body of liberals who approved it, and which he accepted to humour or comfort the Lords a little, while he detested it, and made, as Bright said, the best speech ever delivered against it. So came about the establishment of an effective household suffrage in the cities and boroughs of England.

III

Opinion Out Of Doors

The process effecting this wide extension of political power to immense classes hitherto without it, was in every respect extraordinary. The great reform was carried by a parliament elected to support Lord Palmerston, and Lord Palmerston detested reform. It was carried by a government in a decided minority. It was carried by a minister and by a leader of opposition, neither of whom was at the time in the full confidence of his party. Finally, it was carried by a House of Commons that the year before had, [227] in effect, rejected a measure for the admission of only 400,000 new voters, while the measure to which it now assented added almost a million voters to the electorate.[153]

We always do best to seek rational explanations in large affairs. It may be true that "if there were no blunders there would be no politics," but when we have made full allowance for blunder, caprice, chance, folly, craft, still reason and the nature of things have a share. The secret of the strange reversal in 1867 of all that had been said, attempted, and done in 1866, would seem to be that the tide of public opinion had suddenly swelled to flood. The same timidity that made the ruling classes

[153] The electorate was enlarged from 1,352,970 in 1867 to 2,243,259 in 1870.

dread reform, had the compensation that very little in the way of popular demonstration was quite enough to frighten them into accepting it. Here the demonstration was not little. Riots in Hyde Park, street processions measured by the mile in the great cities from London up to Glasgow, open-air meetings attended by a hundred, two hundred, two hundred and fifty thousand people at Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, showed that even though the workmen might not be anxious to demand the franchise, yet they would not stand its refusal. In the autumn of 1868 Mr. Bright led a splendid campaign in a series of speeches in England, Scotland, and Ireland, marked by every kind of power. It is worthy of remark that not one of the main changes of that age was carried in parliament without severe agitation out of doors. Catholic emancipation was won by O'Connell; the reform act of 1832 by the political unions; free trade by the league against the corn law. Household suffrage followed the same rule.

It was undoubtedly true in a sense that Mr. Gladstone was at the head of a majority in 1866, and now again in. 1867. But its composition was peculiar. Sir Thomas Acland (April 10, 1867) describes Mr. Gladstone as hampered by three sets of people: "1. Radicals, who will vote for household suffrage, but don't want it carried. 2. Whigs (aristocrats), who won't risk a collision with the government, and hope that very little reform will be carried, and want to discredit Gladstone. 3. A large body who care for nothing except to avoid a dissolution." "There is a fresh intrigue," he adds, "every twelve hours."

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The trenchant and sardonic mind of the leader of the revolt that had destroyed the bill of 1866, soon found food for bitter rumination. On the eve of the session Lowe admitted that he had very little hope of a successful end to his efforts, and made dismal protests that the reign of reason was over. In other words, he had found out that the men whom he had placed in power, were going to fling him overboard in what he called this miserable auction between two parties, at which the country was put up for sale,

and then knocked down to those who could produce the readiest and swiftest measure for its destruction.

The liberal cave of the previous year was broken up, Lowe and the ablest of its old denizens now voting with Mr. Gladstone, but the great majority going with the government. The place of the empty cave was taken by a new group of dissidents, named from their habitat the party of the Tea-Room. Many, both whigs above the gangway and even radicals below, were averse to bringing Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone back again; they thought a bill would have a better chance with the tories than with the old leaders. Insubordination and disorganisation were complete. "I have never seen anything like it," says the new Lord Halifax;[154] "but the state of things this year enables me to understand what was very inexplicable in all I heard of last year." We can hardly wonder that the strain was often difficult to bear. A friend, meeting Mr. Gladstone at dinner about this time (March 25), thought that he saw signs of irritated nerve. "What an invaluable gift," he reflects, "a present of phlegm from the gods would be! If we could roll up Thompson [master of Trinity] or Bishop Thirlwall with him and then bisect the compound, we should get a pair as invincible as the Dioscuri." An accomplished observer told his constituents that one saw the humour of the [229] great parliamentary chess tournament, looking at the pieces on the board and the face of Disraeli; its tragic side in a glimpse of the face of Gladstone; in the mephistophelian nonchalance of one, the melancholy earnestness of the other.[155]

Everybody knew that Disraeli, as he watched the scene from Chaotic Parties behind his mask, now and again launching a well-devised retort, was neither liked nor trusted, though more than a little feared; and that Gladstone, with his deeply lined face, his "glare of contentious eagerness," his seeming over-righteousness, both

[154] Sir Charles Wood had been created Viscount Halifax on his resignation of the India Office in 1866.

[155] Grant Duff, *Elgin Speeches*, p. 101.

chafed his friends and exasperated his foes. As it was excellently put by a critic in the press,—the House was indifferent, and Mr. Gladstone was earnest; the House was lax and he was strict; it was cynical about popular equality, and he was enthusiastic; it was lazy about details, he insisted upon teaching it the profoundest minutiæ.[156] About this time, Lord Russell told Lord Halifax that he had gone down to see his brother the Duke of Bedford when he was dying, and had said to him that things were drifting into the country being governed by Disraeli and Gladstone, and the Duke observed that neither of them was fit for it. And Halifax himself went on to say that Gladstone had, in truth, no sympathy or connection with any considerable party in the House of Commons. For the old whig party remembered him as an opponent for many years; the radicals knew that on many points, especially on all church matters, he did not agree with them, and though they admired his talents, and hailed his recent exertions in favour of reform, they had no great attachment to him, nor did he seem to be personally popular with any of them.

Far away from the world of politics, we have an estimate of Mr. Gladstone at this time from the piercing satirist of his age. "Is not he at any rate a man of principle?" said a quaker lady to Carlyle. "Oh, Gladstone!" the sage replied, "I did hope well of him once, and so did John Sterling, though I heard he was a Puseyite and so forth; still it seemed the right thing for a state to
[230] feel itself bound to God, and to lean on Him, and so I hoped that something might come of him. But now, he has been declaiming that England is such a wonderfully prosperous state, meaning that it has plenty of money in its breeches pocket.... But that's not the prosperity we want. And so I say to him, 'You are not the life-giver to England. I go my way, you go yours, good morning (with a most dramatic and final bow).' "[157] England however thought otherwise about life-givers, and made a bow of a completely

[156] *Spectator*, April 20.

[157] *Memories, etc., of Miss Caroline Fox*, p. 339 (March 5, 1867).

different sort. Yet not at once. It was Mr. Disraeli who played the leading part in this great transaction, not by inventing the phrase of household suffrage, for that principle was Mr. Bright's; nor by giving his bill the shape in which it ultimately became law, for that shape was mainly due to Mr. Gladstone, but as the mind by whose secret counsels the arduous and intricate manœuvre was directed. "The most wonderful thing," wrote Bishop Wilberforce at the end of the session, "is the rise of Disraeli. It is not the mere assertion of talent. He has been able to teach the House of Commons almost to ignore Gladstone, and at present lords it over him, and, I am told, says that he will hold him down for twenty years."[158] If Mr. Disraeli said this, he proved almost as much mistaken as when Fox was confident of holding the young Pitt down in 1783. Still he impressed his rival. "I met Gladstone at breakfast," says Lord Houghton (May), "he seems quite awed by the diabolical cleverness of Dizzy." Awe, by no means the right word, I fancy.

IV

First Proposals

On April 12 the first act of the Reform question of 1867 ended in an awkward crisis for Mr. Gladstone. The details of the story are intricate and not much to our purpose. Mr. Gladstone's version printed above discovers its general features. Some particulars, properly biographic, will fill up his sketch. "If you have to drive a man out of a wood," Mr. Gladstone said, "you must yourself go into the wood to drive him." The bystander of a later time, however, may be content to keep outside the thicket until the driver and the driven both emerge. Mr. Disraeli began by [231] preparing a series of resolutions—platitudes with little relation to realities. He told the House that reform should no longer be allowed to determine the fate of cabinets, and the House laughed.

[158] *Life of Wilberforce*, iii. p. 227.

Yet if Mr. Disraeli had only at this time enjoyed the advantage of a better character—if he had been Althorp, Russell, Peel—instead of laughing, his hearers would perhaps have recognised good sense and statesmanship. As he said later, whig prime ministers, coalition prime ministers, coalition chancellors of the exchequer, had one after another had their innings, and with a majority at their back; was it not well now to try something that might be carried by consent? Under pressure from Mr. Gladstone the government explained their plan, dropped the resolutions, and brought in a bill.[159] Men were to have votes who had university degrees, or were members of learned professions, or had thirty pounds in a savings bank, or fifty pounds in the funds, or paid a pound in direct taxes; but the fighting point was that every householder who paid rates should have a vote. A scheme for seats accompanied. To comfort his party for giving so wide a suffrage, the minister provided checks by conferring a double vote on certain classes of citizens, and imposing strict terms as to residence. Three members of his cabinet, of whom Lord Cranborne was the most important, refused the unsubstantial solace and resigned. But Mr. Disraeli saw that he would regain by disorganising his opponents more than he would lose by dislocating his friends.

Mr. Gladstone flew down upon the plan with energy, as a measure of illusory concessions, and securities still more illusory. His speech was taken in some quarters in a conservative sense, for Lowe at once wrote to him (March 21) urging him to follow it up by resisting the second reading on the principle of righting rent against rating. Since Callimachus, the Athenian polemarch, had to give the casting vote at Marathon when the ten generals were equally divided on the question of fighting the Persians or not fighting, “no one,” cried Lowe, “ever had a weightier case to decide” than Mr. Gladstone now. He forgot that the

[159] March 18.

brave Callimachus was slain, and Mr. Gladstone would in a political sense have been slain likewise if he had taken Lowe's advice, for, as he says, Disraeli had by talk of household suffrage "bowled them over." A meeting of 278 liberals was held at his house, and he addressed them for nearly an hour, concurring not over-willingly in the conclusion that they should not resist the second reading.[160] He had a long conversation with Mr. Bright two days before, whom he found 'sensible, moderate, and firm,' and whose view was no doubt the opposite of Lowe's. The bill was read a second time without a division (March 26). [232]

A few entries in Sir Robert Phillimore's journal help us to realise the state of the case during this extraordinary session:—

> *April 9.*—Entire collapse of Gladstone's attack on government yesterday. *Tea-room* schism of liberal members, including the H. of C. Russell. Disraeli's insolent triumph. 10.—Returned to the Coppice with Ld. Richard Cavendish. He tells me Hastings Russell and his brother cannot bear Gladstone as their leader. 12.—In the middle of the day saw Gladstone and Mrs. Gladstone. His *disgust* and *deep mortification* at the defection of his party, mingled with due sense of the loyalty of the greater number, and especially of his old cabinet. The expression of my wish that, if deserted, he will abdicate and leave them to find another leader fully responded to by him. 13.—Defeat of the opposition last night; great triumph of Disraeli; a surprise, I believe, to both parties; 289 voted with Gladstone. What will he do? *Query.*—Ought he on account of the defection of 20 to leave so considerable a party?

"Fresh Intrigue Every Twelve Hours"

The occasion just mentioned marked a climax. Mr. Gladstone moved an amendment to remove the personal payment of rates

[160] "Gladstone," says Lord Selborne, "would have been ready to oppose Disraeli's bill as a whole, if he could have overcome the reluctance of his followers. But when a meeting was called to take counsel on the situation, it became apparent that this could not be done" (*Memorials*, Part II.{FNS i. pp. 68-9).

as an essential qualification, and to confer the franchise on the householder whether he paid the rate direct or through the landlord. The next day the diary records: *April 12.*—"Spoke [233] in reply and voted in 289-310. A smash perhaps without example. A victory of 21 for ministers." A new secession had taken place, and 43 liberal members voted with the government, while nearly 20 were absent. The Cranborne secession was small, and some who had been expected to stay away voted with the government. "Gladstone expressed himself strongly to five or six members of the late government whom he summoned to his house in the morning. He spoke of retiring to a back bench, and announcing that he would give up the ostensible post of leader of the opposition. He was dissuaded from doing this at the present moment, and went out of town, as indeed did almost everybody else."[161] Still the notion of a back bench did lodge itself in his mind for long. The "smash" was undoubtedly severe. As Mr. Gladstone wrote to one of the members for the City, a supporter, it showed that the liberals whose convictions allowed united action upon reform were not a majority but a minority of the House of Commons. Considering the large number who supported his proposal, he told his correspondent that though he would move no further amendment of his own, he was not less willing than heretofore to remain at the service of the party. "The friendly critics," he said to Brand, "note a tone of despondency in my letter to Crawford. That is all owing to Granville and others who cut off a fine peacock's tail that I had appended." So day after day amid surf and breakers he held to his oar. If Mr. Gladstone was much buffeted in the house of his friends, he was not without valiant backers, and among them none was more stout than Mr. Bright, the least effusive of all men in the direction of large panegyric. Speaking to his constituents at Birmingham, "Who is there in the House of Commons," he demanded, "who

[161] *Halifax Papers.*

equals Mr. Gladstone in knowledge of all political questions? Who equals him in earnestness? Who equals him in eloquence? Who equals him in courage and fidelity to his convictions? If these gentlemen who say they will not follow him have any one who is equal, let them show him. If they can point out any statesman who can add dignity and grandeur to the stature of [234] Mr. Gladstone, let them produce him." A deputation against the bill from some popular body came to him (May 11). Mr. Disraeli at once regretted that these "spouters of stale sedition," these "obsolete incendiaries," should have come forward to pay their homage to one who, wherever he may sit, must always remain the pride and ornament of the House—

> "Who but must laugh if such a man there be?
> Who would not weep if Atticus were he?"

V

To the Duchess of Sutherland Mr. Gladstone wrote (July 9):—

> I do not plead guilty to the indictment for "non-attendance." I think that for three months I have been in the House for more hours than the Speaker. I have heard every important word that has been spoken on the Reform bill, and at least nine-tenths of all the words. True, outside the Reform bill I only attend when I think there is a chance of being useful; and in the present state of the House these opportunities are few. I act from no personal motive. But for me to be present and interfere continuously, or so far continuously as I might in other circumstances, would exhibit needlessly from day to day the divisions and consequent weakness of the liberal party. I admit also that time tells on a man of my age and temperament; and my brain tells me that I want more rest and not less. Is this unreasonable? I am against all needless waste of life or anything else. Everything should be husbanded.

> I must add that more attendance would but aggravate the susceptibility which depends on nerves rather than will, and already makes my attendance less useful.

The Phillimore diary gives us one or two glimpses more:—

> *May 9.*—Carnarvon delighted with Gladstone's speech at S.P.G. meeting. 10.—Called on Gladstone in bed at 1.30. Ill from effect of the great exertion of yesterday—S.P.G. in the morning, H. of C. in the evening.... The effect of these defeats of Gladstone in the H. of C. has been to bind the whigs closer to him. 24.—The dinner to Brand and presentation of plate deferred, ostensibly on the ground of
> [235] his health and necessity of going to German waters, really because at present Gladstone refuses to take the chair at the dinner, though attached to Brand, because many who had deserted him (G.) would attend the dinner. Gladstone will not countenance the appearance of a sham union when the party is discredited. *June 7.*—Attack on Gladstone as being in debt "hard pressed by creditors," and therefore wishing for office. The malice against him is wonderful. *29.*—Dined at Newspaper Press Fund. Gladstone in the chair, made a really faultless speech. Never did I hear his voice better, nor the flow of his eloquence more unbroken.

Two or three items more from Mr. Gladstone's diary are worth recording:—

> *May 6.*—The underground tone of the House most unsatisfactory. *May 9.*—Spoke earnestly and long for compound householders, in vain. Beaten by 322-256. Much fatigued by heat and work. *May 28.*—Spoke (perforce) on Disraeli's astonishing declaration of consistency. *July 15.*—Third reading of Reform bill. A remarkable night. Determined at the last moment not to take part in the debate, for fear of doing mischief on our own side.

The conservative leader himself was exposed to onslaughts from his followers and confederates of the previous year as severe as have ever fallen on the head of an English party. “Never,” cried Mr. Lowe, in desolation and chagrin, “never was there tergiversation so complete. Such conduct may fail or not; it may lead to the retention or the loss of office; but it merits alike the contempt of all honest men, and the execration of posterity.” Lord Cranborne, the chief conservative seceder, described the bill in its final shape, after undergoing countless transformations, as the result of the adoption of the principles of Bright at the dictation of Gladstone. It was at Mr. Gladstone's demand that lodgers were invested with votes; that the dual vote, voting papers, educational franchise, savings-bank franchise, all disappeared; that the distribution of seats was extended into an operation of enormously larger scale. In his most biting style, Lord Cranborne deplored that the House should have applauded a policy of legerdemain; talked about borrowing their ethics from the political adventurer; regretted, above all things, that the [236] Reform bill should have been purchased at the cost of a political betrayal that had no parallel in our parliamentary annals, and that struck at the very root of that mutual confidence which is the very soul of our party government.

Merciless storms of this kind Mr. Disraeli bore imperturbably. He complained of the intolerant character of the discussions. “Everybody who does not agree with somebody else is looked upon as a fool, or as being mainly influenced by a total want of principle in the conduct of public affairs.” He doubted whether Mr. Bright or anybody else could show that the tory party had changed their opinions. He had not changed his own opinions; the bill was in harmony with the general policy they had always maintained, though adapted, of course, to the requirements of the year. On Mr. Lowe's “most doleful vaticinations that ever were heard,” about the new voters repudiating the national debt and adopting an inconvertible paper currency, he poured easy

ridicule. Yet only a year before this Mr. Disraeli himself had prophesied that the end of a seven pound franchise would be a parliament of no statesmanship, no eloquence, no learning, no genius. “Instead of these you will have a horde of selfish and obscure mediocrities, incapable of anything but mischief, and that mischief devised and regulated by the raging demagogue of the hour.”

Mr. Gladstone summed the matter up in a sentence to Dr. Pusey: “We have been passing through a strange and eventful year: a deplorable one, I think, for the character and conduct of the House of Commons, but yet one of promise for the country, though of a promise not unmixed with evils.”

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Chapter XV. Opening Of The Irish Campaign. (1868)

> "I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me. Now at the end of three years' struggle, the nation's condition is not what either party or any man desired or expected."—ABRAHAM LINCOLN (1864).

I

Writing to his brother-in-law, Lord Lyttelton, in April 1865, Mr. Gladstone sets out pretty summarily the three incidents that had been taken to mark the line of his advance in the paths of extreme and visionary politics. When it was written, his speech on the franchise the previous year had not ripened,[162] and his speech on the Irish church was only on the eve, nor did he yet know it, of taking shape as a deliberate policy of action.

To Lord Lyttelton.

11 Carlton House Terrace, S.W., April 9, '65.—Our interesting conversation of Wednesday evening, which looked before and after, and for your share in which I heartily thank you, has led me to review the subject matters, a process which every man in public life as well as elsewhere ought often to perform, but which the pressure of overwork, and the exhaustion it leaves behind, sadly hinder. But I sum up in favour of a verdict of "Not guilty," on the following grounds.

As far as I know, there are but three subjects which have exposed me to the charge of radicalism: the Irish church, the franchise, the paper duty, and the consequent struggle with the House of Lords.

My opinions on the Irish church were, I know, those of Newcastle and Sidney Herbert twenty years ago; and they were not radicals. Ever since Maynooth, in 1845, I have seen that resistance *in principle* was gone. That was the main reason which led me to make such a serious affair of my own case about the Maynooth grant in that year. But I held this embryo opinion in my mind as there was no cause to precipitate it into life, and waited to fortify or alter or invalidate it by the teachings of experience. At last the time for speaking, and therefore for formulating my ideas came, and I have spoken according as I believe to be the sense of all the leading men with whom I acted from Peel's death onwards, and within the sense not only of Lord Macaulay, but of the present Lord Grey. [238]

With respect to the franchise, my belief is that the objection taken to my speech really turned not upon the doctrine of *prima facie* title, but upon the fact that it was a speech decisively and warmly in favour of the £6 franchise or something equivalent to it. That is to say, of the very franchise which as a member of the cabinet I had supported in 1860, on the credit and promise of which Lord Derby had been put out in 1859, and which, if it did not appear in the Aberdeen Reform bill of 1852, was represented there by other concessions equally large. The truth is this, that ever since the Aberdeen Reform bill, I have remained just where it placed me; but many seem to think that it is a subject to be played with or traded on. In thinking and acting otherwise I feel myself to be upholding principles essential to the confidence of the people in governments and parliaments, and also a measure which promises by reasonably widening the basis of our institutions to strengthen the structure above.

To the repeal of the paper duty the House of Commons, when led by the Derby government, chose to commit itself unanimously, and this at a time when the tea duty was at

[162] See above, p. 126.

> 17d. per lb. In 1860 and 1861 the cabinet considered the respective claims, and took the same course which the Derby government had assisted the House of Commons to take before. Upon this it was found that the measure which they had approved had become in my hands a radical one; the House of Lords was encouraged to rescue the finance of the country from the hands of the House of Commons; and the claims of tea were declared to be paramount to those of paper. [239] In proposing the repeal of the last remaining excise duty upon a simple article of manufacture, I adopted a principle which had already received an unanimous acceptance. In resisting to the uttermost of my power the encroachment of the House of Lords, I acted, as I believe, on the only principle which makes it practicable to defend the true, legitimate, and constitutional powers of that House itself against encroachment from other quarters.
>
> Now let me look at the other side of the question. On church rates, on university tests, on clerical subscription (the two last being the only two questions really of principle which, as far as I remember, have been raised), I have held my ground; and on the two last the cabinet of which I form a part has in the main adopted a course essentially (but with a little *c*) conservative.

The question of franchise was settled, the question of the powers of the Lords in matters of taxation was settled. The Irish church held its ground. In 1865 Mr. Gladstone voted against a radical member who had moved that the case of the Irish church "called for the early attention of the government." He agreed with the mover on the merits, but did not believe that the time had come. In 1866, when he was leader of the House, he concurred with Lord Russell, then first minister, in meeting a motion against the Irish church with a direct negative. "In meeting a question with a negative," he wrote to the Irish secretary (April 7), "we may always put it on the ground of

time, as well as on the merits. To meet a motion of this kind with the previous question only, implies almost an engagement to take it up on some early occasion, and this I take it we are not prepared for." In the summer of 1865 he wrote to the warden of Glenalmond that the question was "remote and apparently out of all bearing on the practical politics of the day." So far as his own judgment went, he had told Sir Roundell Palmer in 1863, that he had made up his mind on the subject, and should not be able to keep himself from giving expression to his feelings. Why did he say that he did not then believe that the question would come on in his time? "A man," he replied, "who in 1865 completed his
[240] thirty-third year of a laborious career, who had already followed to the grave the remains of almost all the friends abreast of whom he had started from the university in the career of public life; and who had observed that, excepting two recent cases [I suppose Palmerston and Russell], it was hard to find in our whole history a single man who had been permitted to reach the fortieth year of a course of labour similar to his own within the walls of the House of Commons; such a man might be excused ... if he formed a less sanguine estimate of the fraction of space yet remaining to him, than seems to have been the case with his critics."[163]

It was Maynooth that originally cut from under his feet the principle of establishment in Ireland as an obligation of the state. When that went, more general reflections arose in his mind. In 1872 he wrote to Guizot:—

> It is very unlikely that you should remember a visit I paid you, I think at Passy in the autumn of 1845, with a message from Lord Aberdeen about international copyright. The Maynooth Act had just been, passed. Its author, I think, meant it to be final. I had myself regarded it as *seminal*. And you in congratulating me upon it, as I well remember, said we should have the sympathies of Europe in the work of giving

[163] *Gleanings*, vii. p. 135.

> Ireland justice—a remark which evidently included more than the measure just passed, and which I ever after saved and pondered. It helped me on towards what has been since done.

"I must own," he wrote to Lord Granville (April 11, 1868), "that for years past I have been watching the sky with a strong sense of the obligation to act with the first streak of dawn." He now believed the full sun was up, and he was right. In an autobiographic note, undated but written near to the end of his days, he says:—

> I am by no means sure, upon a calm review, that Providence has endowed me with anything that can be called a striking gift. But if there be such a thing entrusted to me it has been shown at certain political junctures, in what maybe termed appreciations of the general situation and its result. To make good the idea, this must not be considered as the simple acceptance of public opinion, founded upon the discernment [241]
> that it has risen to a certain height needful for a given work, like a tide. It is an insight into the facts of particular eras, and their relation one to another, which generates in the mind a conviction that the materials exist for forming a public opinion and for directing it to a particular end. There are four occasions of my life with respect to which I think these considerations may be applicable. They are these: 1. The renewal of the Income-tax in 1853; 2. The proposal of religious equality for Ireland, 1868....

The remaining two will appear in good time. It is easy to label this with the ill-favoured name of opportunist. Yet if an opportunist be defined as a statesman who declines to attempt to do a thing until he believes that it can really be done, what is this but to call him a man of common sense?

II

Fenian Plo

In 1867 Ireland was disturbed by bold and dangerous Fenian plots and the mischief flowed over into England. In September, at Manchester, a body of armed men rescued two Fenian prisoners from a police van, and shot an officer in charge, a crime for which three of them were afterwards hanged. In December a Fenian rolled a barrel of gunpowder up to the wall of a prison in London where a comrade was confined, and fired it. The explosion that followed blew down part of the wall and cost several lives.

> In my opinion,—Mr. Gladstone said afterwards in parliament, and was much blamed for saying,—and in the opinion of many with whom I communicated, the Fenian conspiracy has had an important influence with respect to Irish policy; but it has not been an influence in determining, or in affecting in the slightest degree, the convictions which we have entertained with respect to the course proper to be pursued in Ireland. The influence of Fenianism was this—that when the habeas corpus Act was suspended, when all the consequent proceedings occurred, when the tranquillity of the great city of Manchester was disturbed, when the metropolis itself was shocked and horrified by an inhuman outrage, when a sense of insecurity went abroad far and wide ... when the inhabitants of the
> [242] different towns of the country were swearing themselves in as special constables for the maintenance of life and property—then it was when these phenomena came home to the popular mind, and produced that attitude of attention and preparedness on the part of the whole population of this country which qualified them to embrace, in a manner foreign to their habits in other times, the vast importance of the Irish controversy.[164]

This influence was palpable and undoubted, and it was part of Mr. Gladstone's courage not to muffle up plain truth, from

[164] *Hansard*, May 31, 1869.

any spurious notions of national self-esteem. He never had much patience with people who cannot bear to hear what they cannot fail to see. In this case the truth was of the plainest. Lord Stanley, then a member of his father's government, went to a banquet at Bristol in the January of 1868, and told his conservative audience that Ireland was hardly ever absent from the mind of anybody taking part in public affairs. “I mean,” he said, “the painful, the dangerous, the discreditable state of things that unhappily continues to exist in Ireland.” He described in tones more fervid than were usual with him, the “miserable state of things,” and yet he asked, “when we look for a remedy, who is there to give us an intelligible answer?” The state of Ireland, as Mr. Gladstone said later,[165] was admitted by both sides to be the question of the day. The conservatives in power took it up, and they had nothing better nor deeper to propose than the policy of concurrent endowment. They asked parliament to establish at the charge of the exchequer a Roman catholic university; and declared their readiness to recognise the principle of religious equality in Ireland by a great change in the status of the unendowed clergy of that country, provided the protestant establishment were upheld in its integrity. This was the policy of levelling up. It was met by a counter-plan of religious equality; disestablishment of the existing church, without establishing any other, and with a general cessation of endowments for religion in Ireland. Mr. Disraeli's was at bottom the principle of Pitt and Castlereagh and of many great whigs, but he might have known, and doubtless did know, how odious it would be to the British householders, who were far more like King George III. than they at all supposed. [243]

III

The Standard Raised

[165] At Greenwich, Dec. 21, 1868.

In May 1867, Mr. Gladstone had told the House that the time could not be far distant when parliament would have to look the position of the Irish church fairly and fully in the face. In the autumn Roundell Palmer visited Mr. Cardwell, and discovered clearly from the conversation that the next move in the party was likely to be an attack upon the Irish church. The wider aspects of the Irish case opened themselves to Mr. Gladstone in all their melancholy dimensions. At Southport (Dec. 19) he first raised his standard, and proclaimed an Irish policy on Irish lines, that should embrace the promotion of higher education in a backward country, the reform of its religious institutions, the adjustment of the rights of the cultivator of the soil. The church, the land, the college, should all be dealt with in turn.[166] It might be true, he said, that these things would not convert the Irish into a happy and contented people. Inveterate diseases could not be healed in a moment. When you have long persevered in mischief, you cannot undo it at an instant's notice. True though this might be, was the right conclusion that it was better to do nothing at all? For his own part he would never despair of redeeming the reproach of total incapacity to assimilate to ourselves an island within three hours of our shores, that had been under our dominating influence for six centuries.

At Christmas in 1867 Lord Russell announced to Mr. Gladstone his intention not again to take office, in other words to retire from the titular leadership of the liberal party. Mr. Gladstone did not deny his claim to repose. "Peel," he said, "in
[244] 1846 thought he had secured his dismissal at an age which, if

[166] He had also in his own mind the question of the acquisition of the Irish railways by the state, and the whole question of the position of the royal family in regard to Ireland. On the first of these two heads he was able to man a good commission, with the Duke of Devonshire at its head, and Lord Derby as his coadjutor. "But this commission," he says, "did not venture to face any considerable change, and as they would not move, I, who might be held in a manner to have appealed to them, could do nothing."

spared, I shall touch in three days' time."[167] Lord Russell was now seventy-five. He once told Lord Granville that "the great disappointment of his life had been Grey's refusal to join his government in December 1845, which had prevented his name going down in history as the repealer of the corn laws." "A great reputation," wrote Mr. Gladstone to Granville in 1868, "built itself up on the basis of splendid public services for thirty years; for almost twenty it has, I fear, been on the decline. The movement of the clock continues, the balance weights are gone."[168]

A more striking event than Lord Russell's withdrawal was the accession of Mr. Disraeli to the first place in the counsels of the crown. In February 1868 Lord Derby's health compelled him to retire from his position as head of the government. Mr. Gladstone found fault with the translator of Stockmar's *Memoirs* for rendering "leichtsinnig" applied to Lord Derby as "frivolous." He preferred "light-minded":—

> The difference between frivolous and light-minded is not a broad one. But in my opinion a man is frivolous by disposition, or as people say by nature, whereas he is light-minded by defect or perversity of will; further he is frivolous all over, he may be light-minded on one side of his character. So it was in an eminent degree with Lord Derby. Not only were his natural gifts unsurpassed in the present age, but he had a serious and earnest side to his character. Politics are at once a game and a high art; he allowed the excitements of the game to draw him off from the sustained and exhausting efforts of the high art. But this was the occasional deviation of an honourable man, not the fixed mental habit of an unprincipled one.

Disraeli Becomes Prime Minister

Mr. Disraeli became prime minister. For the moment, the

[167] Mr. Gladstone's letter to Lord Russell is given in Walpole's *Russell*, ii. 446.

[168] Till like a clock worn out with eating time,
The wheels of weary life at last stood still.—Dryden's *Œdipus*.

incident was more dramatic than important; it was plain that his tenure of office could not last long. He was five years older (perhaps more) than Mr. Gladstone; his parliamentary existence had been four or five years shorter. During the thirty-
[245] one years of his life in the House of Commons, up to now he had enjoyed three short spells of office (from 1852 to 1868), covering little more than as many years. He had chosen finance for his department, but his budgets made no mark. In foreign affairs he had no policy of his own beyond being Austrian and papal rather than Italian, and his criticisms on the foreign policy of Palmerston and Russell followed the debating needs of the hour. For legislation in the constructive sense in which it interested and attracted Mr. Gladstone, he had no taste and little capacity. In two achievements only had he succeeded, but in importance they were supreme. Out of the wreckage left by Sir Robert Peel twenty-two years before he had built up a party. In the name of that party, called conservative, he had revolutionised the base of our parliamentary constitution. These two extraordinary feats he had performed without possessing the full confidence of his adherents, or any real confidence at all on the part of the country. That was to come later. Meanwhile the nation had got used to him. He had culture, imagination, fancy, and other gifts of a born man of letters; the faculty of slow reflective brooding was his, and he often saw both deep and far; he was artificial, but he was no pharisee, and he was never petty. His magniloquence of phrase was the expression of real size and spaciousness of character; as Goethe said of St. Peter's at Rome, in spite of all the rococo, there was *etwas grosses*, something great. His inexhaustible patience, his active attention and industry, his steadfast courage, his talent in debate and the work of parliament; his genius in espying, employing, creating political occasions, all made him, after prolonged conflict against impediments of every kind, one of the imposing figures of his time. This was the political captain with whom Mr. Gladstone had contended for some sixteen years

past, and with whom on a loftier elevation for both, he was to contend for a dozen years to come.

On a motion about the state of Ireland, proceeding from an Irish member (March 16, 1868) Mr. Gladstone at last launched before parliament the memorable declaration that the time had come when the church of Ireland as a church in alliance with the state must cease to exist. This was not a mere sounding sentence [246] in a speech; it was one of the heroic acts of his life. Manning did not overstate the case when he wrote to Mr. Gladstone (March 28, '68): "The Irish establishment is a great wrong. It is the cause of division in Ireland, of alienation between Ireland and England. It embitters every other question. Even the land question is exasperated by it. The fatal ascendency of race over race is unspeakably aggravated by the ascendency of religion over religion." But there were many pit-falls, and the ground hid dangerous fire. The parliament was Palmerstonian and in essence conservative; both parties were demoralised by the strange and tortuous manœuvres that ended in household suffrage; many liberals were profoundly disaffected to their leader; nobody could say what the majority was, nor where it lay. To attack the Irish church was to alarm and scandalise his own chosen friends and closest allies in the kindred church of England. To attack a high protestant institution "exalting its mitred front" in the catholic island, was to run sharp risk of awaking the sleuth-hounds of No-popery. The House of Lords would undoubtedly fight, as it did, to its last ditch. The legislative task itself was in complexity and detail, apart from religious passion and the prejudice of race, gigantic.

Having once decided upon this bold campaign, Mr. Gladstone entered upon it with military promptitude, and pursued it with an intrepidity all his own among the statesmen of his day, and not surpassed by Pym in 1640, nor Chatham in 1758, nor Chatham's son in 1783, nor anybody else in days gone by. Within a week of this historic trumpet-blast, he gave notice of three resolutions to

the effect that the established church of Ireland should cease to exist as an establishment. Attendant and consequential changes were appended. Within a week of giving notice, he opened the first resolution, and carried the preliminary motion by a majority of 61. The cheering at this demonstration of a united and victorious party was prodigious, both within the House and in Westminster Hall, and an enthusiastic crowd followed the leader and his two sons as they walked home to Carlton House Terrace. "This," he wrote to the Duchess of Sutherland, "is a day of excitement—almost of exultation. We have made a step, nay a stride, and this stride is on the pathway of justice, and of peace, and of national honour and renown."[169]

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Resolutions On Irish Church

The first resolution was carried (April 30) by a majority of 65, and a week later the second and third went through without a division. Mr. Disraeli fought his battle with much steadiness, but did not go beyond a dilatory amendment. If Mr. Gladstone had old deliverances to reconcile with new policy, so had his tory antagonist. Disraeli was reminded of that profound and brilliant oracle of 1844, when he had described the root of mischief in Ireland as a weak executive, an absentee aristocracy, and an alien church. He wasted little time in trying to explain why the alien church now found in him its champion. "Nobody listened," he said, "at that time. It seemed to me that I was pouring water upon sand, but it seems now that the water came from a golden goblet." The sentiment may have been expressed, he said, "with the heedless rhetoric which, I suppose, is the appanage of all who sit below the gangway; but in my historical conscience, the sentiment of that speech was right." The prime minister did not escape taunts from those in his own camp who thought themselves betrayed by him upon reform the year before. He repaid the taunts by sarcasm. He told Lord Cranborne that there was vigour in his language and no want of vindictiveness,

[169] Lord R. Gower, *Reminiscences*, p. 202.

what it wanted was finish. Considering that Lord Cranborne had written anonymous articles against him before and since they were colleagues—"I do not know whether he wrote them when I was his colleague"—they really ought to have been more polished. Mr. Lowe, again, he described as a remarkable man; especially remarkable for his power of spontaneous aversion; he hates the working classes of England; he hates the Roman catholics of Ireland; he hates the protestants of Ireland; he hates ministers; and until Mr. Gladstone placed his hand upon the ark, he seemed almost to hate Mr. Gladstone.

After Mr. Gladstone's first resolution was carried, the prime minister acknowledged the change in the relations of the government and the House. He and his party had conducted the business of the country though in a minority, just as Lord John Russell between 1846 and 1851 had conducted business for five [248] or six years, though in a minority, "but being morally supported by a majority, as we have been supported by a majority." In this crisis he pursued a peculiar course. He advised the Queen to dissolve the parliament; but at the same time he told her Majesty that if she thought the interests of the country would be better served, he tendered his resignation. The Queen did not accept it, he said; and the ministerial decision was to dissolve in the autumn when the new constituencies would be in order. The statement was not clear, and Mr. Gladstone sought in vain to discover with precision whether the prime minister had begun by resigning, or had presented two alternatives leaving the decision to the Queen, and did he mean a dissolution on existing registers? The answer to these questions was not definite, but it did not matter.

This episode did not check Mr. Gladstone for a moment in his course; in a week after the resolutions were carried, he introduced a bill suspending the creation of new interests in the Irish church. This proof of vigour and resolution rapidly carried the suspensory bill through the Commons. The Lords threw it out by a majority

of 95 (June 29). If we sometimes smile at the sanguine prediction of the optimist, the gloom of his pessimist opponent is more ludicrous. “If you overthrow the Irish established church,” cried the Archbishop of Dublin, “you will put to the Irish protestants the choice between apostasy and expatriation, and every man among them who has money or position, when he sees his church go will leave the country. If you do that, you will find Ireland so difficult to manage that you will have to depend on the gibbet and the sword.” The Bishop of Chester and Bishop Thirlwall, whom Mr. Gladstone described as “one of the most masculine, powerful, and luminous intellects that have for generations been known among the bishops of England,” were deliberately absent from the division. The effect of the bill was not impaired, perhaps it was even heightened; for it convinced the public that its author meant earnest and vigorous business, and the air was instantly alive with the thrill of battle. For it is undoubted that if the country cares for a thing, the resistance to it of the hereditary House seems to add spice and an element of sport.

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Chapter XVI. Prime Minister. (1868)

Geworden ist ihm eine Herrsoherseele,
Und ist gestellt auf einen Herrscherplatz.
Wohl uns, dass es so ist!...
Wohl dem Ganzen, findet
Sich einmal einer, der ein Mittelpunkt
Für viele Tausend wird, ein Halt.
—SCHILLER.

He is possessed by a commanding spirit,
And his, too, is the station of command.
And well for us it is so....
Well for the whole if there be found a man
Who makes himself what Nature destined him,
The pause, the central point of thousand thousands.
—*Coleridge's Translation.*

I

During the election (Nov. 23) Mr. Gladstone published his *Chapter of Autobiography*, the history of his journey from the book of 1838 to the resolutions thirty years later.[170] Lord Granville told him frankly that he never liked nor quite understood the first book; that the description of it in the new "Chapter" gave him little pleasure; that he had at first a feeling that the less a person in Mr. Gladstone's position published, the better; and that unnecessary explanation would only provoke fresh attacks. But as he read on, these misgivings melted away; he thought the description of a certain phase of the history of the English church one of the most eloquent and feeling passages he ever read; the reference to the nonconformists was a graceful amend to them

[170] *Gleanings*, vii.

for being so passionate an Oxonian and churchman; the piece of controversy with Macaulay rather an exaggeration and not easy
[250] to understand; the closing pages admirable. In short, he was all for publication. Another close friend of Mr. Gladstone's, Sir Robert Phillimore, told him (Nov. 29): "I am satisfied that you have done wisely and justly both with reference to the immediate and future influence of your character as a statesman. It is exactly what a mere man of the world would not have done. His standard would have been the ephemeral opinion of the clubs, and not the earnest opinion of the silent but thoughtful persons to whom the moral character of their chief is a matter of real moment and concern." Newman wrote to him from the Oratory at Birmingham, "It is most noble, and I can congratulate you with greater reason and more hearty satisfaction upon it, than I could upon a score of triumphs at the hustings." The man of the world and the man at the club did not hide their disgust, but Phillimore was right, and great hosts of people of the other sort welcomed in this publication a sign of sincerity and simplicity and desire to take the public into that full confidence, which makes the ordinary politician tremble as undignified and indecorous.

That Mr. Gladstone had rightly divined the state of public feeling about Ireland was shown by the result. Manning put the case in apt words when he wrote to him: "I have been much struck by the absence of all serious opposition to your policy, and by the extensive and various support given to it in England and Scotland. It is not so much a change in men's thoughts, but a revelation of what they have been thinking." Heart and soul he flung himself into the labours of his canvass. The constituency for which he had sat in the expiring parliament was now divided, and with Mr. H. R. Grenfell for a colleague, he contested what had become South-West Lancashire. The breadth, the elevation, the freshness, the power, the measure, the high self-command of these speeches were never surpassed by any of his performances. When publicists warn us, and

rightly warn us, that rash expenditure of money extracted from the taxpayer and the ratepayer is the besetting vice and peril of democracy, and when some of them in the same breath denounce Mr. Gladstone as a demagogue pandering to the multitude, they should read the speech at Leigh, in which he assailed the [251] system of making things pleasant all round, stimulating local cupidity to feed upon the public purse, and scattering grants at the solicitation of individuals and classes. No minister that ever lived toiled more sedulously, in office and out of office, to avert this curse of popular government. The main staple of his discourse was naturally the Irish case, and though within the next twenty years he acquired a wider familiarity with detail, he never exhibited the large features of that case with more cogent and persuasive mastery. He told the story of the transformation of the franchise bill with a combined precision, completeness and lightness of hand that made his articles of charge at once extremely interesting and wholly unanswerable. In a vein of pleasant mockery, on the accusation that he was going to ruin and destroy the constitution, he reminded them that within his own recollection it had been wholly ruined and destroyed eight times: in 1828 by the repeal of the Corporation and Test acts; in 1829 by admitting Roman catholics to parliament; in 1832 by reform; in 1846 by free trade; in 1849 by repeal of the navigation law; in 1858 when Jews were allowed to sit in parliament; in 1866 when the government of Lord Russell had the incredible audacity to propose a reform bill with the intention of carrying it or falling in the attempt.

Elected At Greenwich

It was a magnificent campaign. But in South-West Lancashire the church of England was strong; orange prevailed vastly over green; and Mr. Gladstone was beaten. Happily he had in anticipation of the result, and by the care of friends, already been elected for Greenwich.[171] In the kingdom as a whole he was

[171] In Lancashire (Nov. 24) the numbers were—Cross, 7729; Turner, 7676; Gladstone, 7415; Grenfell, 6939. At Greenwich (Nov. 17)—Salomons, 6645;

triumphant. The liberal majority was 112. When the gross votes were added up, it was calculated that the liberals had a million and a half and the conservatives less than a million.[172] After a
[252] long era of torpor a powerful party thus once more came into being. The cause was excellent, but more potent than the cause was the sight of a leader with a resolute will, an unresting spirit of reform, and the genius of political action. This ascendency Mr. Gladstone maintained for quarter of a century to come.

II

On the afternoon of the first of December, he received at Hawarden the communication from Windsor. "I was standing by him," says Mr. Evelyn Ashley, "holding his coat on my arm while he in his shirt sleeves was wielding an axe to cut down a tree. Up came a telegraph messenger. He took the telegram, opened it and read it, then handed it to me, speaking only two words, 'Very significant,' and at once resumed his work. The message merely stated that General Grey would arrive that evening from Windsor. This of course implied that a mandate was coming from the Queen charging Mr. Gladstone with the formation of his first government.... After a few minutes the blows ceased, and Mr. Gladstone resting on the handle of his axe, looked up and with deep earnestness in his voice and with great intensity in his face, exclaimed, 'My mission is to pacify Ireland.' He then resumed his task, and never said another word till the tree was down."[173] General Grey reached Hawarden the next day, bringing with him the letter from the Queen.

Gladstone, 6351; Parker, 4661; Mahon, 4342.

[172] England and Wales, Liberal, 1,231,450, Conservative, 824,056, Liberal Majority, 407,393. Scotland, Liberal, 123,410, Conservative, 23,391, Liberal Majority 100,019. Ireland, Liberal, 53,379, Conservative, 38,083, Liberal Majority, 17,297.

[173] *National Review*, June 1898.

From the Queen.

December 1st, 1868.—Mr. Disraeli has tendered his resignation to the Queen. The result of the appeal to the country is too evident to require its being proved by a vote in parliament, and the Queen entirely agrees with Mr. Disraeli and his colleagues in thinking that the most dignified course for them to pursue, as also the best for the public interests, was immediate resignation. Under these circumstances the Queen must ask Mr. Gladstone, as the acknowledged leader of the liberal party, to undertake the formation of a new administration. With one or two exceptions, the reasons for which she has desired General Grey (the bearer of this letter) [253] to explain, the Queen would impose no restrictions on Mr. Gladstone as to the arrangement of the various offices in the manner which he believes to be best for the public service, and she trusts that he will find no difficulty in filling them up, or at least the greater part of them, so that the council may be held before the 13th. Mr. Gladstone will understand why the Queen would wish to be spared making any arrangements of this nature for the next few days after the 13th. The Queen adds what she said on a similar occasion two years and a half ago to Lord Derby, that she will not name any time for seeing Mr. Gladstone, who may wish to have an opportunity of consulting some of his friends, before he sees her; but that, as soon as he shall have done so, and expresses a desire to see the Queen, she will be ready to receive him.

Formation Of Government

One of his first letters after undertaking to form a government was to Lord Russell, to whom he said that he looked forward with hope and confidence to full and frequent communications, and to the benefit of his friendship and advice. “There remains, however, a question,” he went on; “you have an experience and knowledge to which no living statesman can pretend; of the benefit to be derived from it, I am sure that all with whom I can be likely to act would be deeply sensible. Would it be too great an invasion of your independence to ask you to consider

whether you could afford it as a member of the cabinet without the weight of any other responsibility?" Lord Russell replied in cordial terms, but said that the servitude of a cabinet, whether with or without a special office, was what he did not wish to encounter. "What I should have said," he added at a later date (Dec. 28), "if the office of the president of the council or the privy seal had been offered me, I do not know: at all events I am personally very well satisfied to be free from all responsibility." Sir George Grey also declined, on the ground of years: he was within one of the threescore and ten allotted to mortal man. Lord Halifax, on whose ability and experience both the Queen and Mr. Gladstone set special value, declined the Irish viceroyalty, and stood good-naturedly aside until 1870
[254] when he joined as privy seal. The inclusion in the same cabinet of Mr. Bright, who had been the chief apostle of reform, with Mr. Lowe, its fiercest persecutor, startled the country. As for Lowe, Lord Acton told me that he once informed Mr. Gladstone that Lowe had written the review of his *Financial Statements* in the periodical of which Acton was editor. "He told me at Grillion's that I thereby made him chancellor of the exchequer." With Bright he had greater difficulties. He often described how he wrestled with this admirable man from eleven o'clock until past midnight, striving to overcome his repugnance to office. The next day Bright wrote to him (Dec. 5): "Since I left you at midnight I have had no sleep, from which you may imagine the mental disturbance I have suffered from our long conversation last night. Nevertheless I am driven to the conclusion to take the step to which you invite me, surrendering my inclination and my judgment to your arguments and to the counsel of some whom I have a right to consider my friends.... I am deeply grateful to you for the confidence you are willing to place in me, and for the many kind words you spoke to me yesterday." In the parched air of official politics the relation of these two towards one another is a peculiar and a refreshing element. In the case

of Lord Clarendon, some difficulty was intimated from Windsor before Mr. Gladstone began his task. Mr. Gladstone says in one of his late notes:—

> Clarendon had already held with credit and success for a lengthened period the seals of the foreign office, and his presumptive title to resume them was beyond dispute. He was a man of free and entertaining and almost jovial conversation in society, and possibly some remark culled from the dinner hour had been reported to the Queen with carelessness or malignity. I do not know much, of the interior side of court gossip, but I have a very bad opinion of it, and especially on this ground, that while absolutely irresponsible it appears to be uniformly admitted as infallible. In this case, it was impossible for me to recede from my duty, and no grave difficulty arose. So far as I can recollect the Queen had very little to say in objection, and no keen desire to say it. Clarendon was the only living British statesman whose name carried any influence in the councils of Europe. Only eighteen [255]
> or twenty months remained to him; they were spent in useful activity. My relations with him were, as they were afterwards with Granville, close, constant, and harmonious.

First Cabinet

Of this cabinet Mr. Gladstone always spoke as one of the best instruments for government that ever were constructed.[174] Nearly everybody in it was a man of talent, character, and force, and showed high capacity for public business. In one or two cases, conformably to the old Greek saying, office showed the man; showed that mere cleverness, apart from judgment and discretion is only too possible, and that good intention only makes failure and incapacity in carrying the intention out, so much the more mortifying. The achievements of this cabinet as a whole, as we shall see, are a great chapter in the history of reform

[174] The reader will find the list of its members, now and at later periods of its existence, in the Appendix.

and the prudent management of national affairs. It forms one of the best vindications of the cabinet system, and of the powers of the minister who created, guided, controlled, and inspired it.

"And so," Manning, the close friend of other years, now wrote to him, "you are at the end men live for, but not, I believe, the end for which you have lived. It is strange so to salute you, but very pleasant.... There are many prayers put up among us for you, and mine are not wanting." At an earlier stage sympathetic resolutions had been sent to him from nonconformist denominations, and in writing to Dr. Allon who forwarded them, Mr. Gladstone said: "I thank you for all the kind words contained in your letter, but most of all for the assurance, not the first I am happy to say which has reached me, that many prayers are offered on my behalf. I feel myself by the side of this arduous undertaking a small creature; but where the Almighty sends us duties, He also sends the strength needful to perform them." To Mr. Arthur Gordon, the son of Lord Aberdeen, he wrote (Jan. 29, 1869):—

> As regards my own personal position, all its interior relations are up to this time entirely satisfactory. I myself, at the period of the Aberdeen administration, was as far as the world in general could possibly be, from either expecting or desiring it. I thought at that time that when Lord Russell's career should end, the Duke of Newcastle would be the proper person to be at the head of the government. But during the government of Lord Palmerston, and long before his health broke down, I had altered this opinion; for I thought I saw an alteration both in his tone of opinion, and in his vigour of administration and breadth of view. Since that time I have seen no alternative but that which has now come about, although I am sensible that it is a very indifferent one.

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On December 29 he enters in his diary: "This birthday opens my sixtieth year. I descend the hill of life. It would be a truer figure to say I ascend a steepening path with a burden ever

gathering weight. The Almighty seems to sustain and spare me for some purpose of His own, deeply unworthy as I know myself to be. Glory be to His name." In the closing hours of the year, he enters:—

> This month of December has been notable in my life as follows: *Dec. 1809.*—Born. 1827.—Left Eton. 1831.—Classes at Oxford. 1832.—Elected to parliament. 1838.—Work on Church and State published. 1834.—Took office as lord of the treasury. 1845.—Secretary of state. 1852.—Chancellor of exchequer. 1868.—First lord. Rather a frivolous enumeration. Yet it would not be so if the love of symmetry were carried with a well-proportioned earnestness and firmness into the higher parts of life. I feel like a man with a burden under which he must fall and be crushed if he looks to the right or left or fails from any cause to concentrate mind and muscle upon his progress step by step. This absorption, this excess, this constant ἄγαν is the fault of political life with its insatiable demands, which do not leave the smallest stock of moral energy unexhausted and available for other purposes.... Swimming for his life, a man does not see much of the country through which the river winds, and I probably know little of these years through which I busily work and live.... It has been a special joy of this December that our son Stephen is given to the church, "whose shoe latchet I am not worthy to unloose."

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Book VI. 1869-1874

Chapter I. Religious Equality. (1869)

> In the removal of this establishment I see the discharge of a debt of civil justice, the disappearance of a national, almost a worldwide reproach, a condition indispensable to the success of every effort to secure the peace and contentment of that country; finally relief to a devoted clergy from a false position, cramped and beset by hopeless prejudice, and the opening of a freer career to their sacred ministry.—GLADSTONE.

I

Anybody could pulverise the Irish church in argument, and to show that it ought to be disestablished and disendowed was the easiest thing in the world. But as often happens, what it was easy to show ought to be done, was extremely hard to do. Here Mr. Gladstone was in his great element. It was true to say that "never were the wheels of legislative machinery set in motion under conditions of peace and order and constitutional regularity to deal with a question greater or more profound," than when the historic protestant church in Ireland was severed from its sister church in England and from its ancient connection with the state. The case had been fully examined in parliament. After examination and decision there, it was discussed and decided in the constituencies of the United Kingdom. Even then many held

that the operation was too gigantic in its bearings, too complex in the mass of its detail, to be practicable. Never was our political system more severely tested, and never did it achieve a [258] completer victory. Every great organ of the national constitution came into active play. The sovereign performed a high and useful duty. The Lords fought hard, but yielded before the strain reached a point of danger. The prelates in the midst of anger and perturbation were forced round to statesmanship. The Commons stood firm and unbroken. The law, when at length it became law, effected the national purpose with extraordinary thoroughness and precision. And the enterprise was inspired, guided, propelled, perfected, and made possible from its inception to its close by the resource, temper, and incomparable legislative skill of Mr. Gladstone. That the removal of the giant abuse of protestant establishment in Ireland made a deeper mark on national well-being than other of his legislative exploits, we can hardly think, but—quite apart from the policy of the act, as to which there can now be scarcely two opinions—as a monument of difficulties surmounted, prejudices and violent or sullen heats overcome, rights and interests adjusted, I know not where in the records of our legislation to find its master.

The General Situation

With characteristic hopefulness and simplicity Mr. Gladstone tried to induce Archbishop Trench and others of the Irish hierarchy to come to terms. Without raising the cry of no surrender, they declined all approaches. If Gladstone, they said, were able to announce in the House of Commons a concordat with the Irish clergy, it would ruin them both with the laity of the Irish establishment, and with the English conservatives who had fought for them at the election and might well be expected, as a piece of party business if for no better reasons, to fight on for them in the House of Lords. Who could tell that the Gladstone majority would hold together? Though “no surrender” might be a bad cry, it was even now at the eleventh hour possible that “no popery” would be a good one. In short, they argued, this was one of the

cases where terms could only be settled on the field of battle. There were moderates, the most eminent being Bishop Magee of Peterborough, who had an interview with Mr. Gladstone at this stage, but nothing came of it. One Irish clergyman only, [259] Stopford the archdeacon of Meath, a moderate who disliked the policy but wished to make the best of the inevitable, gave Mr. Gladstone the benefit of his experience and ability. When the work was done, Mr. Gladstone wrote to the archdeacon more than once expressing his sense of the advantage derived from his "thorough mastery of the subject and enlightened view of the political situation." He often spoke of Stopford's "knowledge, terseness, discrimination, and just judgment."

Meanwhile his own course was clear. He did not lose a day:—

> *Dec. 13, 1868.*—Saw the Queen at one, and stated the case of the Irish church. It was graciously received. 24.—At night went to work on draft of Irish church measure, feeling the impulse. 25.—Christmas Day. Worked much on Irish church *abbozzo*. Finished it at night. 26.—Revised the Irish church draft and sent it to be copied with notes.

The general situation he described to Bishop Hinds on the last day of the year:—

> We cannot wait for the church of Ireland to make up her mind. We are bound, nay compelled, to make up ours. Every day of the existence of this government is now devoted to putting forward by some step of inquiry or deliberation the great duty we have undertaken. Our principles are already laid in the resolutions of the late House of Commons. But in the mode of applying them much may depend on the attitude of resistance or co-operation assumed by the Irish church. It is idle for the leading Irish churchmen to think "we will wait and see what they offer and then ask so much more." Our mode of warfare cannot but be influenced by the troops we lead. Our three *corps d'armée*, I may almost say, have been

Scotch presbyterians, English and Welsh nonconformists, and Irish Roman catholics. We are very strong in our minority of clerical and lay churchmen, but it is the strength of weight not of numbers. The English clergy as a body have done their worst against us and have hit us hard, as I know personally, in the counties. Yet we represent the national force, tested by a majority of considerably over a hundred voices. It is [260] hazardous in these times to tamper with such a force.

The preparation of the bill went rapidly forward:—

Hawarden, Jan. 13, 1869.—Wrote out a paper on the plan of the measure respecting the Irish church, intended perhaps for the Queen. Worked on Homer. We felled a lime. 14.—We felled another tree. Worked on Homer, but not much, for in the evening came the Spencers [from Dublin], also Archdeacon Stopford, and I had much Irish conversation with them. 15.—We felled an ash. Three hours conversation with the viceroy and the archdeacon. I went over much of the roughest ground of the intended measure; the archdeacon able and helpful. Also conversation with the viceroy, who went before 7. Worked on Homer at night. 19.—One hour on Homer with Sir J. Acton. Whist in evening. 20.—Further and long conversations on the Irish church question and its various branches with Granville, the attorney-general for Ireland, and in the evening with Dean Howson, also with Sir J. Acton. 21.—Wrote a brief abstract of the intended bill. Woodcutting. 23.—Saw the Queen [at Osborne] on the Irish church especially, and gave H.M. my paper with explanation, which appeared to be well taken. She was altogether at ease. We dined with H.M. afterwards. 24.—Saw her Majesty, who spoke very kindly about Lord Clarendon, Mr. Bright, Mr. Lowe, the Spanish crown, Prince Leopold, Mr. Mozley, and so forth, but not a word on the Irish church. *Feb. 4.*—A letter from H.M. to-day showed much disturbance, which I tried to soothe.

In February Lord Granville thought that it might do good if the Queen were to see Bishop Magee. Mr. Gladstone said to him in reply (Feb. 7, '69):—

> The case is peculiar and not free from difficulty. On the whole I think it would be wrong to place any limit upon the Queen's communications to the Bishop of Peterborough except this, that they would doubtless be made by H.M. to him for himself only, and that no part of them would go beyond him to any person whatever.

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Views Of The Queen

On Feb. 12, the Queen wrote to Mr. Gladstone from Osborne:—

> The Queen has seen the Bishop of Peterborough according to the suggestion made by Lord Granville with the sanction of Mr. Gladstone, and has communicated to him in the strictest confidence the correspondence which had passed between herself and Mr. Gladstone on the subject of the Irish church. She now sends Mr. Gladstone a copy of the remarks made by the bishop on the papers which she placed in his hands for perusal, and would earnestly entreat Mr. Gladstone's careful and dispassionate consideration of what he says. She would point especially to the suggestion which the bishop throws out of the intervention of the bench of English bishops. The country would feel that any negotiation conducted under the direction of the Archbishop of Canterbury would be perfectly safe, and from the concessions which the Bishop of Peterborough expresses his own readiness to make, the Queen is sanguine in her hope that such negotiations would result in a settlement of the question on conditions which would entirely redeem the pledges of the government and be satisfactory to the country. The Queen must therefore strongly deprecate the hasty introduction of the measure, which would serve only to commit the government to proposals from which they could not afterwards recede, while it is *certain* from what the

bishop says, that they would not be accepted on the other side, and thus an acrimonious contest would be begun, which, however it ended, would make any satisfactory settlement of the question impossible.

He replied on the following day:—

Feb. 13.—First the bishop suggests that the endowments posterior to the Reformation should be given to the church, and those preceding it to the Roman catholics. It would be more than idle and less than honest, were Mr. Gladstone to withhold from your Majesty his conviction that no negotiation founded on such a basis as this could be entertained, or, if entertained, could lead to any satisfactory result. Neither could Mr. Gladstone persuade the cabinet to adopt it, nor could the cabinet persuade the House of Commons, nor could cabinet and House of Commons united persuade the nation [262] to acquiesce, and the very attempt would not only prolong and embitter controversy, but would weaken authority in this country. For the thing contemplated is the very thing that the parliament was elected not to do.

Osborne, Feb. 14.—The Queen thanks Mr. Gladstone for his long letter, and is much gratified and relieved by the conciliatory spirit expressed throughout his explanations on this most difficult and important question. The Queen thinks it would indeed be most desirable for him to see the Archbishop of Canterbury—and she is quite ready to write to the archbishop to inform him of her wish and of Mr. Gladstone's readiness to accede to it, should he wish it.

"My impression is," Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Granville (Feb. 14), "that we should make a great mistake if we were to yield on the point of time. It is not time that is wanted; we have plenty of time to deal with the Bishop of Peterborough's points so far as they can be dealt with at all. Sir R. Palmer has been here to-day with overtures from persons of importance unnamed.

I think probably the Archbishop of Canterbury and others.[175] I do not doubt that on the other side they want time, for their suggestions are crude."

Bill Introduced

On the following day (Feb. 15) the Queen wrote to the archbishop, telling him that she had seen Mr. Gladstone, "who shows the most conciliatory disposition," and who at once assured her "of his readiness—indeed, his anxiety—to meet the archbishop and to communicate freely with him." The correspondence between the Queen and the archbishop has already been made known, and most of that between the archbishop and Mr. Gladstone, and I need not here reproduce it, for, in fact, at this first stage nothing particular came of it.[176] "The great mistake, as it seems to me," Mr. Gladstone writes to Archdeacon Stopford (Feb. 8), "made by the Irish bishops and others is this. They seem to think that our friends are at the mercy of our adversaries, whereas our adversaries [263] are really at the mercy of our friends, and it is to these latter that the government, especially in the absence of other support, must look." Meanwhile the bill had made its way through the cabinet:—

> *Feb. 8.*—Cabinet, on the heads of Irish Church bill.. 9.—Cabinet, we completed the heads of the Irish Church measure to my great satisfaction. 19.—At Lambeth, 12-1-½ explaining to the archbishop. 22.—Conclave on Irish church, 3-4-½ and 5-½-7-3/4. After twenty hours' work we finished the bill for this stage.

II

On March 1, Mr. Gladstone brought his plan before a House of Commons eager for its task, triumphant in its strength out of

[175] No: Archbishop Trench and Lord Carnarvon. See Selborne, *Memorials*, i. pp. 114-6.

[176] See *Life of Tait*, ii. pp. 8-14.

doors, and confident that its leader would justify the challenge with which for so many months the country had been ringing. The details are no longer of concern, and only broader aspects survive. A revolutionary change was made by the complete and definite severance of the protestant episcopal church in Ireland alike from the established church of England and from the government of the United Kingdom. A far more complex and delicate task was the winding up of a great temporal estate, the adjustment of many individual and corporate interests, and the distribution of some sixteen millions of property among persons and purposes to be determined by the wisdom of a parliament, where rival claims were defended by zealous and powerful champions influenced by the strongest motives, sacred and profane, of party, property, and church. It was necessary to deal with the sums, troublesome though not considerable, allotted to the presbyterians and to the catholic seminary at Maynooth. Machinery was constructed for the incorporation of a body to represent the emancipated church, and to hold property for any of its uses and purposes. Finally, the residue of the sixteen millions, after all the just demands upon it had been satisfied, computed at something between seven and eight millions, was appropriated in the words of the preamble, "not for the maintenance of any church or clergy, nor for the teaching of religion, but mainly for the relief of unavoidable calamity and suffering" not touched by the poor law. [264]

The speech in which this arduous scheme was explained to parliament was regarded as Mr. Gladstone's highest example of lucid and succinct unfolding of complicated matter. Mr. Disraeli said there was not a single word wasted. So skilfully were the facts marshalled, that every single hearer believed himself thoroughly to comprehend the eternal principles of the commutation of tithe-rent-charge, and the difference in the justice due to a transitory and a permanent curate. Manning said that the only two legislative acts in our history that approached it in importance for Ireland were the repeal of the penal laws and the

Act of Union. However this may be, it is hardly an excess to say that since Pitt, the author of the Act of Union, the author of the Church Act was the only statesman in the roll of the century, capable at once of framing such a statute and expounding it with the same lofty and commanding power.[177]

Second Reading

In a fugitive note, Mr. Gladstone named one or two of the speakers on the second reading: "Ball: elaborate and impressive, answered with great power by Irish attorney-general. Bright: very eloquent and striking. Young George Hamilton: a first speech of great talent, admirably delivered. Hardy: an uncompromising defence of laws and institutions as they are, with a severe picture of the character and civil conduct of the Irish population." Mr. Disraeli's speech was even more artificial than usual. It was Mr. Hardy and Dr. Ball who gave cogent and strenuous expression to the argument and passion of the church case. When the division came, called by Mr. Gladstone "notable and historic" (March 24), the majority in a crowded house was 118.[178] "Our division this morning," Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Granville, "even exceeded expectations, and will powerfully propel the bill." The size of this majority deserves the reader's attention, for it marked the opening of a new parliamentary era. In 1841 Peel had turned out the whigs by a majority of 91. Lord John [265] Russell was displaced in 1852 by 9. The Derby government was thrown out in December 1852 by 19. The same government was again thrown out seven years later by 13. Palmerston was beaten in 1857 by 14, and the next year by 19. In 1864 Palmerston's majority on the Danish question was only 18. The second reading of the Franchise bill of 1866 was only carried by 5, and ministers were afterwards beaten upon it by 11. With Mr. Gladstone's accession the ruling majority for a long time stood at its highest

[177] The Irish Church bill is the greatest monument of genius that I have yet known from Gladstone; even his marvellous budgets are not so marvellous.—*Dr. Temple to Acland, March 12, 1869.*

[178] 368 against 250.

both in size and stability.

With invincible optimism, Mr. Gladstone believed that he would now have "material communications from the heads of the Irish church"; but letters from Lord Spencer at Dublin Castle informed him that, on the contrary, they were angrier after they knew what the majority meant, than they were before. At the diocesan conferences throughout Ireland the bill was denounced as highly offensive to Almighty God, and the greatest national sin ever committed. The Archdeacon of Ossory told churchmen to trust to God and keep their powder dry, though he afterwards explained that he did not allude to carnal weapons. The cabinet was called a cabinet of brigands, and protestant pastors were urged to see to it that before they gave up their churches to an apostate system a barrel of gunpowder and a box of matches should blow the cherished fabrics to the winds of heaven.

Even Mr. Disraeli's astuteness was at fault. The Archbishop of Canterbury perceived from his conversation that he was bent on setting the liberals by the ears, that he looked for speeches such as would betray utter dissension amid professed agreement, that he had good hopes of shattering the enemy, and "perhaps of playing over again the game that had destroyed Lord Russell's Reform bill of 1866." The resounding majority on the second reading, he told the archbishop, was expected; it created no enthusiasm; it was a mechanical majority.[179] [266]

The bill swept through the stages of committee without alteration of substance and with extraordinary celerity, due not merely to the "brute majority," nor to the confidence that all was sure to be undone in another place, but to the peculiar

[179] *Life of Tait*, ii. pp. 18-19. How little he was himself the dupe of these illusions was shown by the next sentence, "What is of importance now is the course to be pursued by the House of Lords." Bishop Magee met Disraeli on Jan. 28, '69. "Dizzy said very little," he wrote to a friend, "and that merely as a politician, on the possibilities in the House of Lords. He regards it as a lost game in the Commons."—*Life of Archbishop Magee*, i. p. 214.

powers developed by the minister. From the speech in which he unfolded his plan, down to the last amendment on report, he showed a mastery alike of himself and of his project and of the business from day to day in hand, that routed opposition and gave new animation and ardour to the confidence of his friends. For six or seven hours a day he astonished the House by his power of attention, unrelaxed yet without strain, by his double grasp of leading principle and intricate detail, by his equal command of legal and historic controversy and of all the actuarial niceties and puzzles of commutation. "In some other qualities of parliamentary statesmanship," says one acute observer of that time, "as an orator, a debater, and a tactician he has rivals; but in the powers of embodying principles in legislative form and preserving unity of purpose through a multiplicity of confusing minutiae he has neither equal nor second among living statesmen."[180] The truth could not be better summed up. He carried the whole of his party with him, and the average majority in divisions on the clauses was 113. Of one dangerous corner, he says:—

> *May 6.*—H of C, working Irish Church bill. Spoke largely on Maynooth. [Proposal to compensate Maynooth out of the funds of the Irish church.] The final division on the pinching point with a majority of 107 was the most creditable (I think) I have ever known.

By a majority of 114 the bill was read a third time on the last day of May.

III

The House Of Lords

The contest was now removed from the constituencies and their representatives in parliament to the citadel of privilege. The issue

[180] See *Daily News*, April 26, 1869.

was no longer single, and the struggle for religious equality in Ireland was henceforth merged before the public eye in a conflict for the supremacy of the Commons in England. Perhaps I should [267] not have spoken of religious equality, for in fact the establishment was known to be doomed, and the fight turned upon the amount of property with which the free church was to go forth to face its new fortunes. “I should urge the House of Lords,” wrote the Archbishop of Canterbury to Mr. Gladstone (June 3), “to give all its attention to saving as large an endowment as possible.”

As at the first stage the Queen had moved for conciliatory courses, so now she again desired Archbishop Tait to communicate with the prime minister. To Mr. Gladstone himself she wrote from Balmoral (June 3): “The Queen thanks Mr. Gladstone for his kind letter. She has invariably found him most ready to enter into her views and to understand her feelings.” The first question was whether the Lords should reject the bill on the second reading:—

> It is eminently desirable, Mr. Gladstone wrote to the archbishop (June 4), that the bill should be read a second time. But if I compare two methods, both inexpedient, one that of rejection on the second reading, the other that of a second reading followed by amendments inconsistent with the principle, I know no argument in favour of the latter, except what relates to the very important question of the position and true interest of the House of Lords itself.

At the same time he promised the archbishop that any views of his upon amendments would have the most careful attention of himself and his colleagues, and “they would be entertained in a spirit not of jealousy but of freedom, with every desire to bring them into such a shape that they may be in furtherance, and not in derogation, of the main design of the bill.”

General Grey, the Queen's secretary, told Mr. Gladstone that she had communicated with the archbishop, “having heard that

violent counsels were likely to prevail, and that in spite of their leaders, the opposition in the House of Lords was likely to try and throw out the measure on the second reading." Her own feeling
[268] was expressed in General Grey's letter to the archbishop of the same date, of which a copy was sent to the prime minister:—

> Mr. Gladstone is not ignorant (indeed the Queen has never concealed her feeling on the subject) how deeply her Majesty deplores the necessity, under which he conceived himself to lie, of raising the question as he has done; or of the apprehensions of which she cannot divest herself, as to the possible consequences of the measure which he has introduced. These apprehensions, her Majesty is bound to say, still exist in full force; but considering the circumstances under which the measure has come to the House of Lords, the Queen cannot regard without the greatest alarm the probable effect of its absolute rejection in that House. Carried, as it has been, by an overwhelming and steady majority through a House of Commons, chosen expressly to speak the feeling of the country on the question, there seems no reason to believe that any fresh appeal to the people would lead to a different result. The rejection of the bill, therefore, on the second reading, would only serve to bring the two Houses into collision, and to prolong a dangerous agitation on the subject.

Mr. Gladstone replied:—

> *June 5.*—From such information as has indirectly reached Mr. Gladstone, he fears that the leaders of the majority in the House of Lords will undoubtedly oppose the second reading of the Irish Church bill, of which Lord Harrowby is to propose the rejection. He understands that Lord Salisbury, as well as Lord Carnarvon, decidedly, but in vain, objected to this course at the meeting held to-day at the Duke of Marlborough's. Very few of the bishops were present. Lord Derby, it is said, supported the resolution. Although a division

> must now be regarded as certain, and as very formidable, all hope need not be abandoned that your Majesty's wise counsels through the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the sagacity of the peers themselves with reference to the security and stability of their position in the legislature, may avail to frustrate an unwise resolution.

"How much more effectually," Mr. Gladstone wrote to Hawarden, "could the Queen assist in the settlement of this question were she not six hundred miles off." As it was, she [269] took a step from which Mr. Gladstone hoped for "most important consequences," in writing direct to Lord Derby, dwelling on the danger to the Lords of a collision with the Commons. In a record of these proceedings prepared for Mr. Gladstone (August 4, '69), Lord Granville writes:—

> Before the second reading of the Irish Church bill in the House of Lords, I was asked by the Archbishop of York to meet him and the Archbishop of Canterbury. They said it was impossible for them to vote for the second reading in any case, but before they decided to abstain from voting against it they wished to know how far the government would act in a conciliatory spirit. I made to them the same declaration that I afterwards made in the House, and after seeing you I had another interview with the Archbishop of Canterbury. I told his grace that it was impossible for the government to suggest amendments against themselves, but I gave a hint of the direction in which such amendments might be framed, and, without mentioning that the suggestion came from you, I said that if his grace would tell Dr. Ball that he only wished to propose amendments which it would be possible for the government to accept, that learned gentleman would know better than others how it could be done. The archbishop, however seems chiefly to have made use of Dr. Ball to supply him with arguments against the government.

The result was doubtful to the very end. It was three o'clock in the morning (June 19) before the close of a fine debate—fine not merely from the eloquence of the speakers and cogency of argument on either side, but because there was a deep and real issue, and because the practical conclusion was not foregone. It was the fullest House assembled in living memory. Three hundred and twenty-five peers voted. The two English archbishops did not vote, and Thirlwall was the only prelate who supported the second reading. It was carried by a majority of 33. In 1857 Lord Derby's vote of censure on Palmerston for the China war was defeated by 36, and these two were the only cases in which the conservatives had been beaten in the Lords for twenty years. Thirty-six conservative peers, including Lord Salisbury, voted away from their party in favour of the second reading.

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IV

Destructive Amendments

For the moment ministers breathed freely, but the bill was soon in the trough of the sea. The archbishop wrote to the Queen that they had decided if they could not get three million pounds to float the new church upon, they would take their chance of what might happen by postponing the bill until next year. Asked by the Queen what could be done (July 10), Lord Granville, being at Windsor, answered that the cabinet would not make up their mind until they knew how far the Lords would go in resistance, but he thought it right to tell her that there was no chance of ministers agreeing to postpone the bill for another year. The day after this conversation, the Queen wrote again to the archbishop, asking him seriously to reflect, in case the concessions of the government should not go quite so far as he might himself wish, whether the postponement of the settlement for another year would not be likely to result rather in worse than in better terms

for the church. She trusted that he would himself consider, and endeavour to induce others to consider, any concessions offered by the House of Commons in the most conciliatory spirit, rather than to try and get rid of the bill. “The amendments,” said Mr. Gladstone, “seem to mean war to the knife.”

After the second reading a tory lady of high station told Lord Clarendon and Mr. Delane that in her opinion a friendly communication might have great influence on Lord Salisbury's course.

> I therefore wrote to him (Lord Granville says in the memorandum already referred to), stating why on public and personal grounds it was desirable that he should meet you. I said that although it would be difficult for us to initiate suggestions, yet from your personal regard for him such a conversation would advance matters. He consented, stating that he was in communication as to amendments with Lord Cairns and the archbishop. He was extremely desirous that no one should know of the interview. You were of opinion that the interview had done good, and I wrote to ask Lord Salisbury whether he would like me to put dots on some of your i's. He declined, and considered the interview had been unsatisfactory, but [271]
> gave me an assurance of his desire to avoid a conflict.... On the 4th of July I wrote again suggesting a compromise on Lord Carnarvon's clause. He declined, that clause being the one thing they cared about. He ended by telling me his growing impression was, that there would be no Church bill this session.

The general result of the operations of the Lords was to leave disestablishment complete, and the legal framework of the bill undisturbed. Disendowment, on the other hand, was reduced to a shadow. An additional sum of between three and four millions was taken for the church, and the general upshot was, out of a property of sixteen millions, to make over thirteen or fourteen millions to an ecclesiastical body wholly exempt from

state control. This, Mr. Gladstone told the Queen, the House of Commons would never accept, and the first effect of persistence in such a course would be a stronger move against the episcopal seats in the House of Lords than had been seen for more than two hundred years. He ridiculed as it deserved the contention that the nation had not passed judgment on the question of disendowment, and he insisted that the government could not go further than three quarters of a million towards meeting the extravagant claims of the Lords. Confessing his disappointment at the conduct of the episcopal body, even including the archbishop, he found a certain consolation in reflecting that equally on the great occasions of 1829 and 1831, though 'the mild and wise Archbishop Howley was its leader,' that body failed either to meet the desires of the country, or to act upon a far-sighted view of the exigencies of the church. One point obstinately contested was the plan for the future application of the surplus. A majority of the Lords insisted on casting out the words of the preamble providing that the residue should not be applied for purposes of religion, and substituting in one shape or another the principle of concurrent endowment, so hostile, as Mr. Gladstone judged it, to the peace of Ireland, and so irreconcilable with public feeling in England and Scotland.

[272] On July 12, the bill came back to the Commons. The tension had hardly yet begun to tell upon him, but Mr. Gladstone enters on these days:—

> *July 11.*—Formidable accounts from and through Windsor. 12.—The time grows more and more anxious. 15.—This day I received from a Roman catholic bishop the assurance that he offered mass, and that many pray for me; and from Mr. Spurgeon (as often from others), an assurance of the prayers of the nonconformists. I think in these and other prayers lies the secret of the strength of body which has been given me in unusual measure during this very trying year.

This was the day on which, amid the ardent cheers of his party, he arose to announce to the House the views of the government. He was in no compromising mood. In a short speech he went through the amendments made by men so out of touch with the feeling of the country that they might have been "living in a balloon." One by one he moved the rejection of all amendments that involved the principle of concurrent endowment, the disposal of the surplus, or the postponement of the date of disestablishment. He agreed, however, to give a lump sum of half a million in lieu of private benefactions, to readjust the commutation terms, and make other alterations involving a further gift of £280,000 to the church. When the Commons concluded the consideration of the Lords' amendments (July 16), Mr. Gladstone observed three things: first, that the sentiment against concurrent endowment in any form was overwhelming; second, that not only was no disposition shown to make new concessions, but concessions actually made were sorely grudged; and third, that the tories were eager to postpone the destination of the residuary property.

V

Difficulties Thicken

On July 16, the bill, restored substantially to its first shape, was again back on the table of the Lords, and shipwreck seemed for five days to be inevitable. On July 20, at eleven o'clock, by a majority of 175 to 93, the Lords once more excluded from the preamble the words that the Commons had placed and replaced there, in order to declare the policy of parliament on matters ecclesiastical in Ireland. This involved a meaning which Mr. [273] Gladstone declared that no power on earth could induce the Commons to accept. The crisis was of unsurpassed anxiety for the prime minister. He has fortunately left his own record of its

phases:[181]—

> *Saturday, July 17.*—On the 16th of July the amendments made by the Lords in the Irish Church bill had been completely disposed of by the House of Commons. The last division, taken on the disposal of the residue, had, chiefly through mere lazy absences, reduced the majority for the government to 72. This *relative* weakness offered a temptation to the opposition to make play upon the point. The cabinet met the next forenoon. We felt on the one hand that it might be difficult to stake the bill on the clause for the disposal of the residue, supposing that to be the single remaining point of difference; but that the postponement of this question would be a great moral and political evil, and that any concession made by us had far better be one that would be of some value to the disestablished church.
>
> By desire of the cabinet I went to Windsor in the afternoon, and represented to H.M. what it was in our power to do; namely, although we had done all we could do upon the merits, yet, for the sake of peace and of the House of Lords, [we were willing], (*a*) to make some one further pecuniary concession to the church of sensible though not very large amount; (*b*) to make a further concession as to curates, slight in itself; (*c*) to amend the residue clause so as to give to parliament the future control, and to be content with simply declaring the principle on which the property should be distributed. The Queen, while considering that she could not be a party to this or that particular scheme, agreed that it might be proper to make a representation to the archbishop to the general effect that the views of the government at this crisis of the measure were such as deserved to be weighed, and to promote confidential communication between us. She intimated her intention to employ the Dean of Windsor as a medium of communication between herself and the archbishop, and wished me to explain particulars fully to him. I went to the deanery, and, not finding

[181] The memorandum is dated Aug. 14, 1869.

the dean, had written as much as here follows on a scrap of paper, when he came in.... [274]

The object of this paper was to induce the archbishop to discountenance any plan for pressing the postponement of the provisions respecting the residue, and to deal with us in preference respecting any practicable concession to the church. When the dean came in, I explained this further, recited the purport of my interview with the Queen, and on his asking me confidentially for his own information, I let him know that the further pecuniary concession we were prepared to recommend would be some £170,000 or £180,000.

Sunday, July 18.—In the afternoon Lord Granville called on me and brought me a confidential memorandum, containing an overture which Mr. Disraeli had placed in the hands of Lord Bessborough for communication to us. [Memorandum not recoverable.] He had represented the terms as those which he had with much difficulty induced Lord Cairns to consent to. While the contention as to the residue was abandoned, and pecuniary concessions alone were sought, the demand amounted, according to our computation, to between £900,000 and £1,000,000.... This it was evident was utterly inadmissible. I saw no possibility of approach to it; and considered that a further quarter of a million or thereabouts was all that the House of Commons could be expected or asked further to concede. On the same afternoon Lord Granville, falling in with Mr. Goschen, asked him what he thought the very most that could be had—would it be £500,000? Goschen answered £300,000, and with this Glyn agreed. Mr. Disraeli desired an answer before three on Monday.

Monday, July 19.—Those members of the government who had acted as a sort of committee in the Irish church question met in the afternoon. We were all agreed in opinion that the Disraeli overture must be rejected, though without closing the door; and a reply was prepared in this sense, which Lord Granville undertook to send. [*Draft, in the above sense that no sum approaching £1,000,000 could be entertained.*]

Meantime the archbishop had arrived in Downing Street, in pursuance of the arrangements of Saturday; and a paper was either now drawn, or sanctioned by my colleagues, I [275] do not remember which, in order to form the basis of my communication to the archbishop. I returned from my interview, and reported, as I afterwards did to the Dean of Windsor, that his tone was friendly, and that he appeared well disposed to the sort of arrangement I had sketched.

Tuesday, July 20.—The archbishop, who had communicated with Lord Cairns in the interval, came to me early to-day and brought a memorandum as a basis of agreement, which, to my surprise, demanded higher terms than those of Mr. Disraeli.[182] I told the archbishop the terms in which we had already expressed ourselves to Mr. Disraeli.... Meantime an answer had come from Mr. Disraeli stating that he could not do more. Then followed the meeting of the opposition peers at the Duke of Marlborough's.

On the meeting of the Houses, a few of us considered what course was to be taken if the Lords should again cast out of the preamble the words which precluded concurrent endowment; and it was agreed to stay the proceedings for the time, and consider among ourselves what further to do. [Lord Granville has a pencil note on the margin, "The first order I received was to throw up the bill, to which I answered that I could not do more than adjourn the debate."] Lord Granville made this announcement accordingly after the Lords had, upon a hot debate and by a large majority, again excluded our words from the preamble [173: 95]. This had been after a speech from Lord Cairns, in which he announced his intention of moving other amendments which he detailed, and which were in general conformable to the proposals already made to

[182] 1. The Lords' amendment as to curates to be adopted, £380,000. 2. The Ulster glebes, 465,000. 3. The glebe houses to be free, 150,000. Total £995,000.

Or the Bishop of Peterborough's amendment as to the tax upon livings in lieu of No. 3, would carry a heavier charge by 124,000. Total £1,119,000.

us. The first disposition of several of us this evening, myself included, was to regard the proceeding of the opposition as now complete; since the whole had been announced, the first stroke struck, and the command shown of a force of peers amply sufficient to do the rest.[183] ... The idea did not, [276] however, include an absolute abandonment of the bill, but only the suspension of our responsibility for it, leaving the opposition to work their own will, and with the intention, when this had been done, of considering the matter further....

Wednesday, July 21.—The cabinet met at 11; and I went to it in the mind of last night. We discussed, however, at great length all possible methods of proceeding that occurred to us. The result was stated in a letter of mine to the Queen, of which I annex a copy. [*See Appendix. He enumerates the various courses considered, and states that the course adopted was to go through the endowment amendments, and if they were carried adversely, then to drop their responsibility.*]

Most of the cabinet were desirous to go on longer; others, myself included, objected to proceeding to the end of the bill or undertaking to remit the bill again to the House of Commons as of our own motion. It occurred to me, however, that we might proceed as far as to the end of the many amendments, about the middle of the bill; and this appeared to meet the views of all, even of those who would have preferred doing more, or less.

Thursday, July 22.—I was laid up to-day, and the transactions were carried on by Lord Granville, in communication with me from time to time at my house. First he brought me a note he had received from Lord Cairns.

This, dated July 22, was to the effect that Lord Cairns had Action Of Lord Cairns

[183] The version in society was that "Gladstone wanted to throw up the bill after the debate of last Tuesday, when the words of the preamble were re-inserted, but he was outvoted in his cabinet; and it is said that Lord Granville told him that if he gave up the bill he must find somebody else to lead the Lords."—(July 22, 1869), *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, ii. p. 409.

no right and no desire to ask for any information as to the course proposed that night; but that if the statements as to the intention of the government to proceed with the consideration of the amendments were correct, and if Lord Granville thought any advantage likely to result from it, Lord Cairns would be ready, "as you know I have throughout been, to confer upon a mode by which without sacrifice of principle or dignity upon either side the remaining points of difference might be arranged." The
[277] proceedings of this critical day are narrated by Lord Granville in a memorandum to Mr. Gladstone, dated August 4:—

> After seeing you I met Lord Cairns at the colonial office. He offered me terms.[184] ... I asked him whether, in his opinion, he, the archbishop, and I could carry anything we agreed upon. He said, "Yes, certainly." After seeing you I met Lord Cairns a second time in his room at the House of Lords. I asked as a preliminary to giving any opinion on his amendments, how he proposed to deal with the preamble. He said, "to leave it as amended by the Lords." I then proposed the words which were afterwards adopted in the 68th clause. He was at first taken aback, but admitted that he had personally no objection to them. He asked what was the opposition to be feared. I suggested some from Lord Grey. He believed this to be certain, but immaterial. I objected *in toto* to Lord Salisbury's clause or its substitute. He was unwilling to yield, chiefly on Lord Salisbury's account, but finally consented. We agreed upon the commutation clause if the 7 and the 5 per cent. were lumped together. On the curates clause we could come to no agreement. He proposed to see Lord Salisbury and the

[184] They were somewhat but not very greatly improved. The Ulster glebes, however, were gone. He now demanded: 1. The acceptance of the amendment respecting curates = £380,000; 2. Five per cent, to be added to the seven per cent, on commutations = £300,000; 3. The glebe houses to be given to the church at ten years' purchase of the sites, a slight modification of Lord Salisbury's amendment = £140,000. From this it appeared that even in the mid hours of this final day Lord Cairns asked above £800,000.

> archbishop, and to meet again at four at the colonial office. He spoke with fairness as to the difficulty of his position, and the risk he ran with his own party. I again saw you and asked the Irish attorney-general to be present at the last interview. I stated to him in Lord Cairns's presence how far we agreed, and expressed my regret that on the last point—the curates—our difference was irreconcilable. Lord Cairns said he hoped not, and proceeded to argue strongly in favour of his proposal. He at last, however, at 4.30, compromised the matter by accepting five years instead of one. I shook his hand, which was trembling with nervousness. We discussed the form of announcing the arrangement to the House. We at once agreed it was better to tell the whole truth, and soon settled that it would be better for its success that he should [278] announce the details. I was afterwards apprehensive that this latter arrangement might be disadvantageous to us, but nothing could be better or fairer than his statement. I cannot finish this statement, which I believe is accurate, without expressing my admiration at the firmness and conciliation which you displayed in directing me in all these negotiations.

"The news was brought to me on my sofa," Mr. Gladstone says, "and between five and six I was enabled to telegraph to the Queen. My telegram was followed up by a letter at 7 P.M., which announced that the arrangement had been accepted by the House of Lords, and that a general satisfaction prevailed." To the Queen he wrote (July 22):—

> Mr. Gladstone is at a loss to account for the great change in the tone and views of the opposition since Sunday and Monday, and even Tuesday last, but on this topic it is needless to enter. As to the principal matters, the basis of the arrangement on the side of the government is much the same as was intended when Mr. Gladstone had the honour of an audience at Windsor on Saturday; but various minor concessions have been added. Mr. Gladstone does not doubt that, if the majority of the

> House of Lords should accede to the advice of Lord Cairns, the government will be able to induce the House of Commons to agree on the conditions proposed. Mr. Gladstone would in vain strive to express to your Majesty the relief, thankfulness, and satisfaction, with which he contemplates not only the probable passing of what many believe to be a beneficent and necessary measure, but the undoubted and signal blessing of an escape from a formidable constitutional conflict. The skill, patience, assiduity, and sagacity of Lord Granville in the work of to-day demand from Mr. Gladstone the tribute of his warm admiration.

On reviewing this whole transaction, and doing full justice to the attitude both of the Queen and the archbishop, the reader will be inclined to agree with old Lord Halifax: "I think we owe a good turn to Cairns, without whose *decision* on Thursday I hardly think that the settlement could have been effected. Indeed
[279] Derby's conduct proves what difficulty there would have been, if Cairns had not taken upon himself the responsibility of acting as he did."

Among interesting letters was one from Manning (July 24): "My joy over the event is not only as a catholic, though that must be, as it ought to be, my highest motive, but as an Englishman to whom, as I remember your once saying, the old English monarchy is dear next after the catholic church. But at this time I will only add that I may wish you joy on personal reasons. I could hardly have hoped that you could so have framed, mastered, and carried through the bill from first to last so complete, so unchanged in identity of principle and detail, and let me add with such unwearying and sustained self-control and forbearance."

The diary gives us a further glimpse of these agitating days:—

> *July 20.*—Conclave of colleagues on Irish church proceedings. An anxious day, a sad evening. 21.—Cabinet 11-2-1/4, stiff, but good. 22.—I was obliged to take to my sofa and spent the

day so in continual interviews with Granville, Glyn, West, Sullivan—especially the first—on the details and particulars of the negotiations respecting the Irish Church bill. The favourable issue left me almost unmanned in the reaction from a sharp and stern tension of mind. 23.—My attack did not lessen. Dr. Clark came in the morning and made me up for the House, whither I went 2-5 P.M., to propose concurrence in the Lords' amendments. Up to the moment I felt very weak, but this all vanished when I spoke and while the debate lasted. Then I went back to bed. 25.—Weak still. I presumed over much in walking a little and fell back at night to my lowest point.

Sir Robert Phillimore records:—

July 21.—Found Gladstone at breakfast, calm, pale, but without a doubt as to the course which the government must pursue, viz.: to maintain upon every important point the bill as sent back by the Commons, probably an autumn session, a bill sternly repeated by the Commons, too probably without the clauses favourable to the Irish church. 23.—Nothing talked or written of but the political marvel of yesterday. Gladstone in a speech universally praised proposed to the House of Commons the bill as now modified, and it passed with much [280] harmony, broken by an Orange member. Gladstone very unwell, and ought to have been in bed when he made his speech. 24.—Gladstone still very weak but in a state of calm happiness at the unexpected turn which the Irish bill had taken. Does not now know the origin or history of the sudden resolution on the part of the leaders of the opposition. I am satisfied that Disraeli was alarmed and thoroughly frightened at the state of the House of Commons and the country, that Cairns was determined to regain what he had practically lost or was losing, the leadership of the Lords, and that many of his party were frightened at the madness and folly of Tuesday night considered after a day's reflection.... Above all

> there was a well-grounded alarm on the part of Cairns and his immediate supporters in the Lords, that their order was in imminent danger. Bluster disappeared, and a retreat, as decent as well could be expected, was made from a situation known to be untenable. They had never expected that Gladstone would drop the bill. 25.—Much conversation with Gladstone, who is still very weak. He wrote to the Archbishop of Dublin to say in effect, that as a private churchman he would be glad to assist in any way the archbishop could point out in the organising of the voluntary church in Ireland.

Sir Thomas Acland writes, August 3, 1869:—

> I stayed at House of Commons perforce till about 1.30 or 2, and then walked away with Gladstone through the Park. It is beautiful to see his intense enjoyment of the cool fresh air, the trees, the sky, the gleaming of light on the water, all that is refreshing in contrast to the din of politics.

A month later the Archbishop of Canterbury found Mr. Gladstone at Lord Granville's at Walmer Castle:—

> Reached Walmer Castle about 6.30. Found Gladstone lying in blankets on the ramparts eating his dinner, looking still very ill.... He joined us at night full of intelligence. His fierce vigour all the better for being a little tempered.... Much interesting conversation about the state of the church and morality in Wales, also about leading ecclesiastics. I gather that he will certainly nominate Temple for a bishopric.[185]

[281]

[185] *Life of Archbishop Tait*, ii. p. 45.

Chapter II. First Chapter Of An Agrarian Revolution. (1870)

> The Irish Land Act of 1870 in its consequences was certainly one of the most important measures of the nineteenth century.—LECKY.

I

In the beginning of 1870 one of Mr. Gladstone's colleagues wrote of him to another, “I fear that he is steering straight upon the rocks.” So it might well seem to any who knew the unplumbed depths on which he had to shape his voyage. Irish history has been said to resemble that of Spain for the last three centuries,—the elaboration of all those ideas of law and political economy most unsuited to the needs of the nation concerned. Such ideas, deeply cherished in Britain where they had succeeded, Mr. Gladstone was now gradually drawn forward to reverse and overthrow in Ireland where they had ended in monstrous failure. Here a pilot's eye might well see jagged reefs. The occasion was the measure for dealing with the land of Ireland, that he had promised at the election. The difficulty arose from the huge and bottomless ignorance of those in whose hands the power lay. Mr. Gladstone in the course of these discussions said, and said truly, of the learned Sir Roundell Palmer, that he knew no more of land tenures in Ireland than he knew of land tenures in the moon. At the beginning much the same might have been observed of the cabinet, of the two houses of parliament, and of the whole mass of British electors. No doubt one effect of this great ignorance was to make Mr. Gladstone dictator. Still ignorance left all the more power to prejudice and interests. We may imagine the task. The cabinet was in the main made up of landlords, lawyers,

hardened and convicted economists,—not economists like Mill, [282] but men saturated with English ideas of contract, of competitive rent, of strict rule of supply and demand. Mr. Bright, it is true, had a profound conviction that the root of Irish misery and disorder lay in the land question. Here he saw far and deep. But then Mr. Bright had made up his mind that the proper solution of the land question was the gradual transformation of the tenants into owners, and this strong preconception somewhat narrowed his vision. Even while Mr. Gladstone was in the middle of his battle on the church, Bright wrote to him (May 21, '69):—

> When the Irish church question is out of the way, we shall find all Ireland, north and south alike, united in demanding something on the land question much broader than anything hitherto offered or proposed in compensation bills. If the question is to go on without any real remedy for the grievance, the condition of Ireland in this particular will become worse, and measures far beyond anything I now contemplate will be necessary. I am most anxious to meet the evil before it is too great for control, and my plan *will meet* it without wrong to any man.

Views Of Mr. Bright

"I have studied the Irish land question," said Bright, "from a point of view almost inaccessible to the rest of your colleagues, and from which possibly even you have not had the opportunity of regarding it.... I hope you are being refreshed, as I am, after the long nights in the House—long nights which happily were not fruitless. I only hope our masters in the other House will not undo what we have done." Mr. Gladstone replied the next day, opening with a sentence that, if addressed to any one less revered than Bright, might have seemed to veil a sarcasm: "I have this advantage for learning the Irish land question, that I do not set out with the belief that I know it already; and certainly no effort that I can make to acquire the mastery of it will be wanting." He then proceeds to express his doubts as to the government

embarking on a very large operation of land-jobbing, buying up estates from landlords and reselling them to tenants; and whether the property bought and sold again by the state would not by force of economic laws gradually return again to fewer hands. He then comes still closer to the pith of the matter [283] when he says to Mr. Bright: "Your plan, if adopted in full, could only extend, to a small proportion of the two or three hundred millions worth of land in Ireland; and I do not well see how the unprotected tenants of the land in general would take essential benefit from the purchase and owning of land by a few of their fortunate brethren." If the land question was urgent, and Bright himself, like Mill, thought that it was, this answer of Mr. Gladstone's was irrefragable. In acknowledging the despatch of this correspondence from Mr. Gladstone, Lord Granville says to him (May 26, 1869):—

> This question may break us up. Bright is thin-skinned; the attacks in the Lords ruffle him more than he chooses to admit. I cannot make out how far he likes office, the cabinet, and his new position. It will be particularly disagreeable to him to have this plan, of which he is so much enamoured and for which he has received so much blame and a little praise, snuffed out by the cabinet. And yet how is it possible to avoid it, even putting aside the strong opinions of Lowe, Cardwell, and others? My only hope is that you have got the germ of some larger and more comprehensive plan in your head, than has yet been developed.

The plan ultimately adopted, after a severe struggle and with momentous consequences, did not first spring from Mr. Gladstone's brain. The idea of adapting the law to custom in all its depth and breadth, and extending the rooted notion of tenant-right to its furthest bearings, was necessarily a plant of Irish and not of English growth. Mr. Chichester Fortescue, the Irish chief secretary and an Irishman, first opened a bold expansion of the

familiar principle of many tenant-right bills. He had introduced such a bill himself in 1866, and the conservative government had brought in another in 1867. It is believed that he was instigated to adopt the new and bolder line by Sir Edward Sullivan, then the Irish attorney-general. Away from Sullivan, it was observed, he had little to say of value about his plan. In the cabinet Fortescue was not found effective, but he was thoroughly at home in the subject, and his speeches in public on Irish business had all the
[284] cogency of a man speaking his native tongue, and even genius in an acquired language is less telling. What is astonishing is the magic of the rapid and sympathetic penetration with which Mr. Gladstone went to the heart of the problem, as it was presented to him by his Irish advisers. This was his way. When acts of policy were not of great or immediate concern, he took them as they came; but when they pressed for treatment and determination, then he swooped down upon them with the strength and vision of an eagle.

II

His career in the most deeply operative portion of it was so intimately concerned with Ireland, that my readers will perhaps benignantly permit a page or two of historic digression. I know the subject seems uninviting. My apology must be that it occupied no insignificant portion of Mr. Gladstone's public life, and that his treatment of it made one of his deepest marks on the legislation of the century. After all, there is no English-speaking community in any part of the wide globe, where our tragic mismanagement of the land of Ireland, and of those dwelling on it and sustained by it, has not left its unlucky stamp.

A Digression

If Englishmen and Scots had not found the theme so uninviting, if they had given a fraction of the attention to the tenure and history of Irish land, that was bestowed, say, upon the Seisachtheia of Solon at Athens, or the Sempronian law in

ancient Rome, this chapter in our annals would not have been written. As it was, parliament had made laws for landlord and tenant in Ireland without well understanding what is either an Irish landlord or an Irish tenant. England has been able to rule India, Mill said, because the business of ruling devolved upon men who passed their lives in India, and made Indian interests their regular occupation. India has on the whole been governed with a pretty full perception of its differences from England. Ireland on the contrary, suffering a worse misfortune than absentee landlords, was governed by an absentee parliament. In England, property means the rights of the rent-receiver who has equipped the land and prepared it for the capital and the [285] skill of the tenant. In Ireland, in the minds of the vast majority of the population, for reasons just as good, property includes rights of the cultivator, whose labour has drained the land, and reclaimed it, and fenced it, and made farm-roads, and put a dwelling and farm buildings on it, and given to it all the working value that it possesses. We need suppose no criminality on either side. The origin of the difference was perfectly natural. In Ireland the holdings were small and multitudinous; no landlord who was not a millionaire, could have prepared and equipped holdings numbered by hundreds or thousands; and if he could, the hundreds and thousands of tenants had not a straw of capital. This peculiarity in social circumstances made it certain, therefore, that if the moral foundation of modern ideas of property is that he who sows shall reap, the idea of property would grow up in the mind of the cultivator, whenever the outer climate permitted the growth in his mind of any ideas of moral or equitable right at all.

In 1843 the Devon Commission had reported that it is the tenant who has made the improvements; that large confiscations of these improvements had been systematically practised in the shape of progressive enhancements of rent; that crime and disorder sprang from the system; and that parliament ought to interfere. A bill was proposed by the Peel government in

1845 for protecting the rightful interests of the tenant against the landlord. It was introduced in the House mainly composed of landlords. There it had such contumelious greeting, that it was speedily dropped. This was a crowning illustration of the levity of the imperial parliament dealing with Irish problems. The vital necessity for readjusting the foundations of social life demonstrated; a half measure languidly attempted; attempt dropped; bills sent to slumber in limbo; dry rot left quietly alone for a whole generation, until bloody outrage and murder awoke legislative conscience or roused executive fear. The union was seventy years old before the elementary feature in the agrarian condition of Ireland was recognised by the parliament which had
[286] undertaken to govern Ireland. Before the union Ireland was governed by the British cabinet, through the Irish landed gentry, according to their views, and in their interests. After the union it was just the same. She was treated as a turbulent and infected province within the larger island; never as a community with an internal economy peculiarly her own, with special sentiments, history, recollections, points of view, and necessities all her own. Between the union and the year 1870, Acts dealing with Irish land had been passed at Westminster. Every one of these Acts was in the interest of the landlord and against the tenant. A score of Insurrection Acts, no Tenant-right Act. Meanwhile Ireland had gone down into the dark gulfs of the Famine (1846-7).

Anybody can now see that the true view of the Irish cultivator was to regard him as a kind of copyholder or customary freeholder, or whatever other name best fits a man who has possessory interests in a piece of land, held at the landlord's will, but that will controlled by custom. In Ulster, and in an embryo degree elsewhere, this was what in a varying and irregular way actually had come about. Agrarian customs developed that undoubtedly belong to a backward social system, but they sprang from the necessities of the case. The essence of such customs in Ulster was first, a fair rent to be fixed not by competition, but by

valuation, and exclusive of tenant's improvements; second, the right of the tenant to transfer to somebody else his goodwill, or whatever else we may call his right of occupancy in the holding.

Instead of adapting law to custom, habit, practice, and equity, parliament proceeded to break all this down. With well-meaning but blind violence it imported into Ireland after the famine the English idea of landed property and contract. Or rather, it imported these ideas into Ireland with a definiteness and formality that would have been impracticable even in England. Just as good people thought they could easily make Ireland protestant if only she could be got within earshot of evangelical truth, so statesmen expected that a few clauses on a parchment would suffice to root out at a stroke the inveterate habits and ideas of long generations. We talk of revolutionary doctrinaires in France and other countries. History hardly shows such revolutionary doctrinaires anywhere as the whig and tory statesmen who tried [287] to regenerate Ireland in the middle of the nineteenth century. They first of all passed an Act (1849) inviting the purchase of the estates of an insolvent landlord upon precisely the same principles as governed the purchase of his pictures or his furniture. We passed the Encumbered Estates Act, Mr. Gladstone said, "with lazy, heedless, uninformed good intentions." The important rights given by custom and equity to the cultivator were suddenly extinguished by the supreme legal right of the rent-receiver. About one-eighth of the whole area of the country is estimated to have changed hands on these terms. The extreme of wretchedness and confusion naturally followed. Parliament thought this must be due to some misunderstanding. That there might be no further mistake, it next proceeded formally to declare (1860) that the legal relations between landlord and tenant in Ireland were to be those of strict contract.[186] Thus blunder was clenched by

[186] When the present writer once referred to the Principle of the Act of 1860 as being that the hiring of land is just as much founded on trade principles as the chartering of a ship or the hiring of a street cab, loud approbation came

blunder. The cultivators were terror-struck, and agitation waxed hot.

Oliver Cromwell had a glimpse of the secret in 1649. "These poor people," he said, "have been accustomed to as much injustice and oppression from their landlords, the great men, and those who should have done them right, as any people in that which we call Christendom. Sir, if justice were freely and impartially administered here, the foregoing darkness and corruption would make it look so much the more glorious and beautiful." It was just two hundred and twenty years before another ruler of England saw as deep, and applied his mind to the free doing of justice.

III

Almost immediately after recovering from the fatigues of the session of 1869, Mr. Gladstone threw himself upon his new task, his imagination vividly excited by its magnitude and its [288] possibilities. "For the last three months," he writes to the Duke of Argyll (Dec. 5), "I have worked daily, I think, upon the question, and so I shall continue to do. The literature of it is large, larger than I can master; but I feel the benefit of continued reading upon it. We have before us a crisis, and a great crisis, for us all, to put it on no higher ground, and a great honour or a great disgrace. As I do not mean to fail through want of perseverance, so neither will I wilfully err through precipitancy, or through want of care and desire at least to meet all apprehensions which are warranted by even the show of reason."

It was not reading alone that brought him round to the full measure of securing the cultivator in his holding. The crucial suggestion, the expediency, namely, of making the landlord pay compensation to the tenant for disturbing him, came from Ireland.

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from the tory benches. So deep was parliamentary ignorance of Ireland even in 1887, after the Acts of 1870 and 1881.—*Hans.* 314, p. 295.

To Mr. Chichester Fortescue, the Irish secretary, Mr. Gladstone writes (Sept. 15):—

> I heartily wish, it were possible that you, Sullivan, and I could have some of those preliminary conversations on land, which were certainly of great use in the first stages of the Irish Church bill. As this is difficult, let us try to compare notes as well as we can in writing. I anticipate that many members of the cabinet will find it hard to extend their views to what the exigencies of the time, soberly considered, now require; but patience, prudence, and good feeling will, I hope, surmount all obstacles.
>
> Like you, I am unwilling to force a peasant proprietary into existence.... The first point in this legislation, viz., that the presumption of law should give improvements to the tenant, is now, I suppose, very widely admitted, but no longer suffices to settle the question.... Now as to your "compensation for disturbance." This is indeed a question full of difficulty. It is very desirable to prevent the using of augmentation of rent as a method of eviction. I shall be most curious to see the means and provisions you may devise, without at present being too sanguine.

Land Bill In Cabinet

Meanwhile he notes to Lord Granville (Sept. 22) how critical and arduous the question is, within as well as without the cabinet, and wonders whether they ought not to be thinking of a judicious cabinet committee:—

> The question fills the public mind in an extraordinary degree, and we can hardly avoid some early step towards making progress in it. A committee keeps a cabinet quiet. It is highly necessary that we should be quite ready when parliament meets, and yet there is so much mental movement upon the question from day to day, as we see from a variety of curious utterances (that of the *Times* included), that it is desirable to keep final decisions open. Much information will be open,

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> and this a committee can prepare in concert with the Irish government. It also, I think, affords a means of bringing men's minds together.

He tells the Irish secretary that so far as he can enter into the secretary's views, he "enters thoroughly into the spirit of them." But many members of the cabinet, laden sufficiently with their own labours, had probably not so closely followed up the matter:—

> The proposition, that *more* than compensation to tenants for their improvements will be necessary in order to settle the Irish land laws, will be unpalatable, or new, to several, and naturally enough. You will have observed the total difference in the internal situation between this case and that of the Irish church, where upon all the greater points our measure was in a manner outlined for us by the course of previous transactions.

At the end of October the question was brought formally before the cabinet:—

> *Oct. 30.*—Cabinet, 2-5-½.... We broke ground very satisfactorily on the question of Irish land. *Nov. 3.*—Cabinet. Chiefly on Irish land, and stiff. 9.—To Guildhall, where I spoke for the government. The combination of physical effort with measured words is difficult. 22.—Worked six hours on my books, arranging and re-arranging. The best brain rest I have had, I think, since December last.

The brain rest was not for long. On Dec. 1 he tells Lord Granville that Argyll is busy on Irish land, and in his views is misled by "the rapid facility of his active mind." "It is rather awkward at this stage to talk of breaking up the government, and that is more easily said than done." I know no more singular reading in its way than the correspondence between [290] Mr. Gladstone and the Duke of Argyll; Mr. Gladstone trying to

lead his argumentative colleague over one or two of the barest rudiments of the history of Irish land, and occasionally showing in the process somewhat of the quality of the superior pupil teacher acquiring to-day material for the lesson of to-morrow. Mr. Gladstone goes to the root of the matter when he says to the Duke: "What I would most earnestly entreat of you is not to rely too much on Highland experience, but to acquaint yourself by careful reading with the rather extensive facts and history of the Irish land question. My own studies in it are very imperfect, though pursued to the best of my ability; but they have revealed to me many matters of fact which have seriously modified my views, most of them connected with and branching out of the very wide extension of the idea and even the practice of tenant right, mostly perhaps *un*recognised beyond the limits of the Ulster custom."

Then Lord Granville writes to him that Clarendon has sent him two letters running, talking of the certainty of the government being broken up. "The sky is very far from clear," Mr. Gladstone says to Mr. Fortescue (Dec. 3), "but we must bate no jot of heart or hope." The next day it is Mr. Bright to whom he turns in friendly earnest admonition. His words will perhaps be useful to many generations of cabinet ministers:—

> It is not the courageous part of your paper to which I now object, though I doubt the policy of the reference to feebleness and timidity, as men in a cabinet do not like what may *seem* to imply that they are cowards. It is your argument (a very over-strained one in my opinion) against Fortescue's propositions, and your proposal (so it reads) to put them back in order of discussion to the second place *now*, when the mind of the cabinet has been upon them for six weeks.... Had the cabinet adopted at this moment *a good and sufficient scheme for dealing with the Irish tenants as tenants*, I should care little how much you depreciated such a scheme in comparison with one for converting them into owners. But the state of

things is most critical. This is not a time at which those who in substance agree, can afford to throw away strength by the
[291] *relative* depreciation of those parts of a plan of relief, to which they do not themselves give the first place in importance. It is most dangerous to discredit *propositions which you mean to adopt*, in the face of any who (as yet) do not mean to adopt them, and who may consistently and honourably use all your statements against them, nay, who would really be bound to do so. No part of what I have said is an argument against your propositions.... If your seven propositions were law to-day, you would have made but a very small progress towards settling the land question of Ireland. For all this very plain speech, you will, I am sure, forgive me.

A letter from Mr. Gladstone to Fortescue (Dec. 5) shows the competition between Bright's projects of purchase by state-aid, and the scheme for dealing with the tenants as tenants:—

> I am a good deal staggered at the idea of any interference with present rents. But I shall not speak on this subject to others. It will be difficult enough to carry the substance of the plan you proposed, without any enlargement of it. I hope to see you again before the question comes on in the cabinet.... Bright is very full of waste lands, and generally of his own plans, considerably (at present) to the detriment of yours. He wants the government to buy waste lands, and says it is not against political economy, but yours is. I think he will come right. It appears to me we might in the case of waste lands lend money (on proper conditions) to *any buyers*; in the case of other lands we are only to lend to occupiers. What do you think of this?

New Principle

At this date he was still in doubt whether anybody would agree to interference with existing rents, but he had for himself hit upon the principle that became the foundation of his law. He put to Fortescue (Dec. 9) as a material point:—

> Whether it is expedient to adopt, wherever it can be made available, *the custom of the country as the basis for compensation on eviction and the like*. I cannot make out from your papers whether you wholly dissent from this. I hoped you had agreed in it. I have acquired a strong conviction upon it, of which I have written out the grounds; but I shall not circulate the paper till I understand your views more fully.

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Lowe, at the other extremity, describes himself as more and more "oppressed by a feeling of heavy responsibility and an apprehension of serious danger," and feeling that he and the minority (Clarendon, Argyll, and Cardwell—of whom he was much the best hand at an argument)—were being driven to choose between their gravest convictions, and their allegiance to party and cabinet. They agreed to the presumption of law as to the making of improvements; to compensation for improvements, retrospective and prospective; to the right of new tenants at will to compensation on eviction. The straw that broke the camel's back was compensation for eviction, where no custom could be proved in the case of an existing tenancy. Mr. Gladstone wrote a long argumentative letter to Lord Granville to be shown to Lowe, and it was effectual. Lowe thought the tone of it very fair and the arguments of the right sort, but nevertheless he added, in the words I have already quoted, "I fear he is steering straight upon the rocks."

What might surprise us, if anything in Irish doings could surprise us, is that though this was a measure for Irish tenants, it was deemed heinously wrong to ascertain directly from their representatives what the Irish tenants thought. Lord Bessborough was much rebuked in London for encouraging Mr. Gladstone to communicate with Sir John Gray, the owner of the great newspaper of the Irish tenant class. Yet Lord O'Hagan, the chancellor, who had the rather relevant advantage of being of the same stock and faith as three-fourths of the nation concerned, told them that "the success or failure of the Land bill depends

on the *Freeman's Journal*; if it says, We accept this as a fixity of tenure, every priest will say the same, and *vice versâ*." It was, however, almost a point of honour in those days for British cabinets to make Irish laws out of their own heads.

Critical Contest

Almost to the last the critical contest in the cabinet went on. Fortescue fought as well as he could even against the prime minister himself, as the following from Mr. Gladstone to him shows (Jan. 12):—

> There can surely be no advantage in further argument between you and me at this stage—especially after so many hours and
> [293] pages of it—on the recognition of usage beyond the limit of Ulster custom as a distinct head. You pressed your view repeatedly on the cabinet, which did not adopt it. Till the cabinet alters its mind, we have no option except to use every effort to get the bill drawn according to its instructions.

How much he had his Irish plans at heart, Mr. Gladstone showed by his urgency that the Queen should open parliament. His letter to her (Jan. 15) on the subject, he told Lord Granville, "expresses my desire, not founded on ordinary motives, nor having reference to ordinary circumstances":—

> We have now to deal with the *gros* of the Irish question, and the Irish question is in a category by itself. It would be almost a crime in a minister to omit anything that might serve to mark, and bring home to the minds of men, the gravity of the occasion. Moreover, I am persuaded that the Queen's own sympathies would be, not as last year, but in the same current as ours. To this great country the state of Ireland after seven hundred years of our tutelage is in my opinion so long as it continues, an intolerable disgrace, and a danger so absolutely transcending all others, that I call it the only real danger of the noble empire of the Queen. I cannot refrain from bringing before her in one shape or another my humble advice that she should, if *able*, open parliament.

IV

Public opinion was ripening. The *Times* made a contribution of the first importance to the discussion, in a series of letters from a correspondent, that almost for the first time brought the facts of Irish land before the general public. A pamphlet from Mill, then at the height of his influence upon both writers and readers, startled them by the daring proposition that the only plan was to buy out the landlords. The whole host of whig economists and lawyers fell heavily upon him in consequence. The new voters showed that they were not afraid of new ideas. It was not until Jan. 25 that peril was at an end inside the government:—

> *Jan. 25, '70.*—Cabinet. The great difficulties of the Irish Land bill *there* are now over. Thank God! *Feb. 7.*—With the Prince of Wales 3-1/4-4-1/4 explaining to him the Land bill, and on other matters. He has certainly much natural intelligence. 15.—H. of C. Introduced the Irish Land bill in a speech of 3-1/4 hours. Well received by the House at large. *Query*, the Irish popular party? [294]

Lord Dufferin, an Irish landlord, watching, as he admits, with considerable jealousy exceptional legislation in respect to Ireland, heard the speech from the peers' gallery, and wrote to Mr. Gladstone the next day: “I feel there is no one else in the country who could have recommended the provisions of such a bill to the House of Commons, with a slighter shock to the prejudices of the class whose interests are chiefly concerned.” He adds: “I happened to find myself next to Lord Cairns. When you had done, he told me he did not think his people would oppose any of the leading principles of your bill.”

The policy of the bill as tersely explained by Mr. Gladstone in a letter to Manning, compressing as he said eight or ten columns of the *Times*, was “to prevent the landlord from using the terrible weapon of undue and unjust eviction, by so framing the handle

that it shall cut his hands with the sharp edge of pecuniary damages. The man evicted without any fault, and suffering the usual loss by it, will receive whatever the custom of the country gives, and where there is no custom, according to a scale, besides whatever he can claim for permanent buildings or reclamation of land. Wanton eviction will, as I hope, be extinguished by provisions like these. And if they extinguish wanton eviction, they will also extinguish those demands for *unjust* augmentations of rent, which are only formidable to the occupier, because the power of wanton or arbitrary eviction is behind them." What seems so simple, and what was so necessary, marked in truth a vast revolutionary stride. It transferred to the tenant a portion of the absolute ownership, and gave him something like an estate in his holding. The statute contained a whole code of minor provisions, including the extension of Mr. Bright's clauses for peasant proprietorship in the Church Act, but this transfer was what gave the Act its place in solid legal form.

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Bill Carried

The second reading was carried by 442 to 11, the minority being composed of eight Irish members of advanced type, and three English tories, including Mr. Henley and Mr. James Lowther, himself Irish secretary eight years later. The bill was at no point fought high by the opposition. Mr. Disraeli moved an amendment limiting compensation to unexhausted improvements. The government majority fell to 76, "a result to be expected," Mr. Gladstone reports, "considering the natural leanings of English and Scotch members to discount in Ireland what they would not apply in Great Britain. They are not very familiar with Irish land tenures." One fact of much significance he notes in these historic proceedings. Disraeli, he writes to the Duke of Argyll (April 21, 1870), "has not spoken one word against valuation of rents or perpetuity of tenure." It was from the house of his friends that danger came:—

April 4.—H. of C. Spoke on Disraeli's amendment. A majority

> of 76, but the navigation is at present extremely critical. 7.—H. of C. A most ominous day from end to end. Early in the evening I gave a review of the state of the bill, and later another menace of overturn if the motion of Mr. William Fowler [a liberal banker], which Palmer had unfortunately (as is too common with him) brought into importance, should be carried. We had a majority of only 32.

To Lord Russell he writes (April 12):—

> I am in the hurry-scurry of preparation for a run into the country this evening, but I must not omit to thank you for your very kind and welcome letter. We have had a most anxious time in regard to the Irish Land bill.... The fear that our Land bill may cross the water creates a sensitive state of mind among all tories, many whigs, and a few radicals. Upon this state of things comes Palmer with his legal mind, legal point of view, legal aptitude and inaptitude (*vide* Mr. Burke), and stirs these susceptibilities to such a point that he is always near bringing us to grief. Even Grey more or less goes with him.

Phillimore records a visit in these critical days:—

> *April 8.*—Gladstone looked worn and fagged. Very affectionate and confidential. Annoyed at Palmer's conduct. Gladstone feels keenly the want of support in debate. Bright ill. Lowe no moral weight. “I feel when I have spoken, that I have not a shot in my locker.” [296]

As a very accomplished journalist of the day wrote, there was something almost painful in the strange phenomenon of a prime minister fighting as it were all but single-handed the details of his own great measure through the ambuscades and charges of a numerous and restless enemy—and of an enemy determined apparently to fritter away the principle of the measure under the pretence of modifying its details. “No prime minister has ever

attempted any task like it—a task involving the most elaborate departmental readiness, in addition to the general duties and fatigues of a prime minister, and that too in a session when questions are showered like hail upon the treasury bench."[187]

Then the government put on pressure, and the majority sprang up to 80. The debate in the Commons lasted over three and a half months, or about a fortnight longer than had been taken by the Church bill. The third reading was carried without a division. In the Lords the bill was read a second time without a division. Few persons "clearly foresaw that it was the first step of a vast transfer of property, and that in a few years it would become customary for ministers of the crown to base all their legislation on the doctrine that Irish land is not an undivided ownership, but a simple partnership."[188]

In March Mr. Gladstone had received from Manning a memorandum of ill omen from the Irish bishops, setting out the amendments by them thought necessary. This paper included the principles of perpetuity of tenure for the tiller of the soil and the adjustment of rent by a court. The reader may judge for himself how impossible it would have been, even for Mr. Gladstone, in all the plenitude of his power, to persuade either cabinet or parliament to adopt such invasions of prevailing doctrine. For this, ten years more of agitation were required, and then he was able to complete the memorable chapter in Irish history that he had now opened.

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V

Fenian Prisoners

Neither the Land Act nor the Church Act at once put out the hot ashes of Fenianism. A Coercion Act was passed in the spring

[187] *Spectator*.

[188] Lecky, *Democracy and Liberty*, i. p. 165.

of 1870. In the autumn Mr. Gladstone tried to persuade the cabinet to approve the release of the Fenian prisoners, but it was not until the end of the year that he prevailed. A secret committee was thought necessary in 1871 to consider outrages in Westmeath, and a repressive law was passed in consequence. Mr. Gladstone himself always leaned strongly against these exceptional laws, and pressed the Irish government hard the other way. "What we have to do," he said, "is to defy Fenianism, to rely on public sentiment, and so provide (as we have been doing) the practical measures that place the public sentiment on our side, an operation which I think is retarded by any semblance of *severity* to those whose offence we admit among ourselves to have been an ultimate result of our misgovernment of the country. I am afraid that local opinion has exercised, habitually and traditionally, too much influence in Ireland, and has greatly compromised the character of the empire. *This* question I take to be in most of its aspects an imperial question." The proposal for a secret committee was the occasion of a duel between him and Disraeli (Feb. 27, 1871)—"both," said Lord Granville, "very able, but very bitter." The tory leader taunted Mr. Gladstone for having recourse to such a proceeding, after posing as the only man capable of dealing with the evils of Ireland, and backed by a majority which had legalised confiscation, consecrated sacrilege, and condoned high treason.

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Chapter III. Education—The Career And The Talents. (1870)

> He that taketh away-weights from the motions, doth the same as he that addeth wings.—PYM.

I

Amid dire controversies that in all countries surround all questions of the school, some believe the first government of Mr. Gladstone in its dealing with education to have achieved its greatest constructive work. Others think that, on the contrary, it threw away a noble chance. In the new scheme of national education established in 1870, the head of the government rather acquiesced than led. In his own words, his responsibility was that of concurrence rather than of authorship. His close absorption in the unfamiliar riddles of Irish land, besides the mass of business incident to the office of prime minister, might well account for his small share in the frame of the education bill. More than this, however, his private interest in public education did not amount to zeal, and it was at bottom the interest of a churchman. Mr. Gladstone afterwards wrote to Lord Granville (June 14, '74), "I have never made greater personal concessions of opinion than I did on the Education bill to the united representations of Ripon and Forster." His share in the adjustments of the Act was, as he said afterwards, a very simple one, and he found no occasion either to differ from departmental colleagues, or to press upon them any proposals of his own. If they had been dealing with an untouched case, he would have preferred the Scotch plan, which allowed the local school board to prescribe whatever religious
[299] education pleased it best. Nor did he object to a strict limitation of all teaching paid for in schools aided or provided out of public

money, whether rate or tax, to purely secular instruction. In that case, however, he held strongly that, subject to local consent, the master who gave the secular teaching should be allowed to give religious teaching also at other times, even within the school-house.[189]

Advance Of Ideas

What Mr. Gladstone cared for was the integrity of religious instruction. What he disliked or dreaded was, in his own language, the invasion of that integrity "under cover of protecting exceptional consciences." The advance of his ideas is rather interesting. So far back as 1843,[190] in considering the education clauses of the Factory bill of that year, he explained to Lord Lyttelton that he was not prepared to limit church teaching in the schools in the exposition of scripture. Ten years later, he wrote to his close friend, Bishop Hamilton of Salisbury:—

> I am not friendly to the idea of constraining by law either the total or the partial suppression of conscientious differences in religion, with a view to fusion of different sects whether in church or school. I believe that the free development of conviction is upon the whole the system most in favour both of truth and of charity. Consequently you may well believe that I contemplate with satisfaction the state of feeling that prevails in England, and that has led all governments to adopt the system of separate and independent subsidies to the various religious denominations.

As for the government bill of that year (1853), he entirely repudiated the construction put upon some of its clauses, namely, "that people having the charge of schools would be obliged to admit children of all religious creeds, as well as that having

[189] Article on Mr. Forster, *Nineteenth Century*, September 1888.

[190] "In 1843 the government of Sir R. Peel, with a majority of 90, introduced an Education bill, rather large, and meant to provide for the factory districts. The nonconformists at large took up arms against it, and after full consideration in the cabinet (one of my first acts in cabinet), they withdrew it rather than stir up the religious flame."—*Mr. Gladstone to Herbert Gladstone, May 7, 1896.*

admitted them, they would be put under control as to the instruction to be given." Ten years later still, we find him saying, "I deeply regret the aversion to 'conscience clauses,' [300] which I am convinced it would be most wise for the church to adopt. As far back as 1838 I laboured hard to get the National Society to act upon this principle permissively; and if I remember right, it was with the approval of the then Bishop of London." In 1865 he harps on the same string in a letter to Lord Granville:—

> ... Suppose the schoolmaster is reading with his boys the third chapter of St. John, and he explains the passage relating to baptism in the sense of the prayer book and articles—the dissenters would say this is instruction in the doctrine of the church of England. Now it is utterly impossible for you to tell the church schoolmaster or the clergyman that he must not in the school explain any passage of scripture in a sense to which any of the parents of the children, or at least any sect objects; for *then you would in principle entirely alter the character of the religious teaching for the rest of the scholars, and in fact upset the whole system.* The dissenter, on the other hand, ought (in my opinion) to be entitled to withdraw his child from the risk (if he considers it such) of receiving instruction of the kind I describe.

Mr. Gladstone had therefore held a consistent course, and in cherishing along with full freedom of conscience the integrity of religious instruction, he had followed a definite and intelligible line. Unluckily for him and his government this was not the line now adopted.

II

When the cabinet met in the autumn of 1869, Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord de Grey (afterwards Ripon) (Nov. 4):—

> I have read Mr. Forster's able paper, and I follow it very generally. On one point I cannot very well follow it.... Why not adopt frankly the principle that the State or the local community should provide the secular teaching, and either leave the option to the ratepayers to go beyond this *sine quâ non*, if they think fit, within the limits of the conscience clause, or else simply leave the parties themselves to find Bible and other religious education from voluntary sources?

Early in the session before the introduction of the bill, Mr. Gladstone noted in his diary, "Good hope that the principal matters at issue may be accommodated during the session, but great differences of opinion have come to the surface, and much trouble may arise." In fact trouble enough arose to shake his ministry to its foundations. What would be curious if he had not had the Land bill on his hands, is that he did not fight hard for his own view in the cabinet. He seems to have been content with stating it, without insisting. Whether he could have carried it in the midst of a whirlwind of indeterminate but vehement opinions, may well be doubted. [301]

Mr. Forster

The Education bill was worked through the cabinet by Lord de Grey as president of the council, but its lines were laid and its provisions in their varying forms defended in parliament, by the vice-president, who did not reach the cabinet until July 1870. Mr. Forster was a man of sterling force of character, with resolute and effective power of work, a fervid love of country, and a warm and true humanity. No orator, he was yet an excellent speaker of a sound order, for his speaking, though plain and even rough in style, abounded in substance; he always went as near to the root of the matter as his vision allowed, and always with marked effect for his own purposes. A quaker origin is not incompatible with a militant spirit, and Forster was sturdy in combat. He had rather a full share of self-esteem, and he sometimes exhibited a want a tact that unluckily irritated or estranged many whom more suavity might have retained. Then, without meaning it,

he blundered into that most injurious of all positions for the parliamentary leader, of appearing to care more for his enemies than for his friends. As Mr. Gladstone said of him, "destiny threw him on the main occasions of his parliamentary career into open or qualified conflict with friends as well as foes, perhaps rather more with friends than foes." A more serious defect of mind was that he was apt to approach great questions—Education, Ireland, Turkey—without truly realising how great they were, and this is the worst of all the shortcomings of statesmanship. There was one case of notable exception. In all the stages and aspects of the American civil war, Forster played an admirable part.

[302] The problem of education might have seemed the very simplest. After the extension of the franchise to the workmen, everybody felt, in a happy phrase of that time, that "we must educate our masters." Outside events were supposed to hold a lesson. The triumphant North in America was the land of the common school. The victory of Prussians over Austrians at Sadowa in 1866 was called the victory of the elementary school teacher. Even the nonconformists had come round. Up to the middle of the sixties opinion among them was hostile to the intervention of the state in education. They had resisted Graham's proposals in 1843, and Lord John Russell's in 1847; but a younger generation, eager for progress, saw the new necessity that change of social and political circumstance imposed. The business in 1870 was to provide schools, and to get the children into them.[191]

[191] In 1869 about 1,300,000 children were being educated in state-aided schools, 1,000,000 in schools that received no grant, were not inspected, and were altogether inefficient, and 2,000,000 ought to have been, but were not at school at all. The main burden of national education fell on the shoulders of 200,000 persons whose voluntary subscriptions supported the schools. "In other words, the efforts of a handful out of the whole nation had accomplished the fairly efficient education of about one-third of the children, and had provided schools for about one-half; but the rest either went to inefficient schools, or to no school at all, and for them there was no room even had the power to compel

It is surprising how little serious attention had been paid even by speculative writers in this country to the vast problem of the relative duties of the State and the Family in respect of education. Mill devoted a few keen pages to it in his book upon political economy. Fawcett, without much of Mill's intellectual power or any of his sensitive temperament, was supposed to represent his principles in parliament; yet in education he was against free schools, while Mill was for them. All was unsettled; important things were even unperceived. Yet the questions of national education, answer them as we will, touch the moral life and death of nations. The honourable zeal of the churches had done something, but most of the ground remained to be covered. The question was whether the system about to be created should merely supplement those sectarian, private, voluntary schools, or should erect a fabric worthy of the high name of national.

The churchman hoped, but did not expect, the first. The [303] nonconformist (broadly speaking), the academic liberal, and the hard-grit radical, were keen for the second, and they were all three well represented in the House of Commons.

A Crucial Decision

What the government proposed was that local boards should be called into existence to provide schools where provision was inadequate and inefficient, these schools to be supported by the pence of the children, the earned grant from parliament, and a new rate to be levied upon the locality. The rate was the critical element. If the boards chose, they could make bye-laws compelling parents to send their children to school; and they could (with a conscience clause) settle what form of religious instruction they pleased. The voluntary men were to have a year of grace in which to make good any deficiency in supply of schools, and so keep out the boards. The second reading was secured without a division, but only on assurances from Mr. Gladstone that amendments would be made in committee. On

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their attendance existed."—See Sir Henry Craik's *The State in its Relation to Education*, pp. 84, 85.

June 16, the prime minister, as he says, “explained the plans of the government to an eager and agitated house.”

Two days before, the cabinet had embarked upon a course that made the agitation still more eager. Mr. Gladstone wrote the pregnant entry: “*June 14.* Cabinet; decided on making more general use of machinery supplied by voluntary schools, avoidance of religious controversy in local boards.” This meant that the new system was in no way to supersede the old non-system, but to supplement it. The decision was fatal to a national settlement. As Mr. Forster put it, their object was “to complete the voluntary system and to fill up gaps.” Lord Ripon used the same language in the Lords. Instead of the school boards being universal, they should only come into existence where the ecclesiastical party was not strong enough in wealth, influence, and liberality to keep them out. Instead of compulsory attendance being universal, that principle could only be applied where a school board was found, and where the school board liked to apply it. The old parliamentary grant to the denominational schools was to be doubled. This last provision was Mr. Gladstone's own. Forster had told him that
[304] it was impossible to carry a proposal allowing school boards to contribute to denominational schools, and the only compensation open was a larger slice of the grant from parliament.

III

The storm at once began to rage around the helmsman's ears. Some days earlier the situation had been defined by Mr. Brand, the whip, for his leader's guidance. The attempt, he said, made by Fawcett, Dilke, and others, to create a diversion in favour of exclusively secular education has signally failed; the opinion of the country is clearly adverse. On the other hand, while insisting on the religious element, the country is just as strongly opposed to dogmatic teaching in schools aided by local rates. “You ask

me," said Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Brand (May 24), "to solve the problem in the words 'to include religion, and to exclude dogma,' which, as far as I know, though it admits of a sufficient practical handling by individuals acting for themselves, has not yet been solved by any state or parliament." Well might he report at Windsor (June 21) that, though the auspices were favourable, there was a great deal of crude and indeterminate opinion on the subject in the House as well as elsewhere, and "the bill, if carried, would be carried by the authority and persistence of the government, aided by the acquiescence of the opposition." It was this carrying of the bill by the aid of the tory opposition that gave fuel to the liberal flame, and the increase of the grant to the sectarian schools made the heat more intense. The most critical point of the bill, according to Mr. Gladstone, was a proposal that now seems singularly worded, to the effect that the teaching of scriptures in rate schools should not be in favour of, or opposed to, tenets of any denomination. This was beaten by 251 to 130. "The minority was liberal, but more than half of the liberal party present voted in the majority."

Anger Of Nonconformists

"We respect Mr. Forster," cried Dale of Birmingham, "we honour Mr. Gladstone, but we are determined that England shall not again be cursed with the bitterness and strife from which we had hoped that we had for ever escaped, by the abolition of the church rate."[192] Writing to a brother nonconformist, he expresses his almost unbounded admiration for Mr. Gladstone, "but it is a bitter disappointment that his government should be erecting new difficulties in the way of religious equality." Under the flashing eye of the prime minister himself the nonconformist revolt reared its crest. Miall, the veteran bearer of the flag of disestablishment, told Mr. Gladstone (July 22) that he was leading one section of the liberal party through the valley of humiliation. "Once bit, twice shy. We can't stand this sort of thing much longer," he

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[192] *Life of Dale*, p. 295.

said. In a flame of natural wrath Mr. Gladstone replied that he had laboured not to gain Mr. Miall's support, but to promote the welfare of the country. “I hope my hon. friend will not continue his support to the government one moment longer than he deems it consistent with his sense of right and duty. For God's sake, sir, let him withdraw it the moment he thinks it better for the cause he has at heart that he should do so.” The government, he said, had striven to smooth difficulties, to allay passions, to avoid everything that would excite or stimulate, to endeavour to bring men to work together, to rise above mere sectional views, to eschew all extremes, and not to make their own narrow choice the model of the measure they were presenting to parliament, but to admit freely and liberally into its composition those great influences which were found swaying the community. Forster wrote to a friend, “it does not rest with me now whether or no the state should decree against religion—decree that it is a thing of no account. Well, with my assent the state shall not do this, and I believe I can prevent it.”[193] Insist, forsooth, that religion was not a thing of no account against men like Dale, one of the most ardent and instructed believers that ever fought the fight and kept the faith; against Bright, than whom no devouter spirit breathed, and who thought the Education Act “the worst Act passed by any liberal parliament since 1832.”

[306] The opposition did not show deep gratitude, having secured as many favours as they could hope, and more than they had anticipated. A proposal from the government (July 14) to introduce secret voting in the election of local boards was stubbornly contested, in spite, says Mr. Gladstone, “of the unvarying good temper, signal ability and conciliatory spirit of Mr. Forster,” and it was not until after fourteen divisions that a few assuaging words from Mr. Gladstone brought the handful of conservative opposition to reason. It was five o'clock before

[193] *Life of Forster*, i. p. 497.

the unflagging prime minister found his way homewards in the broad daylight.

It is impossible to imagine a question on which in a free government it was more essential to carry public opinion with the law. To force parents to send children to school, was an enterprise that must break down if opinion would not help to work it. Yet probably on no other question in Mr. Gladstone's career as law-maker was common opinion so hard to weigh, to test, to focus and adjust. Of the final settlement of the question of religious instruction, Mr. Gladstone said to Lord Lyttelton when the battle was over (Oct. 25, '70):—

> ... I will only say that it was in no sense my choice or that of the government. Our first proposition was by far the best. But it received no active support even from the church, the National Society, or the opposition, while divers bishops, large bodies of clergy, the Education Union, and earliest of all, I think, Roundell Palmer in the House of Commons, threw overboard the catechism. We might then have fallen back upon the plan of confining the application of the rate to secular subjects; but this was opposed by the church, the opposition, most of the dissenters, and most of our own friends. As it was, I assure you, the very utmost that could be done was to arrange the matter as it now stands, where the exclusion is limited to the formulary, and to get rid of the popular imposture of undenominational instruction.

Effects Of Party

At bottom the battle of the schools was not educational, it was social. It was not religious but ecclesiastical, and that is often the very contrary of religious. In the conflicts of the old centuries whence Christian creeds emerged, disputes on dogma constantly sprang from rivalries of race and accidents of geography. So now quarrels about education and catechism and conscience masked the standing jealousy between church and chapel—the unwholesome fruit of the historic mishaps of the sixteenth and

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seventeenth centuries that separated the nation into two camps, and invested one of them with all the pomp and privilege of social ascendency. The parent and the child, in whose name the struggle raged, stood indifferent. From the point of party strategy, the policy of this great statute was fatal. The church of England was quickened into active antagonism by Irish disestablishment, by the extinction of sectarian tests at Oxford and Cambridge, and by the treatment of endowed schools. This might have been balanced by the zeal of nonconformists. Instead of zeal, the Education Act produced refrigeration and estrangement.

We may be sure that on such a subject Mr. Gladstone looked further than strategies of party. "I own to you," said he to a correspondent before the battle was quite over, "that the history of these last few months leaves upon my mind some melancholy impressions, which I hope at some fancied period of future leisure and retirement to study and interpret." He soon saw how deep the questions went, and on what difficult ground the state and the nation would be inevitably drawn. His notions of a distinctive formula were curious. Forster seems to have put some question to him on the point whether the three creeds were formularies within the Act. It appears to me, Mr. Gladstone answered (October 17, 1870):—

> It is quite open to you at once to dispose of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds and to decline inquiring whether they are distinctive, upon the ground that they are not documents employed in the instruction of young children.... Obviously no one has a right to call on you to define the distinctive character of a formulary such as the Thirty-nine Articles, or of any but such as are employed in schools. With respect to the Apostles' Creed, it appears to me not to be a distinctive formulary in the sense of the Act. Besides the fact that it is acknowledged by the great bulk of all Christendom, it is denied or rejected by no portion of the Christian community; and, further, it is not controversial in its form, but sets forth,

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> in the simplest shape a series of the leading facts on which Christianity, the least abstract of all religions, is based.

Manning plied him hard (September, October, November, 1871). The state of Paris (Commune blazing that year, Tuileries and Hôtel de Ville in ashes, and the Prussian spiked helmets at the gates) was traceable to a godless education—so the archbishop argued. In England the Christian tradition was unbroken. It was only a clique of doctrinaires, Huxley at the head of them, who believing nothing trumpeted secular education. "Delighted to see Mr. Forster attacked as playing into the hands of the clergy." Mr. Gladstone should stimulate by every agency in his power the voluntary religious energies of the three kingdoms. "The real crisis is in the formation of men. They are as we make them, and they make society. The formation of men is the work you have given to the school boards. God gave it to the parents. Neither you nor Mr. Forster meant this; you least of all men on your side of the House. Glad to see you lay down the broad and intelligible line that state grants go to secular education, and voluntary efforts must do the rest. Let us all start fair in this race. Let every sect, even the Huxleyites, have their grant if they fulfil the conditions. As for the school-rate conscience, it is a mongrel institution of quakerism." How Mr. Gladstone replied on all these searching issues, I do not find.

IV

The passing of the Act did not heal the wound. The nonconformist revolt was supported in a great conference at Manchester in 1872, representing eight hundred churches and other organizations. Baptist unions and congregational unions were unrelenting. We may as well finish the story. It was in connection with this struggle that Mr. Chamberlain first came prominently into the arena of public life—bold, intrepid, imbued with the keen spirit of

political nonconformity, and a born tactician. The issue selected for the attack was the twenty-fifth section of the Education Act, [309] enabling school boards to pay in denominational schools the fees of parents who, though not paupers, were unable to pay them. This provision suddenly swelled into dimensions of enormity hitherto unsuspected. A caustic onlooker observed that it was the smallest ditch in which two great political armies ever engaged in civil war. Yet the possibility under cover of this section, of a sectarian board subsidising church schools was plain, and some cases, though not many, actually occurred in which appreciable sums were so handed over. The twenty-fifth section was a real error, and it made no bad flag for an assault upon a scheme of error.

Bright's Return To Government

Great things were hoped from Mr. Bright's return to the government in the autumn of 1873. The correspondence between Mr. Gladstone and him sheds some interesting light upon the state into which the Education Act, and Mr. Forster's intractable bearing in defence of it, had brought important sections of the party:—

Mr. Bright to Mr. Gladstone.

Aug. 12, 1873.—So far as I can hear, there is no intention to get up an opposition at Birmingham, which is a comfort, as I am not in force to fight a contested election. I am anxious not to go to the election, fearing that I shall not have nerve to speak to the 5000 men who will or may crowd the town hall. Before I go, if I go, I shall want to consult you on the difficult matter—how to deal frankly and wisely with the education question. I cannot break with my "noncon." friends, the political friends of all my life; and unless my joining you can do something to lessen the mischief now existing and *still growing*, I had better remain as I have been since my illness, a spectator rather than an actor on the political field.... I hope you are better, and that your troubles, for a time, are diminished. I wish much you could have announced a change

> in the education department; it would have improved the tone of feeling in many constituencies.

Mr. Gladstone himself had touched "the watchful jealousy" of Bright's nonconformist friends by a speech made at the time at Hawarden. This speech he explained in writing to Bright from Balmoral (Aug. 21):—

> The upshot, I think, is this. My speech could not properly have been made by a man who thinks that boards and public rates [310] ought to be used for the purpose of putting down as quickly as may be the voluntary schools. But the recommendation which I made might have been consistently and properly supported by any one whose opinions fell short of this, and did not in the least turn upon any preference for voluntary over compulsory means.[194]

As he said afterwards to Lord Granville, "I personally have no fear of the secular system; but I cannot join in measures of repression against voluntary schools."

"There is not a word said by you at Hawarden," Bright replied (Aug. 25), "that would fetter you in the least in considering the education question; but at present the general feeling is against the idea of any concession on your part.... What is wanted is some definite willingness or resolution to recover the goodwill and confidence of the nonconformist leaders in the boroughs; for without this, reconstruction is of no value.... Finance is of great moment, and people are well pleased to see you in your old office again; but no budget will heal the soreness that has been created—it is not of the pocket but of the feelings.... I want you just to know where I am and what I feel; but if I could talk to you, I could say what I have to say with more precision, and with a greater delicacy of expression. I ask you only to put the best construction on what I write."

[194] For the rest of the letter see Appendix.

If Forster could only have composed himself to the same considerate spirit, there might have been a different tale to tell. Bright made his election speech at Birmingham, and Forster was in trouble about it. “I think,” said the orator to Mr. Gladstone, “he ought rather to be thankful for it; it will enable him to get out of difficulties if he will improve the occasion. There is no question of changing the policy of the government, but of making minor concessions.... I would willingly change the policy of irritation into one of soothing and conciliation.” Nothing of great importance in the way even of temporary reconciliation was effected by Mr. Bright's return. The ditch of the twenty-fifth
[311] clause still yawned. The prime minister fell back into the position of August. The whole situation of the ministry had become critical in every direction. “Education must be regarded as still to a limited extent an open question in the government.”

When the general election came, the party was still disunited. Out of 425 liberal candidates in England, Scotland, and Wales, 300 were pledged to the repeal of the 25th clause. Mr. Gladstone's last word was in a letter to Bright (Jan. 27, 1874):—

> The fact is, it seems to me, that the noncons. have not yet as a body made up their minds whether they want unsectarian religion, or whether they want simple secular teaching, so far as the application of the rate is concerned. I have never been strong against the latter of these two which seems to me impartial, and not, if fairly worked, of necessity in any degree unfriendly to religion. The former is in my opinion glaringly partial, and I shall never be a party to it. But there is a good deal of leaning to it in the liberal party. Any attempt to obtain definite pledges now will give power to the enemies of both plans of proceeding. We have no rational course as a party but one, which is to adjourn for a while the solution of the grave parts of the education problem; and this I know to be in substance your opinion.

V

The same vigorous currents of national vitality that led to new endeavours for the education of the poor, had drawn men to consider the horrid chaos, the waste, and the abuses in the provision of education for the directing classes beyond the poor. Grave problems of more kinds than one came into view. The question, What is education? was nearly as hard to answer as the question of which we have seen so much, What is a church? The rival claims of old classical training and the acquisition of modern knowledge were matters of vivacious contest. What is the true place of classical learning in the human culture of our own age? Misused charitable trusts, and endowments perverted by the fluctuations of time, by lethargy, by selfishness, from the objects of pious founders, touched wakeful jealousies in the privileged sect, and called into action that adoration of the principle of [312] property which insists upon applying all the rules of individual ownership to what rightfully belongs to the community. Local interests were very sensitive, and they were multitudinous. The battle was severely fought, and it extended over several years, while commission upon commission explored the issues.

In a highly interesting letter (1861) to Lord Lyttelton Mr. Gladstone set out at length his views upon the issue between ancient and modern, between literary training and scientific, between utilitarian education and liberal. The reader will find this letter in an appendix, as well as one to Sir Stafford Northcote.[195] While rationally conservative upon the true basis of attainments in "that small proportion of the youth of any country who are to become in the fullest sense educated men," he is rationally liberal upon what the politics of the time made the burning question of the sacrosanctity of endowments. "It is our habit in this country," he said, "to treat private interests with an extravagant tenderness. The truth is that all laxity and extravagance in dealing with what

[195] See Appendix.

in a large sense is certainly public property, approximates more or less to dishonesty, or at the least lowers the moral tone of the persons concerned."

The result of all this movement, of which it may perhaps be said that it was mainly inspired and guided by a few men of superior energy and social weight like Goldwin Smith, Temple, Jowett, Liddell, the active interest of the classes immediately concerned being hardly more than middling—was one of the best measures in the history of this government of good measures (1869). It dealt with many hundreds of schools, and with an annual income of nearly six hundred thousand pounds. As the Endowed Schools bill was one of the best measures of the government, so it was Mr. Forster's best piece of legislative work. That it strengthened the government can hardly be said; the path of the reformer is not rose-strewn.[196]

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VI

University Tests

In one region Mr. Gladstone long lagged behind. He had done a fine stroke of national policy in releasing Oxford from some of her antique bonds in 1854;[197] but the principle of a free university was not yet admitted to his mind. In 1863 he wrote to the vice-chancellor how entirely the government concurred in

[196] In 1874 the conservative government brought in a bill restoring to the church of England numerous schools in cases where the founder had recognised the authority of a bishop, or had directed attendance in the service of that church, or had required that the masters should be in holy orders. Mr. Gladstone protested against the bill as "inequitable, unusual, and unwise," and it was largely modified in committee.

[197] See vol. i., book iv., chap. iv. By the act of 1854 a student could proceed to the bachelor's degree without the test of subscribing to the Thirty-nine Articles. Cambridge was a shade more liberal. At both universities dissenters were shut out from college fellowships, unless willing to make a declaration of conformity.

the principle of restricting the governing body of the university and the colleges to the church. The following year he was willing to throw open the degree; but the right to sit in convocation he guarded by exacting a declaration of membership of the church of England.[198] In 1865 Mr. Goschen—then beginning to make a mark as one of the ablest of the new generation in parliament, combining the large views of liberal Oxford with the practical energy of the city of London, added to a strong fibre given him by nature—brought in a bill throwing open all lay degrees. Mr. Gladstone still stood out, conducting a brisk correspondence with dissenters. "The whole controversy," he wrote to one of them, "is carried on aggressively, as if to disturb and not to settle. Abstract principles urged without stint or mercy provoke the counter-assertion of abstract principles in return. There is not power to carry Mr. Goschen's speech either in the cabinet, the parliament, or the country. Yet the change in the balance of parties effected by the elections will cast upon the liberal majority a serious responsibility. I would rather see Oxford level with the ground, than its religion regulated in the manner which would please Bishop Colenso."

Year by year the struggle was renewed. Even after the Gladstone government was formed, Coleridge, the solicitor-general, was only allowed in a private capacity to introduce a bill removing the tests. When he had been two years at the head of administration, Mr. Gladstone warned Coleridge: "For me individually it would be beyond anything odious, I am almost [314] tempted to say it would be impossible, after my long connection with Oxford, to go into a new controversy on the basis of what will be taken and alleged to be an absolute secularisation of the colleges; as well as a reversal of what was deliberately considered and sanctioned in the parliamentary legislation of 1854 and 1856. I incline to think that this work is work for others, not for me."

[198] Speech on Mr. Dodson's bill, March 16, 1864.

It was not until 1871 that Mr. Gladstone consented to make the bill a government measure. It rapidly passed the Commons and was accepted by the Lords, but with amendments. Mr. Gladstone when he had once adopted a project never loitered; he now resolutely refused the changes proposed by the Lords, and when the time came and Lord Salisbury was for insisting on them, the peers declined by a handsome majority to carry the fight further. It is needless to add that the admission of dissenters to degrees and endowments did not injuriously affect a single object for which a national university exists. On the other hand, the mischiefs of ecclesiastical monopoly were long in disappearing.

VII

Opening Of Civil Service

We have already seen how warmly the project of introducing competition into the civil service had kindled Mr. Gladstone's enthusiasm in the days of the Crimean war.[199] Reform had made slow progress. The civil service commission had been appointed in 1855, but their examinations only tested the quality of candidates sent before them on nomination. In 1860 a system was set up of limited competition among three nominated candidates, who had first satisfied a preliminary test examination. This lasted until 1870. Lowe had reform much at heart. At the end of 1869, he appealed to the prime minister: "As I have so often tried in vain, will you bring the question of the civil service before the cabinet to-day? Something must be decided. We cannot keep matters in this discreditable state of abeyance. If the cabinet will not entertain the idea of open competition, might we [315] not at any rate require a larger number of competitors for each vacancy? five or seven or ten?"

[199] Vol. i. p. 509.

Resistance came from Lord Clarendon and, strange to say, from Mr. Bright. An ingenious suggestion of Mr. Gladstone's solved the difficulty. All branches of the civil service were to be thrown open where the minister at the head of the department approved. Lowe was ready to answer for all the departments over which he had any control,—the treasury, the board of works, audit office, national debt office, paymaster-general's office, inland revenue, customs and post-office. Mr. Cardwell, Mr. Childers, Mr. Goschen, and Lord de Grey were willing to do the same, and finally only Clarendon and the foreign office were left obdurate. It was true to say of this change that it placed the whole educated intellect of the country at the service and disposal of the state, that it stimulated the acquisition of knowledge, and that it rescued some of the most important duties in the life of the nation from the narrow class to whom they had hitherto been confided.

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Chapter IV. The Franco-German War. (1870)

> Of all the princes of Europe, the king of England alone seemed to be seated upon the pleasant promontory that might safely view the tragic sufferings of all his neighbours about him, without any other concernment than what arose from his own princely heart and Christian compassion, to see such desolation wrought by the pride and passion and ambition of private persons, supported by princes who knew not what themselves would have.—CLARENDON.

I

During the years in which England had been widening the base of her institutions, extending her resources of wealth and credit, and strengthening her repute in the councils of Christendom, a long train of events at which we have glanced from time to time, had slowly effected a new distribution of the force of nations, and in Mr. Gladstone's phrase had unset every joint of the compacted fabric of continental Europe. The spirit in which he thought of his country's place in these transactions is to be gathered from a letter addressed by him to General Grey, the secretary of the Queen, rather more than a year before the outbreak of the Franco-German war. What was the immediate occasion I cannot be sure, nor does it matter. The letter itself is full of interest, for it is in truth a sort of charter of the leading principles of Mr. Gladstone's foreign policy at the moment when he first incurred supreme responsibility for our foreign affairs:—

> *Mr. Gladstone to General Grey.*
>
> *April 17, 1869.*—... Apart from this question of the moment, there is one more important as to the tone in which

it is to be desired that, where matter of controversy has arisen on the continent of Europe, the diplomatic correspondence [317] of this country should be carried on. This more important question may be the subject of differences in the country, but I observe with joy that her Majesty approves the general principle which Lord Clarendon sets forth in his letter of the 16th. I do not believe that England ever will or can be unfaithful to her great tradition, or can forswear her interest in the common transactions and the general interests of Europe. But her credit and her power form a fund, which in order that they may be made the most of, should be thriftily used.

The effect of the great revolutionary war was to place England in a position to rely upon the aid of her own resources. This was no matter of blame to either party; it was the result of a desperate struggle of over twenty years, in which every one else was down in his turn, but England was ever on her feet; in which it was found that there was no ascertained limit either to her means, or to her disposition to dispense them; in which, to use the language of Mr. Canning, her flag was always flying "a signal of rallying to the combatant, and of shelter to the fallen." The habit of appeal and of reliance thus engendered by peculiar circumstances, requires to be altered by a quiet and substantial though not a violent process. For though Europe never saw England faint away, *we* know at what a cost of internal danger to all the institutions of the country, she fought her way to the perilous eminence on which she undoubtedly stood in 1815.

If there be a fear abroad that England has forever abjured a resort to force other than moral force, is that fear justified by facts? In 1853, joining with France, we made ourselves the vindicators of the peace of Europe; and ten years later, be it remembered, in the case of Denmark we offered to perform the same office, but we could get no one to join us. Is it desirable that we should go further? Is England so uplifted in strength above every other nation, that she can with prudence advertise herself as ready to undertake the general redress of

wrongs? Would not the consequence of such professions and promises be either the premature exhaustion of her means, or a collapse in the day of performance? Is *any* Power at this time of day warranted in assuming this comprehensive obligation?

[318] Of course, the answer is, No. But do not, on the other hand, allow it to be believed that England will never interfere. For the eccentricities of other men's belief no one can answer; but for any reasonable belief in such an abnegation on the part of England, there is no ground whatever. As I understand Lord Clarendon's ideas, they are fairly represented by his very important diplomatic communications since he has taken office. They proceed upon such grounds as these: That England should keep entire in her own hands the means of estimating her own obligations upon the various states of facts as they arise; that she should not foreclose and narrow her own liberty of choice by declarations made to other Powers, in their real or supposed interests, of which they would claim to be at least joint interpreters; that it is dangerous for her to assume alone an advanced, and therefore an isolated position, in regard to European controversies; that, come what may, it is better for her to promise too little than too much; that she should not encourage the weak by giving expectations of aid to resist the strong, but should rather seek to deter the strong by firm but moderate language, from aggressions on the weak; that she should seek to develop and mature the action of a common, or public, or European opinion, as the best standing bulwark against wrong, but should beware of seeming to lay down the law of that opinion by her own authority, and thus running the risk of setting against her, and against right and justice, that general sentiment which ought to be, and generally would be, arrayed in their favour. I am persuaded that at this juncture opinions of this colour being true and sound, are also the only opinions which the country is disposed to approve. But I do not believe that on that account it is one whit less disposed than it has been at any time, to cast in its lot upon any fitting occasion with the cause it believes

> to be right.... I therefore hope and feel assured her Majesty will believe that Lord Clarendon really requires no intimation from me to ensure his steadily maintaining the tone which becomes the foreign minister of the Queen.

State Of Europe

Heavy banks of cloud hung with occasional breaks of brighter sky over Europe; and all the plot, intrigue, conspiracy, and subterranean scheming, that had been incessant ever since the Crimean war disturbed the old European system, and Cavour [319] first began the recasting of the map, was but the repulsive and dangerous symptom of a dire conflict in the depths of international politics. The Mexican adventure, and the tragedy of Maximilian's death at Queretaro, had thrown a black shadow over the iridescent and rotten fabric of Napoleon's power. Prussian victory over Austria at Sadowa had startled Europe like a thunderclap. The reactionary movement within the catholic fold, as disclosed in the Vatican council, kindled many hopes among the French clericals, and these hopes inspired a lively antagonism to protestant Prussia in the breast of the Spanish-born Empress of the French. Prussia in 1866 had humiliated one great catholic power when she defeated the Austrian monarchy on the battlefields of Bohemia. Was she to overthrow also the power that kept the pope upon his temporal throne in Rome? All this, however, was no more than the fringe, though one of the hardest things in history is to be sure where substance begins and fringe ends. The cardinal fact for France and for Europe was German unity. Ever since the Danish conflict, as Bismarck afterwards told the British government,[200] the French Emperor strove to bring Prussia to join him in plans for their common aggrandisement. The unity of Germany meant, besides all else, a vast extension of the area from which the material of military strength was to be drawn; and this meant the relative depression of the power of French arms. Here was the substantial fact, feeding the flame of

[200] July 28, 1870.

national pride with solid fuel. The German confederation of the Congress of Vienna was a skilful invention of Metternich's, so devised as to be inert for offence, but extremely efficient against French aggression. A German confederation under the powerful and energetic leadership of Prussia gave France a very different neighbour.

In August 1867, the French ambassador at Berlin said to the ambassador of Great Britain, "We can never passively permit the formation of a German empire; the position of the Emperor of the French would become untenable." The British ambassador in Paris was told by the foreign minister there, that "there was no wish for aggrandisement in the Emperor's mind, but a solicitude
[320] for the safety of France." This solicitude evaporated in what Bismarck disdainfully called the policy of *pourboires*, the policy of tips and pickings—scraps and slips of territory to be given to France under the diplomatic name of compensation. For three years it had been no secret that peace was at the mercy of any incident that might arise.

The small Powers were in trepidation, and with good reason. Why should not France take Belgium, and Prussia take Holland? The Belgian press did not conceal bad feeling, and Bismarck let fall the ominous observation that if Belgium persisted in that course, "she might pay dear for it." The Dutch minister told the British ambassador in Vienna that in 1865 he had a long conversation with Bismarck, and Bismarck had given him to understand that without colonies Prussia could never become a great maritime nation; he coveted Holland less for its own sake, than for her wealthy colonies. When reminded that Belgium was guaranteed by the European Powers, Bismarck replied that "a guarantee was in these days of little value." This remark makes an excellent register of the diplomatic temperature of the hour.

Then for England. The French Emperor observed (1867), not without an accent of complaint, that she seemed "little disposed to take part in the affairs of the day." This was the time of

the Derby government. When war seemed inevitable on the affair of Luxemburg, Lord Stanley, then at the foreign office, phlegmatically remarked (1867) that England had never thought it her business to guarantee the integrity of Germany. When pressed from Prussia to say whether in the event of Prussia being forced into war by France, England would take a part, Lord Stanley replied that with the causes of that quarrel we had nothing to do, and he felt sure that neither parliament nor the public would sanction an armed interference on either side. Belgium, he added, was a different question. General non-intervention, therefore, was the common doctrine of both our parties.

Efforts For Disarmament

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After Mr. Gladstone had been a year in power, the chance of a useful part for England to perform seemed to rise on the horizon, but to those who knew the racing currents, the interplay of stern forces, the chance seemed but dim and faint. Rumour and gossip of a pacific tenor could not hide the vital fact of incessant military preparation on both sides—steadfast and scientific in Prussia, loose and ill-concerted in France. Along with the perfecting of arms, went on a busy search by France for alliances. In the autumn of 1869 Lord Clarendon had gone abroad and talked with important personages. Moltke told him that in Prussia they thought war was near. To Napoleon the secretary of state spoke of the monster armaments, the intolerable burden imposed upon the people, and the constant danger of war that they created. The Emperor agreed—so Lord Clarendon wrote to Mr. Gladstone (Sept. 18, '69)—but went on to say that during the King of Prussia's life, and as long as the present Prussian system lasted, he thought no change of importance could be effected. Still the seed by and by appeared to have fallen on good ground. For in January 1870, in a conversation with the British ambassador, the French foreign minister (Daru) suggested that England might use her good offices with Prussia, to induce a partial disarmament in order that France might disarm also. The minister, at the same time, wrote a long despatch in the same

sense to the French ambassador at St. James's. Lord Clarendon perceived the delicacy of opening the matter at Berlin, in view of the Prussian monarch's idolatry of his army. He agreed, however, to bring it before the king, not officially, but in a confidential form. This would compromise nobody. The French ambassador in London agreed, and Lord Clarendon wrote the draft of a letter to Loftus in Berlin. He sent the draft to Mr. Gladstone (Jan. 31, 1870) for "approval and criticism." Mr. Gladstone entered eagerly into Lord Clarendon's benevolent correspondence:—

Mr. Gladstone to Lord Clarendon.

31 Jan. 1870.—The object of your letter on disarmament is noble, and I do not see how the terms of the draft can be improved. I presume you will let the Queen know what you are about, and possibly circumstances might arrive in which
[322] she could help?

7 Feb.—The answer to your pacific letter as reported by Loftus throws, I think, a great responsibility on the King of Prussia.

12 Feb.—I hope, with Daru, that you will not desist from your efforts, whatever be the best mode of prosecuting the good design. I thought Bismarck's case, on Loftus's letter, a very bad one. I do not think Lyons's objections, towards the close of his letter, apply in a case where you have acted simply as a friend, and not in the name and on behalf of France.

18 Feb.—I return Bismarck's confidential letter on disarmament. As the matter appears to me, the best that can be said for this letter is that it contains matter which might be used with more or less force in a conference on disarmament, by way of abating the amount of relative call on Prussia. As an argument against entertaining the subject, it is futile, and he ought at any rate to be made to feel his responsibility,—which, I daresay, you will contrive while acknowledging his civility.

9 April.—I presume you have now only in the matter of disarmament to express your inability to recede from your

> opinions, and your regret at the result of the correspondence. If inclined to touch the point, you might with perfect justice say that while our naval responsibilities for our sea defence have no parallel or analogue in the world, we have taken not far short of two millions off our estimates, and have not announced that the work of reduction is at an end: which, whether satisfactory or not, is enough, to show that you do not preach wholly without practising.

It is a striking circumstance, in view of what was to follow, that at this moment when Mr. Gladstone first came into contact with Bismarck,—the genius of popular right, and free government, and settled law of nations, into contact with the genius of force and reason of state and blood and iron—the realist minister of Prussia seemed to be almost as hopeful for European peace as the minister of England. "The political horizon," Bismarck wrote (Feb. 22), "seen from Berlin appears at present so unclouded that there is nothing of interest to report, and I only hope that no unexpected event will render the lately risen hope of universal [323] peace questionable."[201] The unexpected event did not tarry, and Bismarck's own share in laying the train is still one of the historic enigmas of our time.

II

The Spanish Throne

Ever since 1868 the statesmen of revolutionary Spain had looked for a prince to fill their vacant throne. Among others they bethought themselves of a member of a catholic branch of the house of Hohenzollern, and in the autumn of 1869 an actual proposal was secretly made to Prince Leopold. The thing lingered. Towards the end of February, 1870, Spanish importunities were renewed, though still under the seal of strict

[201] *Reminiscences of the King of Roumania.* Edited from the original by Sydney Whitman. 1899. P. 92.

secrecy, even the Spanish ambassador in Paris being kept in the dark.[202] Leopold after a long struggle declined the glittering bait. The rival pretenders were too many, and order was not sure. Still his refusal was not considered final. The chances of order improved, he changed his mind, and on June 28 the Spanish emissary returned to Madrid with the news that the Hohenzollern prince was ready to accept the crown. The King of Prussia, not as king, but as head of the house, had given his assent. That Bismarck invented the Hohenzollern candidature the evidence is not conclusive. What is undoubted is that in the late spring of 1870 he took it up, and was much discontented at its failure in that stage.[203] He had become aware that France was striving to arrange alliances with Austria, and even with Italy, in spite of the obnoxious presence of the French garrison at Rome. It was possible that on certain issues Bavaria and the South might join France against Prussia. All the hindrances to German unity, the jealousies of the minor states, the hatred of the Prussian
[324] military system, were likely to be aggravated by time, if France, while keeping her powder dry, were to persevere in a prudent abstention. Bismarck believed that Moltke's preparations were more advanced than Napoleon's. It was his interest to strike before any French treaties of alliance were signed. The Spanish crown was an occasion. It might easily become a pretext for collision if either France or Germany thought the hour had come. If the Hohenzollern candidate withdrew, it was a diplomatic success for France and a humiliation to Germany; if not, a king from Prussia planted across the Pyrenees, after the aggrandizements of north German power in 1864 and 1866, was enough to make

[202] King William wrote to Bismarck (Feb. 20, 1870) that the news of the Hohenzollern candidature had come upon him like a thunderbolt, and that they must confer about it. *Kaiser Wilhelm I. und Bismarck*, i. p. 207.

[203] The story of a ministerial council at Berlin on March 15, at which the question was discussed between the king, his ministers, and the Hohenzollern princes, with the result that all decided for acceptance, is denied by Bismarck.—*Recollections*, ii. p. 89.

Richelieu, Mazarin, Louis XIV., Bonaparte, even Louis Philippe, turn in their graves.

On June 27, 1870, Lord Clarendon died, and on July 6 Lord Granville received the seals of the foreign department from the Queen at Windsor. The new chief had visited his office the day before, and the permanent under-secretary coming into his room to report, gave him the most remarkable assurance ever received by any secretary of state on first seating himself at his desk. Lord Granville told the story in the House of Lords on July 11, when the crash of the fiercest storm since Waterloo was close upon them:—

> The able and experienced under-secretary, Mr. Hammond, at the foreign office told me, it being then three or four o'clock, that with the exception of the sad and painful subject about to be discussed this evening [the murders by brigands in Greece] he had never during his long experience known so great a lull in foreign affairs, and that he was not aware of any important question that I should have to deal with. At six o'clock that evening I received a telegram informing me of the choice that had been made by the provisional government of Spain of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, and of his acceptance of the offer. I went to Windsor the following day, and had the honour of receiving the seals of the foreign office from her Majesty. On my return I saw the Marquis de Lavalette, who informed me of the fact which I already knew, and in energetic terms remarked on the great indignity thus offered to France, and expressed the determination of the government of the Emperor not to permit the project to be carried out. M. Lavalette added [325] that he trusted that her Majesty's government, considering its friendly relations with France and its general desire to maintain peace, would use its influence with the other parties concerned. I told M. de Lavalette that the announcement had taken the prime minister and myself entirely by surprise.[204]

[204] *Hansard*, July 11, 1870.

Yet two days before Mr. Hammond told Lord Granville that he was not aware of anything important to be dealt with at the foreign department, a deputation had started from Madrid with an invitation to Prince Leopold. At the moment when this singular language was falling from our under-secretary's lips, the Duc de Gramont, the French foreign minister, was telling Lord Lyons at Paris that France would not endure the insult, and expressing his hope that the government of the Queen would try to prevent it. After all, as we have seen, Bismarck in February had used words not very unlike Mr. Hammond's in July.

On July 5, the Emperor, who was at St. Cloud, sent for Baron Rothschild (of Paris), and told him that as there was at that moment no foreign minister in England, he wished to send through him a message to Mr. Gladstone. He wanted Mr. Gladstone to be informed, that the council of ministers at Madrid had decided to propose Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern for the Spanish throne, that his candidature would be intolerable to France, and that he hoped Mr. Gladstone would endeavour to secure its withdrawal. The message was telegraphed to London, and early on the morning of July 6, the present Lord Rothschild deciphered it for his father, and took it to Carlton House Terrace. He found Mr. Gladstone on the point of leaving for Windsor, and drove with him to the railway station. For a time Mr. Gladstone was silent. Then he said he did not approve of the candidature, but he was not disposed to interfere with the liberty of the Spanish people to choose their own sovereign.

Lord Granville put pressure on the provisional government
[326] at Madrid to withdraw their candidate, and on the government at Berlin "effectually to discourage a project fraught with risks to the best interests of Spain." The draft of this despatch was submitted by Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, who suggested a long addition afterwards incorporated in the text. The points of his addition were an appeal to the magnanimity of the King of Prussia; an injunction to say nothing to give ground for the

supposition that England had any business to discuss the abstract right of Spain to choose her own sovereign; that the British government had not admitted Prince Leopold's acceptance of the throne to justify the immediate resort to arms threatened by France; but that the secrecy with which the affair had been conducted was a ground for just offence, and the withdrawal of the prince could alone repair it.[205] Austria made energetic representations at Berlin to the same effect. In sending this addition to Lord Granville, Mr. Gladstone says (July 8), "I am doubtful whether this despatch should go till it has been seen by the cabinet, indeed I think it should not, and probably you mean this. The Queen recollects being told something about this affair by Clarendon—without result—last year. I think Gramont exacts too much. It would never do for us to get up a combination of Powers in this difficult and slippery matter."

Events for a week—one of the great critical weeks of the century—moved at a dizzy speed towards the abyss. Peace unfortunately hung upon the prudence of a band of statesmen in Paris, who have ever since, both in their own country and everywhere else, been a byword in history for blindness and folly. The game was delicate. Even in the low and broken estate into which the moral areopagus of Europe had fallen in these days, it was a disadvantage to figure as the aggressor. This disadvantage the French Empire heedlessly imposed upon itself. Of the diplomacy on the side of the government of France anterior to the war, Mr. Gladstone said that it made up "a [327] chapter which for fault and folly taken together is almost without a parallel in the history of nations."[206]

[205] The despatch is dated July 6 in the blue-book (C. 167, p. 3), but it was not sent that day, as the date of Mr. Gladstone's letter shows. No cabinet seems to have been held before July 9. The despatch was laid before the cabinet, and was sent to Berlin by special messenger that evening. The only other cabinet meeting during this critical period was on July 14.

[206] *Gleanings*, iv. p. 222. Modern French historians do not differ from Mr. Gladstone.

On July 6 the French Ministers made a precipitate declaration to their Chambers, which was in fact an ultimatum to Prussia. The action of Spain was turned into Prussian action. Prussia was called to account in a form that became a public and international threat, as Bismarck put it, "with the hand on the sword-hilt." These rash words of challenge were the first of the French disasters. On July 8 the Duc de Gramont begged her Majesty's government to use all their influence to bring about the voluntary renunciation by Prince Leopold of his pretensions. This he told Lord Lyons would be "a most fortunate solution" of the question. Two days later he assured Lord Lyons that "if the Prince of Hohenzollern should, on the advice of the King of Prussia, withdraw his acceptance of the crown the whole affair would be at an end."

On July 10 Lord Granville suggests to Mr. Gladstone: "What do you think of asking the Queen whether there is any one to whom she could write confidentially with a view to persuade Hohenzollern to refuse?" Mr. Gladstone replies:—

> 1. I should think you could not do wrong in asking the Queen, as you propose, to procure if she can a refusal from Hohenzollern, through some private channel. 2. I suppose there could be no objection to sounding the Italian government as to the Duke of Aosta. 3. If in the meantime you have authentic accounts of military movements in France, would it not be right formally to ask their suspension, if it be still the desire of the French government that you should continue to act in the sense of procuring withdrawal?

The ambassador at Paris was instructed to work vigorously in this sense, and to urge self-possession and measure upon the Emperor's council. On July 12, however, the prospects of peace grew more and more shadowy. On that day it became known that
[328] Prince Leopold had spontaneously renounced the candidature, or that his father had renounced it on his behalf. The French

ministers made up their minds that the defeat of Prussia must be more direct. Gramont told Lyons (July 12) that the French government was in a very embarrassing position. Public opinion was so much excited that it was doubtful whether the ministry would not be overthrown, if it went down to the Chamber and announced that it regarded the affair as finished, without having obtained some more complete satisfaction from Prussia. So the Emperor and his advisers flung themselves gratuitously under Bismarck's grinding wheels by a further demand that not only should the candidature be withdrawn, but the King should pledge himself against its ever being at any time revived. Mr. Gladstone was not slow to see the fatal mischief of this new development.

Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville.

July 12, 11.30 P.M.—I have seen, since Rothschild's telegram,[207] that of Lyons, dated 7.55 P.M. It seems to me that Lyons should be supplied with an urgent instruction by telegram before the council of ministers to-morrow. France appealed to our support at the outset. She received it so far as the immediate object was concerned. It was immediately and energetically given. It appears to have been named by the French minister in public inclusively with that of other Powers. Under these circumstances it is our duty to represent the immense responsibility which will rest upon France, if she does not at once accept as satisfactory and conclusive, the withdrawal of the candidature of Prince Leopold.

The substance of this note was despatched to Paris at 2.30 A.M. on the morning of July 13. It did not reach Lord Lyons till half-past nine, when the council of ministers had already been sitting for half an hour at St. Cloud. The telegram was hastily embodied in the form of a tolerably emphatic letter and sent by special messenger to St. Cloud, where it was placed in M. de

[207] The Rothschild telegram was: The Prince has given up his candidature. The French are satisfied.

Gramont's hand, at the table at which he and the other ministers were still sitting in council in the presence of the Emperor and
[329] the Empress.[208] At the same time Lord Granville strongly urged M. de Lavalette in London, to impress upon his government that they ought not to take upon themselves the responsibility of pursuing the quarrel on a matter of form, when they had obtained what Gramont had assured Lord Lyons would put an end to the dispute. Though Mr. Disraeli afterwards imputed want of energy to the British remonstrances, there is no reason to suppose that Lord Lyons was wanting either in directness or emphasis. What warnings were likely to reach the minds of men trembling for their personal popularity and for the dynasty, afraid of clamour in the streets, afraid of the army, ignorant of vital facts both military and diplomatic, incapable of measuring such facts even if they had known them, committed by the rash declaration of defiance a week before to a position that made retreat the only alternative to the sword? At the head of them all sat in misery, a sovereign reduced by disease to a wavering shadow of the will and vision of a man. They marched headlong to the pit that Bismarck was digging for them.

British Remonstrances

On July 14 Mr. Gladstone again writes to Lord Granville, suggesting answers to questions that might be asked that night in parliament. Should they say that the candidature was withdrawn, and that with this withdrawal we had a right to hope the whole affair would end, but that communications were still continued with Prussia? In duty to all parties we were bound to hope that the subject of complaint having disappeared, the complaint itself and the danger to the peace of Europe would disappear also. Then he proceeds: "What if you were to telegraph to Lyons to signify that we think it probable questions may be asked in parliament to-day; that having been called in by France itself, we cannot affect to be wholly outside the matter; and that it will be

[208] No. 39. Correspondence respecting the negotiations preliminary to the war between France and Prussia, 1870.

impossible for us to conceal the opinion that the cause of quarrel having been removed, France ought to be satisfied. While this might fairly pass as a friendly notice, it might also be useful as admonition. Please to consider. The claim in the telegrams for more acknowledgment of the conduct of Prussia in parliament, seems to me to deserve consideration." [330]

On July 13 Gramont asked Lord Lyons whether he could count upon the good offices of England in obtaining the prohibition of any future candidature, at the same time giving him a written assurance that this would terminate the incident. Lord Lyons declined to commit himself, and referred home for instructions. The cabinet was hastily summoned for noon on the 14th. It decided that the demand could not be justified by France, and at the same time took a step of which Gramont chose to say, that it was the one act done by the English government in favour of peace. They suggested to Bismarck that as the King of Prussia had consented to the acceptance by Prince Leopold of the Spanish crown, and had thereby, in a certain sense, become a party to the arrangement, so he might with perfect dignity communicate to the French government his consent to the withdrawal of the acceptance, if France waived her demand for an engagement covering the future. This suggestion Bismarck declined (July 15) to bring before the King, as he did not feel that he could recommend its acceptance. As he had decided to hold France tight in the position in which her rulers had now planted her, we can understand why he could not recommend the English proposal to his master. Meanwhile the die was cast.

III

French Diplomacy

The King of Prussia was taking the waters of Ems. Thither Benedetti, the French ambassador to his court, under instructions followed him. The King with moderation and temper told him (July 11) he had just received a telegram that the answer of Prince

Leopold would certainly reach him the next day, and he would then at once communicate it. Something (some say Bismarck) prevented the arrival of the courier for some hours beyond the time anticipated. On the morning of the 13th the King met Benedetti on the promenade, and asked him if he had anything new to say. The ambassador obeyed his orders, and told the King of the demand for assurances against a future candidature. The King at once refused this new and unexpected concession, but in parting from Benedetti said they would resume their conversation
[331] in the afternoon. Meanwhile the courier arrived, but before the courier a despatch came from Paris conveying the suggestion that the King might write an apologetic letter to the French Emperor. This naturally gave the King some offence, but he contented himself with sending Benedetti a polite message by an aide-de-camp that he had received in writing from Prince Leopold the intelligence of his renunciation. "By this his Majesty considered the question as settled." Benedetti persevered in seeking to learn what answer he should make to his government on the question of further assurances. The King replied by the same officer that he was obliged to decline absolutely to enter into new negotiations; that what he had said in the morning was his last word in the matter. On July 14, the King received Benedetti in the railway carriage on his departure for Berlin, told him that any future negotiations would be conducted by his government, and parted from him with courteous salutations. Neither king nor ambassador was conscious that the country of either had suffered a shadow of indignity from the representative of the other.

Bismarck called upon the British ambassador in those days, and made what, in the light of later revelations, seems a singular complaint. He observed that Great Britain "should have forbidden France to enter on the war. She was in a position to do so, and her interests and those of Europe demanded it of her."[209] Later

[209] *The Diplomatic Reminiscences of Lord Augustus Loftus.* Second series, i. p. 283.

in the year he spoke in the same sense at Versailles: "If, at the beginning of the war, the English had said to Napoleon, 'There must be no war,' there would have been none."[210] What is certain is that nobody would have been more discomfited by the success of England's prohibition than Count Bismarck. The sincerity and substance of his reproach are tested by a revelation made by himself long after. Though familiar, the story is worth telling over again in the biography of a statesman who stood for a type alien to policies of fraud.

Count Bismarck's Telegram [332]

Bismarck had hurried from Varzin to Berlin on July 12, in profound concern lest his royal master should subject his country and his minister to what, after the menace of Gramont and Ollivier on July 6, would be grave diplomatic defeat. He had resolved to retire if the incident should end in this shape, and the chief actor has himself described the strange sinister scene that averted his design. He invited Moltke and Roon to dine with him alone on July 13. In the midst of their conversation, "I was informed," he says, "that a telegram from Ems in cipher, if I recollect rightly, of about 200 'groups' was being deciphered. When the copy was handed me it showed that Abeken had drawn up and signed the telegram at his Majesty's command, and I read it out to my guests, whose dejection was so great that they turned away from food and drink. On a repeated examination of the document I lingered upon the authorisation of his Majesty, which included a command, immediately to communicate Benedetti's fresh demand and its rejection to our ambassadors and to the press. I put a few questions to Moltke as to the extent of his confidence in the state of our preparations, especially as to the time they would still require in order to meet this sudden risk of war. He answered that if there was to be war he expected no advantage to us by deferring its outbreak.... Under the conviction that war could be avoided only at the cost of the honour of Prussia,

[210] Busch, i. p. 312.

I made use of the royal authorisation to publish the contents of the telegram; and in the presence of my two guests I reduced the telegram by striking out words, but without adding or altering, to the following form: 'After the news of the renunciation of the hereditary Prince of Hohenzollern had been officially communicated to the imperial government of France by the royal government of Spain, the French ambassador at Ems further demanded of his Majesty the King that he would authorise him to telegraph to Paris that his Majesty the King bound himself for all future time never again to give his consent if the Hohenzollerns should renew their candidature. His Majesty the King thereupon decided not to receive the French ambassador again, and sent to tell him through the aide-de-camp on duty that his Majesty had nothing further to communicate to the ambassador.' The [333] difference in the effect of the abbreviated text of the Ems telegram, as compared with that produced by the original, was not the result of stronger words but of the form, which made this announcement appear decisive, while Abeken's version would only have been regarded as a fragment of a negotiation still pending and to be continued at Berlin. After I had read out the concentrated edition to my two guests, Moltke remarked: 'Now it has a different ring; it sounded before like a parley; now it is like a flourish in answer to a challenge.' I went on to explain: 'If in execution of his Majesty's order I at once communicate this text, which contains no alteration in or addition to the telegram, not only to the newspapers, but also by telegraph to all our embassies, it will be known in Paris before midnight, and not only an account of its contents, but also an account of the manner of its distribution, will have the effect of a red rag upon the Gallic bull. Fight we must, if we do not want to act the part of the vanquished without a battle. Success, however, essentially depends upon the impression which the origination of the war makes upon us and others; it is important that we should be the party attacked, and that we fearlessly meet the public threats

of France.' This explanation brought about in the two generals a revulsion to a more joyous mood, the liveliness of which surprised me. They had suddenly recovered their pleasure in eating and drinking, and spoke in a more cheerful vein. Roon said: 'Our God of old lives still, and will not let us perish in disgrace.' "[211]

The telegram devised at the Berlin dinner-party soon reached [334] Paris. For a second time the 14th day of July was to be a date of doom in French history. The Emperor and his council deliberated on the grave question of calling out the reserves. The decisive step had been pressed by Marshal Lebœuf the night before without success. He now returned to the charge, and this time his proposal was resolved upon. It was about four o'clock. The marshal had hardly left the room before new scruples seized his colleagues. The discussion began over again, and misgivings revived. The Emperor showed himself downcast

[211] *Bismarck: His Reflections and Reminiscences*, 1898, ii. pp. 95-101. As I have it before me, the reader will perhaps care to see the telegram as Bismarck received it, drawn up by Abeken at the King's command, handed in at Ems, July 13, in the afternoon, and reaching Berlin at six in the evening: "His Majesty writes to me: 'Count Benedetti spoke to me on the promenade, in order to demand from me, finally in a very importunate manner, that I should authorise him to telegraph at once that I bound myself for all future time never again to give my consent if the Hohenzollerns should renew their candidature. I refused at last somewhat sternly, as it is neither right nor possible to undertake engagements of this kind *à tout jamais*. Naturally I told him I had as yet received no news, and as he was earlier informed about Paris and Madrid he could clearly see that my government once more had no hand in the matter.' His Majesty has since received a letter from the Prince. His Majesty having told Count Benedetti that he was awaiting news from the Prince, has decided, with reference to the above demand, upon the representation of Count Eulenburg and myself, not to receive Count Benedetti again, but only to let him be informed through an aide-de-camp: That his Majesty has now received from the Prince confirmation of the news which Benedetti had already received from Paris, and had nothing further to say to the ambassador. His Majesty leaves it to your excellency whether Benedetti's fresh demand and its rejection should not be at once communicated both to our ambassadors and to the press." (ii. p.

and worn out. Towards five o'clock somebody came to tell them it was absolutely necessary that ministers should present themselves before the Chambers. Gramont rose and told them that if they wished an accommodation, there was still one way, an appeal to Europe. The word congress was no sooner pronounced than the Emperor, seized by extraordinary emotion at the thought of salvation by his own favourite chimera, was stirred even to tears. An address to the Powers was instantly drawn up, and the council broke off. At six o'clock Lebœuf received a note from the Emperor, seeming to regret the decision to call out the reserves. On Lebœuf's demand the council was convoked for ten o'clock that night. In the interval news came that the Ems telegram had been communicated to foreign governments. As Bismarck had calculated, the affront of the telegram was aggravated by publicity. At ten o'clock the council met, and mobilisation was again considered. By eleven it was almost decided that mobilisation should be put off. At eleven o'clock a foreign office despatch arrived, and was read at the council. What was this despatch, is not yet known—perhaps from the French military agent at Berlin, with further news of Prussian preparations. It was of such a kind that it brought about an instant reaction. The orders for mobilisation were maintained.[212]

[335]

France Declares War

An inflammatory appeal was made to the Chambers. When a parliamentary committee was appointed, a vital document was suppressed, and its purport misrepresented. Thus in point of scruple, the two parties to the transaction were not ill-matched, but Bismarck had been watchful, provident, and well informed, while his opponents were men, as one of them said, "of a light heart," heedless, uncalculating, and ignorant and wrong as to their facts.[213]

96.)

[212] See Sorel, *Hist. diplomatique de la guerre franco-allemande* (1875), i. pp. 169-71.

[213] In the Reichstag, on July 20, Bismarck reproached the French ministers for

On July 15 Mr. Gladstone reported to the Queen:—

> Mr. Disraeli made inquiries from the government respecting the differences between France and Prussia, and in so doing expressed opinions strongly adverse to France as the apparent aggressor. Mr. Gladstone, in replying, admitted it to be the opinion of the government that there was no matter known to be in controversy of a nature to warrant a disturbance of the general peace. He said the course of events was not favourable, and the decisive moment must in all likelihood be close at hand.

"At a quarter past four," says a colleague, "a cabinet box was handed down the treasury bench to Gladstone. He opened it and looking along to us, said—with an accent I shall never forget—'*War declared against Prussia.*' "[214] "Shall I ever forget," says Archbishop Tait, "Gladstone's face of earnest care when I saw him in the lobby?"[215]

The British cabinet made a final effort for peace. Lord Granville instructed our ambassadors to urge France and Prussia to be so far controlled by the treaty of Paris that before proceeding to extremities they should have recourse to the good offices of some friendly Power, adding that his government was ready to take any part that might be desired in the matter. On the 18th Bismarck replied by throwing the onus of acceptance on France. On the 19th France declined the proposal. [336]

Just as Bismarck said that England ought to have prevented the war, Frenchmen also said that we ought to have held the Emperor back. With what sanction could Mr. Gladstone have enforced

not yielding to the pressure of the members of the opposition like Thiers and Gambetta, and producing the document, which would have overthrown the base on which the declaration of war was founded. Yet he had prepared this document for the very purpose of tempting France into a declaration of war.

[214] Grant Duff's *Diaries*, ii. p. 153. The technical declaration of war by France was made at Berlin on July 19.

[215] *Life*, ii. p. 78.

peremptory counsel? Was France to be made to understand that England would go to war on the Prussian side? Short of war, what more could she have done? Lord Granville had told Gramont that he had never in despatch or conversation admitted that after the French had received satisfaction in substance, there was a case for a quarrel on pure form. The British cabinet and their ambassador in Paris had redoubled warning and remonstrance. If the Emperor and his advisers did not listen to the penetrating expostulations of Thiers, and to his vigorous and instructed analysis of the conditions of their case, why should they listen to Lord Granville? Nor was there time, for their precipitancy had kindled a conflagration before either England or any other Power had any chance of extinguishing the blaze.[216]

To Michel Chevalier Mr. Gladstone wrote a few days later:—

> I cannot describe to you the sensation of pain, almost of horror, which, has thrilled through this country from end to end at the outbreak of hostilities, the commencement of the work of blood. I suppose there was a time when England would have said, "Let our neighbours, being, as they are, our rivals, waste their energies, their wealth, their precious irrevocable lives, in destroying one another: they will be the weaker, we shall be relatively the stronger." But we have now unlearned that bad philosophy; and the war between France and Prussia saddens the whole face of society, and burdens every man with a personal grief. We do not pretend to be sufficient judges of the merits: I now mean by "we" those

[216] "II fallait donner à l'Europe le temps d'intervenir, ce qui n'empêchait pas que vos armements continuassent, et il ne fallait pas se hâter, de venir ici dans le moment où la susceptibilité française devait être la plus exigeante, des faits qui devaient causer une irritation dangereuse.... Ce n'est pas pour l'intérêt essentiel de la France, c'est par la faute du cabinet que nous avons la guerre."—*Thiers*, in the Chamber, July 15, 1870. For this line of contention he was called an "unpatriotic trumpet of disaster," and other names commonly bestowed on all men in all countries who venture to say that what chances for the hour to be a popular war is a blunder.

> who are in authority, and perhaps in a condition to judge least ill. We cannot divide praise and blame as between parties. [337] I hope you do not think it unkind that I should write thus. Forgive the *rashness* of a friend. One of the purposes in life dear to my heart has been to knit together in true amity the people of my own country with those of your great nation. That web of concord is too tender yet, not to suffer under the rude strain of conflicts and concussions even such as we have no material share in. I think that even if I err, I cannot be without a portion of your sympathy: now when the knell of the brave begins to toll. As for us, we have endeavoured to cherish with both the relations of peace and mutual respect. May nothing happen to impair them!

Though good feeling prevented Mr. Gladstone from dividing praise and blame between the two governments, his own judgment was clear. The initial declaration of July 6, followed by the invention of a second demand by France upon Prussia after the first had been conceded, looked to him, as it did to England generally, like a fixed resolution to force a quarrel. In September he wrote of the proceedings of the French government:—

> Wonder rises to its climax when we remember that this feverish determination to force a quarrel was associated with a firm belief in the high preparation and military superiority of the French forces, the comparative inferiority of the Germans, the indisposition of the smaller states to give aid to Prussia, and even the readiness of Austria, with which from his long residence at Vienna the Duc de Gramont supposed himself to be thoroughly acquainted, to appear in arms as the ally of France. It too soon appeared that, as the advisers of the Emperor knew nothing of public rights and nothing of the sense of Europe, so they knew nothing about Austria and the mind of the German states, and less than nothing about not only the Prussian army, but even their own.[217]

[217] *Gleanings*, iv. p. 222.

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Chapter V. Neutrality And Annexation. (1870)

> The immediate purpose with which Italians and Germans effected the great change in the European constitution was unity, not liberty. They constructed not securities but forces. Machiavelli's time had come.—ACTON.

I

First Thoughts In England

"The war is a grievous affair," Mr. Gladstone said to Brand, "and adds much to our cares, for to maintain our neutrality in such a case as this, will be a most arduous task. On the face of the facts France is wrong, but as to personal trustworthiness the two moving spirits on the respective sides, Napoleon and Bismarck, are nearly on a par." His individual activity was unsparing. He held almost daily conferences with Lord Granville at the foreign office; criticised and minuted despatches; contributed freely to the drafts. "There has not, I think," he wrote to Bright (Sept. 12), "been a single day on which Granville and I have not been in anxious communication on the subject of the war." When Lord Granville went to Walmer he wrote to Mr. Gladstone, "I miss our discussions here over the despatches as they come in very much." "I hope I need not say that while you are laid up with gout at Walmer," Mr. Gladstone wrote in October, "I am most ready to start at a few hours' notice at any time of day or night, to join you upon any matter which you may find to require it. Indeed I could not properly or with comfort remain here upon any other terms." Details of this agitating time, with all its convulsions and readjustments, belong to the history of Europe. The part taken by Mr. Gladstone and his cabinet was for several months in pretty close harmony with the humour of the country. It will be enough for us to mark their action at decisive moments. [339]

On July 16 he wrote to Cardwell at the war office:—

> If, unhappily, which God forbid, we have to act in this war, it will not be with six months', nor three months', nor even one month's notice. The real question is, supposing an urgent call of honour and of duty in an emergency for 15,000 or 20,000 men, what would you do? What answer would the military authorities make to this question, those of them especially who have brains rather than mere position? Have you no fuller battalions than those of 500? At home or in the Mediterranean? If in the latter, should they not be brought home? Childers seemed to offer a handsome subscription of marines, and that the artillery would count for much in such a case is most probable. What I should like is to study the means of sending 20,000 men to Antwerp with as much promptitude as at the Trent affair we sent 10,000 to Canada.

The figures of the army and navy were promptly supplied to the prime minister, Cardwell adding with, a certain shrillness that, though he had no wish to go either to Antwerp or anywhere else, he could not be responsible for sending an expedition abroad, unless the army were fitted for that object by measures taken now to increase its force.

> I entirely agree with you, Mr. Gladstone replied, that *when* it is seriously intended to send troops to Antwerp or elsewhere abroad, "immediate measures must be taken to increase our force." I feel, however, rather uneasy at what seems to me the extreme susceptibility on one side of the case of some members of the cabinet. I hope it will be balanced by considering the effect of any forward step by appeal to parliament, in compromising the true and entire neutrality of our position, and in disturbing and misdirecting the mind of the public and of parliament. I am afraid I have conveyed to your mind a wrong impression as to the state of my own. It is only a far outlook which, in my opinion, brings into view as

> a possibility the sending a force to Antwerp. Should the day arrive, we shall then be on the very edge of war, with scarcely a hope of not passing onward into the abyss.

Cardwell sent him a paper by a high military authority, on which Mr. Gladstone made two terse ironic comments. "I think the paper," he said, "if it proves anything proves (1) That generals and not ministers are the proper judges of those weights in the political scales which express the likelihood of war and peace; (2) That there is very little difference between absolute neutrality and actual war. I advise that Granville should see it." [340]

On July 25 the *Times* divulged the text of a projected agreement in 1869 (it was in truth 1867) between the French and Prussian governments in five articles, including one that the incorporation of Belgium by France would not be objected to by Prussia. The public was shocked and startled, and many were inclined to put down the document for a forgery and a hoax. As a matter of fact, in substance it was neither. The Prussian ambassador a few days before had informed Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville personally and in strict secrecy, that the draft of such a project existed in the handwriting of M. Benedetti. This private communication was taken by Mr. Gladstone to have been made with the object of prompting him to be the agent in producing the evil news to the world, and thus to prejudice France in the judgment of Europe. He thought that no part of his duty, and took time to consider it, in the expectation that it was pretty sure to find its way into print by some other means, as indeed soon happened. "For the sake of peace," Bismarck explained to Lord Granville (July 28, 1870), "I kept the secret, and treated the propositions in a dilatory manner." When the British ambassador on one occasion had tried to sound him on the suspected designs of France, Bismarck answered, "It is no business of mine to tell French secrets."

Mind Of The British Government

There were members of the cabinet who doubted the

expediency of England taking any action. The real position of affairs, they argued, was not altered: the draft treaty only disclosed what everybody believed before, namely that France sought compensation for Prussian aggrandisement, as she had secured it for Italian aggrandisement by taking Savoy and Nice. That Prussia would not object, provided the compensations were not at the expense of people who spoke German, had all come out at the time of the Luxemburg affair. If France and Prussia agreed,
[341] how could we help Belgium, unless indeed Europe joined? But then what chance was there of Russia and Austria joining against France and Prussia for the sake of Belgium, in which neither of them had any direct interest? At the same time ministers knew that the public in England expected them to do something, though a vote for men and money would probably suffice. The cabinet, however, advanced a step beyond a parliamentary vote. On July 30 they met and took a decision to which Mr. Gladstone then and always after attached high importance. England proposed a treaty to Prussia and France, providing that if the armies of either violated the neutrality of Belgium, Great Britain would co-operate with the other for its defence, but without engaging to take part in the general operations of the war. The treaty was to hold good for twelve months after the conclusion of the war. Bismarck at once came into the engagement. France loitered a little, but after the battle of Wörth made no more difficulty, and the instrument was signed on August 9.

The mind of the government was described by Mr. Gladstone in a letter to Bright (August 1):—

> Although some members of the cabinet were inclined on the outbreak of this most miserable war to make military preparations, others, Lord Granville and I among them, by no means shared that disposition, nor I think was the feeling of parliament that way inclined. But the publication of the treaty

> has altered all this, and has thrown upon us the necessity either of doing something fresh to secure Belgium, or else of saying that under no circumstances would we take any step to secure her from absorption. This publication has wholly altered the feeling of the House of Commons, and no government could at this moment venture to give utterance to such an intention about Belgium. But neither do we think it would be right, even if it were safe, to announce that we would in any case stand by with folded arms, and see actions done which would amount to a total extinction of public right in Europe.

The idea of engagements that might some day involve resort to force made Bright uneasy, and Mr. Gladstone wrote to him again (August 4):— [342]

> It will be a great addition to the domestic portion of the griefs of this most unhappy war, if it is to be the cause of a political severance between you and the present administration. To this I know you would justly reply that the claims of conviction are paramount. I hope, however, that the moment has not quite arrived.... You will, I am sure, give me credit for good faith when I say, especially on Lord Granville's part as on my own, who are most of all responsible, that we take this step in the interest of peace.... The recommendation set up in opposition to it generally is, that we should simply declare *we* will defend the neutrality of Belgium by arms in case it should be attacked. Now the sole or single-handed defence of Belgium would be an enterprise which we incline to think Quixotic; if these two great military powers combined against it—that combination is the only serious danger; and this it is which by our proposed engagements we should I hope render improbable to the very last degree. I add for myself this confession of faith. If the Belgian people desire, on their own account, to join France or any other country, I for one will be no party to taking up arms to prevent it. But that the Belgians, whether they would or not, should go 'plump' down the maw

> of another country to satisfy dynastic greed, is another matter. The accomplishment of such a crime as this implies, would come near to an extinction of public right in Europe, and I do not think we could look on while the sacrifice of freedom and independence was in course of consummation.

II

The Storm Of War

By the end of the first week of August the storm of war had burst upon the world. "On the 2nd of August, in the insignificant affair of Saarbrück, the Emperor of the French assumed a feeble offensive. On the 4th, the Prussians replied energetically at Wissemburg. And then what a torrent, what a deluge of events! In twenty-eight days ten battles were fought. Three hundred thousand men were sent to the hospitals, to captivity, or to the grave. The German enemy had penetrated into the interior of
[343] France, over a distance of a hundred and fifty miles of territory, and had stretched forth everywhere as he went the strong hand of possession. The Emperor was a prisoner, and had been deposed with general consent; his family wanderers, none knew where; the embryo at least of a republic, born of the hour, had risen on the ruins of the empire, while proud and gorgeous Paris was awaiting with divided mind the approach of the conquering monarch, and his countless host."[218] This was Mr. Gladstone's description of a marvellous and shattering hour.

Talleyrand was fond in the days of 1815 at Vienna, of applying to any diplomatist who happened to agree with him the expression, "a good European." He meant a statesman who was capable of conceiving the state-system of the western world as a whole. The events of August made the chief minister of Austria now exclaim, "I see no longer any Europe." All the notions of alliance that had so much to do with the precipitation of the war

[218] *Gleanings*, iv. p. 197.

were dissipated. Italy, so far from joining France, marched into Rome. Austria ostentatiously informed England that she was free from engagements. The Czar of Russia was nephew of the Prussian king and German in his leanings, but Gortchakoff, his minister, was jealous of Bismarck, and his sympathies inclined to France, and Czar and minister alike nursed designs in the Black Sea. With such materials as these Mr. Pitt himself with all his subsidies could not have constructed a fighting coalition. Even the sons of stricken France after the destruction of the empire were a divided people. For side by side with national defence against the invader, republican and monarchic propagandism was at work, internecine in its temper and scattering baleful seeds of civil war.

"Many," Mr. Gladstone wrote to Chevalier in September, "seem so over-sanguine as to suppose that it is in our power at any moment, by friendly influence of reasoning, to solve the problem which has brought together in the shock of battle the two greatest military powers of Europe.... I do not see that it is an offence on our part not to interfere when the belligerents differ so widely, when we have not the hope of bringing them together, and [344] when we cannot adopt without reserve the language and claims of either." Material responsibility and moral responsibility both pointed to a rigid equity between the combatants, and to strict neutrality. The utmost to be done was to localise the war; and with this aim, the British cabinet induced Italy, Austria, Russia, and smaller powers to come to a common agreement that none of them would depart from neutrality without a previous understanding with the rest. This league of the neutrals, though negative, was at least a shadow of collective action, from which good might come if the belligerents should some day accept or invite mediation. To this diplomatic neutrality the only alternative was an armed neutrality, and armed neutrality has not always served pacific ends.

To the German contention at one stage after the overthrow of

the empire, that the Empress was still the only authority existing legally for France, Mr. Gladstone was energetically opposed. "It embodied," he said, "the doctrine that no country can have a new government without the consent of the old one." "Ought we," he asked Lord Granville (Sept. 20), "to witness in silence the promulgation of such a doctrine, which is utterly opposed to the modern notions of public right, though it was in vogue fifty years back, and though it was acted on with most fatal consequences by the Prussians of eighty years back?" Then as for mediation, whether isolated or in common, he saw no hope in it. He said to the Duke of Argyll (Sept. 6), "I would not say a word ever so gently. I believe it would do great mischief. As at present advised, I see but two really safe grounds for mediation, (1) a drawn battle; (2) the request of both parties." Ever since 1862, and his error in the American war—so he now wrote to Lord Granville—"in forming and expressing an opinion that the Southerners had virtually established their independence, I have been very fearful of giving opinions with regard to the proper course of foreign nations to pursue in junctures, of which, after all, I think they have better means of forming a judgment than foreigners can possess." [345]

In the middle of September Thiers, in the course of his valiant mission to European courts, reached London. "Yesterday," Mr. Gladstone writes (Sept. 14), "I saw Thiers and had a long conversation with him; he was very clear and touching in parts. But the purpose of his mission is vague. He seems come to do just what he can." The vagueness of Thiers did but mirror the distractions of France. Not even from his ingenious, confident, and fertile mind could men hope for a clue through the labyrinth of European confusions. Great Britain along with four other powers recognised the new government of the Republic in France at the beginning of February 1871.

Article In "Edinburgh Review"

It was about this time that Mr. Gladstone took what was for a prime minister the rather curious step of volunteering an

anonymous article in a review, upon these great affairs in which his personal responsibility was both heavy and direct.[219] The precedent can hardly be called a good one, for as anybody might have known, the veil was torn aside in a few hours after the *Edinburgh Review* containing his article appeared. Its object, he said afterwards, was "to give what I thought needful information on a matter of great national importance, which involved at the time no interest of party whatever. If such interests had been involved, a rule from which I have never as a minister diverted would have debarred me from writing." Lord Granville told him that, "It seemed to be an admirable argument, the more so as it is the sort of thing Thiers ought to have said and did not." The article made a great noise, as well it might, for it was written with much eloquence, truth, and power, and was calculated to console his countrymen for seeing a colossal European conflict going on, without the privilege of a share in it. One passage about happy England—happy especially that the wise dispensation of Providence had cut her off by the streak of silver sea from continental dangers—rather irritated than convinced. The production of such an article under such circumstances was a striking illustration of Mr. Gladstone's [346] fervid desire—the desire of a true orator's temperament—to throw his eager mind upon a multitude of men, to spread the light of his own urgent conviction, to play the part of missionary with a high evangel, which had been his earliest ideal forty years before. Everybody will agree that it was better to have a minister writing his own articles in a respectable quarterly, than doctoring other people's articles with concomitants from a reptile fund.

[219] To be found in *Gleanings*, iv. In republishing it, Mr. Gladstone says, "This article is the only one ever written by me, which was meant for the time to be in substance, as well as in form, anonymous." That was in 1878. Three years later he contributed an anonymous article, "The Conservative Collapse," to the *Fortnightly Review* (May 1880).

III

On the vital question of the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, Mr. Gladstone's view was easy to anticipate. He could not understand how the French protests turned more upon the inviolability of French soil, than on the attachment of the people of Alsace and North Lorraine to their country. The abstract principle he thought peculiarly awkward in a nation that had made recent annexations of her own. Upon all his correspondents at home and abroad, he urged that the question ought to be worked on the basis of the sentiments of the people concerned, and not upon the principle of inviolability. He composed an elaborate memorandum for the cabinet, but without effect. On the last day of September, he records: "*Sept. 30*: Cabinet 2-1/4-6. I failed in my two objects. 1. An effort to speak with the other neutral Powers against the transfer of Alsace and Lorraine without reference to the populations. 2. Immediate release of Fenian prisoners."

To Mr. Bright, who was still prevented by illness from attending cabinets, and who had the second of the two objects much at heart, he wrote the next day:—

> I send for your private perusal the enclosed mem. which I proposed to the cabinet yesterday, but could not induce them to adopt. It presupposes the concurrence of the neutral Powers. They agreed in the opinions, but did not think the expression of them timely. My opinion certainly is that the transfer of territory and inhabitants by mere force calls for the reprobation of Europe, and that Europe is entitled to utter it, and can utter it with good effect.

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The ground taken by him in the cabinet was as follows:—

> A matter of this kind cannot be regarded as in principle a question between the two belligerents only, but involves

> considerations of legitimate interest to all the Powers of Europe. It appears to bear on the Belgian question in particular. It is also a principle likely to be of great consequence in the eventual settlement of the Eastern question. Quite apart from the subject of mediation, it cannot be right that the neutral Powers should remain silent, while this principle of consulting the wishes of the population is trampled down, should the actual sentiment of Alsace and Lorraine be such as to render that language applicable. The mode of expressing any view of this matter is doubtless a question requiring much consideration. The decision of the cabinet was that the time for it had not yet come. Any declaration in the sense described would, Mr. Gladstone thought, entail, in fairness, an obligation to repudiate the present claim of France to obtain peace without surrendering "either an inch of her territory or a stone of her fortresses."

Mr. Bright did not agree with him, but rather favoured the principle of inviolability. In November Mr. Gladstone prepared a still more elaborate memorandum in support of a protest from the neutral Powers. The Duke of Argyll put what was perhaps the general view when he wrote to Mr. Gladstone (Nov. 25, 1870), "that he had himself never argued in favour of the German annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, but only against our having any right to oppose it otherwise than by the most friendly dissuasion." The Duke held that the consent of populations to live under a particular government is a right subject to a great many qualifications, and it would not be easy to turn such a doctrine into the base of an official remonstrance. After all, he said, the instincts of nations stand for something in this world. The German did not exceed the ancient acknowledged right of nations in successful wars, when he said to Alsace and Lorraine, "Conquest in a war forced upon me by the people of which you form a part, gives me the *right* to annex, if on other grounds I deem it expedient, and for strategic reasons I do so deem it." [348]

Mr. Gladstone, notwithstanding his cabinet, held to his view energetically expressed as follows:—

> If the contingency happen, not very probable, of a sudden accommodation which shall include the throttling of Alsace and part of Lorraine, without any voice previously raised against it, it will in my opinion be a standing reproach to England. There is indeed the Russian plan of not recognising that in which we have had no part; but it is difficult to say what this comes to.

On December 20 he says to Lord Granville what we may take for a last word on this part of the case: "While I more and more feel the deep culpability of France, I have an apprehension that this violent laceration and transfer is to lead us from bad to worse, and to be the *beginning* of a new series of European complications."

While working in the spirit of cordial and even eager loyalty to the prime minister, Lord Granville disagreed with him upon the question of diplomatic action against annexation. Palmerston, he said to Mr. Gladstone in October, "wasted the strength derived by England by the great war by his brag. I am afraid of our wasting that which we at present derive from moral causes, by laying down general principles when nobody will attend to them, and when in all probability they will be disregarded. My objection to doing at present what you propose is, that it is impossible according to my views to do so without being considered to throw our weight into the French scale against Germany, with consequent encouragement on one side and irritation on the other."

Like Thiers, Mr. Gladstone had been leaning upon the concurrence of the neutral Powers, and active co-operation at St. Petersburg. Russian objects were inconsistent with the alienation of Germany, and they made a fatal bar to all schemes

for lowering the German terms. This truth of the situation was suddenly brought home to England in no palatable way.

[349]

Chapter VI. The Black Sea. (1870-1871)

> "You are always talking to me of principles. As if your public law were anything to me; I do not know what it means. What do you suppose that all your parchments and your treaties signify to me?"
>
> —ALEXANDER I. To TALLEYRAND.

I

At the close of the Crimean war in 1856 by the provisions of the treaty of Paris, Russia and Turkey were restrained from constructing arsenals on the coast of the Euxine, and from maintaining ships of war on its waters. No serious statesman believed that the restriction would last, any more than Napoleon's restraint on Prussia in 1808 against keeping up an army of more than forty thousand men could last. Palmerston had this neutralisation more at heart than anybody else, and Lord Granville told the House of Lords what durability Palmerston expected for it:—

> General Ignatieff told me that he remarked to Lord Palmerston, "These are stipulations which you cannot expect will last long," and Lord Palmerston replied, "They will last ten years." A learned civilian, a great friend of mine, told me he heard Lord Palmerston talk on the subject, and say, "Well, at all events they will last my life." A noble peer, a colleague of mine, an intimate friend of Lord Palmerston, says Lord Palmerston told him they would last seven years.[220]

In 1856 Mr. Gladstone declared his opinion, afterwards often repeated, that the neutralisation of the Black Sea, popular as

[220] House of Lords, Feb. 14, 1871.

it might be in England at the moment, was far from being a satisfactory arrangement.[221] Were the time to come, he said, [350] when Russia might resume aggressive schemes on Turkey, he believed that neutralisation would mean nothing but a series of pitfalls much deeper than people expected.[222] These pitfalls now came into full view. On the last day of October Prince Gortchakoff addressed a circular to the Powers, announcing that his imperial master could "no longer consider himself bound to the terms of the treaty of March 1856, in so far as these limit his rights of sovereignty in the Black Sea." On the merits there was very little real dispute in Europe. As Lord Granville once wrote to Mr. Gladstone: "There was no doubt about Germany having at Paris, and subsequently, always taken the Russian view. France made an intimation to the same effect very soon after the conclusion of the treaty. And Austria later. Italy did the same, but not in so decided a manner.... I have frequently said in public that with the exception of ourselves and the Turks, all the co-signatories of the treaty of Paris had expressed views in favour of modifying the article, previous to Prince Gortchakoff's declaration."[223]

The Russian Circular

To have a good case on the merits was one thing, and to force it at the sword's point was something extremely different. As Mr. Gladstone put it in a memorandum that became Lord Granville's despatch, "the question was not whether any desire expressed by Russia ought to be carefully examined in a friendly spirit by the co-signatory powers, but whether they are to accept from her an announcement that by her own act, without any consent from

[221] The stipulations "were politically absurd, and therefore in the long run impossible." "The most inept conclusions of the peace of Paris."—Bismarck, *Reflections*, ii. p. 114.

[222] *Hansard*, May 6, 1856. See also May 24, 1855, and Aug. 3, 1855.

[223] Bismarck, in his *Reflections*, takes credit to himself for having come to an understanding with Russia on this question at the outbreak of the Franco-German war.

them, she has released herself from a solemn covenant."[224] Mr. Gladstone, not dissenting on the substance of the Russian claim, was outraged by the form. The only parallel he ever found to Gortchakoff's proceedings in 1870 was a certain claim, of which we shall soon see something, made by America in 1872. "I have had half an idea," he wrote to Lord Granville, "that it might be
[351] well I should see Brunnow [the Russian ambassador] either with you or alone. All know the mischief done by the Russian idea of Lord Aberdeen, and the opposition are in the habit of studiously representing me as his double, or his heir in pacific traditions. This I do not conceive to be true, and possibly I might undeceive Brunnow a little."

In this country, as soon as the news of the circular was made known, the public excitement was intense. Consols instantly dropped heavily. Apart from the form of the Russian claim, the public still alert upon the eastern question, felt that the question was once more alive. As Mr. Gladstone had said to Lord Granville (Oct. 4, 1870), "Everybody at a time like this looks out for booty; it will be hard to convince central Europe that Turkey is not a fair prize." From France Lord Lyons wrote to Mr. Gladstone (Nov. 14) that the Russian declaration was looked upon with complacency, because it might lead to a congress, and at all events it might, by causing a stir among the neutrals, give a check to Prussia as well as to Russia.

Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone, who was at Hawarden (Nov. 21):—

> I am very sorry to hear that you are not well. Of course, you must run no risk, but as soon as you can you will, I hope, come up and have a cabinet. Childers has been here. He tells me there is a perfect howl about ministers not meeting. He is more quiet in his talk than I hear some of our colleagues

[224] "The whole pith of the despatch was yours."—Granville to Mr. Gladstone, Nov. 18, 1870.

> are. But he says if there is to be war, every day lost is most injurious. I have told him that it is impossible to say that we may not be driven into it by Russia, or by other foreign powers, or by our own people; that we must take care of our dignity; but if there ever was a cabinet which is bound not to drift into an unnecessary war, it is ours.

Mr. Gladstone replied next day:—

> I will frankly own that I am much disgusted with a good deal of the language that I have read in the newspapers within the last few days about immediate war with Russia. I try to put a check on myself to prevent the reaction it engenders. Your observation on drifting into war is most just: though I always thought Clarendon's epithet in this one case inapplicable as well as unadvisable. I know, however, nothing more like drifting into war than would be a resort to any military measures whatever, except with reference either to some actual fact or some well defined contingency.... [352]

II

The courses open to the British Government in the face of the circular were these. They might silently or with a protest acquiesce. Or they might declare an offensive war (much deprecated by Turkey herself) against a nation that had peculiar advantages for defence, and for an object that every other signatory power thought in itself a bad object. Third, they might, in accordance with a wonderfully grand scheme suggested to ministers, demand from Germany, all flushed as she was with military pride, to tell us plainly whether she was on our side or Russia's; and if the German answer did not please us, then we should make an offensive alliance with France, Austria, Italy, and Turkey checking Russia in the east and Germany in the west. A fourth plan was mutely to wait, on the plea that whatever Russia

might have said, nothing had been done. The fifth plan was a conference. This was hardly heroic enough to please everybody in the cabinet. At least it saved us from the insanity of a war that would have intensified European confusion, merely to maintain restraints considered valuable by nobody. The expedient of a conference was effectively set in motion by Bismarck, then pre-occupied in his critical Bavarian treaty and the siege of Paris. On November 12, Mr. Odo Russell left London for Versailles on a special mission to the Prussian king. The intrepidity of our emissary soon secured a remarkable success, and the episode of Bismarck's intervention in the business was important.

Bismark's Action

Mr. Odo Russell had three hours' conversation with Count Bismarck on November 21. Bismarck told him that the Russian circular had taken him by surprise; that though he had always thought the treaty of 1856 too hard upon Russia, he entirely disapproved both of the manner and time chosen for forcing on
[353] a revision of it; that he could not interfere nor even answer the circular, but to prevent the outbreak of another war he would recommend conferences at Constantinople.[225] The conversation broke off at four o'clock in the afternoon, with this unpromising cast. At ten in the evening it was resumed; it was prolonged until half an hour beyond midnight. “I felt I knew him better,” Mr. Russell in an unofficial letter tells Lord Granville (Nov. 30), “and could express more easily all that I had determined to say to convince him that unless he could get Russia to withdraw the

[225] Bismarck's private opinion was this: “Gortchakoff is not carrying on in this matter a real Russian policy (that is, one in the true interests of Russia), but rather a policy of violent aggression. People still believe that Russian diplomats are particularly crafty and clever, full of artifices and stratagems, but that is not the case. If the people at St. Petersburg were clever they would not make any declaration of the kind but would quietly build men-of-war in the Black Sea and wait until they were questioned on the subject. Then they might reply they knew nothing about it, but would make inquiries and so let the matter drag on. That might continue for a long time, and finally people would get accustomed to it.”—Busch, *Bismarck: Some Secret Pages of his History*, i. pp. 312-13.

circular, we should be compelled with or without allies to go to war." Bismarck remained long obstinate in his professed doubts of England going to war; but he gradually admitted the truth of the consequences to which a pacific acceptance of "the Russian kick must inevitably lead. And so he came round to the British point of view, and felt that in our place he could not recede."

It was not hard to see Bismarck's interests. The mischief to Germany of another European war before Paris had fallen; the moral support to be derived by the Tours government from a revival of the old Anglo-French alliance; the chances of Beust and other persons fishing in the troubled waters of an extended European conflict; the vital importance of peace to the reconstruction of Germany—these were the disadvantages to his own country and policy, of a war between England and Russia; these worked the change in his mind between afternoon and midnight, and led him to support the cause of England and peace against Gortchakoff and his circular. Characteristically, at the same time he strove hard to drive a bargain with the English agent, and to procure some political advantages in exchange for his moral support. "In politics," he said, "one hand should wash the other" (*eine Hand die andere waschen muss*). In Mr. Odo [354]
Russell, however, he found a man who talked the language, kept the tone and was alive to all the arts of diplomatic business, and no handwashing followed. When Mr. Russell went to his apartment in the Place Hoche at Versailles that night, he must have felt that he had done a good day's work.

In the following year, papers were laid before parliament, and attention was drawn to the language used by Mr. Russell to Bismarck, in the pregnant sentence about the question being of a nature in its present state to compel us with or without allies, to go to war with Russia.[226] Mr. Gladstone, when directly challenged, replied (Feb. 16) that the agent had used this argument without

[226] Correspondence respecting the treaty of March 30, 1856, No. 76, pp. 44, 45, c. 245.

specific authority or instruction from the government, but that the duty of diplomatic agents required them to express themselves in the mode in which they think they can best support the proposition of which they wish to procure acceptance. Mr. Odo Russell explained to Mr. Gladstone (Feb. 27) that he was led to use the argument about England being compelled to go to war with or without allies by these reasons: that we were bound by a definite treaty to regard any retractation of the stipulations of March 30, 1856, as a cause of war;[227] that Gortchakoff's assumption of a right to renounce provisions directly touching Russian interests seemed to carry with it the assumption of a right to renounce all the rest of the treaty; that Mr. Gladstone's government had declared (Nov. 10) that it was impossible to sanction the course announced by Gortchakoff; that, therefore, France being otherwise engaged, and Austria being unprepared, we might be compelled by our joint and several obligations under the tripartite treaty, to go to war with Russia for proceedings that we pronounced ourselves unable to sanction; finally, that he had never been instructed to state to Prussia, that the question was not one compelling us ever to go to war, notwithstanding our treaty engagements. What was Mr. Gladstone's reply to this I do
[355] not find, but Lord Granville had very sensibly written to him some weeks before (Dec. 8, 1870):—

> I am afraid our whole success has been owing to the belief that we would go to war, and to tell the truth, I think that war in some shape or other, sooner or later, was a possible risk after our note. In any case, I would reassure nobody now. Promising peace is as unwise as to threaten war. A sort of instinct that the bumps of combativeness and destructiveness are to be found somewhere in your head, has helped us much during the last five months.

[227] The tripartite treaty of England, France, Austria, of April 15, 1856.

III

The London Conference

Having undertaken to propose a conference, Bismarck did the best he could for it. The British cabinet accepted on condition that the conference was not to open with any previous assumption of Gortchakoff's declaration, and they objected to Petersburg as the scene of operations. Mr. Gladstone in some notes prepared for the meeting of his colleagues (Nov. 26), was very firm on the first and main point, that "Her Majesty's government could enter into no conference which should assume any portion of the treaty to have been already abrogated by the discretion of a single Power, and it would be wholly out of place for them, under the present circumstances, to ask for a conference, as they were not the parties who desire to bring about any change in the treaty." Russia made difficulties, but Bismarck's influence prevailed. The conference assembled not at Petersburg but in London, and subject to no previous assumption as to its results.[228]

The close of a negotiation is wont to drop the curtain over embarrassments that everybody is glad to forget;[229] but the obstacles to an exact agreement were not easily overcome. Lord Granville told Mr. Gladstone that no fewer than thirteen or fourteen versions of the most important protocol were tried before terms were reached. In the end Lord Granville's conclusion was that, as no just rights had been sacrificed, it was a positive advantage that Russia should be gratified by the removal of restraints naturally galling to her pride. [356]

The conference opened at the foreign office on Dec. 17, and held its final meeting on March 13. Delay was caused by the difficulty of procuring the attendance of a representative of France. Jules Favre was appointed by the government at Bordeaux, but he was locked up in Paris, and he and Bismarck could not agree as to the proper form of safe-conduct. What was

[228] Russell to Lord Granville, c. 245, No. 78, p. 46.
[229] Sorel's *Guerre Franco-Allemande*, ii. chap. 4.

even more important, the governing men in France could not agree upon his instructions; for we must remember that all this time along with the patriotic struggle against the Prussians, there went on an internal struggle only a degree less ardent between republicans and monarchists. It was not until the final meeting of the conference, that the Duc de Broglie was accredited as representative of his country.[230] At the first formal meeting a special protocol was signed recording it as "an essential principle of the law of nations that no Power can liberate itself from the engagements of a treaty, nor modify the stipulations thereof, unless with the consent of the contracting Powers by means of an amicable arrangement."

To give a single signatory Power the right of forbidding a change desired by all the others, imposes a kind of perpetuity on treaty stipulations, that in practice neither could nor ought to be insisted upon. For instance it would have tied fast the hands of Cavour and Victor Emmanuel in the Italian transactions which Mr. Gladstone had followed and assisted with so much enthusiasm, for Austria would never have assented. It is, moreover, true that in the ever recurring eras when force, truculent and unabashed, sweeps aside the moral judgments of the world, the mere inscription of a pious opinion in a protocol may seem worth little trouble. Yet it is the influence of good opinion, tardy, halting, stumbling, and broken, as it must ever be, that upholds and quickens the growth of right. The good rules laid down in conferences and state-papers may look tame in the glare of the real world of history as it is. Still, if we may change the figure, they help to dilute the poisons in the air.

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[230] That this failure to take advantage of the conference was an error on the part of France is admitted by modern French historians. Hanotaux, *France Contemporaine*, i. p. 108; Sorel, ii. pp. 216-7. Lord Granville had himself pointed out how a discussion upon the terms of peace might have been raised.

IV

Changes In English Opinion

In England opinion veered round after Sedan. The disappearance of the French empire had effectively dispelled the vivid suspicions of aggression. The creation of the empire of a united Germany showed a new Europe. The keen word of an English diplomatist expressed what was dawning in men's minds as a new misgiving. "Europe," he said, "has lost a mistress and got a master." Annexation wore an ugly look. Meetings to express sympathy with France in her struggle were held in London and the provinces. Still on the whole the general verdict seemed to be decisively in favour of a resolute neutrality, for in fact, nobody who knew anything of the state of Europe could suggest a policy of British intervention that would stand an hour of debate.

One proposal favoured by Mr. Gladstone, and also, I remember, commended by Mill, was the military neutralisation of Alsace and Lorraine, and the dismantling of the great border fortresses, without withdrawing the inhabitants from their French allegiance. The idea was worked out in a pamphlet by Count Gasparin. On this pamphlet Mr. Max Müller put what Mr. Gladstone called the fair question, whether its author was likely to persuade the European powers to guarantee border neutrality. "I will try to give you a fair answer," Mr. Gladstone said (Jan. 30, 1871). "You will not think it less fair because it is individual and unofficial; for a man must be a wretch indeed, who could speak at this most solemn juncture, otherwise than from the bottom of his heart. First, then, I agree with you in disapproving the declaration, or reputed declaration, of Lord Derby (then Stanley) in 1867, about the Luxemburg guarantee. I have in parliament and in my present office, declined or expressly forborne to recognise that declaration.[231] Secondly, as to the main question.

[231] *Lord Stanley on the Luxemburg Guarantee, June 14, 1867.*—The guarantee now given is collective only. That is an important distinction. It means this,

[358] It is great. It is difficult. But I should not despair. I may add I should desire to find it practicable; for I think it would be a condition fair to both parties, and one on which Germany would have an absolute title to insist. Some of the most excusable errors ever committed," he said, in closing the letter, "have also been the most ruinous in their consequences. The smallest in the forum of conscience, they are the greatest in the vast theatre of action. May your country, justly indignant and justly exultant, be preserved from committing one of these errors." Three months later, when all was at an end, he repeated the same thought:—

> The most fatal and in their sequel most gigantic errors of men are also frequently the most excusable and the least gratuitous. They are committed when a strong impetus of right carries them up to a certain point, and a residue of that impetus, drawn from the contact with human passion and infirmity, pushes them beyond it. They vault into the saddle; they fall on the other side. The instance most commonly present to my mind is the error of England in entering the Revolutionary war in 1793. Slow sometimes to go in, she is slower yet to come out, and if she had then held her hand, the course of the revolution and the fate of Europe would in all likelihood have been widely different. There might have been no Napoleon. There might have been no Sedan.

The changes in the political map effected by these dire months of diplomacy and war were almost comparable in one sense to those of the treaty of Münster, or the treaty of the Pyrenees,

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that in the event of a violation of neutrality, all the powers who have signed the treaty may be called upon for their collective action. No one of those powers is liable to be called upon to act singly or separately. It is a case so to speak of "limited liability." We are bound in honour—you cannot put a legal construction upon it—to see in concert with others that these arrangements are maintained. But if the other powers join with us, it is certain that there will be no violation of neutrality. If they, situated exactly as we are, decline to join, we are not bound single-handed to make up the deficiencies of the rest.

or the treaties of Vienna, save that those great instruments all left a consolidated Europe. Italy had crowned her work by the acquisition of Rome. Russia had wiped out the humiliation of 1856. Prussia, after three wars in six years, had conquered the primacy of a united Germany. Austria had fallen as Prussia rose. France had fallen, but she had shaken off a government that had no root in the noblest qualities of her people.

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Chapter VII. “Day's Work Of A Giant”. (1870-1872)

> We have not been an idle government. We have had an active life, and that is substantially one of the conditions of a happy life.... I am thankful to have been the leader of the liberal party at a period of the history of this country, when it has been my privilege and my duty to give the word of advance to able coadjutors and trusty and gallant adherents.—GLADSTONE.

I

The most marked administrative performance of Mr. Gladstone's great government was the reform and reorganisation of the army. In Mr. Cardwell he was fortunate enough to have a public servant of the first order; not a political leader nor a popular orator, but one of the best disciples of Peel's school; sound, careful, active, firm, and with an enlightened and independent mind admirably fitted for the effective despatch of business. Before he had been a month at the war office, the new secretary of state submitted to Mr. Gladstone his ideas of a plan that would give us an effective force for defence at a greatly reduced cost. The reorganisation of the army was one of the results of that great central event, from which in every direction such momentous consequences flowed—the victory of Prussian arms at Sadowa. The victory was a surprise, for even Lord Clyde, after a close inspection of the Prussian army, had found no more to report than that it was a first-rate militia. Sadowa disclosed that a soldier, serving only between two and three years with the colours, could yet show himself the most formidable combatant in Europe. The principle of Cardwell's plan was that short enlistment is essential to a healthy organisation of the army, and this reform it was that [360] produced an efficient reserve, the necessity for which had been

one of the lessons of the Crimean war. A second, but still a highly important element, was the reduction of the whole force serving in the colonies from fifty thousand men to less than half that number.[232] “To this change,” said Mr. Cardwell, “opposition will be weak, for the principle of colonial self-reliance is very generally assented to.” The idea, as Lord Wolseley says, that a standing army during peace should be a manufactory for making soldiers rather than either a costly receptacle for veterans, or a collection of perfectly trained fighters, “had not yet taken, hold of the military mind in England.”[233] The details do not concern us here, and everybody knows the revolution effected by the changes during Mr. Gladstone's great administration in the composition, the working, and the professional spirit of the army.

Army Reform

Army reform first brought Mr. Gladstone into direct collision with reigning sentiment at court. In spite of Pym and Cromwell and the untoward end of Charles I. and other salutary lessons of the great rebellion, ideas still lingered in high places that the sovereign's hand bore the sword, and that the wearer of the crown through a commander-in-chief had rights of control over the army, not quite dependent on parliament and secretary of state. The Queen had doubted the policy of disestablishing the church in Ireland, but to disestablish the commander-in-chief came closer home, and was disliked as an invasion of the personal rights of the occupant of the throne. This view was rather firmly pressed, and it was the first of a series of difficulties—always to him extremely painful, perhaps more painful than any other—that Mr. Gladstone was called upon in his long career to overcome. The subject was one on which the temper of a reforming parliament allowed no compromise,

[232] The number of men was reduced from 49,000 in 1868 to 20,941 in 1870; at the same time the military expenditure on the colonies was reduced from £3,388,023 to £1,905,538.

[233] *Reign of Queen Victoria*, edited by T. H. Ward (1887), i. p. 211.

even if the prime minister himself had been inclined to yield. As it was, by firmness, patience, and that tact which springs not from courtiership but from right feeling, he succeeded, and in
[361] the June of 1870 the Queen approved an order in council that put an end to the dual control of the army, defined the position of the commander-in-chief, and removed him corporeally from the horse guards to the war office in Pall Mall.[234] This, however, by no means brought all the military difficulties to an end.

One particular incident has a conspicuous place on the political side of Mr. Gladstone's life. Among the elements in the scheme was the abolition of the practice of acquiring military rank by money purchase. Public opinion had been mainly roused by Mr. Trevelyan, who now first made his mark in that assembly where he was destined to do admirable work and achieve high eminence and popularity. An Act of George III. abolished selling of offices in other departments, but gave to the crown the discretion of retaining the practice in the army, if so it should seem fit. This discretion had been exercised by the issue of a warrant sanctioning and regulating that practice; commissions in the army were bought and sold for large sums of money, far in excess of the sums fixed by the royal warrant; and vested interests on a large scale grew up in consequence. The substitution, instead of this abusive system, of promotion by selection, was one of the first steps in army reform. No effective reorganisation was possible without it. As Mr. Gladstone put it, the nation must buy back its own army from its own officers. No other proceeding in the career of the ministry aroused a more determined and violent opposition. It offended a powerful profession with a host of parliamentary friends; the officers disliked liberal politics, they rather disdained a civilian master, and they fought with the vigour peculiar to irritated caste.

The first question before parliament depended upon the

[234] *Hansard*, Feb. 21 and March 23, 1871.

Commons voting the money to compensate officers who had acquired vested interests. If that were secure, there was nothing to hinder the crown, in the discretion committed to it by the statute, from cancelling the old warrant. Instead of this, ministers determined to abolish purchase by bill. Obstruction was long and sustained. The principle of the bill was debated and re-debated on every amendment in committee, and Mr. Gladstone reported that [362] “during his whole parliamentary life, he had been accustomed to see class interests of all kinds put themselves on their defence under the supposition of being assailed, yet he had never seen a case where the modes of operation adopted by the professing champions were calculated to leave such a painful impression on the mind.” Credible whispers were heard of the open hostility of high military personages. In one of the debates of this time upon the army (Mar. 23, 1871), speakers freely implied that the influence of what was called the horse guards was actively adverse to reform. Mr. Gladstone, taking this point, laid it down that “military authorities without impairing in the slightest degree the general independence of their political opinions, should be in full harmony with the executive as to the military plans and measures which it might propose; and that only on this principle could the satisfactory working of our institutions be secured.”

The correspondence with the Queen was copious. In one letter, after mentioning that parliament had been persuaded to extend the tenure of the commander-in-chief's office beyond five years, and to allow the patronage and discipline of the army to be vested in him, though the secretary of state was responsible, Mr. Gladstone proceeds:—

> It would have been impossible to procure the acquiescence of parliament in these arrangements, unless they had been accompanied with the declaration of Mr. Cardwell, made in the name of the cabinet, and seen and approved by your Majesty, that “it is of course necessary for the commander-in-chief to be in harmony with the government of the day” (Feb.

> 21, 1871), and with a similar declaration of Mr. Gladstone on March 23, 1871, also reported to, and approved by your Majesty, that while all political action properly so called was entirely free, yet the military plans and measures of the government must always have the energetic co-operation of the military chiefs of the army.

Purchase And Royal Warrant [363]

The end was of course inevitable.[235] The bill at last passed the Commons, and then an exciting stage began. In the Lords it was immediately confronted by a dilatory resolution. In view of some such proceeding, Mr. Gladstone (July 15) wrote to the Queen as to the best course to pursue, and here he first mentioned the step that was to raise such clamour:—

> As the government judge that the illegality of over-regulation prices cannot continue, and as they can only be extinguished by putting an end to purchase, what has been chiefly considered is how to proceed with the greatest certainty and the smallest shock, and how to secure as far as may be for the officers all that has hitherto been asked on their behalf. With this view, the government think the first step would be to abolish the warrant under which prices of commissions are fixed. As the resolution of the House of Lords states the unwillingness of the House to take part in abolishing purchase until certain things shall have been done, it would not be applicable to a case in which, without its interposition, purchase would have been already abolished.

Two days later (July 17) the Lords passed what Sir Roundell Palmer called "their ill-advised resolution." On July 18 the cabinet met and resolved to recommend the cancelling of the old warrant regulating purchase, by a new warrant abolishing purchase. It has been said or implied that this proceeding was

[235] At the end of the volume, the reader will find some interesting remarks by Mr. Gladstone on these points. See Appendix.

forced imperiously upon the Queen. I find no evidence of this. In the language of Lord Halifax, the minister in attendance, writing to Mr. Gladstone from Osborne (July 19, 1871), the Queen “made no sort of difficulty in signing the warrant” after the case had been explained. In the course of the day she sent to tell Lord Halifax, that as it was a strong exercise of her power in apparent opposition to the House of Lords, she should like to have some more formal expression of the advice of the cabinet than was contained in an ordinary letter from the prime minister, dealing with this among other matters. Ministers agreed that the Queen had a fair right to have their advice on such a point of executive action on her part, recorded in a formal and deliberate submission of their opinion. The advice was at once clothed in the definite form of a minute. [364]

On July 20 Mr. Gladstone announced to a crowded and anxious House the abolition of purchase by royal warrant. The government, he said, had no other object but simplicity and despatch, and the observance of constitutional usage. Amid some disorderly interruptions, Mr. Disraeli taunted the government with resorting to the prerogative of the crown to get out of a difficulty of their own devising. Some radicals used the same ill-omened word. After a spell of obstruction on the ballot bill, the bitter discussion on purchase revived, and Mr. Disraeli said that what had occurred early in the evening was “disgraceful to the House of Commons,” and denounced “the shameful and avowed conspiracy of the cabinet” against the House of Lords. The latter expression was noticed by the chairman of committee and withdrawn, though Mr. Gladstone himself thought it the more allowable of the two.

In a letter to his brother-in-law, Lord Lyttelton, Mr. Gladstone vindicated this transaction as follows:—

> *July 26, '71.*—I should like to assure myself that you really have the points of the case before you. 1. Was it not for

> us an indispensable duty to extinguish a gross, wide-spread, and most mischievous illegality, of which the existence had become certain and notorious? 2. Was it not also our duty to extinguish it in the best manner? 3. Was not the best manner that which, (*a*) made the extinction final; (*b*) gave the best, *i.e.* a statutory, title for regulation prices; (*c*) granted an indemnity to the officers; (*d*) secured for them compensation in respect of over-regulation prices? 4. Did not the vote of the House of Lords stop us in this best manner of proceeding? 5. Did it absolve us from the duty of putting an end to the illegality? 6. What method of putting an end to it remained to us, except that which we have adopted?

Freeman's Judgment

Sir Roundell Palmer wrote, "I have always thought and said that the issuing of such a warrant was within the undoubted power of the crown.... It did and does appear to me that the course which the government took was the least objectionable course that could be taken under the whole circumstances of the case."[236] I can find [365] nothing more clearly and more forcibly said upon this case than the judgment of Freeman, the historian—a man who combined in so extraordinary a degree immense learning with precision in political thought and language, and added to both the true spirit of manly citizenship:—

> I must certainly protest against the word "prerogative" being used, as it has so often been of late, to describe Mr. Gladstone's conduct with regard to the abolition of purchase in the army. By prerogative I understand a power not necessarily contrary to law, but in some sort beyond law—a power whose source must be sought for somewhere else than in the terms of an act of parliament. But in abolishing purchase by a royal warrant Mr. Gladstone acted strictly within the terms of an act of parliament, an act so modern as the reign of George III. He in truth followed a course which that act not only

[236] *Memorials, Personal and Political*, vol. i. pp. 193, 194.

> allowed but rather suggested.... I am not one of those who condemn Mr. Gladstone's conduct in this matter; still I grant that the thing had an ill look. The difference I take to be this. Mr. Gladstone had two courses before him: he might abolish purchase by a royal warrant—that is, by using the discretion which parliament had given to the crown; or he might bring a bill into parliament to abolish purchase.... What gave the thing an ill look was that, having chosen the second way and not being able to carry his point that way, he then fell back on the first way. I believe that it was better to get rid of a foul abuse in the way in which it was got rid of, than not to get rid of it at all, especially as the House of Commons had already decided against it. Still, the thing did not look well. It might seem that by electing to bring a bill into parliament Mr. Gladstone had waived his right to employ the royal power in the matter.... I believe that this is one of those cases in which a strictly conscientious man like Mr. Gladstone does things from which a less conscientious man would shrink. Such a man, fully convinced of his own integrity, often thinks less than it would be wise to think of mere appearances, and so lays himself open to the imputation of motives poles asunder from the real ones.[237]

These last words undoubtedly explain some acts and tendencies that gave a handle to foes and perplexed friends.

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II

Next let us turn to reform in a different field. All the highest abstract arguments were against secret voting. To have a vote is to have power; as Burke said, “liberty is power, when men act in bodies”; but the secret vote is power without responsibility.

[237] E. A. Freeman, in *Pall Mall Gazette*, February 12, 1874.

The vote is a trust for the commonwealth; to permit secrecy makes it look like a right conferred for a man's own benefit. You enjoin upon him to give his vote on public grounds; in the same voice you tell him not to let the public know how he gives it. Secrecy saps the citizen's courage, promotes evasion, tempts to downright lying. Remove publicity and its checks, then all the mean motives of mankind—their malice, petty rivalries, pique, the prejudices that men would be ashamed to put into words even to themselves—skulk to the polling booth under a disguising cloak. Secrecy, again, prevents the statesman from weighing or testing the forces in character, stability, persistency, of the men by whom a majority has been built up, and on whose fidelity his power of action must depend. This strain of argument was worked out by J. S. Mill[238] and others, and drew from Mr. Bright, who belonged to a different school of liberals, the gruff saying, that the worst of great thinkers is that they so often think wrong.

Though the abstract reasoning might be unanswerable, the concrete case the other way was irresistible. Experience showed that without secrecy in its exercise the suffrage was not free. The farmer was afraid of his landlord, and the labourer was afraid of the farmer; the employer could tighten the screw on the workman, the shopkeeper feared the power of his best customers, the debtor quailed before his creditor, the priest wielded thunderbolts over the faithful. Not only was the open vote not free; it exposed its possessor to so much bullying, molestation, and persecution, that his possession came to be less of a boon than a nuisance.

The Ballot

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For forty years this question had been fought. The ballot actually figured in a clause of an early draft of the Reform bill of 1832. Grote, inspired by James Mill whose vigorous pleas for the ballot in his well-known article in 1830 were the high landmark in the controversy, brought it before parliament in an annual motion. When that admirable man quitted parliament to finish

[238] *Representative Government*, chap. x.

his great history of Greece, the torch was still borne onwards by other hands. Ballot was one of the five points of the charter. At nearly every meeting for parliamentary reform between the Crimean war and Disraeli's bill of 1867, the ballot was made a cardinal point. General opinion fluctuated from time to time, and in the sixties journals of repute formally dismissed it as a dead political idea. The extension of the franchise in 1867 brought it to life again, and Mr. Bright led the van in the election of 1868 by declaring in his address that he regarded the ballot as of the first importance. “Whether I look,” he said, “to the excessive cost of elections, or to the tumult which so often attends them, or to the unjust and cruel pressure which is so frequently brought to bear upon the less independent class of voters, I am persuaded that the true interest of the public and of freedom will be served by the system of secret and free voting.” J. S. Mill had argued that the voter should name his candidate in the polling booth, just as the judge does his duty in a court open to the public eye. No, replied Bright, the jury-room is as important as the judge's bench, and yet the jury-room is treated as secret, and in some countries the verdict is formally given by ballot. Some scandals in the way of electoral intimidation did much to ripen public opinion. One parliamentary committee in 1868 brought evidence of this sort to light, and another committee recommended secret voting as the cure.

Among those most ardent for the change from open to secret voting, the prime minister was hardly to be included. “I am not aware,” he wrote to Lord Shaftesbury (Dec. 11, 1871), “of having been at any time a vehement opponent of the ballot. I have not been accustomed to attach to it a vital importance, but at any time, I think, within the last twenty or twenty-five years I should have regarded it as the legitimate complement of the present suffrage.”[239] In the first speech he made as prime

[239] The reader may remember his stripling letters—vol. i. p. 99.

[368] minister at Greenwich (Dec. 21, 1868) be said that there were two subjects that could not be overlooked in connection with the representation of the people. "One of them is the security afforded by the present system for perfect freedom in the giving of the vote, which vote has been not only not conferred as a favour, but imposed as a duty by the legislature on the members of the community. I have at all times given my vote in favour of open voting, but I have done so before, and I do so now, with an important reservation, namely, that whether by open voting or by whatsoever means, free voting must be secured."

A bill providing for vote by ballot, abolishing public nominations and dealing with corrupt practices in parliamentary elections was introduced by Lord Hartington in 1870. Little progress was made with it, and it was eventually withdrawn. But the government were committed to the principle, and at the end of July Mr. Gladstone took the opportunity of explaining his change of opinion on this question, in the debate on the second reading of a Ballot bill brought in by a private member. Now that great numbers who depended for their bread upon their daily labour had acquired the vote, he said, their freedom was threatened from many quarters. The secret vote appeared to be required by the social conditions under which they lived, and therefore it had become a necessity and a duty to give effect to the principle.

The Ballot Passed

Yet after the cabinet had decided to make the ballot a ministerial measure, the head of the cabinet makes a rather pensive entry in his diary: "*July 27, 1870.*—H. of C. Spoke on ballot, and voted in 324-230 with mind satisfied, and as to feeling, a lingering reluctance." How far this reluctance was due to misgivings on the merits of the ballot, how far to the doubts that haunt every ministerial leader as to the possibilities of parliamentary time, we do not know. The bill, enlarged and reintroduced next year, was entrusted to the hands of Mr. Forster—himself, like Mr. Gladstone, a latish convert to the

principle of secret voting—and by Forster's persistent force and capacity for hard and heavy labour, after some eighteen days in committee, it passed through the House of Commons. [369]

After obstruction had been at last broken down, other well-known resources of civilisation remained, and the Lords threw out the bill.[240] It was novel, they said; it was dangerous, it had not been considered by the country or parliament (after eighteen days of committee and forty years of public discussion), it was incoherent and contradictory, and to enact vote by ballot was inevitably to overthrow the monarchy. Even the mightiest of American orators had said as much. “Above all things,” Daniel Webster had adjured Lord Shaftesbury, “resist to the very last the introduction of the ballot; for as a republican, I tell you that the ballot can never co-exist with monarchical institutions.”

The rejection by the Lords stimulated popular insistence. At Whitby in the autumn (Sept. 2), Mr. Gladstone said the people's bill had been passed by the people's House, and when it was next presented at the door of the House of Lords, it would be with an authoritative knock. He told Lord Houghton that he was sorry to see the agitation apparently rising against the House of Lords, though he had a strong opinion about the imprudence of its conduct on the Army bill, and especially on the Ballot bill. “There is no Duke of Wellington in these days. His reputation as a domestic statesman seems to me to rest almost entirely on his leadership of the peers between 1832 and 1841.”

The bill was again passed through the Commons in 1872. Mr. Gladstone was prepared for strong measures. The cabinet decided that if the House of Lords should hold to what the prime minister styled “the strange provision for optional secrecy,” the government would withdraw the bill and try an autumn session, and if the Lords still hardened their hearts, “there would remain nothing but the last alternative to consider,”—these

[240] In the House of Lords only 48 peers voted for the bill against 97. Many of the whigs abstained.

words, I assume, meaning a dissolution. Perhaps the opposition thought that a dissolution on the ballot might give to the ministerial Antæus fresh energy. This time the Lords gave way, satisfied that the Measure had now at last been more adequately discussed,—the said discussion really consisting in
[370] no more than an adequate amount of violent language out of doors against the principle of a hereditary legislature.[241]

The results of the general election two years later as they affected party, are an instructive comment on all this trepidation and alarm. In one only of the three kingdoms the ballot helped to make a truly vital difference; it dislodged the political power of the Irish landlord. In England its influence made for purity, freedom, and decency, but it developed no new sources of liberal strength. On this aspect of things the first parliamentary precursor of the ballot made remarks that are worth a few lines of digression. "You will feel great satisfaction," his wife said to Grote one morning at their breakfast, "at seeing your once favourite measure triumph over all obstacles." "Since the wide expansion of the voting element," the historian replied, "I confess that the value of the ballot has sunk in my estimation. I don't, in fact, think the elections will be affected by it one way or another, as far as party interests are concerned." "Still," his interlocutor persisted, "you will at all events get at the genuine preference of the constituency." "No doubt; but then, again, I have come to perceive that the choice between one man and another among the English people, signifies less than I used formerly to think it did. The English mind is much of one pattern, take whatsoever class you will. The same favourite prejudices, amiable and otherwise; the same antipathies, coupled with ill-regulated though benevolent efforts to eradicate human evils, are well-nigh universal. A House of Commons cannot afford to be above its own constituencies in intelligence, knowledge, or

[241] The first parliamentary election by ballot in England was the return of Mr. Childers at Pontefract (Aug. 15, 1872) on his acceptance of the duchy.

patriotism.”[242] In all this the element of truth is profound enough. In every change of political machinery the reformer promises and expects a new heaven and a new earth; then standing forces of national tradition, character, and institution assert their strength, our millennium lags, and the chilled enthusiast sighs. He is unreasonable, as are all those who expect more from life and the world than life and the world have to give. Yet here at least the reformer has not failed. The efficacy of secret voting is negative if we will, but it averts obvious mischiefs alike from old privileged orders in states and churches and from new. [371]

III

Finance

In finance the country looked for wonders. Ministers were called the cabinet of financiers. The cabinet did, in fact, contain as many as five men who were at one time or another chancellors of the exchequer, and its chief was recognised through Europe as the most successful financier of the age. No trailing cloud of glory, as in 1853 or 1860, attended the great ministry, but sound and substantial results were achieved, testifying to a thrifty and skilful management, such as might have satisfied the ambition of a generation of chancellors. The head of the new government promised retrenchment as soon as the government was formed. He told his constituents at Greenwich (Dec. 21, 1868) that he was himself responsible for having taken the earliest opportunity of directing the public mind to the subject of expenditure at an opening stage of the late election; for “although there may be times when the public mind may become comparatively relaxed in regard to the general principles of economy and thrift, it is the special duty of public men to watch the very beginnings of evil in that department. It is a very easy thing to notice these mischiefs when they have grown to a gigantic size; but it

[242] *Life of Grote*, pp. 312, 313.

commonly happens that when financial error has arisen to those dimensions, the case has become too aggravated for a remedy." He reminded them of the addition that had been made to the standing charges of the country in the ordinary and steadily recurring annual estimates presented to parliament. He said that he knew no reason why three millions should have been added during the two years of tory government to the cost of our establishments:—

> It is one thing, I am very well aware, to put on three millions; it is another thing to take them off. When you put three millions on to the public expenditure, you create a number of new relations, a number of new offices, a number of
> [372] new claims, a number of new expectations. And you can't, and what is more, you ought not to, destroy all these in a moment. And, therefore, the work of retrenchment must be a well-considered and a gradual work. But I ask you to look at the names of the men who have been, placed in charge of the great spending departments of the country. The study, the idea that has governed the formation of the present administration has been to place able and upright men in charge of the public purse—men of administrative experience, men of proved ability, men, lastly, holding their seats in the House of Commons, and, therefore, immediately responsible to the representatives of the people. It would not become me to promise what we can do; but this I can tell you, that my friends connected with the various departments most concerned in the public expenditure have, even before the early moment at which I speak, directed their very first attention to this subject, and that I, for one, shall be as deeply disappointed as you can be, if in the estimates which it will be our duty to present in February you do not already perceive some results of their opening labours.

One of Mr. Gladstone's first letters to a colleague was addressed to Mr. Lowe, containing such hints and instructions

upon treasury administration as a veteran pilot might give about lights, buoys, channels, currents, to a new captain. “No man wants so much sympathy,” he said, “as the chancellor of the exchequer, no man gets so little. Nor is there any position so lamentable for him as to be defeated in proposing some new charge on the public conceived or adopted by himself. He is like an ancient soldier wounded in the back. Whereas even defeat in resisting the raids of the House of Commons on the public purse is honourable, and always turns out well in the end.” He sent Mr. Lowe a list of the subjects that he had tried in parliament without success, and of those that he had in his head but was not able to take in hand. They make a fine example of an active and reforming mind.[243] “What commonly happened, in cases of this kind, in my time, was as follows: The opposition waited for a development of discontent and resistance among some small fraction of liberal members. When this was compact [373] in itself, or was at all stimulated by constituencies, they sent out habitually strong party whips, and either beat me, or forced me to withdraw in order to avoid beating, or exposing our men to local disadvantage. This game, I hope, will not be quite so easy now.”

Match Tax

The first two of Mr. Lowe's budgets were on the lines thus traced beforehand. The shilling duty on a quarter of corn was abolished—“an exceeding strong case,” as Mr. Gladstone called it—taxes on conveyances were adjusted, and the duty on fire insurance was removed. The only notable contribution to the standing problem of widening the base of taxation was the proposal to put a tax on matches.[244] This was a notion borrowed

[243] See Appendix.

[244] Writing to Mr. Lowe on his budget proposals, Mr. Gladstone Says (April 11, 1871): “The lucifer matches I hope and think you would carry, but I have little information, and that old. I advise that on this Glyn be consulted as to the feeling in the House of Commons. I am sceptical as to the ultimate revenue of one million.”

from the United States, and much approved by Mr. Wells, the eminent free-trade financier of that country. In England it was greeted with violent disfavour. It was denounced as reactionary, as violating the first principles of fiscal administration, and as the very worst tax that had been proposed within recent memory, for is not a match a necessary of life, and to tax a necessary of life is to go against Adam Smith and the books. The money, it was said, ought to have been got either by raising the taxes on tea and sugar, or else by putting the shilling duty back on corn again, though for that matter, tea, sugar, and corn are quite as much necessaries of life as, say, two-thirds of the matches used.[245] No care, however, was given to serious argument; in fact, the tax was hardly argued at all. Some hundreds of poor women employed at a large match factory in the east end of London trooped to protest at Westminster, and the tax was quickly dropped. It was perhaps unlucky that the proposal happened to be associated with Mr. Lowe, for his uncomplimentary criticisms on the working class four or five years before were neither forgotten nor forgiven. A Latin pun that he meant to print on the proposed halfpenny match
[374] stamp, *ex luce lucellum*, "a little gain out of a little light," was good enough to divert a college common room, but it seemed flippant to people who expected to see the bread taken out of their mouths.

On the other side of the national account Mr. Gladstone was more successful. He fought with all his strength for a reduction of the public burdens, and in at least one of these persistent battles with colleagues of a less economising mind than himself, he came near to a breach within the walls of his cabinet. In this thankless region he was not always zealously seconded. On Dec. 14, 1871, he enters in his diary: "Cabinet, 3-7. For two and a half hours we discussed army estimates, mainly on reduction, and the chancellor of exchequer did not speak one word." The result

[245] See *The Match Tax: a Problem in Finance*. By W. Stanley Jevons (London: Stanford, 1871). A searching defence of the impost.

is worth recording. When Mr. Gladstone was at the exchequer the charge on naval, military, and civil expenditure had been reduced between 1860 and 1865 from thirty-eight millions to thirty-one. Under the Derby-Disraeli government the figure rose in two or three years to thirty-four millions and three-quarters. By 1873 it had been brought down again to little more than thirty-two millions and a quarter.[246] That these great reductions were effected without any sacrifice of the necessary strength and efficiency of the forces, may be inferred from the fact that for ten years under successive administrations the charge on navy and army underwent no substantial augmentation. The process had been made easier, or made possible, by the necessity under which the German war laid France, then our only rival in naval force, to reduce her expenditure upon new ships. The number of seamen was maintained, but a reduction was effected in the inefficient vessels in the foreign squadrons; two costly and almost useless dockyards were suppressed (much to the disadvantage of Mr. Gladstone's own constituents), and great abuses were remedied in the dockyards that were left. In the army reduction was made possible without lessening the requisite strength, by the withdrawal of troops from Canada, New Zealand, and the Cape. This was due to the wise policy of Lord Granville and Mr. Gladstone. In spite of the increased cost of education, of army purchase, of the rise of prices, and all the other causes that [375] swell estimates, the country was still spending no more in 1873 than when Mr. Gladstone took office in 1868.[247] To this story we have to add that nearly thirty millions of debt were paid off in the five years. Well might men point to such a record, as the best proof that the promises of economy made at the hustings

[246] See a speech in the House of Commons by Mr. Childers, April 24, 1873.

[247] The estimates of 1874-5 were practically the estimates of the Gladstone government, showing a revenue of £77,995,000, or a surplus of £5,492,000. See Lord Welby's letter to Mr. Lowe in *Life of Lord Sherbrooke*, ii. pp. 383, 384.

had been seriously kept.[248]

Lowe As Chancellor Of The Exchequer

When the time came for him to take stock of his own performances, Mr. Lowe, who was apt to be cleverer than he was wise, made a speech at Sheffield, in September 1873, that almost recalls the self-laudation of Cicero over the immortal glories of his consulate. He disclaimed any share of the admirable genius for finance that had been seen in Pitt, Peel, or Gladstone, but he had read in the Latin grammar that economy was a great revenue, and he thought that he could at least discharge the humble task of hindering extravagance. "The first thing I did as chancellor of the exchequer," he said, "was to issue an order that no new expenditure whatever would be allowed without my opinion first being taken upon it.... In an evil hour for my own peace and quietness I took upon myself—I believe it was never taken upon himself by any chancellor of the exchequer before—the duty of protecting the revenue, instead of leaving it to be done by an inferior official." After reciting his figures, he wound up with a resounding pæan: "So far as I am aware, up to the present time there is no one who can challenge comparison with what has been done during these years. Sir R. Peel and Mr. Gladstone routed out protection in your trade, a measure that conferred immortal honour on them, but so far as relieving you from taxation is concerned, I believe you would seek in vain in British history for anything like what has been done during these last four years." This strange vein was more than a little distasteful to the prime minister, as a letter to Lord Granville upon it shows (Sept. 9, 1873):—

[376]

> Lowe's speech at Sheffield is really too bad, and free as it is from all evil intention, it illustrates the invariable solecisms of his extraordinary mind.... He says no chancellor of the exchequer before did treasury business, but left it to a subordinate official.... Some have done more, some less. No

[248] *Economist*, Feb. 8, 1873.

one, probably, as much as Lowe, but some almost as much. I did less, perhaps much less. But I hold that the first duties of the chancellor of the exchequer are outside the treasury. One of them is to look after and control the great expenditures and estimates. In this duty I am sorry to say he was wretchedly deficient; yet he coolly takes to himself the credit of army and navy reductions, which is due to Cardwell and Childers (who, in his admirable speech, did not say a word, I think, for himself), and with which every member of the cabinet had almost as much to do as he had. I can speak from experience, for I know what it has been to have had cast upon my shoulders the most important and most offensive duty of the financial minister.... He has ample merit to stand on, in a great amount of labour done, and generally well done, and with good results for the public. Much of the unpopularity is unjust; a little patience would set all right.

[377]

Chapter VIII. Autumn Of 1871. Decline Of Popularity. (1871-1872)

> For the present at least the reformation will operate against the reformers. Nothing is more common than for men to wish, and call loudly too, for a reformation, who when it arrives do by no means like the severity of its aspect. Reformation is one of those pieces which must be put at some distance in order to please. Its greatest favourers love it better in the abstract than in the substance.
>
> —BURKE.

I

In July, 1871, Mr. Gladstone paid a Sunday visit to Tennyson among the Surrey hills. They had two interesting days, "with talk ranging everywhere." The poet read the *Holy Grail*, which Mr. Gladstone admired. They discussed the Goschen parish council plan, and other social reforms; Lacordaire and liberal collectivism; politics and the stormy times ahead. Mr. Gladstone assured them that he was a conservative, and feared extreme measures from the opposition. "A very noble fellow," Tennyson called him, "and perfectly unaffected."[249] Mr. Gladstone, for his part, records in his diary that he found "a characteristic and delightful abode. In Tennyson are singularly united true greatness, genuine simplicity, and some eccentricity. But the latter is from habit and circumstance, the former is his nature. His wife is excellent, and in her adaptation to him wonderful. His son Hallam is most attractive."

After a laborious and irksome session, "in which, we have sat, I believe, 150 hours after midnight," the House rose (Aug. 21).

[249] *Life of Tennyson*, ii. p. 108.

Mr. Gladstone spent some time at Whitby with his family, and made a speech to his eldest son's constituents (Sept. 2) on the ballot, and protesting against the spirit of "alarmism." Towards [378] the end of the month he went on to Balmoral. On September 26 he was presented with the freedom of Aberdeen, and made a speech on Irish home rule, of which, as we shall see, he heard a great deal fifteen years later:—

To Mrs. Gladstone.

Balmoral, Sept. 28.—The time is rolling on easily at this *quiet* place.... We breakfast six or eight. The Prince and Princess Louis of Hesse dine most days. To-day I walked with her and her party. She is quick, kind, and well informed. I got her to-day on the subject of the religious movement in the Roman catholic church in Germany. She is imbued with her father's ideas, and, I think, goes beyond them. She quoted Strauss to me, as giving his opinion that the movement would come to nothing. She said the infallibility was the legitimate development of the Roman system. I replied that the Roman system had grown up by a multitude of scarcely perceptible degrees out of the earliest form of Christianity, and if we adopted this notion of legitimate development, we ran a risk of making Saint Paul responsible for the Vatican council. She talked much about the hospitals, in which she worked so hard while nursing her baby, a very fine one, whom she introduced to me, with two flourishing elder children. She hates war; and is not easy as to the future.

Sept. 29.—I have had a twelve-mile stretch to-day, almost all on wild ground, and so solitary! not a living creature except three brace of grouse all the way. I am glad to report that I came in very fresh. ... What a mess the Bishop of Winchester has made of this Glengarry kirk business.

Sept. 30.—Last night we dined ten at Abergeldie. The Prince of Wales had his usual pleasant manners. He is far lighter in hand than the Duke of Edinburgh. After dinner he invited me to play whist. I said, "For love, sir?" He said,

"Well, shillings and half-a-crown on the rubber," to which I submitted. Ponsonby and I against the Prince and Brasseur, a charming old Frenchman, his tutor in the language. The Prince has apparently an *immense* whist memory, and plays well accordingly. To-day the Queen was to have seen me
[379] at six, but sent to postpone it till to-morrow on account of expecting the Princess of Wales, who was to come over and pay her a visit from Abergeldie. I think she is nervous, and shrinks from talk; but I do not mean to say a word that would give her trouble, as there would be no good in it at this moment.

Oct. 3.—I have seen the Queen again this morning. She conversed longer, near an hour, and was visibly better and stronger, and in good spirits. She told me much about her illness. ... She wished me a pleasant journey.

Ballater, Oct. 4.—Here am I ensconced in the station-master's box at Ballater, after a 15 or 16 mile walk round through the hills, the regular train being postponed for an hour or more to let the couple from Mar Lodge go off special. They had two carriages laden with luggage, besides their own carriage! I hope to be at Colwyn soon after six. These solitary walks among the hills, I think, refresh and invigorate me more than anything else. To-day the early part of the day was glorious, and the wind most bracing as it came over the mass of mountains. I bade farewell reluctantly to Balmoral, for it is as homelike as any place away from home can be, and wonderfully safe from invasions. I had all the grand mountains in view at once, with their snow caps; the lowest, about the same as Snowdon. I came by the falls of the Muich, which, after the rain, were very fine. I had an interesting conversation with Princess Louise about the Queen this morning.

Oct. 4.—Nothing sets me up in mind and body like a mountain solitude, not even, perhaps, the sea. Walked from Balmoral to Ballater, 15 miles, in 4 hrs. 5 m. 6.—Walked 20 miles in 5 hrs. and 45 minutes. 7.—Walked 15 miles.—(*Diary.*)

To Mrs. Gladstone.

Ainslie Place, Edinburgh, Oct. 8, 1871.—I got here last night before seven, and had the most affectionate welcome from the dean that you can conceive; a dinner-party followed, and now I have for the *first time* since the government was formed had a holiday of two whole days. Last night the lord advocate tried to talk to me about the Scotch endowed schools and I refused to have anything to say to him. I have no time to write about my walk, beyond this, that it was quite successful. The dean [Ramsay] preached at St. John's this morning about Ruth. The sermon was beautiful, and the voice and manner with his venerable age made it very striking. He put an astonishing energy into it, and his clear melodious tones rang through and through as they did when I first heard him 43½ years ago. It was altogether most touching, and he told me afterwards that he had wished to preach to me once more before he died. But I rejoice to say his life seems a very good one. I would not have missed the occasion for much. [380]

London, Oct. 27.—Went to Sir R. Murchison's funeral, the last of those who had known me or of me from infancy. And so a step towards the end is made visible. It was a great funeral. 28.—My expedition to Greenwich, or rather, Blackheath. I spoke 1 h. 50 m.; too long, yet really not long enough for a full development of my points. Physically rather an excess of effort. All went well, thank God!—(*Diary.*)

Speech At Blackheath

This speech at Blackheath was a fine illustration both of Mr. Gladstone's extraordinary power, and of the sure respect of a British audience for manful handling and firm dealing in a minister, if only the appeal be high enough. It was one of the marked scenes of his life. In the cold mist of the October afternoon he stood bareheaded, pale, resolute, before a surging audience of many thousands, few of them enthusiastically his friends, a considerable mass of them dockyard workmen, furious at discharge or neglect by an economising government. He was received with loud and angry murmurs ominous of

storm, but curiosity, interest, and a sense that even a prime minister should have fair play prevailed. His rich tones and clear articulation—and Mr. Gladstone had studied all the arts for husbanding vocal resources—carried his words beyond the five or six thousand persons that are commonly understood to be the limit of possible hearers in the open air. After half an hour of struggle he conquered a hold upon them that became more intense as he went on—touching topic after topic, defending all that had been done for the reform and efficiency of the army, denouncing
[381] extreme opinions on the Education Act, vindicating the ballot bill, laughing at various prescriptions of social quackery—until at the close of a speech nearly two hours long, he retired amid sustained hurricanes of earnest applause. Well might he speak of rather an excess of physical effort, to say nothing of effort of mind.

On his return to Hawarden he had a visit from Mr. Bright, whom he earnestly hoped to bring back into the cabinet.[250]

> *Nov. 13.*—Hawarden. Two long conversations with Mr. Bright, who arrived at one. 14.—Some five hours in conversation with Mr. Bright; also I opened my proposal to him, which he took kindly though cautiously. My conversation with him yesterday evening kept me awake till four. A most rare event; but my brain assumes in the evening a feminine susceptibility, and resents any unusual strain, though, strange to say, it will stand a debate in the H. of C. 15.—Forenoon with Bright, who departed, having charmed everybody by his gentleness. Began the cutting of a large beech. #/
>
> *To Lord Granville.*
>
> *Nov. 15, 1871.*—Bright has been here for forty-eight hours, of which we passed I think more than a fourth in conversation on public affairs. Everything in and everything out of the cabinet I told him as far as my memory would

[250] Mr. Bright had retired from the cabinet on account of ill health in December 1870.

serve, and I think we pretty well boxed the political compass. On the whole I remained convinced of two things: first, that his heart is still altogether with us; secondly, that his health, though requiring great care, is really equal to the moderate demands we should make upon him. The truth is I was quite as much knocked up with our conversation as he was, but then I had the more active share. In the whole range of subjects that we travelled over, we came to no point of sharp difference, and I feel confident that he could work with the cabinet as harmoniously and effectually as before. In saying this I should add that I told him, with respect to economy, that I thought we should now set our faces in that direction. I told him that we should not expect of him ordinary night attendance in the House of Commons, and that his attendance in the cabinet was the main object of our desire. He was [382] pleased and touched with our desire, and he has not rejected the proposal. He has intimated doubts and apprehensions, but he reserves it for consideration, and seemed decidedly pleased to learn that the question *might* be held open until the meeting of parliament in case of need.... I did not think it fair to put to him the request by which I endeavoured to hold him in December 1868, viz.: that he would not determine in the matter without seeing me again; but I begged and pressed that he should in no case refuse without taking the opinion of a first-rate London physician, as these are the people whose wide experience best enables them to judge in such cases. Altogether my experience of him was extremely pleasant, and he was popular beyond measure in the house, where the guests were one or two ladies and four gentlemen, Sir G. Prevost, a high church (but most excellent) archdeacon, John Murray, the tory publisher, and Hayward—whom to describe it needs not. One and all were charmed with Bright. In his character the mellowing process has continued to advance, and whatever he may have been thirty years ago, he is now a gentle and tender being. Yesterday he had five hours of conversation with me and much with others, also an hour and

> a half walk in the rain, which seemed to do him no harm whatever. I will add but one word. He was deeply impressed with the royalty question.... Details I will report to the cabinet.

Mr. Bright did not yet feel able to return, and an important year, the third of the administration, drew to its close.

II

Two stubborn and noisy scuffles arose in the autumn of 1871, in consequence of a couple of appointments to which Mr. Gladstone as prime minister was a party. One was judicial, the other was ecclesiastical.

Case Of Sir Robert Collier

Parliament, authorising the appointment of four paid members of the judicial committee of the privy council, had restricted the post to persons who held at the date of their appointment, or had previously held, judicial office in this country or in India.[251]

[383] Difficulty arose in finding a fourth member of the new court from the English bench. The appointment being a new one, fell to the prime minister, but he was naturally guided by the chancellor. The office was first offered by Mr. Gladstone to Lord Penzance, who declined to move. Application was then made to Willes and to Bramwell. They also declined, on the ground that no provision was made for their clerks. Willes could not abandon one who had been "his officer, he might say friend, for thirty years." Bramwell spoke of the pecuniary sacrifice that the post would involve, "for I cannot let my clerks, who between them have been with me near half a century, suffer by the change." The chancellor mentioned to Mr. Gladstone a rumour that there was 'an actual strike among the judges' in the matter. Nobody who knew Bramwell would impute unreasonable or low-minded motives to him, and from their own point of view

[251] 34 and 35 Vict. c. 91, sect. 1.

the judges had a sort of case. It was ascertained by the chancellor that Blackburn and Martin had said expressly that they should decline. Mr. Gladstone felt, as he told Lord Hatherley, that “it was not right to hawk the appointment about,” and he offered it to Sir Robert Collier, then attorney-general. Collier's claim to the bench, and even to the headship of a court, was undisputed; his judicial capacity was never at any time impugned; he acquired no additional emolument. In accepting Mr. Gladstone's offer (Oct. 1871) he reminded him: “You are aware that in order to qualify me it will be necessary first to make me a common law judge.” Three days later, the chancellor told Mr. Gladstone, “It would hardly do to place the attorney-general on the common law bench and then promote him.” Still under the circumstances he thought it would be best to follow the offer up, and Collier was accordingly made a judge in the common pleas, sat for a few days, and then went on to the judicial committee. The proceeding was not taken without cabinet authority, for Lord Granville writes to Mr. Gladstone: “Nov. 12, '71: The cabinet completely assented to the arrangement. Sufficient attention was perhaps not given to the technical point. For technical it only is.... I think you said at the cabinet that Collier wished to have [384] three months' tenure of the judgeship, and that we agreed with you that this would have been only a sham.”

Cockburn, the chief justice of the Queen's bench, opened fire on Mr. Gladstone (Nov. 10) in a long letter of rather over-heroic eloquence, protesting that a colourable appointment to a judgeship for the purpose of getting round the law seriously compromised the dignity of the judicial office, and denouncing the grievous impropriety of the proceeding as a mere subterfuge and evasion of the statute. Mr. Gladstone could be extremely summary when he chose, and he replied in three or four lines, informing the chief justice that as the transaction was a joint one, and as “the completed part of it to which you have taken objection, was the official act of the lord chancellor,” he had transmitted the

letter for his consideration. That was all he said. The chancellor for his part contented himself with half a dozen sentences, that his appointment of Collier to the puisne judgeship had been made with a full knowledge of Mr. Gladstone's intention to recommend him for the judicial committee; that he thus "acted advisedly and with the conviction that the arrangement was justified as regards both its fitness and its legality"; and that he took upon himself the responsibility of thus concurring with Mr. Gladstone, and was prepared to vindicate the course pursued. This curt treatment of his Junius-like composition mortified Cockburn's literary vanity, and no vanity is so easily stung as that of the amateur.

Parliamentary Criticism

Collier, when the storm was brewing, at once wrote to Mr. Gladstone (Nov. 13) proposing to retain his judgeship to the end of the term, then to resign it, and act gratuitously in the privy council. He begged that it might not be supposed he offered to do this merely as matter of form. "Though I consider the objection to my appointment wholly baseless, still it is not pleasant to me to hold a salaried office, my right to which is questioned." "I have received your letter," Mr. Gladstone replied (Nov.. 14), "which contains the offer that would only be made by a high-spirited man, impatient of suspicion or reproval, and determined to place himself beyond it.... I have not a grain of inclination to recede from the course marked out, and if you had proposed to abandon the appointment, I should have remonstrated."

[385]

What Mr. Gladstone called "a parliamentary peppering" followed in due course. It was contended that the statute in spirit as in letter exacted judicial experience, and that formal passing through a court was a breach of faith with parliament. As usual, lawyers of equal eminence were found to contend with equal confidence that a fraud had been put upon the law, and that no fraud had been put upon it; that the law required judicial status not experience, and on the other hand that what it required was experience not status. Lord Hatherley and Roundell Palmer were all the virtues, whether public or private, personified; they

were at the top of the legal ladder; and they agreed in Palmer's deliberate judgment that—after other judges with special fitness had declined the terms offered by parliament—in nominating the best man at the bar who was willing to take a vacant puisne judgeship upon the understanding that he should be at once transferred to the judicial committee, the government were innocent of any offence against either the spirit or substance of the law.[252]

Yet the escape was narrow. The government only missed censure in the Lords by a majority of one. In the Commons the evening was anxious. "You will see," says Mr. Bruce (Feb. 20, 1872), "that we got but a small majority last night. The fact is that our victory in the Lords made men slack about coming to town, and Glyn got very nervous in the course of the evening. However, Palmer's and Gladstone's speeches, both of which were excellent, improved the feeling, and many who had announced their intention to go away without voting, remained to support us." At one moment it even looked as if the Speaker might have to give a casting vote, and he had framed it on these lines: "I have concluded that the House while it looks upon the course taken by government as impolitic and injudicious, is not prepared at the present juncture to visit their conduct with direct parliamentary censure."[253] In the end, ministers had a majority [386] of twenty-seven, and reached their homes at three in the morning with reasonably light hearts.

III

Ewelme Rectory

The ecclesiastical case of complaint against Mr. Gladstone was of a similar sort. By an act of parliament passed in 1871 the Queen was entitled to present to the rectory of Ewelme, but only

[252] Selborne's *Memorials*, i. p. 200.
[253] *Brand Papers.*

a person who was a member of convocation of the university of Oxford. This limitation was inserted by way of compensation to the university for the severance of the advowson of the rectory from a certain chair of divinity. The living fell vacant, and the prime minister offered it (June 15) to Jelf of Christ Church, a tory and an evangelical. By Jelf it was declined. Among other names on the list for preferment was that of Mr. Harvey, a learned man who had published an edition of Irenæus, a work on the history and theology of the three creeds, articles on judaism, jansenism, and jesuitism, and other productions of merit. As might perhaps have been surmised from the nature of his favourite pursuits, he was not a liberal in politics, and he had what was for the purposes of this preferment the further misfortune of being a Cambridge man. To him Mr. Gladstone now offered Ewelme, having been advised that by the process of formal incorporation in the Oxford convocation the requirement of the statute would be satisfied. Mr. Harvey accepted. He was told that it was necessary that he should become a member of convocation before he could be appointed. A little later (Aug. 1) he confessed to the prime minister his misgivings lest he should be considered as an "interloper in succeeding to the piece of preferment that parliament had appropriated to bona-fide members of the university of Oxford." These scruples were set aside, he was incorporated as a member of Oriel in due form, and after forty-two days of residence was admitted to membership of convocation, but whether to such plenary membership as the Ewelme statute was taken to require, became matter of dispute. All went forward, and the excellent man was presented and instituted to his rectory in regular course.

[387] There was no secret about operations at Oxford; the Oriel men were aware of his motive in seeking incorporation, and the vice-chancellor and everybody else concerned knew all about it. Mr. Gladstone, when squalls began to blow, wrote to Mr. Harvey (Feb. 26, '72) that he was advised that the presentation was perfectly valid.

The attack in parliament was, as such attacks almost always are, much overdone. Mr. Gladstone, it appeared, was far worse than Oliver Cromwell and the parliament of the great rebellion; for though those bad men forced three professors upon Oxford between 1648 and 1660, still they took care that the intruders should all be men trained at Oxford and graduates of Oxford. Who could be sure that the prime minister would not next appoint an ultramontane divine from Bologna, or a Greek from Corfu? Such extravagances did as little harm as the false stories about Mr. Harvey being jobbed into the living because he had been at Eton with Mr. Gladstone and was his political supporter. As it happened he was a conservative, and Mr. Gladstone knew nothing of him except that a number of most competent persons had praised his learning. In spite of all this, however, and of the technical validity of the appointment, we may wish that the rector's doubts had not been overruled. A worthy member regaled the House by a story of a gentleman staying in the mansion of a friend; one morning he heard great noise and confusion in the yard; looking out he saw a kitchen-maid being put on a horse, and so carried round and round the yard. When he went downstairs he asked what was the matter, and the groom said, “Oh, sir, 'tis only that we're going to take the animal to the fair to sell, and we want to say he has carried a lady.” The apologue was not delicate, but it conveyed a common impression. “Gladstone spoke,” says Mr. Bruce (March 9, 1872), “with great vigour and eloquence on the Ewelme case; but I think that, with the best possible intentions, he had placed himself in a wrong position.”

IV

In 1872 the wide popularity of the government underwent a marked decline. The award at Geneva caused lively irritation. [388] The most active nonconformists were in active revolt. The Licensing bills infuriated the most powerful of all trade interests.

The Collier case and the Ewelme case seemed superfluous and provoking blunders. A strong military section thirsted for revenge on the royal warrant. Mr. Goschen's threatened bill on local rating spread vague terrors. Individual ministers began to excite particular odium.

As time went on, the essentially composite character of a majority that was only held together by Mr. Gladstone's personality, his authority in the House, and his enormous strength outside, revealed itself in awkward fissures. The majority was described by good critics of the time, as made up of three sections, almost well defined enough to deserve the name of three separate parties. First were the whigs, who never forgot that the prime minister had been for half his life a tory; who always suspected him, and felt no personal attachment to him, though they valued his respect for property and tradition, and knew in any case that he was the only possible man. Then came the middle-class liberals, who had held predominance since 1832, who were captivated by Mr. Gladstone's genius for finance and business, and who revered his high moral ideals. Third, there was the left wing, not strong in parliament but with a certain backing among the workmen, who thought their leader too fond of the church, too deferential to the aristocracy, and not plain enough and thorough enough for a reforming age. The murmurs and suspicions of these hard and logical utilitarians of the left galled Mr. Gladstone as ungrateful. Phillimore records of him at this moment:—

> *Feb. 21, 1872.*—Gladstone in high spirits and in rather a conservative mood. 29.—Gladstone sees that the time is fast coming when he must sever himself from his extreme supporters. He means to take the opportunity of retiring on the fair plea that he does not like to oppose those who have shown such great confidence in him, or to join their and his opponents. The plea seems good for retirement, but not [389] for refraining in his individual capacity from supporting a government which is liberal and conservative.

Here is a sketch from the Aberdare papers of the temper and proceedings of the session:—

> *April 19.*—We have had a disastrous week—three defeats, of which much the least damaging was that on local taxation, where we defended the public purse against a dangerous raid. There is no immediate danger to be apprehended from them. But these defeats lower prestige, encourage the discontented and envious, and animate the opposition. I think that Gladstone, who behaved yesterday with consummate judgment and temper, is personally very indifferent at the result. He is vexed at the ingratitude of men for whom he has done such great things which would have been simply impossible without him, and would not be unwilling to leave them for a while to their own guidance, and his feeling is shared by many of the ministry. Our measures must for the most part be taken up by our successors, and we should of course be too happy to help them. But I don't see the end near, although, of course, everybody is speculating.

Yet business was done. Progress of a certain kind was made in the thorny field of the better regulation of public houses, but Mr. Gladstone seems never to have spoken upon it in parliament. The subject was in the hands of Mr. Bruce, the home secretary, an accomplished and amiable man of the purest public spirit, and he passed his bill; but nothing did more to bring himself and his colleagues into stern disfavour among the especially pagan strata of the population. An entry or two from Mr. Bruce's papers will suffice to show Mr. Gladstone's attitude:—

> *Home Office, Dec. 9, 1869.*—I am just returned from the cabinet, where my Licensing bill went through with flying colours. I was questioned a great deal as to details, but was ready, and I think that Gladstone was very well pleased.
>
> *Jan. 16, 1871.*—I called upon Gladstone yesterday evening. He was in high spirits and full of kindness. He said

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> that he had told Cardwell that I must be at the bottom of the abuse the press was pouring upon him, as I had contrived to relieve myself of it. "Some one minister," he added, "is sure to be assailed. You caught it in the autumn, and now poor Cardwell is having a hard time of it." I went with him afterwards to the Chapel Royal, which he never fails to attend.
>
> *Dec. 14.*—We have a cabinet to-day, when I hope to have my Licensing bill in its main principles definitely settled. Unfortunately Gladstone cares for nothing but "free trade" [in the sale of liquor], which the House won't have, and I cannot get him really to interest himself in the subject.

This is Speaker Brand's account of the general position:—

> Throughout the session the opposition, ably led by Disraeli, were in an attitude of watchfulness. He kept his eye on the proceedings of the government day by day on the Alabama treaty. Had that treaty failed, no doubt Disraeli would have taken the sense of the House on the conduct of the government. For the larger part of the session the Alabama question hung like a cloud over the proceedings, but as soon as that was settled, the sky cleared. It has been a good working session.... Of the two leading men, Gladstone and Disraeli, neither has a strong hold on his followers. The radicals below the right gangway are turbulent and disaffected, and the same may be said of the independent obstruction below the left gangway.... B., E., H., L. avowedly obstruct all legislation, and thus bring the House into discredit.

Disraeli Takes The Field

It was now that Mr. Disraeli discerned the first great opportunity approaching, and he took the field. At Manchester (April 3) he drew the famous picture of the government, one of the few classic pieces of the oratory of the century:—

> Extravagance is being substituted for energy by the government. The unnatural stimulus is subsiding. Their paroxysms end in prostration. Some take refuge in melancholy, and their

> eminent chief alternates between a menace and a sigh. As I sit opposite the treasury bench, the ministers remind me of one of those marine landscapes not very unusual on the coasts of South America. You behold a range of exhausted volcanoes. Not a flame flickers upon a single pallid crest. But the situation is still dangerous. There are occasional [391] earthquakes, and ever and anon the dark rumblings of the sea.

On midsummer day he essayed at the Crystal Palace a higher flight, and first struck the imperialist note. He agreed that distant colonies could only have their affairs administered by self-government. "Self-government, when it was conceded, ought to have been conceded as part of a great policy of imperial consolidation. It ought to have been accomplished by an imperial tariff, by securities for the people of England, for the enjoyment of the unappropriated lands which belonged to the sovereign as their trustee, and by a military code which should have precisely defined the means and the responsibilities by which the colonies should have been defended, and by which, if necessary, this country should call for aid from the colonies themselves. It ought further to have been accompanied by the institution of some representative council in the metropolis which would have brought the colonies into constant and continuous relations with the home government." He confessed that he had himself at one time been so far caught by the subtle views of the disintegrationists, that he thought the tie was broken. Opinion in the country was at last rising against disintegration. The people had decided that the empire should not be destroyed. "In my judgment," he said, "no minister in this country will do his duty who neglects any opportunity of reconstructing as much as possible our colonial empire, and of responding to those distant sympathies which may become the source of incalculable strength and happiness to this land." Toryism now sought three great objects: "the maintenance of our institutions, the preservation of our empire, and the improvement of the condition of the people."

The time was at hand when England would have to decide between national and cosmopolitan principles, and the issue was no mean one. “You must remember,” he concluded, “that in fighting against liberalism or the continental system, you are fighting against those who have the advantage of power—against those who have been high in place for nearly half a century. You have nothing to trust to but your own energy and the sublime
[392] instinct of an ancient people.”

Disraeli's genius, at once brooding over conceptions and penetrating in discernment of fact, had shown him the vast tory reserves that his household suffrage of 1867 would rally to his flag. The same genius again scanning the skies read aright the signs and characteristics of the time. Nobody would seriously have counselled intervention in arms between France and Germany, yet many felt a vague humiliation at a resettlement of Europe without England. Nobody seriously objected to the opening of the Black Sea, yet many were affected by a restive consciousness of diplomatic defeat. Everybody was glad that—as I am about to describe in the following chapter—we had settled the outstanding quarrel with America, yet most people were sore at the audacity of the indirect claims, followed by the award of swingeing damages. National pride in short was silently but deeply stirred; the steady splendour of the economic era for a season paled in uncalculating minds. This coming mood the tory leader, with his rare faculty of wide and sweeping forecast, confidently divined, and he found for it the oracle of a party cry in phrases about Empire and Social Reform. When power fell into his hands, he made no single move of solid effect for either social reform or imperial unity. When Mr. Gladstone committed himself to a policy, he brought in bills to carry it out. Forecast without a bill is interesting, but not to be trusted.

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Chapter IX. Washington And Geneva. (1870-1872)

> Although I may think the sentence was harsh in its extent, and unjust in its basis, I regard the fine imposed on this country as dust in the balance compared with the moral value of the example set when these two great nations of England and America—which are among the most fiery and the most jealous in the world with regard to anything that touches national honour—went in peace and concord before a judicial tribunal rather than resort to the arbitrament of the sword.—GLADSTONE.[254]

I

One morning in the summer of 1862 a small wooden sloop, screw and steam, of a little over a thousand tons register dropped slowly down the waters of the Mersey. The decks were rough and unfinished, but guests on board with bright costumes made a gay picture, flags were flying, and all wore the look of a holiday trial trip. After luncheon in the cabin, the scene suddenly changed. At a signal from the vessel a tug came alongside, the cheerful visitors to their surprise were quickly transferred, and the sloop made off upon her real business. She dropped anchor in a bay on the coast of Anglesey, where she took twenty or thirty men mostly English on board from a tug sent after her from Liverpool, with or without the knowledge of the officials. Thence she sailed to the Azores, where a steamer from London and a steamer from Liverpool brought officers, armaments, and coal. As soon as these were trans-shipped, the British ensign was hauled down, the Confederate flag run up, and the captain opened sealed orders

[254] House of Commons, June 15, 1880.

directing him to sink, burn, or destroy, everything that flew the ensign of the so-called United States of America. These orders the [394] captain of the rover faithfully executed, and in a few months the *Alabama*—for that was henceforth her memorable name—had done much to sweep the commercial marine of America from the ocean.

Escape Of The *Alabama*

On the day on which she sailed (July 29), the government made up its mind that she should be detained, on the strength of affidavits that had been almost a week in their hands. The bird of prey had flown. The best definition of due diligence in these matters would seem to be, that it is the same diligence and exactness as are exercised in proceedings relating to imposts of excise or customs. We may guess how different would have been the vigilance of the authorities if a great smuggling operation had been suspected. This lamentable proceeding, for which the want of alacrity and common sense at the foreign office and the bias or blundering of the customs agents at Liverpool, may divide the grave discredit, opened a diplomatic campaign between England and the United States that lasted as long as the siege of Troy, and became an active element in the state of moral war that prevailed during that time between the two kindred communities. Mr. Gladstone, like other members of the Palmerston administration, held for several years that the escape of the *Alabama* was no wrong done by us. Lord Russell admitted (1863) that the cases of the *Alabama* and the *Oreto* were "a scandal and in some degree a reproach to our laws," though he stated in the same sentence that the cabinet thought the law sufficient where legal evidence also was sufficient. It was true that Britain is the greatest shipbuilding country in the world; that to interfere with ships or any other article of commerce is in so far to impose on a neutral some of the calamities of a belligerent; and that restriction of trade was no element in the policy and spirit of foreign enlistment acts either here or in America, which was the first country that by positive legislation sought to restrain its

citizens within definite limits of neutrality. By a law of this kind parliament intended to forbid all subjects within its jurisdiction to make war on people at peace with the British sovereign. It is only, in the words of Canning, when the elements of armament are combined, that they come within the purview of such law. [395] This is not by way of controversy, but to define an issue. Chief Justice Cockburn, an ardent champion of his country if ever there was one, pronounced in his judgment at Geneva, when the day for a verdict at length arrived, that the cruiser ought to have been detained a week before; that the officials of customs were misled by legal advice "perhaps erroneous"; and that the right course to take was "plain and unmistakable." Even Lord Russell after many years of obdurate self-defence, at last confessed in manly words: "I assent entirely to the opinion of the lord chief justice that the *Alabama* ought to have been detained during the four days I was waiting for the opinion of the law officers. But I think that the fault was not that of the commissioners of customs; it was my fault as secretary of state for foreign affairs."[255]

Before the *Alabama* some ten vessels intended for Confederate service had been detained, inquired into, and if released, released by order of a court for want of evidence. After the *Alabama*, no vessel on which the American minister had made representation to the foreign office succeeded in quitting a British port. But critical cases occurred. Emboldened by the successful escape of the *Alabama*, the Confederate agents placed two ironclad rams upon the stocks at the Birkenhead shipyard; Mr. Adams, the American minister in London, renewed his bombardment of the foreign office with proof of their object and design; the foreign office repeated its perplexed pleas against interference, made still more difficult by a colourable transfer of the rams to a French owner; and the whole dreary tragi-comedy of the *Alabama* seemed likely to be acted over again. By the autumn

[255] Walpole's *Russell*, ii. p. 373 *n.*

of 1863 the rams were ready to take the water, and the builders were again talking of a trial trip. This time Lord Russell gave orders that the rams were to be stopped (Sept. 3). He felt the mortification of an honourable man at the trick, of which he had allowed himself to be made the dupe in the case of the *Alabama*. Perhaps also he had been impressed by language used by Mr. Adams to a member of the cabinet, and more formally to
[396] himself, to the effect that the departure of the rams would mean the practical opening to the Southern Confederates of full liberty to use this country as a base for hostile expeditions against the North. "This," said Mr. Adams, "is war."[256]

The affair of the rams was followed by Mr. Gladstone with absorbed attention. He confessed to the Duke of Argyll (Sept. 30, 1863) that he could not get the ironclads out of his head, and his letter shows with what exhaustive closeness he argued the case. The predicament was exactly fitted to draw out some of his most characteristic qualities—minute precision, infinite acuteness, infinite caution, the faculty of multiplied distinction upon distinction, an eye for the shadows of a shade. The points are no longer of living interest, but they exhibit a side of him that is less visible in his broader performances of parliament or platform.

As might have been expected, Mr. Adams was instructed to solicit redress for the doings of the *Alabama*. Lord Russell (Dec. 19, 1862), declaring that government had used every effort to stop her, refused to admit that we were under any obligation whatever to make compensation. Two years later (Aug. 30, 1865) he still declined both compensation and a proposal for arbitration. This opened a long struggle of extreme interest in the ministerial life of Mr. Gladstone, and, what was more, in the history of civilised nations. It was arbitration upon these issues that now began to divide politicians both inside the cabinet and

[256] See *Rhodes*, iv. pp. 377-86.

outside, just as mediation and recognition had divided them in the earlier stages of the American conflict.

American Claims

In 1863 Mr. Adams was the first to point to what after a long struggle became the solution of these difficulties, by assuring Lord Russell that there was "no fair and equitable form of conventional arbitrament or reference" to which America would not be willing to submit. In 1865 (Sept. 2) Mr. Gladstone wrote a letter to Lord Russell, the reply to which has already been published.[257] Always jealous for cabinet authority, he began by submitting to Lord Russell that he had no idea that a despatch refusing arbitration was to be written, without a cabinet being held upon a subject so important. As it was, they had not disposed [397] of the question or even discussed it. On the merits, he inclined to believe that the demand for arbitration was highly unreasonable; still though not disposed to say "Yes" to the demand, he doubted "No." The proper course would be to lead the Americans to bring out the whole of their case, so that the cabinet might have all the pleas before them previously to coming to "a decision of great delicacy and moment."

Lord Russell stood to his guns. "The question," he said, "has been the principal object of my thoughts for the last two years, and I confess I think that paying twenty millions down would be far preferable to submitting the case to arbitration." England would be disgraced for ever if a foreign government were left to arbitrate whether an English secretary of state had been diligent or negligent in his duties, and whether an English law officer was partial and prejudiced in giving his opinion of English law. There the matter stood, and the moral war smouldered on.

II

In 1870, the time arrived when Mr. Gladstone himself, no longer

[257] Walpole's *Russell*, ii. p. 370.

a minister third in standing in a Palmerston government, was called upon to deal with this great issue as a principal in his own administration. In 1868 the conservative government had agreed to a convention, by which a mixed commission, British and American, sitting in London should decide upon the settlement of all claims by the subjects of either country upon the other; and in respect of what were known generically as the *Alabama* Claims, proposing to refer these to the arbitration of the head of some friendly state, in case the mixed commission should not agree. The idea of a composite court or tribunal, as distinguished from a single sovereign arbitrator, had not yet risen above the horizon. Before this project ripened, Mr. Disraeli was out of government, Lord Clarendon had taken Lord Stanley's place at the foreign office, and the convention, with some modifications,
[398] was signed by him (Jan. 14, 1869), and in due course despatched to Washington. There the Senate, not on the merits but for party and personal reasons, refused to ratify. Though this attempt failed, neither of the two English political parties was in a position any longer to refuse arbitration in principle.

Agreement in principle is of little avail, without driving force enough for practice. The driving force was found mainly from a gradual change in English sentiment, though the difficulties with Russia also counted for something. Even so early as 1863 the tide of popular opinion in England had begun slowly to swell in favour of the Northern cause. In 1866 victory across the Atlantic was decided, the union was saved, and slavery was gone. A desire to remove causes of difference between ourselves and the United States grew at a remarkable speed, for the spectacle of success is wont to have magical effects even in minds that would indignantly reject the standards of Machiavelli. While benevolent feeling gained volume in this country, statesmen in America took ground that made the satisfaction of it harder. They began to base their claim for reparation on the original proclamation of British neutrality when the American conflict

began. First made in 1866, this new pretension was repeated in despatches of 1867, and in 1869 the American secretary formally recorded the complaint that the Southern insurrection obtained its enduring vitality by resources drawn from England, and as a consequence of England's imperfect discharge of her duties as neutral. England became, they said, the arsenal, the navy-yard, and the treasury of the insurgent Confederacy.

In the discussion of the Clarendon convention of 1869 Mr. Sumner—a man of some great qualities, but too often the slave of words where he thought himself their master—made an extravagant speech against the British government in the senate, assessing the claim of the United States upon this country on principles that would have raised it to the modest figure of some four hundred million pounds sterling due from us to them, or, as Mr. Gladstone himself estimated it, to sixteen hundred millions. It does not matter which. This was only a violent and fantastic exaggeration of an idea of constructive claims for [399] indirect damages that lay slumbering, but by no means extinct, in American minds, until, as we shall see, in 1872 it very nearly led to a disastrous explosion. This idea first found distinct and official utterance in the despatch of 1869. Besides compensating individuals for depredations, we were to pay for the cost to America of chasing the cruisers; for the transfer of most of the American commercial marine to the British flag; for enhanced insurance; and generally for the increased difficulty of putting down the rebellion.

All through 1870 a rather troublesome exchange of letters went on between Washington and the foreign office, and Mr. Gladstone took an active concern in it. “I grieve to trouble you with so much manuscript,” Lord Clarendon writes him on one occasion (Mar. 17, 1870), “but I don't venture single-handed to conduct a correspondence with the United States.... All this correspondence can do nothing but harm, and I have made my answer as short as is consistent with courtesy. I should like

to send it on Saturday, but if you have not time to look at it, or think it ought to be seen by the cabinet, I could, make an excuse for the delay to Motley." All this was in entire conformity to Mr. Gladstone's enduring conception of the right relations between a prime minister and the foreign secretary. We need not follow details, but one must not be omitted. In 1868 a royal commission recommended various material changes in the Foreign Enlistment Act, and in 1870 accordingly a new law was passed, greatly strengthening the hands of the executive, and furnishing due means of self-protection against such nefarious manœuvres as those of the *Alabama*.[258] By this Act, among other things, it was made an offence to build a ship with reasonable cause to believe that it would be employed in the service of a foreign state at war with a friendly state.

As the year 1870 went on, the expediency of an accommodation with America strengthened in Mr. Gladstone's
[400] mind. One member of the cabinet pointed out to the foreign secretary that if there was any chance of a war with Russia about the Black Sea, it would be as well to get causes of differences with America out of the way; otherwise, however unprepared the United States might be at the moment, we should undoubtedly have them on our hands sooner or later.[259] With Mr. Gladstone the desire was not a consequence of the possible troubles with Russia. His view was wider and less specific. He was alive to the extent to which England's power in Europe was reduced by the smothered quarrel with America, but he took even higher ground than this in his sense of the blessing to the world of an absolute reconciliation in good faith between the old England and the new. At first the government proposed (Nov. 28, 1870) to send over Sir John Rose to America. He was one of the many Scots who have carried the British flag in its best colours over the face

[258] Sir William Harcourt called the Act "the best and most complete law for the enforcement of neutrality in any country." See *Hansard*, Aug. 1, 3, 4, 1870.
[259] *Life of Childers*, i. p. 173.

of the globe; his qualities had raised him to great prominence in Canada; he had enjoyed good opportunities of measuring the American ground; he was shrewd, wise, well read in the ways of men and the book of the world, and he had besides the virtue of being pleasant. Rose himself did not formally undertake the mission, but he applied himself with diligence and success to bring the American government to the project of a joint high commission to examine and consider a situation that there was a common desire to terminate.

The British Commission

On Feb. 1, 1871, Mr. Gladstone was able to report to the Queen the arrival of news that the government of the United States were willing to concur in a commission for the discussion of international questions at present depending, without a previous understanding that liability in respect of the *Alabama* was to be acknowledged by this country. The cabinet naturally thought that on this they might close, and they at once considered the composition of the commission and the proper instructions. Lord de Grey consented to be its president. Lord Derby, on being invited to join the commission, was very grateful for the compliment but declined, being of opinion that firmness and not [401] concession to the Americans was what was wanted. Sir George Grey declined; so did Lord Halifax. "I asked Northcote," Lord Granville reports to Mr. Gladstone, "his eyes twinkled through his spectacles. But he said he must ask Lady Northcote, and requested permission to consult Dizzy. The former consented, ditto Dizzy, which looks well." So the commission was made up of Lord de Grey as the head of it, Northcote, Thornton (the British minister at Washington), Sir John Macdonald, as the representative of Canada, and Mr. Mountague Bernard, a theoretic jurist, who had written a book about our neutrality the year before.[260]

[260] *A Historical Account of the Neutrality of Great Britain during the American Civil War*. 1870.

III

The personal relations of Lord de Grey and his brethren with their American colleagues were excellent. They worked hard all day, and enjoyed Washington hospitality in its full strength every night. In business, Mr. Fish occasionally advanced or supported contentions thought by the Englishmen to be almost amusing. For instance, Mr. Sumner in a memorandum (Jan. 17, 1871) to Mr. Fish, had submitted a singular species of political syllogism. He desired nothing so much, he said, as that entire goodwill should prevail between Great Britain and the United States, and that the settlement should be complete. Now the greatest trouble and peril in the way of a complete settlement was Fenianism; Fenianism was excited by the proximity of the British flag over the Canadian border; therefore, the British flag should be withdrawn from the whole hemisphere, including the islands, and the American flag should fly in its stead. In conformity with this tight and simple chain of reasoning, Mr. Fish threw out a hint to Lord de Grey that the cession of Canada might end the quarrel. The English envoy contented himself with the dry remark that he
[402] did not find such a suggestion in his instructions.[261]

[261] Franklin, in the negotiations on the recognition of the independence of the American colonies in 1782, had made the same suggestion of the cession of Canada by way of reparation and indemnification to the colonists for losses suffered by them in their rebellion, and Lord Shelburne was as deaf in 1782 as Lord de Grey in 1871. At an inaugural dinner of what was then called the Colonial Society (March 10, 1869), Mr. Johnson, then American minister, made some semi-facetious remarks about colonies finding themselves transferred from the union jack to the stars and stripes. Lord Granville said he was rather afraid that the minister of the great republic, who had spoken with such singular eloquence, would feel it was a little want of sense on his part, that made him unprepared at that moment to open negotiations for the cession of British Canada. Mr. Gladstone, who was present, referred to the days when he had been at the colonial office, when in every British colony there was a party, called “the British party,” which, he rejoiced to think, had since become totally extinct.

Though sometimes amused, the commissioners soon understood that at heart the American negotiators desired to settle. Difficulties with their own people were great. A presidential campaign with all its necessities approached. A settlement of outstanding accounts with England might be a good card to play in the election; on the other hand, if the peace card were not available, it was just possible that a war card might do nearly as well. Mr. Fish was mortally afraid of Sumner, who had been chairman of the foreign relations committee in the senate, and whose anti-English temper, as we have seen, was red-hot. The constitutional requirement of a two-thirds majority in the senate for the ratification of a treaty was awkward and menacing, and it was necessary to secure dubious senators by the exhibition of high national temper on the public stage. It is interesting to note, in passing, that the English visitors were persuaded how much better it would have been if, according to our own parliamentary system at Westminster, the American system had allowed Mr. Fish to meet Mr. Sumner on the floor of congress, and instead of seeking victory by unseen manipulation, fight the battle out before the country.

Difficulties In Cabinet

The British commissioners were almost as much embarrassed by their friends at home as by their friends or foes at Washington. Both ministers and lawyers, from the safe distance of Downing Street, were sometimes excessive in pressing small and trivial alterations, which the Americans after the diplomatist's manner insisted on treating as if they were not small but great. The sharp corner in the London cabinet was the more serious proposal, that certain rules as to the duty of neutrals should be laid down, and should be made guiding principles for the arbitrators, although the rules themselves had not been formally established when England's alleged breaches of neutral obligation had been committed. This retro-active or *ex-post-facto* quality, when the cabinet considered it (March 18), gave trouble, and it was used by passionate and impolitic persons to tarnish the whole

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policy in this country. Much heat was evoked, for a cabinet of many talents is not always the same thing as a cabinet of plain minds. One clever man objected at large to the commission, to concession, to obtaining any principle of settlement for future contingencies. A second was violent against all such arbitration as this, and thought they had much better pay up at once and have done with it. A third clever man even let fall some high words about "national dishonour." Granville, Argyll, Forster (the last described by a colleague as "a tower of strength"), were steadfast and unfaltering for conciliation. Mr. Gladstone agreed, but eager though he was for a settlement, he "agreed with reluctance." Sir Roundell Palmer had now great influence with him, and Palmer had come round to the conclusion that the risk from translating retrospectively into the form of a hypothetical international convention, not existing when the events happened, a duty that we had recognised as incumbent on us under our own law, might be safely run.[262] In plain English, the adverse way of describing this peculiar substitute for a free and open arbitration, was that Great Britain owed the Americans nothing, and if she had not consented to accept a set of new-fangled rules, and to be judged retro-actively by them, she could not possibly have been made to pay anything. To this the short answer was that though the rules might or might not be new-fangled as principles of international law, yet they were not new as principles of English municipal law, which, as construed by the British government itself, was coincident in substance with those rules. Was it in fact reasonable to contend that ironclads might be built in the Mersey, sent out a few miles beyond the river mouth, there armed from lighters, and sent off to bombard New York? If not, was it reasonable that England should invite the arbitrators to judge the *Alabama* case according to one rule in the past, and then to lay down another rule for the future? [404]

[262] Selborne, *Personal and Political Memorials*, i. p. 214.

A minor objection raised by Mr. Gladstone gave much alarm to his commissioners, and it is too characteristic to be omitted. Speaking of the ardently desired treaty, he writes to Lord Granville (April 12, 1871):—

> With regard to the preamble, it designates the late war in America as "the rebellion." I do not think it is right for us now to adopt a mode of speech different from that which we maintained throughout the struggle. Further, it tends to discredit our recognition of belligerency. And if we declare it a rebellion, we have given an example available to be quoted hereafter for the dealings of a foreign power with rebels as belligerents. If, on the other hand, the Americans object to speaking of the "civil war," it is quite easy (so I think) to leave out the words "during the recent rebellion in the U.S." altogether, and to say in the years 186—or even to begin "Whereas H.B.M." perhaps inserting in after "U.S." "in respect of such depredations."

This is an instance of the tenacity with which he sometimes held his ground after its relations and bearings had entirely changed. Something too may doubtless be set down to the lingering remains of his old feeling, of the strength of the constitutional argument of the South that sovereign states had a right to withdraw from the union if they pleased. If the proposal to drop the word "rebellion" had been brought without warning or preparation before the full commission, assent would have been hopeless, but by the discretion of informal interviews, the matter was canvassed beforehand, the obnoxious word was silently left out, Mr. Gladstone's point was gained, and things went prosperously forward. "I am quite sure," wrote Sir Stafford Northcote to Mr. Gladstone (March 17), "that there was no other way in which you could have hoped to settle these questions than by such a commission as ours.... What may be our fate I do not presume to guess, but if we succeed, it will be mainly

due to de Grey's excellent sense, tact, and temper." In the end, notwithstanding the power of the senate over treaties, the want of control by the American government over its party, and the exigencies of Canada, all at last fell into decent shape, and [405] the substantial objects in view were effectively maintained. Canadian fishery questions were adjusted, and the boundary of San Juan remitted to the arbitration of the newly made German Emperor.

Treaty Signed

After thirty-seven sittings, spread over a period of two months, the treaty was signed on May 8, in a room decorated with flowers, with the good omen of brilliant sunshine, and everybody in such good humour that the American secretary of the commission tossed up with Lord Tenterden which should sign first,—the Englishman happily winning. The treaty began by the declaration that her Britannic Majesty authorised the commissioners to express in a friendly spirit the regret felt by her Majesty's government for the escape, under whatever circumstances, of the *Alabama* and other vessels from British ports, and for the depredations committed by these vessels. It embraced a definition of the rules of maritime neutrality, which some legal text-writers have applauded, and other legal text-writers have therefore condemned. Finally, and most important of all, whether we look at the immediate purpose or at its contribution to a great though slow-moving cause, the treaty of Washington secured a judgment by the arbitration of a tribunal, of all claims growing out of acts committed by the cruisers, "and generically known as the *Alabama* Claims." The tribunal was to consist of five members named by Great Britain, the United States, Switzerland, Italy, and Brazil.

The effect of the rules of Washington as applied at Geneva remains, as I have said, a topic of controversy. Maine, for example, while admitting that the result for the occasion was good, holds that by making the rule of neutral duty more severe, it marked reaction rather than progress in the general drift of

international law.[263] Others maintain that the amended foreign enlistment Act of 1870, which is in fact a partial incorporation of the Washington rules, went far beyond what international law requires, and made a new crime out of an act, namely the building of a ship, which is not forbidden either by the law of nations or by other municipal laws.[264]

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IV

Indirect Claims

Once, after some crowning mercy in the war, President Lincoln said to his cabinet, "Now, gentlemen, we have got our harpoon into the monster, but we must still take uncommon care, or else by a single flop of his tail he will send us into all eternity." This wholesome caution, too often overlooked by headlong politicians, was suddenly found to be much needed at the eleventh hour of the treaty of Washington. At the end of 1871, Mr. Gladstone experienced a severe shock, for he found that the case put in by America for the arbitrators insisted upon an adjudication by them not only upon the losses suffered by individual American citizens, but upon the indirect, constructive, consequential, and national claims first propounded in their full dimensions by Mr. Sumner. A storm at once arose in England, and nobody was more incensed than the prime minister. In reporting to the Queen, he used language of extreme vehemence, and in the House of Commons (Feb. 9, 1872) when Mr. Disraeli spoke of the indirect claims as preposterous and wild, as nothing less than the exacting of tribute from a conquered people, Mr. Gladstone declared that such words were in truth rather under the mark than an exaggeration, and went on to say that "we

[263] *International Law*, p. 240. On the doubtful value of the rules, see Lawrence's *Principles of International Law* (1895), pp. 553-4.
[264] Boyd, third Eng. edition of *Wheaton* (1889), p. 593.

must be insane to accede to demands which no nation with a spark of honour or spirit left could submit to even at the point of death." Speaking of the construction put upon the treaty by the government, he declared such a construction to be "the true and unambiguous meaning of the words, and therefore the only meaning admissible, whether tried by grammar, by reason, by policy, or by any other standard." Some persons argued that this was to accuse the Americans of dishonesty. "I learn really for the first time," exclaimed Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville (Feb. 8), "that a man who affirms that in his opinion a document is unambiguous in his favour, thereby affirms that one who reads it otherwise is dishonest." His critics retorted that surely a construction that could not stand the test of grammar, of reason, of policy, or any other test, must be due either to insanity or to dishonesty; and as we could hardly assume General Grant, Mr. [407] Fish, and the others to be out of their wits, there was nothing for it but dishonesty.

For five anxious months the contest lasted. The difficulties were those of time and form, often worse than those of matter and substance. Nor would this have been the first case in which small points hinder the settlement of great questions. The manner of proceeding, as Mr. Gladstone reports to the Queen, was of such complication that hours were given almost every day for many weeks, to the consideration of matter which on the day following was found to have moved out of view. Suggestions came from Washington, mostly inadmissible, whether their faults were due to accident and haste or to design. Sometimes refusals of this suggestion or that from our side were couched in "terms of scant courtesy and bordering upon harshness." Still the cabinet persisted in husbanding every chance of saving the treaty. They charitably judged the attitude of the Washington government, in Mr. Gladstone's ample language, "to be directed by considerations belonging to the sphere of its own domestic policy, and to the contentions of party in that sphere. But they

will attempt by patient consideration, avoidance of self-laudation and of irritating topics, and a steady endeavour to be right, to attain the great end in view of an honourable settlement which it would be a sad disgrace as well as misfortune to both countries now to miss." And here occurs a consideration as we pass, upon the American constitution. "The fact remains indisputable (June 1), that there is no conclusive evidence of any serious subject the substance of which is at present in dispute between the two governments, but the difficulties arising on the American side from what may be termed electioneering considerations are greatly aggravated by the position of the American senate and the reference to that body for previous counsel, for which it seems to be miserably unsuited, as it takes days and almost weeks for debate, where a cabinet would require only hours."

The opposition in parliament was patriotic, and as a rule made no difficulties. "Mr. Disraeli," reports Mr. Gladstone (June 3), "behaved with the caution and moderation which have generally [408] marked his conduct with, regard to the Washington treaty.... On the whole the House of Commons showed the same dignified self-command for which it has been remarkable during the whole period since the opening of the session with reference to this question; although the more inflammatory expressions, which fell from a few members, were warmly cheered by a portion, and a portion only, of the opposition."

The cabinet was unanimous against the submission of the indirect claims, but there were marked differences of leaning, as in fact there had been throughout. All accepted Lord Ripon's[265] view that if he had insisted on getting into the treaty nothing less than a formal and express repudiation of the indirect claims, no treaty at all would have been possible. Both sides in the Washington conferences had been more anxious to submit to the arbitrators the principle of allowing indirect claims, than to

[265] Lord de Grey had been created Marquis of Ripon after the signature of the treaty of Washington.

embark on any discussion of them. The American commissioners knew this principle to be unsound, but knowing also that their own people expected the claims to be referred, they could only abstain from insisting on their inclusion. The British commissioners were willing silently to waive an express renunciation of them, being confident that the terms of the protocols and the language of the treaty would be so construed by the arbitrators as to exclude the indirect claims.[266] All this was a rational and truly diplomatic temper on both sides; but then the immortal events of a hundred years before had shown too plainly that Englishmen at home cannot always be trusted to keep a rational and diplomatic temper; and many events in the interval had shown that English colonists, even when transfigured into American citizens, were still chips of the old block. The cabinet agreed that a virtual waiver of the claims was to be found both in the protocols of the conference, and in the language of the treaty. Lord Ripon and Mr. Forster, however, thought it would be safe to go on at Geneva, in the assurance that the arbitrators would be certain
[409] to rule the indirect claims out. At the other extreme of the cabinet scale, the view was urged that England should not go on, unless she put upon record a formal declaration that did she not, and never would, assent to any adjudication upon the indirect claims. To a certain minister who pressed for some declaration in this sense,—also formulated in a motion by Lord Russell in parliament, himself responsible for so much of the original mischief[267]—Mr. Gladstone wrote as follows:—

[266] See Moore, *History and Digest of International Arbitration to which the United States have been a Party*. Washington, 1898, i. pp. 629-37.

[267] Mr. Bruce writes home from the cabinet room: "June 5, 1872: You must read the House of Lords debate on the *Alabama* treaty. It was a most mischievous move of Lord Russell, as the discussion must weaken our last chance—not a bad one—of settling differences. The debate was adjourned. But there is no doubt that a vote will be carried which, if it were in the House of Commons, would lead to resignation. We cannot of course treat the vote of the Lords, where we are always in a minority, as of the same quality. But it

> *June 17.*—... I doubt whether the cabinet can legitimately be asked, as a cabinet, to make these affirmations, inasmuch as, according to my view, they are not within the purview of its present undertaking—that undertaking has reference exclusively to the scope of the arbitration. We have contended all along that the claims would not legitimately come before the arbitrators.... But we had never demanded the assent of the Americans to our reasoning, only to our conclusion that the claims were not within the scope of the arbitration. It is my view (but this is quite another matter) that they lie cast aside, a dishonoured carcass, which no amount of force, fraud, or folly can again galvanise into life. You will see then, in sum, that (if I rightly understand you) I accept for myself broadly and freely what may be called the extreme doctrine *about* the indirect claims; but I think the cabinet cannot fairly be challenged for an official judgment on a matter really not before it.

The little entries in the diary give us a good idea of the pressure on the prime minister:—

> *Feb. 6, 1872.*—Spoke an hour after Disraeli on the address.... The *Alabama* and Washington question lay heavy on me till the evening. Even during the speech I was disquieted, and had to converse with my colleagues. *March 16.*—Cabinet 2¾-7; laborious chiefly on the Washington treaty. *17th.*—Worked on part of the despatch for America. *18th.*—In conclave. Much heavy work on *Alabama*. *22nd.*—Severe bronchial attack. Transacted business through West, W. H. G. [his son] Mr. Glyn, Lord Granville, and Cardwell, who went to and fro between the cabinet below-stairs and me. To all of them I whispered with some difficulty. *April 5.*—Conclave on countercase. First with Cardwell and [410]

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will be misunderstood in America. We are now in the cabinet discussing the next steps." The motion was withdrawn.

> Lowe, then with Tenterden and Sanderson. Much confusion. *May 12.*—Saw Lord Granville, who brought good news from America. *27th.*—U.S. question bristles with difficulties. *30th.*—H. of C. During the evening two long conferences on Washington treaty with Lord G. and the lawyers, and a cabinet 10-1. Worked Uniformity bill through committee at intervals. *June 3.*—Cabinet 3-4-1/4. H. of C. Made a statement on the treaty of Washington. The house behaved *well*. Also got the Act of Uniformity bill read a third time. Its preamble is really a notable fact in 1872. *6th.*—H. of C. Spoke on Washington treaty and Scots Education—the House *too* well pleased as to the former. *11th.*—The cabinet met at 2. and sat intermittently with the House to 5¾, again 9-1/4-1.

At Geneva

The arbitrators were to meet on June 15. Yet no break in the clouds seemed likely. Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues had a meeting at the foreign office, and did not separate until after midnight on June 11. The British agent was to be directed to apply for an immediate adjournment, and without lodging the summary of our case as provided by the treaty. If the arbitrators declined to adjourn, either because the Americans objected, or from a belief that they had no title to adjourn without a formal opening of business by lodging summaries, then was or was not our agent to change tack and lodge his summary? Or was the arbitration, and with the arbitration the whole treaty, to fall to the ground for want of it? On this question Mr. Gladstone thought it his duty to mention to the Queen that it had not yet (June 13) been found possible to bring the cabinet to a decision. For a day or two it looked as if the ministry might fall to pieces, but the head of it was indomitable:— [411]

> *June 13* (Thursday).—Since Tuesday morning I have constantly resolved or discussed this proposition: that we should not be justified in breaking off the proceedings at Geneva (if an adjournment can be had after presentation of

> the summary), upon a refusal to present it. My determination upon it is now firmly rooted and tested by all the mental effort I can apply, and the time I thought had come to-day for looking forward as well as backward. I therefore wrote to the Queen in terms which might a little prepare her for difficulties in the cabinet. I saw Granville first, who had not reached my point, but seemed to come up to it; then arranged for him to see Halifax, Ripon to see Kimberley, and the chancellor [Lowe] to see Cardwell; as the *knot* of the probable difficulty is in these three. On the whole, I hope we shall, in one way or another, work through. *At any rate, if anything like a government can be held together, I will not shrink.*
>
> *June 15.*—Cabinet 12-2-1/4, and with brief intervals to 7-½. Dined with Princess Louise. After dinner Granville and I went to see Mr. Hammond, then on to the F. 0., where we got (before midnight) the protocol of to-day from Geneva. Thank God that up to a certain point the indications on this great controversy are decidedly favourable.
>
> *June 16.*—Sunday (Bunker Hill anniversary? [No—June 17]). Cabinet here 1-½-3-1/4. We sent off a telegram, which I hope may finish the good work at Geneva.

What happened at Geneva was this. When the day came, the British agent did not lodge his summary, but asked for an adjournment for eight months, as the two governments did not agree upon the scope of the arbitration. This looked dark enough, and the treaty seemed doomed. It was saved by Mr. Adams, the American nominee on the tribunal. When he reached Geneva and learned how things stood, he decided that the knot which they could not untie must be cut.[268] His golden idea was this: the arbitrators should make a spontaneous declaration that on the principles of international law the indirect claims ought to be excluded from their consideration. Adams saw his colleagues one by one, and brought them round to his view. [412]

[268] *Charles Francis Adams.* By his Son. Boston, 1900, pp. 394-7.

The English chief justice had made up his mind that the whole thing was dead, as he had for many months been loudly telling all London that it ought to be. But when asked by Mr. Adams whether the spontaneous extra-judicial declaration would remove all obstacles to progress, Cockburn answered that he thought it would. "I said," Mr. Adams continued, "that in that event I was prepared to make a proposition. I should be assuming a heavy responsibility; but I should do so, not as an arbitrator representing my country, but as representing all nations." So the indirect claims were summarily ruled out, and the arbitration proceeded. In some notes prepared for the cabinet on all these proceedings (Feb. 4, 1873), Lord Tenterden, the clever and experienced British agent at Geneva, writes, "I cannot conclude this part of the memorandum without saying that the dignity, tact, self-command, and moderation with which Mr. Adams discharged his functions as arbitrator, did honour to his country."

The Award

In September (1872) the five arbitrators at Geneva gave their award. They were unanimous in finding Great Britain liable for the acts of the *Alabama*; all save the British representative found her liable for the *Florida*; the Italian, the Swiss, and the American against the Englishman and the Brazilian found her liable for the *Shenandoah* after leaving Melbourne. They awarded in satisfaction and final settlement of all claims, including interest, a gross sum of about three and a quarter million pounds sterling. The award, though hardly a surprise, still inflicted a lively twinge of mortification on the masterful and confident people of this island. Opinion was divided, but the decision was not one of those that cut deep or raise the public temperature to fever. The prints of the opposition insisted that the result was profoundly vexatious, it was a bungled settlement, and the arguments used in favour of it were "wild sentimental rubbish." On the other hand, the *Times* regarded it with profound satisfaction, and ministerial writers with a lyric turn hailed it as a magnificent victory, though we had to pay a heavy bill. A little balm was extracted from

the fact that the Americans had preferred before the tribunal a demand of nine millions and a half, and thus got little more than one-third of what they had asked. So ended what has been called the greatest of all arbitrations, extinguishing the embers that could not have been left to smoulder without constant peril of a vast and fratricidal conflagration. The treaty of Washington and the Geneva arbitration stand out as the most notable victory in the nineteenth century of the noble art of preventive diplomacy, and the most signal exhibition in their history of self-command in two of the three chief democratic powers of the western world. For the moment the result did something to impair the popularity of Mr. Gladstone's government, but his association with this high act of national policy is one of the things that give its brightest lustre to his fame.

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Chapter X. As Head Of A Cabinet. (1868-1874)

> Rational co-operation in politics would be at an end, if no two men might act together, until they had satisfied themselves that in no possible circumstances could they be divided.—GLADSTONE.

I

The just complacency with which Mr. Gladstone regarded his cabinet on its first construction held good:—

> I look back with great satisfaction on the internal working of the cabinet of 1868-74. It was a cabinet easily handled; and yet it was the only one of my four cabinets in which there were members who were senior to myself (the lord chancellor Hatherley, Lord Clarendon), with many other men of long ministerial experience. When this cabinet was breaking up in 1874, I took the opportunity of thanking them for the manner in which they had uniformly lightened my task in the direction of business. In reply, Halifax, who might be considered as the senior in years and experience taken jointly, very handsomely said the duty of the cabinet had been made more easy by the considerate manner in which I had always treated them. Some of them were as colleagues absolutely delightful, from the manner in which their natural qualities blended with their consummate experience. I refer especially to Clarendon and Granville.

Criticism By Colleagues

If we may trust some of those who were members of it, no cabinet ever did its business with livelier industry or effect. Under Mr. Gladstone's hand it was a really working cabinet, not an assemblage of departmental ministers, each minding his

own affairs, available as casual members of this or the other sub-committee, and without an eye for the general drift and tendency of their proceedings. Of course ministers differed in [415] importance. One was pleasant and popular, but not forcible. Another overflowed with knowledge and was really an able man, but somehow he carried no guns, and nobody cared what he said. One had aptitude without weight—perhaps the true definition of our grossly overworked epithet of clever. Another had weight and character, without much aptitude. The cabinet as a whole was one of extraordinary power, not merely because its chief had both aptitude and momentum enough for a dozen, but because it was actively homogeneous in reforming spirit and purpose. This solidarity is the great element in such combinations, and the mainspring of all vigorous cabinet work.

Of Mr. Gladstone as head of his first cabinet, we have a glimpse from Mr. Stansfeld:—

> Mr. Gladstone's conduct in the cabinet was very curious. When I first joined in 1871, I naturally thought that his position was so commanding, that he would be able to say, "This is my policy; accept it or not as you like." But he did not. He was always profuse in his expressions of respect for the cabinet. There was a wonderful combination in Mr. Gladstone of imperiousness and of deference. In the cabinet he would assume that he was nothing. I thought he should have said, "This is my policy. What do you think of it?" and then have fought it out until they had come to an agreement. He always tried to lead them on by unconscious steps to his own conclusions.[269]

To this we may add some words of Lord Granville used in 1883, but doubtless just as true of 1868-74:—

[269] Sir James Stansfeld, *Review of Reviews*, xi. p. 519.

> I have served under several prime ministers, men for whom I had high respect and to whom I had the greatest attachment, but I can say that I never knew one who showed a finer temper, a greater patience, or more consideration for his colleagues than Mr. Gladstone in all deliberations on any important subject. In his official position, with his knowledge, with his ability, and with the wonderful power of work that characterises him, he of course has an immense influence on the deliberations of the cabinet; but notwithstanding his tenacity of purpose and his earnestness, it is quite extraordinary how he attends to the
> [416] arguments of all, and, except on any question of real vital principle, he is ready to yield his own opinion to the general sense of the colleagues over whom he presides.[270]

Imputing his own qualities to others, and always keen to make the best of people and not the worst, if he had once invited a man to office, he held on to him to the last possible moment. "The next most serious thing to admitting a man into the cabinet," he said, "is to leave a man out who has once been in." Not seldom he carried his invincible courtesy, deference, and toleration even beyond the domain where those qualities ought to be supreme. This was part of what men meant, when they said that life was to him in all its aspects an application of Christian teaching and example. To this we must add another consideration of first importance, and one that vulgar criticism of great statesmen too commonly ignores. In the words of Lord Aberdeen (1856), who knew from sharp experience how much his doctrine might cost a man: "A prime minister is not a free agent. To break up a government, to renounce all the good you hoped to do and leave imperfect all the good you have done, to hand over power to persons whose objects or whose measures you disapprove, even merely to alienate and politically to injure your friends, is no slight matter."[271]

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[270] *Pall Mall Gazette*, Dec. 14, 1883.

[271] M. C. M. Simpson's *Many Memories*, pp. 232-3.

A member of this first cabinet wrote to Mr. Gladstone long after it had come to an end: "I suppose there was no one of your then colleagues less sympathetic with you, less in tune with your opinions and enthusiasms than Lowe. Nevertheless this happened to me with him—after you had resigned. Lowe opened to me one day, on the subject of your relations with your colleagues. He spoke in terms of warm admiration, and to my great surprise, ended by saying, 'I have the same kind of feeling towards him that I can suppose must be the feeling of a dog for his master.' Lowe is a perfectly sincere man. He would not have said this if he had not felt it." "In everything personal," Mr. Gladstone replied, "Lowe was an excellent colleague and member of cabinet. But I had never been in personal relations [417] with him before, and at the outset of the ministry of 1868 I knew very little of him. Moreover, he was the occasion of much trouble to me by his incessant broils with ——, who was an awkward customer." In sheer intellect Mr. Gladstone held that Lowe had not many equals, but in nobody else did he discover so many mixed and contradictory qualities—"splendid in attack, but most weak in defence, at times exhibiting pluck beyond measure, but at other times pusillanimity almost amounting to cowardice; one day headstrong and independent, and the next day helpless as a child to walk alone; capable of tearing anything to pieces, but of constructing nothing."[272]

Lord Clarendon—Lowe—Brig

When Lord Clarendon died,—"An irreparable colleague," Mr. Gladstone notes in his diary, "a statesman of many gifts, a most lovable and genial man." Elsewhere he commemorates his "unswerving loyalty, his genial temper, his kindness ever overflowing in acts yet more than in words, his liberal and indulgent appreciation of others." In the short government of 1865-6, Lord Granville had described Clarendon to Mr. Gladstone as "excellent, communicating more freely with the

[272] Quoted in Sir E.W. Hamilton's *Monograph*, p. 324.

cabinet and carrying out their policy more faithfully, than any foreign secretary I have known." Mr. Gladstone himself told me twenty years after, that of the sixty men or so who had been his colleagues in cabinet, Clarendon was the very easiest and most attractive. It is curious to observe that, with the exception of Mr. Bright, he found his most congenial adherents rather among the patrician whigs than among the men labelled as advanced.

Mr. Bright, as we have seen, was forced by ill-health to quit the government. Thirty years of unsparing toil, more than ten of them devoted especially to the exhausting, but in his case most fruitful, labours of the platform, had for the time worn down his stock of that energy of mind, which in the more sinewy frame of the prime minister seemed as boundless as some great natural element. To Mrs. Bright Mr. Gladstone wrote:—

[418] It is not merely a selfish interest that all his colleagues feel in him on account of his great powers, just fame, and political importance; but it is one founded on the esteem and regard which, one and all, they entertain towards him. God grant that any anxieties you may entertain about him may soon be effectually relieved. I wish I felt quite certain that he is as good a patient as he is a colleague. But the chief object of my writing was to say that the Queen has signified both by letter and telegraph her lively interest in Mr. B.'s health; and she will not forgive me unless I am able to send her frequent reports.

He is quite capable of dealing faithfully with colleagues breaking rules. To a member of the cabinet who had transgressed by absence from a division of life and death:—

I should not act frankly by you if I did not state it, without hesitation as a general and prospective proposition, that, without reference to the likelihood or unlikelihood of defeat, upon motions which must from their nature be votes of confidence, [there can] be but one rule for the members of the

> government, and that is to give the votes themselves which at the same time the government with less strong title is asking from the members of their party.

He scolds a leading minister pretty directly for placing him in a disagreeable and rather ludicrous position, by failing to give the proper information about a government bill containing an important change, so that nobody could explain the reason for it to the House. His own personal example of absolutely unremitting attendance on the scene of action, entitled him to rebuke slackness. Nothing escaped him. Here is the way in which he called defaulters to their duty:—

> *April 8, 1873.*—The chancellor of the exchequer thinks he has some reason to complain of your having quitted London on Thursday, without any prior communication with him or Glyn, four days before the budget. I have heard with regret that the state of your health has compelled you to spend your vacation abroad; but scarcely even a direct medical order, and certainly in my opinion nothing less, could render such an example innocent in its effects, as is set by a departure from London under such circumstances. Although it has been a great pleasure to me to admit and recognise your parliamentary services and distinctions, and though I have always thought [419] your accession to the government an acquisition of great value, I must frankly avow my opinion that it is hardly possible for the chancellor of exchequer to discharge his duties without your constant and sedulous co-operation, or for the official corps in general to avoid suffering, if the members of it make themselves the judges of the question when and under what circumstances their absence may be permitted during the sittings of the House.
>
> *June 25, 1870.*—I am led to suppose by your absence from the division yesterday, that there may not be a perfectly clear understanding between us as to the obligations of members of the government on these occasions. Yesterday gave occasion

> of much inconvenience on account of the entertainment at Windsor, but all the members of the government who could be expected to attend voted in the division, except yourself. I can say from my own recollection that as far as regards political officers, the sovereign always permits the claim of the House of Commons to prevail.

Changes among subordinate members of the government came early. Of one of these ministers Mr. Gladstone writes to Lord Granville (August 18, 1869): "He has great talent, and is a most pertinacious worker, with a good deal of experience and widely dispersed knowledge of public affairs. But he seems to be somewhat angular, and better adapted for doing business within a defined province of his own, than in common stock or partnership with others." Unfortunately the somewhat angular man shared his work with a chief who had intellectual angularities of his own, not very smoothly concealed. As it happened, there was another minister of secondary rank who did not come up to the expected mark. "Though he has great talents, remarkable power of speech, and some special qualifications for his department, he has not succeeded in it with the House of Commons, and does not seem very thoroughly to understand pecuniary responsibility and the management of estimates, and there is no doubt whatever that in his department the present House of Commons will be vigilant and exacting, while the rapid growth of its expenditures
[420] certainly shows that it should be filled by some one capable of exercising control." Not thoroughly "to understand pecuniary responsibility" was counted a deadly sin in those halcyon days. So the transgressor accepted a diplomatic mission, and this made room to plant his angular colleague in what seemed a "province of his own." But few provinces are definite enough to be independent of the treasury, and the quarrels between this minister and the chancellor of the exchequer became something of a scandal and a weakness to the government. One of the fiercest battles of the time (1872) broke out in respect of Kew Gardens

between the minister with a definite province of his own and a distinguished member of "a scientific fraternity, which, valuable as it is, has been unduly pampered of late from a variety of causes into a somewhat overweening idea of its own importance." The premier's pacifying resources were taxed by this tremendous feud to the uttermost; he holds a stiffish tone to the minister, and tries balm for the *savant* by propitiatory reminder of "a most interesting fact made known to me when I had the pleasure and advantage of seeing you at Kew, namely the possibility of saving for purposes of food a portion of the substance of the diseased potato. The rescue of a sensible percentage of this valuable esculent will be a noble service rendered by scientific knowledge and skill to the general community." But science is touchy, and wounds are sometimes too deep to be healed by words.

Ministerial Discipline

A point worth noting is his strict limitation of his own rights as head of a government. "Hope you will not think," he wrote to a colleague, "I am evading my duties, but while it is my duty to deal with all difficulties arising between members of the government, it is wholly beyond my power, and in no way belongs to my province, to examine and settle the controversies which may arise between them and civil servants who are employed under them." He is careful to distinguish his own words from the words of the cabinet; careful both to lean upon, and to defer to, the judgment of that body; and when the decision is taken, it is in their name that he writes to the vexatious colleague (July 24, 1872): "The cabinet have come to their conclusion, and directed me to make it known to you.... If you think proper to make the announcement of these intentions of the government, they are quite willing that you should do so. If otherwise, Mr. Bruce will do it as home minister. Thus far as to making known what will be done. As to the doing of it, the rules will have to be cancelled at once by you." [421]

The reader of an authoritarian or arbitrary cast of mind may ask why he did not throw a handful of dust upon the angry

combatants. “It is easy,” he wrote to Cardwell (Nov. 20, 1871) “to talk of uprooting X., but even if it were just, it will, as Glyn [the party whip] would tell you, be very difficult. But Y. perhaps proceeds more like Moloch, and X. in the manner of Belial. Why cannot they follow the good example of those worthies, who co-operated in pandemonium? If you thought you could manage Y., I would try to tackle X. I commend this subject to your meditations.” Sulphureous whiffs from this pandemonium were pretty copiously scented both by parliament and the public, and did the ministry some harm.

Of a peer of much renown in points of procedure, private business, and the like, he says, “he looks at everything out of blinkers, and has no side lights.” Of one brilliant and able colleague in the first administration he writes, that “he has some blank in his mental constitution, owing to which he receives admonitions most kindly, and then straightway does the same thing over again.” Of another colleague, “though much nearer the rights of the case than many who were inclined to object, he is thin and poor in the cabinet.” Some one else is “a sensitive man, given beyond most men to speak out his innermost and perhaps unformed thoughts, and thereby to put himself at a disadvantage.” Another public servant is “not unmanageable, but he needs to be managed.” In the same letter he speaks of the Hibernian presbyterian as “that peculiar cross between a Scotchman and an Irishman.”

Of his incessant toil the reader has already a good idea. Here are a few items. To one correspondent (Jan. 21, 1869) he writes: “I hope you do not think my ‘holiday’ at Hawarden has proved my idleness, for I think ten hours a day has been a moderate
[422] estimate of my work there on public business, to which some other matters have had to be added.” To the attorney-general he says when he has had three years more of it (Sept. 18, 1872): “I cannot say with you that my office never gives me a day without business, for in the four ‘vacations’ so far as they have gone,

I think I have had no less than five days. This vacation has thus far been the best; but heavy and critical work impends." In October, 1871, he writes to Mrs. Gladstone from Edinburgh: "I have for *the first time* since the government was formed, had a holiday of two whole days." To Lord Clarendon he writes from Lord Granville's at Walmer (Sept. 2, 1869): "At the end of a holiday morning of work, since I breakfasted at nine, which has lasted till near four, I have yet to say a few words about...." To Archdeacon Harrison, May 25, 1873: "As you may like to have the exact anatomy of my holiday on the Queen's birthday, I will give it you: 2-1/4 A.M., return home from the H. of C. 10 A.M., two hours' work in my room. 2-7, the cabinet. Three-quarters of an hour's walk. 8-12, thirty-two to dinner and an evening party. 12, bed!" To Sir R. Phillimore, July 23, 1873: "Not once this year (except a day in bed) have I been absent from the hours of government business in the House, and the rigour of attendance is far greater now than at earlier periods of the session."

His colleagues grudged his absence for a day. On one occasion, in accordance with a lifelong passion and rooted habit, he desired to attend a funeral, this time in Scotland, and Lord Granville's letter of remonstrance to him is interesting in more points than one; it shows the exacting position in which the peculiarities of some colleagues and of a certain section of his supporters placed him:—

> It is the unanimous desire of the cabinet that I should try to dissuade you.... It is a duty of a high order for you to do all you can for your health.... You hardly ever are absent from the House without some screw getting loose. I should write much more strongly if I did not feel I had a personal interest in the matter. In so strained a state as Europe is now in, the slightest thing may lead to great consequences, and it is possible that [423]
> it may be a disadvantage to me and to the *chose publique* if anything occurs during the thirty-six hours you are absent.

This letter of Lord Granville's was written on July 10, 1870, just five days before war was declared between France and Prussia.

He wrote to the *Spectator* (May 1873) to correct a report "that every day must begin for me with my old friend Homer." He says: "As to my beginning every day with Homer, as such a phrase conveys to the world a very untrue impression of the demands of my present office, I think it right to mention that, so far as my memory serves me, I have not read Homer for fifty lines now for a quarter of an hour consecutively for the last four years, and any dealings of mine with Homeric subjects have been confined to a number of days which could be readily counted on the fingers." Yet at the end of 1869, he winds up a letter of business by saying, "I must close; I am going to have a discussion with Huxley on the immortality of the soul!"

Who can wonder that after a prolonged spell of such a strain as this, he was found laying down strong doctrine about the age of a prime minister? Bishop Wilberforce met him twice in the May of 1873. "Gladstone much talking how little real good work any premier had done after sixty: Peel; Palmerston, his work really all done before; Duke of Wellington added nothing to his reputation after. I told him Dr. Clark thought it would be physically worse for him to retire. 'Dr. Clark does not know how completely I should employ myself,' he replied." Four days later: "Gladstone again talking of sixty as full age of premier."[273]

II

In words already quoted, Mr. Gladstone spoke of most of his life having been given to working the institutions of his country. Of all these institutions—House of Commons, Lords, cabinet, church, stern courts of law—that which he was most

[273] May 6, 10, 1873. *Life of Wilberforce*, iii. p. 413.

apt to idealise was the throne. His sense of chivalry and his sense of an august tradition continuously symbolised by a [424] historic throne, moved him as the sight of the French Queen at Versailles had moved the majestic political imagination of Burke a century before. About the throne he sometimes used language that represented almost at its highest the value set upon it in text-books of the constitution, and in the current conventions of ceremonial speech.[274] Although what he called the iron necessities of actual business always threw these conventions into the background when the time came, yet his inmost feeling about the crown and the person of its wearer was as sincere as it was fervid. In business, it is true, he never yielded, yet even in his most anxious and pressing hours he spared neither time nor toil in endeavours to show the Queen why he could not yield. "Though decisions," he said, "must ultimately conform to the sense of those who are to be responsible for them, yet their business is to inform and persuade the sovereign, not to overrule him." One writer describes the Queen as "superb in standing sentry over the business of the empire." This is obsequious phrase-making. But I will borrow the figure in saying what is more real, that Mr. Gladstone from beginning to end stood sentry over the interests, whether profound and enduring or trivial and fleeting, of the ancient monarchy of this kingdom. None who heard it will ever forget the moving and energetic passage in which when he was the doughty veteran of eighty years, speaking against his own followers on some question of a royal annuity, he moved the whole House to its depths by the passionate declaration, "I am not ashamed to say that in my old age I rejoice in any opportunity that enables me to testify that, whatever may be thought of my opinions, whatever may be thought of my proposals in general politics, I do not forget the service that I have borne to the illustrious representative of the British monarchy."[275]

[274] *Gleanings*, i. pp. 232-3.
[275] July 25, 1889.

The Queen

My readers have had opportunity enough of judging Mr. Gladstone's estimate of the Queen's shrewdness, simplicity, high manners. Above all, he constantly said how warmly he recognised her sincerity, frankness, straight-forwardness, and love of truth.

[425]

On the other side, his own eager mobility, versatility, and wide elastic range was not likely to be to the taste of a personage with a singular fixity of nature. Then the Queen was by the necessity of her station a politician, as was Elizabeth or George III., although oddly enough she had a bitter dislike of what she thought the madness of "women's rights." As politician, she often took views that were not shared either by the constituencies or by the ministers whom the constituencies imposed upon her. The Queen in truth excellently represented and incorporated in her proper person one whole set of those qualities in our national character, on which the power of her realm had been built up. Mr. Gladstone stood for a different and in some aspects and on some occasions almost an antagonistic set of national qualities. The Queen, according to those who knew her well,[276] dreaded what in the eighteenth century they called enthusiasm: she dreaded or disdained it in religion, and in politics almost more. Yet her Englishmen are full of capacity for enthusiasm, and the Scots for whom she had such cordial affection have enthusiasm in measure fuller still. Unhappily, in the case of Ireland that occupied so much of Mr. Gladstone's life, her sympathies with his long and vigorous endeavour notoriously stood at zero. The Queen's loyalty to the constitution and to ministers in office was unquestioned, but she was not well placed, nor was she perhaps by character well fitted, to gauge the fluctuating movements of an age of change, as it was the duty of her statesmen to gauge and plumb them. If a cabinet with the confidence of the House of Commons decides upon a policy, it must obviously be a premier's duty to persist, and in that duty Mr. Gladstone was resolute. If

[276] See the remarkable article in the *Quarterly Review*, April, 1901, p. 320.

he had been otherwise, he knew that he would be falling short in loyalty to the country, and to its chief magistrate most of all.

In 1871 a wave of critical feeling began to run upon the throne. An influential journalist of that day, singularly free from any tincture of republican sentiment, thus describes it. "A few weeks ago," he says, "a deep and universal feeling of discontent at the Queen's seclusion (or rather at its consequences) found voice in the journals of the country. No public print of any [426] importance failed to take part in the chorus; which was equally remarkable for its suddenness, fulness, and harmony. Indeed, the suddenness of the cry was surprising—till we remembered that what was then said had lain unexpressed in the minds of the whole community for years, with annual increment; and that when popular feeling gathers in that way, it is generally relieved at last by something of the nature of an explosion." He then goes on to speak of "republicanism of a very revolutionary form flooding in," and says that such a complexion of affairs could be viewed with pleasure by no friend of the monarchy.[277] The details of this movement are no longer of much interest, and they only concern us here because they gave Mr. Gladstone real anxiety. For him it was one of the special duties of a prime minister, as distinguished from his cabinet, to watch and guard relations between the crown and the country. Whether in office or in opposition, he lost no opportunity of standing forth between the throne and even a faint shadow of popular or parliamentary discontent. He had done it in the case of Prince Albert,[278] and he did it now. When the end came after nearly thirty years from our present date, the Queen wrote: "I shall ever gratefully remember his devotion and zeal in all that concerned my personal welfare and that of my family." In 1871 his zeal went beyond the Queen's personal welfare, and his solicitude for the institution represented by the Queen undoubtedly took a form of deferential

[277] *Pall Mall Gazette*, Sept. 29, 1871.
[278] See Appendix.

exhortation—an exhortation that she should return to a fuller discharge of public duty, which the Queen found irksome. The Queen was as fond of Balmoral as Mr. Gladstone was fond of Hawarden. The contrast between the formality of Windsor and the atmosphere of simple attachment and social affection that surrounded her in Scotland, was as delightful to her as the air and the scenery. A royal progress through applauding multitudes in great cities made her ill. Hence, when Mr. Gladstone pressed her to defer a northern journey, or to open parliament, or to open a bridge, or otherwise emerge from seclusion, the Queen,
[427] though well aware that he had not, and could not, have any motive save her own and the public interest, undoubtedly felt that her energetic minister was attempting to overwork her. This feeling, as most of us know, breeds resistance, and even in time resentment. To say, however, that "in his eagerness Mr. Gladstone pressed her to do what she knew to be not her work so much as his," is misleading and a little ludicrous.[279] Mr. Gladstone had persuaded himself that in the humour of the day persistence in seclusion did harm; it was his duty to give advice accordingly, and this duty he could not consent to shirk.

In other ways his very awe of the institution made him set an exacting standard for the individual who represented it. The letters contain a hundred instances. One may suffice. On the occasion of the Irish Church bill of 1869, the prime minister sent to the Queen a print of its clauses, and along with this draft a letter, covering over a dozen closely-written quarto pages, in explanation. Himself intensely absorbed and his whole soul possessed by the vital importance of what he was doing, he could not conceive that the sovereign, nursing a decided dislike of his policy, should not eagerly desire to get to the bottom of the provisions for carrying the policy out. The Queen read the letter, and reread it, and then in despair desired a gentleman practised

[279] *Quarterly Review* for April, 1901, p. 305.

in dealing with parliamentary bills, happening at that time to be at Osborne, to supply her with a summary.[280] The gaunt virtues of a *précis*—a meagre thing where qualifying sentences drop off, parentheses are cut out, adverbs hardly count, the noun stands denuded of its sheltering adjective—were never congenial to Mr. Gladstone's copious exactitude in hypothesis, conditions, and contingencies. Neither of these two illustrious personages was without humour, and it seems at once a wonder and a pity that the monarch did less than justice to this laborious and almost military sense of discipline and duty in the minister; while the minister failed in genial allowance for the moderation of a royal lady's appetite for bread and honey from the draftsman's kitchen. If failing there were, it was natural to a man of earnest and [428] concentrated mind. Be all this as it may, he became more and more conscious that the correspondence and occurrences of 1871-2 had introduced a reserve that was new. Perhaps it recalled to him the distance and formality that marked the relations between King George III. and the proudest, the most intrepid, and the greatest of his prime ministers.

III

Once in a conversation with Mr. Gladstone I asked him whether he remembered Peel's phrase to Cobden about the odious power that patronage confers. He replied, “I never felt that, when I was prime minister. It came in the day's work like the rest. I don't recall that I ever felt plagued by improper applications. Peel was perhaps a little over fond of talking of the sacrifices of office. A man has no business to lay himself out for being prime minister, or to place himself in the way of it, unless he is prepared to take all the incidents of the post whether disagreeable or not. I've no

[280] This circumstance is accurately told, among other places, in Mr. Sidney Lee's *Queen Victoria.*

sympathy with talk of that kind." He was far from the mind of Carteret. "What is it to me," cried that glittering minister, "who is a judge or who is a bishop? It is my business to make kings and emperors, and to maintain the balance of Europe."

Patronage

To the bestowal of honours he brought the same diligent care as to branches of public business that to men of Peel's type seemed worthier of care. He treated honours on fixed considerations. Especially in the altitudes of the peerage, he tried hard to find solid political ground to go upon. He noted the remarkable fact that though a very large majority of the peerages granted since 1835 had been made on the advice of liberal ministers, yet such is the influence of wealth and privileged station that the liberal minority in the Lords had decreased. In 1869 the conservative majority was between sixty and seventy, without counting bishops or nominal liberals. Yet household suffrage at this very time had immensely increased the moral strength of the House of Commons. The crisis upon the Irish church had been borne with impatience, and Mr. Gladstone discerned

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a combustible temper at the action of the Lords that might easily have burst into flame. Still he saw no signal plan for improving the upper House. The appointment of life peers might be desirable, he said, but it was not easy to arrange, nor could its effect be great. The means of action therefore for bringing the Lords into more conformity or better proportions to the Commons, were very moderate. But that made it all the more important that they should not be overlooked. The governing idea in respect of both classes of hereditary honours was in his judgment the maintenance of a due relation between the members in those elevated ranks, and the number of persons offering the proper conditions for promotion of this kind, in a country so rapidly growing in wealth and population.

With characteristic love of making knowledge quantitative—one definition, I rather think, of science—Mr. Gladstone caused returns to be prepared for him, which showed

that in 1840 there were about seventeen peers for every million of the population, while in 1869 this number had fallen to fourteen (in 1880 it was about the same). Lord Palmerston in his second government appears to have recommended sixteen peerages, and Lord Derby in little more than a quarter of the time recommended fourteen. Mr. Gladstone himself, during his first administration, excluding royal, non-political and *ex-officio* peerages, added thirty members to the House of Lords, besides making five promotions. In the same period twelve peerages became extinct. Lord Beaconsfield (counting the same exclusions) created between 1874 and 1880 twenty-six new peers, and made nine promotions.[281]

In two directions Mr. Gladstone made an honourable innovation. He recommended a member of the Jewish faith for a peerage, and in the first list of his submissions to the Queen two Roman catholics were included. No catholic peer [430] had been created within living memory. One of these two was Lord Acton, afterwards so intimate a friend, whose character, he told the Queen, "is of the first order, and he is one of the most learned and accomplished, though one of the most modest and unassuming, men of the day." If religious profession was not in his eyes relevant in making peers, neither was the negation of profession, for at the same time he proposed a peerage to Grote. "I deeply and gratefully appreciate," he wrote to Mr. Gladstone, "the sentiments you are pleased to express respecting my character and services. These I shall treasure up never to be forgotten, coming as they do from a minister who has entered on the work of reform with a sincerity and energy never hitherto

[281] During the twelve years in which he held the office of prime minister, he was answerable for sixty-seven new peerages (twenty-two of these now extinct), and on his recommendation fourteen Scotch and Irish peers were called to the House of Lords. In addition, he was responsible for seven promotions of peers to higher rank. During the same period ninety-seven baronetcies were created.—See Sir Edward Hamilton, *Mr. Gladstone, a Monograph*, p. 97.

paralleled. Such recognition is the true and sufficient recompense for all useful labours of mine."[282]

At the same time the prime minister thought that some honour ought to be tendered to Mr. Mill, but Lord Granville, whom he consulted, thought otherwise, "merely on the ground that honours should go as much as possible with general acceptance." Lord Granville was a man of thoroughly liberal and even generous mind; still not particularly qualified to be a good judge either of the merits of a man like Mill, or of his "acceptance" in circles well worth considering.

IV

It was to be expected that preferments in the church should get a special share of Mr. Gladstone's laborious attention, and so they did. As member for Oxford he had been so much importuned in Lord Palmerston's time, that he wrote in a moment of unusual impatience (1863), "I think these church preferments will be the death of me." Palmerston favoured the evangelicals, and Mr. Gladstone was mortified that Church did not succeed Stanley in the chair of ecclesiastical history at Oxford, and that Wilberforce was not elevated to the throne of York in 1862.

Ecclesiastical Appointments

During his first administration he recommended for no fewer than twelve bishoprics and eight deaneries. He was not unprepared to find, as he put it to Acland, that [431] "saints, theologians, preachers, pastors, scholars, philosophers, gentlemen, men of business,—these are not to be had every day, least of all are they to be commonly found in combination. But these are the materials which ought to be sought out, and put forward in the church of England, if she is to stand the trials, and do her work."

[282] *Life of Grote*, pp. 306-10.

According to his fashion, he wrote down upon a fragmentary piece of paper what qualifications he ought to look for in a bishop, and this is the list:—

> Piety. Learning (sacred). Eloquence. Administrative power. Faithful allegiance to the Church and to the church of England. Activity. Tact and courtesy in dealings with men: knowledge of the world. Accomplishments and literature. An equitable spirit. Faculty of working with his brother bishops. Some legal habit of mind. Circumspection. Courage. Maturity of age and character. Corporal vigour. Liberal sentiments on public affairs. A representative character with reference to shades of opinion fairly allowable in the Church.

One of his earliest preferments, that of Dr. Temple to the bishopric of Exeter, created lively excitement. He had been a contributor to *Essays and Reviews*:—

> On some of the papers contained in the volume, Mr. Gladstone wrote to the Bishop of Lichfield, I look with a strong aversion. But Dr. Temple's responsibility prior to the publication was confined to his own essay. The question whether he ought to have disclaimed or denounced any part of the volume afterwards is a difficult one, and if it was a duty, it was a duty in regard to which a generous man might well go wrong. As regards his own essay, I read it at the time of publication, and thought it of little value, but did not perceive that it was mischievous.

In speaking of him to Acland in 1865, Mr. Gladstone had let fall a truly remarkable saying, going deep down to the roots of many things:—

> You need not assure me of Dr. Temple's Christian character. I have read his sermons, and if I had doubted—but I never did—they would have removed the doubt. Indeed I think it a most formidable responsibility, at the least, in these times to

> doubt any man's character on account of his opinions. The limit of possible variation between character and opinion, ay, between character and belief, is widening, and will widen. [432]

How could the leading mark of progress made in Mr. Gladstone's age be more truly hit, how defined with more pith and pregnancy? How could the illumination of his own vigorous mind in forty years of life and thought be better demonstrated? It would even be no bad thing if those who are furthest removed from Mr. Gladstone's opinions either in religion or politics could lay this far-reaching dictum of his to heart. By many men in all schools his lesson is sorely needed. Shrill was the clamour. Dr. Pusey, in Mr. Gladstone's own phrase, was “rabid.” He justified his anger by reputed facts, which proved to be no facts at all, but the anger did not die with the fable. Even Phillimore was disquieted. “It has cut very deep indeed,” he said. Mr. Gladstone, confident of his ground, was not dismayed. “The movement against Dr. Temple is like a peculiar cheer we sometimes hear in the House of Commons, vehement but thin.”

No appointment proved so popular and successful as that of Bishop Fraser to Manchester. He was the first person named by Mr. Gladstone for the episcopate without some degree of personal knowledge. A remarkable concurrence of testimony established the great breadth of his sympathies, a trait much in his favour for the particular see of Manchester. Yet strange to say when by and by Stanley died, Mr. Gladstone was a party to trying to remove Fraser from the north to Westminster.

When in 1883 Mr. Gladstone was challenged as confining his recommendations to the high church side, he defended himself to sufficient purpose. He had a list made out of appointments to bishoprics, deaneries, and the most important parishes:—

> There have been thirty important appointments. Out of them I have recommended eleven who would probably be called high churchmen (not one of them, so far as I know, unsympathetic

towards other portions of the clergy) and nineteen who are not. On further examination it will appear that the high churchmen whom I take to be a decided majority of the clergy as well as a decided minority of my recommendations, have gone as a rule to the places of hard work and little pay. For example, they have got five out of ten *parochial* recommendations; but, out of sixteen appointments to deaneries and canonries, they have received four, and those, with the exception of Mr. Furse, the worst. I could supply you with the lists in detail. [433]

One admission I must make; the evidently broad churchmen are too large a proportion of the non-high, and the low churchmen rather too small, a disproportion which I should hope to remove, but undoubtedly the low churchman of the present day has a poorer share than half a century ago of the working energy of the church.

All these terms, High, Low, and Broad, are rather repugnant to me, but I use them as a currency of tokens with which it is difficult to dispense.

Turning from this point of view to the recognition of learning and genius, in the course of his first administration we find that he made Church dean of St. Paul's, and Scott of the Greek lexicon dean of Rochester, Liddon and Lightfoot canons of St. Paul's, Kingsley first canon of Chester, and then of Westminster, Vaughan master of the Temple.

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Chapter XI. Catholic Country And Protestant Parliament. (1873)

> It is all very well to establish united education, but if the persons to be educated decline to unite, your efforts will be thrown away. The question then occurs whether it is best to establish a system, rejected by those concerned, in the hope that it will gradually work its way into acceptance in spite of the intolerance of priests, or to endow the separate denominational bodies on the ground that even such education is better than none, or, finally, to do nothing. The question is one of statesmanship enlightened by a knowledge of facts, and of the sentiments of the population.—LESLIE STEPHEN.

I

Descending from her alien throne, the Irish church had now taken her place among the most prosperous of free communions. To Irish cultivators a definite interest of possession had been indirectly confirmed in the land to which most of its value had been given by their own toil. A third branch of the upas tree of poisonous ascendency described by Mr. Gladstone during the election of 1868, still awaited his axe. The fitness of an absentee parliament to govern Ireland was again to be tested. This time the problem was hardest of all, for it involved direct concession by nations inveterately protestant, to a catholic hierarchy having at its head an ultramontane cardinal of uncompromising opinions and inexorable will.

Everybody knew that the state of university education in Ireland stood in the front rank of unsettled questions. Ever since the establishment of three provincial colleges by Peel's government in 1845, the flame of the controversy had been alight. Even on the very night when Graham introduced the

bill creating them, no less staunch a tory and protestant than Sir Robert Inglis had jumped up and denounced “a gigantic scheme [435] of godless education.” The catholics loudly echoed this protestant phrase. The three colleges were speedily condemned by the pope as fatal to faith and morals, and were formally denounced by the synod of Thurles in 1850. The fulminations of the church did not extinguish these modest centres of light and knowledge, but they cast a creeping blight upon them. In 1865 a demand was openly made in parliament for the incorporation by charter of a specifically catholic university. Mr. Gladstone, along with Sir George Grey, then admitted the reality of a grievance, namely, the absence in Ireland of institutions of which the catholics of the country were able to avail themselves. Declining, for good reasons or bad, to use opportunities of college education by the side of protestants, and not warmed by the atmosphere and symbols of their own church and faith, catholics contended that they could not be said to enjoy equal advantages with their fellow-citizens of other creeds. They repudiated a system of education repugnant to their religious convictions, and in the persistent efforts to force 'godless education' on their country, they professed to recognise another phase of persecution for conscience' sake.

In 1866, Lord Russell's government tried its hand with a device known as the supplemental charter. It opened a way to a degree without passing through the godless colleges. This was set aside by an injunction from the courts, and it would not have touched the real matter of complaint, even if the courts had let it stand. Next year the tories burnt their fingers, though Mr. Disraeli told parliament that he saw no scars. For a time, he believed that an honourable and satisfactory settlement was possible, and negotiations went on with the hierarchy. The prelates did not urge endowment, Mr. Disraeli afterwards said, but “they mentioned it.” The country shrank back from concurrent endowment, though, as Mr. Disraeli truly said, it was the policy

of Pitt, of Grey, of Russell, of Peel, and of Palmerston. Ever since 1794, catholic students had been allowed to graduate at Trinity College, and ever since the disestablishment of the Irish church in 1869, Trinity had asked parliament for power to admit
[436] catholics to her fellowships and emoluments. This, however, did not go to the root, whether we regard it as sound or unsound, of the catholic grievance, which was in fact their lack of an endowed institution as distinctively catholic in all respects as Trinity was protestant.

Such was the case with which Mr. Gladstone was called upon to grapple, and a delicate if not even a desperate case it was. The prelates knew what they wished, though they lay in shadow. What they wanted a protestant parliament, with its grip upon the purse, was determined that they should not have. The same conclusion as came to many liberals by prejudice, was reached by the academic school on principle. On principle they held denominational endowment of education to be retrograde and obscurantist. Then there was the discouraging consideration of which Lord Halifax reminded Mr. Gladstone. "You say with truth," he observed when the situation had developed, "that the liberal party are behaving very ill, and so they are. But liberal majorities when large are apt to run riot. No men could have stronger claims on the allegiance of their party than Lord Grey and Lord Althorp after carrying the Reform bill. Nevertheless, the large majority after the election of 1832-3 was continually putting the government into difficulty." So it befell now, and now as then the difficulty was Irish.

II

At Work On The Bill

Well knowing the hard work before him, Mr. Gladstone applied himself with his usual indomitable energy to the task. "We go to Oxford to-morrow," he writes to Lord Granville (Nov. 12), "to visit Edward Talbot and his wife; forward to London on

Thursday, when I dine with the Templars. My idea of work is that the first solid and heavy bit should be the Irish university—some of this may require to be done in cabinet. When we have got that into shape, I should be for taking to the yet stiffer work of local taxation—most of the cabinet take a personal interest in this. I think it will require immeasurable talking over, which might be done chiefly in an open informal cabinet, before any binding resolutions are taken. But I propose to let Palmer have [437] his say (general) about law reform on Friday." At Oxford he saw Dr. Pusey, "who behaved with all his old kindness, and seemed to have forgotten the Temple[283] business, or rather as if it had never been." On November 20, he records, "Cabinet 2-3/4-6-½. Some heads of a measure on Irish university education." No communications were opened with the Irish bishops beforehand, probably from a surmise that they would be bound to ask more than they could obtain.

> *Jan. 16, 1873, Hawarden.*—Dr. Ingram [the distinguished fellow of Trinity College] came in afternoon, and I was able to spend several hours with him on the university question. 17.—Many hours with Dr. Ingram on the bill and scheme; in truth, almost from breakfast to dinner. Conversation with him in evening on Homer and ancient questions. Read *Old Mortality*. 20.—Drew an abstract of historical facts respecting Dublin university and college. 21.—Off at 11. At 11 C.H.T. at 6 P.M. 25.—Mr. Thring 3-5-½ on Irish bill. Attended Lord Lytton's funeral in the Abbey. The church lighted in a frost-fog was sublime. 31.—Cabinet spent many hours in settling Irish university bill. *Feb.* 2.—Paid a mournful visit to the death-bedside of my old friend Milnes Gaskell.... Death has been very busy around me. 8.—Cabinet 2-½-6-½. Passed the Irish university bill. 13.—Worked until three upon my materials. Then drove and walked. H. of C. 4-1/4-8-½. I

[283] The promotion of Dr. Temple to the bench.

spoke three hours in introducing the Irish university bill with much detailed explanation. (*Diary.*)

Phillimore has an interesting note or two on his friend at this critical time:—

Feb. 2.—Gladstone looking well, but much aged. Spoke of anxiety to retire when he could do so with honour, said he had *forced* himself into the study of the whole question relating to Trinity College, Dublin, and that he was sure that his enemies did not understand the very curious facts relative to the university. It seemed as if he meant to frame the government measure on a historical and antiquarian basis. This will not satisfy the country if the practical result is to place more power
[438] in the hands of the papists. 10.—Gladstone looked very worn and anxious. Spoke about the relief he should experience after Thursday, the weight of the matter which he had to deal with, and the general misapprehension which prevailed; thought the tide was turning in their favour. 11.—Gladstone in high spirits, confident of success on Thursday. 14.—Dined at Gladstone's. Our host in high spirits at his achievement of yesterday.

The leading provisions of the measure, though found by the able and expert draftsman unusually hard to frame, may be very shortly stated, for the question by the way is still in full blast. A new university of Dublin was to rise, a teaching as well as an examining body, governed by a council who were to appoint officers and regulate all matters and things affecting the university. The constitution of this governing council was elaborately devised, and it did not make clerical predominance ultimately impossible. The affiliation of colleges, not excluding purely denominational institutions, was in their hands. There were to be no religious tests for either teachers or taught, and religious profession was to be no bar to honours and emoluments. Money was provided by Trinity College, the consolidated fund,

and the church surplus, to the tune of £50,000 a year. The principle was the old formula of mixed or united education, in which protestants and catholics might side by side participate.

Well Received On Introduction

What many found intolerably obnoxious were two "gagging clauses." By one of these a teacher or other person of authority might be suspended or deprived, who should in speaking or writing be held to have wilfully given offence to the religious convictions of any member. The second and graver of them was the prohibition of any university teacher in theology, modern history, or moral and mental philosophy. The separate affiliated colleges might make whatever arrangements they pleased for these subjects, but the new university would not teach them directly and authoritatively. This was undoubtedly a singular limitation for a university that had sent forth Berkeley and Burke; nor was there ever a moment when in spite of the specialisation of research, the deepest questions in the domain of thought and [439] belief more inevitably thrust themselves forward within common and indivisible precincts.

III

On Feb. 14, Mr. Gladstone reported to the Queen:—

> The general impression last night appeared to be that the friends of Trinity College were relieved; that the liberal party and the nonconformists were well satisfied with the conformity between the proposed measure and the accepted principles of university organisation in England; but that the Roman catholics would think themselves hardly or at least not generously used. All that Mr. Gladstone has heard this morning through private channels, as well as the general tone of the press, tends to corroborate the favourable parts of what he gathered last night, and to give hope that reasonable and moderate Roman catholics may see that their real grievances

> will be removed; generally also to support the expectation that the bill is not likely to pass.

Delane of the *Times* said to Manning when they were leaving the House of Commons, "This is a bill made to pass." Manning himself heartily acquiesced. Even the bitterest of Mr. Gladstone's critics below the gangway on his own side agreed, that if a division could have been taken while the House was still under the influence of the three hours' speech, the bill would have been almost unanimously carried.[284] "It threw the House into a mesmeric trance," said the seconder of a hostile motion. Effects like these, not purple passages, not epigrams nor aphorisms, are the test of oratory. Mr. Bruce wrote home (Feb. 15): "Alas! I fear all prospect of ministerial defeat is over. The University bill is so well received that people say there will not be even a division on the second reading. I see no other rock ahead, but sometimes they project their snouts unexpectedly, and cause shipwreck."

Soon did the projecting rocks appear out of the smooth water.
[440] Lord Spencer had an interview with Cardinal Cullen at Dublin Castle (Feb. 25), and found him though in very good humour and full of gratitude for fair intentions, yet extremely hostile to the bill. It was in flat opposition, he said, to what the Roman catholics had been working for in Ireland for years; it continued the Queen's Colleges, and set up another Queen's College in the shape of Trinity College with a large endowment; it perpetuated the mixed system of education, to which he had always been opposed, and no endowment nor assistance was given to the catholic university; the council might appoint professors to teach English literature, geology, or zoology who would be dangerous men in catholic eyes. Lord Spencer gathered that the cardinal would be satisfied with a sum down to redress inequality or a grant for buildings.

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[284] Stephen's *Life of Fawcett*, p. 282.

Archbishop Manning wrote to Cardinal Cullen the day after the bill was produced, “strongly urging them to accept it.” It seemed to him to rest on a base so broad that he could not tell how either the opposition or the radical doctrinaires could attack it without adopting “the German tyranny.” He admitted that he was more easily satisfied than if he were in Ireland, but he thought the measure framed with skill and success. After a fortnight the archbishop told Mr. Gladstone, that he still saw reason to believe that the Irish hierarchy would not refuse the bill. On March 3rd, he says he has done his utmost to conciliate confidence in it. By the 7th he knew that his efforts had failed, but he urges Mr. Gladstone not to take the episcopal opposition too much to heart. “Non-endowment, mixed education, and godless colleges, are three bitter things to them.” “This,” he wrote to Mr. Gladstone, when all was over (March 12) “is not your fault, nor the bill's fault, but the fault of England and Scotland and three anti-catholic centuries.”

Hostility Of Irish Bishops

The debate began on March 3rd, and extended to four sittings. The humour of the House was described by Mr. Gladstone as “fitful and fluctuating.” Speeches “void of real argument or point, yet aroused the mere prejudices of a section of the liberal party against popery and did much to place the bill in danger.” Then that cause of apprehension disappeared, and a [441] new change passed over the shifting sky, for the intentions of Irish members were reported to be dubious. There was not a little heat and passion, mainly from below the ministerial gangway. The gagging clauses jarred horribly, though they were trenchantly defended by Mr. Lowe, the very man to whose line of knowledge and intellectual freedom they seemed likely to be most repugnant. It soon appeared that neither protestant nor catholic set any value on these securities for conscience, and the general assembly of the presbyterians declared war upon the whole scheme. The cabinet—“most harmonious at this critical time,”—still held firmly that the bill was well constructed, so

that if it once reached committee it would not be easy to inflict mortal wounds. On March 8th the prime minister reported to the Queen:—

> Strange to say, it is the opposition of the Roman catholic bishops that brings about the present difficulty; and this although they have not declared an opposition to the bill outright, but have wound up their list of objections with a resolution to present petitions praying for its amendment. Still their attitude of what may be called growling hostility has had these important results. Firstly, it has deadened that general willingness of the liberal party, which the measure itself had created, to look favourably on a plan such as they might hope would obtain acquiescence, and bring about contentment. Secondly, the great majority of the bishops are even more hostile than the resolutions, which were apparently somewhat softened as the price of unanimity; and all *these* bishops, working upon liberal Irish members through their political interest in their seats, have proceeded so far that from twenty to twenty-five may go against the bill, and as many may stay away. When to these are added the small knot of discontented liberals and mere fanatics which so large a party commonly contains, the government majority, now taken at only 85, disappears....
>
> It is not in the power or the will of your Majesty's advisers to purchase Irish support by subserviency to the Roman bishops. Their purpose has been to offer justice to all, and their hope has been that what was just would be seen to be
[442] advantageous. As far as the Roman catholics of Ireland are concerned, the cabinet conceive that they are now at perfect liberty to throw up the bill. But they are also of opinion that its abandonment would so impair or destroy their moral power, as to render it impossible for them to accept the defeat. There are whispers of a desire in the liberal party, should the catastrophe arrive, to meet it by a vote of confidence, which would probably be carried by a still larger majority. But

the cabinet look with extreme disfavour upon this method of proceeding, which would offer them the verbal promise of support just when its substance had been denied.

He then proceeds to more purely personal aspects and contingencies:—

What lies beyond it would be premature to describe as having been regularly treated or even opened to-day. Mr. Gladstone considers himself far more tied to the bill and the subject than his colleagues; and if they upon a defeat were disposed to carry on the government without him, he would with your Majesty's sanction take effectual means to provide at least against his being an impediment in the way of an arrangement eligible in so many points of view. But his colleagues appear at present indisposed to adopt this method of solution. There would then remain for them the question whether they should humbly tender their resignations to your Majesty, or whether they should advise a dissolution of the parliament, which was elected under other auspices. This would be a matter of the utmost gravity for consideration at the proper time. Mr. Gladstone as at present advised has no foregone conclusion in favour of either alternative, and would act with his colleagues as between them. But he does not intend to go into opposition, and the dissolution of this government, brought about through languor and through extensive or important defections in the liberal party which has made him its leader, would be the close of his political life. He has now for more than forty years striven to serve the crown and country to the best of his power, and he is willing, though with overtaxed faculties and diminishing strength, to continue the effort longer, if he sees that the continuance can be conducive to the objects which he [443] has heretofore had at heart; but the contingency to which he has last referred, would be for him the proof that confidence was gone, that usefulness was at an end, and that he might

> and ought to claim the freedom which best befits the close of life.

The next day, in reporting that the estimates of the coming division were far from improving, Mr. Gladstone returned in a few words to the personal point:—

> Mr. Gladstone is very grateful for your Majesty's caution against being swayed by private feelings, and he will endeavour to be on his guard against them. He has, however, always looked to the completion of that commission, so to call it, which events in a measure threw into his hands five years ago, as the natural close of the main work of the present government; and many circumstances have combined to impress him with the hope that thus an honourable path would be opened for his retirement. He ought, perhaps, to add that he has the strongest opinion, upon political grounds and grounds other than political, against spending old age under the strain of that perpetual contention which is inseparable from his present position; and this opinion could only be neutralised by his perceiving a special call to remain: that is to say, some course of public service to be done by him better than if it were in other hands. Such a prospect he neither sees nor anticipates. But it is premature to trouble your Majesty on this minor subject.

On the 9th Cardinal Cullen blazed forth in a pastoral that was read in all the churches. He described the bill as richly endowing non-catholic and godless colleges, and without giving one farthing to catholics, inviting them to compete in their poverty, produced by penal laws and confiscations, with those left in possession of enormous wealth. The new university scheme only increased the number of Queen's Colleges, so often and so solemnly condemned by the catholic church and by all Ireland, and gave a new impulse to that sort of teaching that separates education from religion and its holy influences, and

banishes God, the author of all good, from our schools. The prelate's pastoral had a decisive effect in regions far removed from the ambit of his crosier. The tory leader could not resist [444] a temptation thus offered by the attitude of the Irish cardinal, and the measure that had been much reviled as a dark concordat between Mr. Gladstone and the pope, was now rejected by a concordat between the pope's men and Mr. Disraeli.

The discussion was on a high level in Mr. Gladstone's judgment. Lyon Playfair criticised details with some severity and much ability, but intended to vote for the bill. Miall, the nonconformist leader, supported the second reading, but required alterations that were admissible enough. On March 10 Mr. Harcourt, who was not yet an old member, "opened the discussion by a speech in advance of any he has yet delivered as to effect upon the House. Severe in criticism on detail, he was favourable to the substance of the bill." One significant incident of the debate was a declaration by Bentinck, a conservative ultra, that he would vote against the bill in reliance on the declaration of Mr. Hardy, which he understood to be a pledge for himself and others near him, not to take office during the existence of the present parliament. "Mr. Hardy remained silent during this appeal, which was several times repeated." Then the end came (March 11-12):—

> Mr. Disraeli rose at half-past ten, and spoke amidst rapt attention till midnight. Mr. Gladstone followed in a speech of two hours, and at two o'clock the division was called. During the whole evening the greatest uncertainty had prevailed; for himself Mr. Gladstone leaned to expecting an unfavourable result. The numbers were, Ayes (for the government), 284; Noes, 287; majority against the government, 3. It is said that 45 adherents of the government, or thereabouts, voted against them. It was the Irish vote that grew continually worse.[285]

[285] The adverse majority was made up of 209 English, 68 Irish, and 10 Scotch

Ministers Defeated

[445] Of the speech in which the debate was wound up Forster says in his diary: "Gladstone, with the House dead against him and his bill, made a wonderful speech—easy, almost playful, with passages of great power and eloquence, but with a graceful play, which enabled him to plant deep his daggers of satire in Horsman and Co."[286] Speaker Brand calls it "a magnificent speech, generous, high-minded, and without a taint of bitterness, although he was sorely tried, especially by false friends." He vindicated the obnoxious clauses, but did not wish to adhere to them if opinion from all quarters were adverse, and he admitted that it was the opposition of members from Ireland that principally acted on his hearers. His speech contained a remarkable passage, pronouncing definitely against denominational endowment of university education.

[446]

members. The minority contained 222 English, 47 Scotch, and 15 Irish members. The absentees numbered 75, of whom 53 were English, 3 Scotch, and 19 Irish. There voted with the opposition 43 liberals—eight English and Scotch, including Mr. Bouverie, Mr. Fawcett, Mr. Horsman, Sir Robert Peel, and 35 Irish, of whom 25 were catholics and 10 protestants.

[286] *Life of W. E. Forster*, i. p. 550.

Chapter XII. The Crisis. (1873)

.. alla fortuna, come vuol, son presto..
Pero giri fortuna la sua rota,
Come le piace, e il villan la sua marra.
—*Inferno*, xv. 93.

For fortune as she wills I am ready.. so
let her turn her wheel as she may please,
and the churl his spade.

I

A week of lively and eventful interests followed,—not only interesting in the life of Mr. Gladstone, but raising points with important constitutional bearings, and showing a match between two unsurpassed masters of political sword-play. The story was told generally and partially in parliament, but the reader who is curious about either the episode itself, or Mr. Gladstone's modes of mind and action, will find it worth a little trouble to follow details with some closeness.

March 11.—H. of C. Spoke 12-2, and voted in a division of 284-287—which was believed to cause more surprise to the opposite side than it did to me. At 2.45 A.M. I apprised the Queen of our defeat.

Thursday, March 12.—Saw the Queen at 12.15. Failed to find Granville. Cabinet 1-2-3/4. We discussed the matter with a general tendency to resignation rather than dissolving. Confab. on my position with Granville and Glyn, then joined by Bright. To the Queen again at six to keep her informed. Large dinner party for the Duke of Edinburgh, and an evening party afterwards, to hear Joachim.

Friday, March 13.—After seeing Mr. Glyn and Lord F. Cavendish, I went at 10.40 to see Dr. Clark. He completed his examination, and gave me his careful judgment. I went
[447] to Lord Granville, sketched out to him and Glyn my views, and went to the cabinet at 12.15. Stated the case between the two alternatives of resignation and dissolution as far as regarded myself. On the side of resignation it would not be necessary to make any final announcement [of his retirement from the leadership]. I am strongly advised a temporary rest. On the other hand, if we now dissolve, I anticipate that *afterwards* before any long time difficulties will arise, and my mission will be terminated. So that the alternatives are not so unequally weighed. The cabinet without any marked difference, or at least without any positive assertion to the contrary, determined on tendering their resignations.[287] After cabinet saw Hartington and others respecting honours. At 2.45 saw the Queen and resigned. The Queen informed me that she would send for Mr. Disraeli; suggested for consideration whether I would include the mention of this fact in my announcement to parliament, and added as I was leaving the room, without looking (apparently) for an answer, that she would inform me of what might take place. At 3.45 saw Granville respecting the announcements. Made announcement in House of Commons at 4.30. More business at Downing Street, and home at six.

At a quarter to seven, or a little later, Colonel Ponsonby called with a communication from her Majesty. "Any news?" I said. "A great deal," he replied; and informed me as follows. Mr. Disraeli had been with the Queen; did not see the means of carrying on the government by the agency of

[287] *March 13.*—Cabinet again at twelve. Decided to resign ... Gladstone made quite a touching little speech. He began playfully. This was the last of some 150 cabinets or so, and he wished to say to his colleagues with what "profound gratitude"—and here he completely broke down, and he could say nothing, except that he could not enter on the details. ... Tears came to my eyes, and we were all touched.—*Life of W. E. Forster*, i. pp. 550, 551.

his party under present circumstances; did not ask for the dissolution of parliament (this was understood to mean did not offer to become minister on condition of being permitted to dissolve); did not say that his renunciation of the task was final; recommended that the Queen should call for my advice. Upon this the Queen sent Colonel Ponsonby, and he said, "She considers this as sending for you anew." I replied that I did not regard the Queen's reference of this intelligence to me, as her calling upon me anew to undertake the work of government; that none of my obligations to the sovereign were cancelled [448] or impaired by the resignation tendered and accepted; that I was still the minister for the purpose of rendering any service she might be pleased to call for in the matter on which she is engaged, exactly as before, until she has a new minister, when my official obligations will come to an end. That I felt there was great inconvenience and danger of misapprehension out of doors in proceeding over-rapidly with a matter of such gravity, and that each step in it required to be well measured and ascertained before proceeding to consider of the next following step. That I had great difficulty in gathering any precise idea of Mr. Disraeli's account of what he could not do, and what he either could or did not say that he could not. That as this account was to present to me the state of facts on which I was commanded to advise, it was quite necessary for me to have an accurate idea of it, in order that I might do justice to her Majesty's commands. I would therefore humbly suggest that Mr. Disraeli might with great propriety be requested to put his reply into writing. That I presumed I might receive this reply, if it were her Majesty's pleasure to make it known to me, at some not late hour to-morrow, when I would at once place myself in a condition to tender my humble advice. This is an account of what Colonel Ponsonby might fairly consider as my answer to her Majesty's communication. I enlarged the conversation, however, by observing that the division which overthrew us was a party division. It bore the express authentic symbol of its character in having party tellers on

> the opposition as well as on the government side; that we were aware of the great, even more than ordinary, efforts of Colonel Taylor, with Mr. Disraeli's countenance, to bring members to London and to the House; that all this seemed to impose great obligations on the opposition; and if so, that it would be the duty of the leader of the opposition to use every exertion of consultation with his friends and otherwise before declining the task, or in any manner advising the Queen to look elsewhere. To Colonel Ponsonby indeed, I observed that I thought Mr. Disraeli was endeavouring, by at once throwing back on me an offer which it was impossible for me at the time and under the circumstances to accept, to get up a case of absolute necessity founded upon this refusal of mine, and
> [449] thus, becoming the indispensable man and party, to have in his hands a lever wherewith to overcome the reluctance and resistance of his friends, who would not be able to deny that the Queen must have a government.

Attitude Of Mr. Disraeli

Mr. Disraeli's reply to the Queen's inquiry whether he was prepared to form a government, was put into writing, and the two operative paragraphs of it were sent through Colonel Ponsonby to Mr. Gladstone. They ran as follows:—

> In answer, Mr. Disraeli said he was prepared to form an administration which he believed would carry on her Majesty's affairs with efficiency, and would possess her confidence; but he could not undertake to carry on her Majesty's government in the present House of Commons. Subsequently, her Majesty having remarked that Mr. Gladstone was not inclined to recommend a dissolution of parliament, Mr. Disraeli stated that he himself would not advise her Majesty to take that step.

Viewing these paragraphs as forming the answer offered by Mr. Disraeli to the Queen, Mr. Gladstone reported to her (March 14) that “he did not find himself able to gather their precise effect”:—

> The former of the two, if it stood alone, would seem to imply that Mr. Disraeli was prepared to accept office with a view to an immediate dissolution of parliament, but not otherwise; since it states that he believes himself able to form a suitable administration, but not "to carry on your Majesty's government in the present House of Commons." In the latter of the two paragraphs Mr. Disraeli has supposed your Majesty to have remarked that "Mr. Gladstone was not inclined to recommend a dissolution of parliament," and has stated that "he himself would not advise your Majesty to take that step." Your Majesty will without doubt remember that Mr. Gladstone tendered no advice on the subject of dissolution generally, but limited himself to comparing it with the alternative of resignation, which was the only question at issue, and stated that on the part of the cabinet he humbly submitted resignation of their offices, which they deemed to be the step most conformable to their duty. Mr. Gladstone does not clearly comprehend the bearing of Mr. Disraeli's closing words; as he could not tender advice to your Majesty [450] either affirmatively or negatively on dissolution, without first becoming your Majesty's adviser. Founding himself upon the memorandum, Mr. Gladstone is unable to say to what extent the apparent meaning of the one paragraph is modified or altered by the other; and he is obliged to trouble your Majesty, however reluctantly, with this representation, inasmuch as a perfectly clear idea of the tenor of the reply is a necessary preliminary to his offering any remark or advice upon it; which, had it been a simple negative, he would have felt it his duty to do.

Between six and seven in the evening Colonel Ponsonby came with a letter from the Queen to the effect that Mr. Disraeli had unconditionally declined to undertake the formation of a government. In obedience to the Queen's commands Mr. Gladstone proceeded to give his view of the position in which her Majesty was placed:—

March 15.—Not being aware that there can be a question of any intermediate party or combination of parties which would be available at the present juncture, he presumes that your Majesty, if denied the assistance of the conservative or opposition party, might be disposed to recur to the services of a liberal government. He is of opinion, however, that either his late colleagues, or any statesman or statesmen of the liberal party on whom your Majesty might call, would with propriety at once observe that it is still for the consideration of your Majesty whether the proceeding which has taken place between your Majesty and Mr. Disraeli can as yet be regarded as complete. The vote of the House of Commons on Wednesday morning was due to the deliberate and concerted action of the opposition, with a limited amount of adventitious numerical aid. The division was a party division, and carried the well-known symbol of such divisions in the appointment of tellers of the opposition and government respectively. The vote was given in the full knowledge, avowed in the speech of the leader of the opposition, that the government had formally declared the measure on which the vote was impending to be vital to its existence. Mr. Gladstone humbly conceives that, according to the well-known principles of our parliamentary
[451] government, an opposition which has in this manner and degree contributed to bring about what we term a crisis, is bound to use and to show that it has used its utmost efforts of counsel and inquiry to exhaust all practicable means of bringing its resources to the aid of the country in its exigency. He is aware that his opinion on such a subject can only be of slight value, but the same observation will not hold good with regard to the force of a well-established party usage. To show what that usage has been, Mr. Gladstone is obliged to trouble your Majesty with the following recital of facts from the history of the last half century.... [*This apt and cogent recital the reader will find at the end of the volume, see Appendix.*]... There is, therefore, a very wide difference between the manner in which the call of your Majesty has

been met on this occasion by the leader of the opposition, and the manner which has been observed at every former juncture, including even those when the share taken by the opposition in bringing about the exigency was comparatively slight or none at all. It is, in Mr. Gladstone's view, of the utmost importance to the public welfare that the nation should be constantly aware that the parliamentary action certain or likely to take effect in the overthrow of a government; the reception and treatment of a summons from your Majesty to meet the necessity which such action has powerfully aided in creating; and again the resumption of office by those who have deliberately laid it down,—are uniformly viewed as matters of the utmost gravity, requiring time, counsel, and deliberation among those who are parties to them, and attended with serious responsibilities. Mr. Gladstone will not and does not suppose that the efforts of the opposition to defeat the government on Wednesday morning were made with a previously formed intention on their part to refuse any aid to your Majesty, if the need should arise, in providing for the government of the country; and the summary refusal, which is the only fact before him, he takes to be not in full correspondence either with the exigencies of the case, or as he has shown, with the parliamentary usage. In humbly submitting this representation to your Majesty, Mr. Gladstone's wish is to point out the difficulty in which he would find himself placed were he to ask your Majesty for authority to inquire from his late colleagues whether they or any of them were prepared, if your Majesty should call on [452] them, to resume their offices; for they would certainly, he is persuaded, call on him, for their own honour, and in order to the usefulness of their further service if it should be rendered, to prove to them that according to usage every means had been exhausted on the part of the opposition for providing for the government of the country, or at least that nothing more was to be expected from that quarter.

This statement, prepared after dinner, Mr. Gladstone took to

Lord Granville that night (March 14). The next morning he again saw Lord Granville and Colonel Ponsonby, and despatched his statement to the Queen. "At 2.45," he writes to Granville:—

> I saw the Queen, not for any distinct object, but partly to fill the blank before the public. H.M. was in perfect humour. She will use the whole or part of my long letter by sending it to Disraeli. She seemed quite to understand our point of view, and told me plainly what shows that the artful man *did* say, if it came back to him again at this juncture, he would not be bound by his present refusal. I said, "But, ma'am, that is not before me." "But he told it to me," she said.

Further Discussions

The Queen sent Mr. Gladstone's long letter to Mr. Disraeli, and he replied in a tolerably long letter of his own. He considered Mr. Gladstone's observations under two heads: first, as an impeachment of the opposition for contributing to the vote against the bill, when they were not prepared to take office; second, as a charge against Mr. Disraeli himself that he summarily refused to take office without exhausting all practicable means of aiding the country in the exigency. On the first article of charge, he described the doctrine advanced by Mr. Gladstone as being "undoubtedly sound so far as this: that for an opposition to use its strength for the express purpose of throwing out a government which it is at the time aware that it cannot replace—having that object in view and no other—would be an act of recklessness and faction that could not be too strongly condemned." But this, he contended, could not be imputed to the conservative opposition of 1873. The Irish bill was from the first strongly objected to by a large section of the liberal party, and on the same grounds that led the conservative opposition to reject it, namely, that it sacrificed Irish education to the Roman catholic hierarchy. The party whom the bill was intended to propitiate rejected it as inadequate. If the sense of the House had been taken, irrespective of considerations of the political result of the division, not one-fourth of the House

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would have voted for it. Mr. Gladstone's doctrine, Disraeli went on, amounted to this, that “whenever a minister is so situated that it is in his power to prevent any other parliamentary leader from forming an administration likely to stand, he acquires thereby the right to call on parliament to pass whatever measures he and his colleagues think fit, and is entitled to denounce as factious the resistance to such measures. Any such claim is one not warranted by usage, or reconcilable with the freedom of the legislature. It comes to this: that he tells the House of Commons, ‘Unless you are prepared to put some one in my place, your duty is to do whatever I bid you.’ To no House of Commons has language of this kind ever been addressed; by no House of Commons would it be tolerated.”

As for the charge of summary refusal to undertake government, Mr. Disraeli contented himself with a brief statement of facts. He had consulted his friends, and they were all of opinion that it would be prejudicial to the public interests for a conservative ministry to attempt to conduct business in the present House of Commons. What other means were at his disposal? Was he to open negotiations with a section of the late ministry, and waste days in barren interviews, vain applications, and the device of impossible combinations? Was he to make overtures to the considerable section of the liberal party that had voted against the government? The Irish Roman catholic gentlemen? Surely Mr. Gladstone was not serious in such a suggestion. The charge of deliberate and concerted action against the Irish bill was 'not entirely divested of some degree of exaggeration.' His party was not even formally summoned to vote against the government measure, but to support an amendment which was seconded from the liberal benches, and which could only by a violent abuse of [454] terms be described as a party move.

On Saturday afternoon Mr. Gladstone had gone down to Cliveden, and there at ten o'clock on the Sunday evening (March 16) he received a message from the Queen, enclosing Mr.

Disraeli's letter, and requesting him to say whether he would resume office. This letter was taken by Mr. Gladstone to show that "nothing more was to be expected in that quarter," and at eleven o'clock he sent off the messenger with his answer in the affirmative:—

> *March 16, 1873*, 10-3/4 P.M.—It is quite unnecessary for him to comment upon any of the statements or arguments advanced by Mr. Disraeli, as the point referred by your Majesty for him to consider is not their accuracy, sufficiency, or relevancy, but simply whether any further effort is to be expected from the opposition towards meeting the present necessity. Your Majesty has evidently judged that nothing more of this kind can be looked for. Your Majesty's judgment would have been conclusive with Mr. Gladstone in the case, even had he failed to appreciate the full cogency of the reason for it; but he is bound to state that he respectfully concurs with your Majesty upon that simple question, as one not of right but of fact. He therefore does not hesitate at once to answer your Majesty's gracious inquiry by saying that he will now endeavour to prevail upon your Majesty's late advisers generally to resume their offices, and he again places all such service as it is in his power to offer, at your Majesty's disposal. According to your Majesty's command, then, he will repair to London to-morrow morning, and will see some of the most experienced members of the late government to review the position which he regards as having been seriously unhinged by the shock of last Wednesday morning; to such an extent indeed, that he doubts whether either the administration or parliament can again be what they were. The relations between them, and the course of business laid down in the royal speech, will require to be reconsidered, or at least reviewed with care.

II

Tuesday, March 18.—[*To the Queen*] The cabinet met informally at this house [11 Carlton House Terrace] at 2 P.M., and sat till 5-½. [455]

The whole of the cabinet were ready to resume their offices. It was decided to carry on the government in the present parliament, without contemplating any particular limit of time for existence in connection with the recent vote.

Wednesday, March 19.—Went down to Windsor at midday; 3/4 hour with the Queen on the resignation, the statement tomorrow, the Duke of Edinburgh's marriage, royal precedence, Tennyson's honour; also she mentioned railway accidents and an assault on a soldier, and on luxury in food and dress. Dined with the Duke of Cambridge. Speaker's levee, saw Mr. Fawcett [who had been active in fomenting hostility] and other members. Then Mrs. Glyn's party.

Thursday, March 20.—H. of C. Made my explanation. Advisedly let pass Mr. Disraeli's speech without notice.

Mr. Gladstone said among other things:—

I felt reluctance personally from a desire for rest, the title to which had possibly been ... earned by labour. Also politically, because I do not think that as a general rule the experience we have had in former years of what may be called returning or resuming governments, has been very favourable in its character.... The subsequent fortunes of such governments lead to the belief that upon the whole, though such a return may be the lesser of two evils, yet it is not a thing in itself to be desired. It reminds me of that which was described by the Roman general according to the noble ode of Horace:—

... Neque amissos colores
Lana refert medicata fuco,
Nec vera virtus cum semel excidit
Curat reponi deterioribus.[288]

[288] *Carm.* iii. 5, 27. In Mr. Gladstone's own translation, *The Odes of Horace*

Mr. Disraeli made a lengthy statement, covering a much wider field. The substance of the whole case after all was this.
[456] The minister could not dissolve for the reason that the defeat had strengthened all the forces against the bill and against the government, and the constituencies who had never looked on it with much favour after its rejection by the Irish to satisfy whom it had been invented, now regarded it with energetic disfavour. The leader of the opposition, on the other hand, produced a long string of ingenious reasons for not abiding by the result of what was his own act: as, for example, that dissolution could not be instant; to form a government would take time; financial business must be arranged; a policy could not be shaped without access to official information; in this interval motions would be made and carried on plausible questions, and when the election came, his friends would go to the country as discredited ministers, instead of being a triumphant opposition. In writing to his brother Robertson, Mr. Gladstone glances at other reasons:—

> *March 21*.—We have gone through our crisis; and I fear that nobody is much the better for it. For us it was absolutely necessary to show that we did not consider return, as we had not considered resignation, a light matter. As to the opposition, the speech of Disraeli last night leaves it to be asked why did he not come in, wind up the business of the session, and dissolve? There is no reason to be given, except that a portion of his party was determined not to be educated again, and was certain that if he got in he would again commence this educating process. The conservative party will never assume its natural position until Disraeli retires;

(p. 84):—

... Can wool repair
The colours that it lost when soaked with dye?
Ah, no. True merit once resigned,
No trick nor feint will serve as well.

A rendering less apt for this occasion finds favour with some scholars, that true virtue can never be restored to those who have once fallen away from it.

> and I sometimes think he and I might with advantage pair off together.

Speaker Brand says: “Disraeli's tactics are to watch and wait, not showing his hand nor declaring a policy; he desires to drive Gladstone to a dissolution, when he will make the most of Gladstone's mistakes, while he will denounce a policy of destruction and confiscation, and take care to announce no policy of his own. His weakness consists in the want of confidence of some of his party.”

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Chapter XIII. Last Days Of The Ministry. (1873)

> ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις ναύκληρον πάντ᾽ ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ πράξαντα, καὶ κατασκευάσαντα τὸ πλοῖον ἀφ᾽ ὧν ὑπελάμβανε σωθήσεσθαι, εἶτα χειμῶνι χρησάμενον καὶ πονησάντων αὐτῷ τῶν σκευῶν ἥ καὶ συντριβέτων ὅλως, τῆς ναυαγίας αἰτιῶτο.—DEMOSTHENES.
>
> As if, when a shipmaster had done all he could for safety, and fitted his vessel with everything to make her weathertight, then when he meets a storm and all his tackle strains and labours until it is torn to pieces, we should blame him for the wreck.

I

The shock of defeat, resignation, and restoration had no effect in lessening ministerial difficulties. The months that followed make an unedifying close to five glorious years of progress and reform. With plenty of differences they recall the sunless days in which the second administration of the younger Pitt ended that lofty career of genius and dominion. The party was divided, and some among its leaders were centres of petty disturbance. In a scrap dated at this period Mr. Gladstone wrote: “Divisions in the liberal party are to be seriously apprehended from a factious spirit on questions of economy, on questions of education in relation to religion, on further parliamentary change, on the land laws. On these questions generally my sympathies are with what may be termed the advanced party, whom on other and general grounds I certainly will never head nor lead.”

The quarrel between the government and the nonconformists was not mitigated by a speech of Mr. Gladstone's against a motion for the disestablishment of the church. It was described

by Speaker Brand as "firm and good," but the dissenters, with all their kindness for the prime minister, thought it firm and bad.[289] [458] To Dr. Allon, one of the most respected of their leaders, Mr. Gladstone wrote (July 5):—

> The spirit of frankness in which you write is ever acceptable to me. I fear there may be much in your sombre anticipations. But if there is to be a great schism in the liberal party, I hope I shall never find it my duty to conduct the operations either of the one or of the other section. The nonconformists have shown me great kindness and indulgence; they have hitherto interpreted my acts and words in the most favourable sense; and if the time has come when my acts and words pass beyond the measure of their patience, I contemplate with repugnance, at my time of life especially, the idea of entering into conflict with them. A political severance, somewhat resembling in this a change in religion, should at most occur not more than once in life. At the same time I must observe that no one has yet to my knowledge pointed out the expressions or arguments in the speech, that can justly give offence.

A few personal jottings will be found of interest:—

> *April 7, 1873.*—H. of C. The budget and its reception mark a real onward step in the session. 23.—Breakfast with Mr. C. Field to meet Mr. Emerson. 30.—I went to see the remains of my dear friend James Hope. Many sad memories but more joyful hopes. *May 15.*—The King and Queen of the Belgians

[289] He said he had once made a computation of what property the church would acquire if disestablished on the Irish terms, and he made out that "between life incomes, private endowments, and the value of fabrics and advowsons, something like ninety millions would have to be given in the process of disestablishment to the ministers, members, and patrons of the church of England. That is a very staggering kind of arrangement to make in supplying the young lady with a fortune and turning her out to begin the world."—*Hans.*, May 16, 1873.

came to breakfast at ten. A party of twenty. They were most kind, and all went well.

To the Queen (May 19).—Mr. Gladstone had an interview yesterday at Chiselhurst with the Empress. He thought her Majesty much thinner and more worn than last year, but she showed no want of energy in conversation. Her Majesty felt much interest, and a little anxiety, about the coming examination of the prince her son at Woolwich.

June 8.—Chapel royal at noon. It was touching to see [459] Dean Hook and hear him, now old in years and very old I fear in life; but he kindled gallantly. 17.—Had a long conversation with Mr. Holloway (of the pills) on his philanthropic plans; which are of great interest. 25.—Audience of the Shah with Lord Granville and the Duke of Argyll. Came away after 1-1/4 hours. He displayed abundant acuteness. His gesticulation particularly expressive. 26.—Sixteen to breakfast. Mme. Norman Neruda played for us. She is also most pleasing in manner and character. Went to Windsor afterwards. Had an audience. *July 1.*—H. of C. Received the Shah soon after six. A division on a trifling matter of adjournment took place during his Majesty's presence, in which he manifested an intelligent interest. The circumstance of his presence at the time is singular in this view (and of this he was informed, rather to his amusement) that until the division was over he could not be released from the walls of the House. It is probably, or possibly, the first time for more than five hundred years that a foreign sovereign has been under personal restraint of any kind in England. [*Query, Mary Queen of Scots.*]

Death Of Bishop Wilberforce

Then we come upon an entry that records one of the deepest griefs of this stage of Mr. Gladstone's life—the sudden death of Bishop Wilberforce:—

July 19.—Off at 4.25 to Holmbury.[290] We were enjoying

[290] The house of Mr. Frederick Leveson Gower where for many years Mr. Gladstone constantly enjoyed a hospitality in which he delighted.

> that beautiful spot and expecting Granville with the Bishop of Winchester, when the groom arrived with the message that the Bishop had had a bad fall. An hour and a half later Granville entered, pale and sad: "It's all over." In an instant the thread of that very precious life was snapped. We were all in deep and silent grief. 20.—Woke with a sad sense of a great void in the world. 21.—Drove in the morning with Lord Granville to Abinger Hall. Saw *him*, for the last time in the flesh, resting from his labours. Attended the inquest; inspected the spot; all this cannot be forgotten. 23.—Gave way under great heat, hard work, and perhaps depression of force. Kept my bed all day.

"Of the special opinions of this great prelate," he wrote to the Queen, "Mr. Gladstone may not be an impartial judge, but he [460] believes there can be no doubt that there does not live the man in any of the three kingdoms of your Majesty who has, by his own indefatigable and unmeasured labours, given such a powerful impulse as the Bishop of Winchester gave to the religious life of the country." When he mentioned that the bishop's family declined the proposal of Westminster Abbey for his last resting place, the Queen replied that she was very glad, for "to her nothing more gloomy and doleful exists."

"Few men," Mr. Gladstone wrote later in this very year, "have had a more varied experience of personal friendships than myself. Among the large numbers of estimable and remarkable people whom I have known, and who have now passed away, there is in my memory an inner circle, and within it are the forms of those who were marked off from the comparative crowd even of the estimable and remarkable, by the peculiarity and privilege of their type."[291] In this inner circle the bishop must have held a place, not merely by habit of life, which accounts for so many friendships in the world, but by fellowship in their

[291] *Life of Hope-Scott*, ii. p. 284.

deepest interests, by common ideals in church and state, by common sympathy in their arduous aim to reconcile greetings in the market-place and occupation of high seats, with the spiritual glow of the soul within its own sanctuary.

Ministerial Embarrassments

While still grieving over this painful loss, Mr. Gladstone suddenly found himself in a cauldron of ministerial embarrassments. An inquiry into certain irregularities at the general post office led to the discovery that the sum of eight hundred thousand pounds had been detained on its way to the exchequer, and applied to the service of the telegraphs. The persons concerned in the gross and inexcused irregularities were Mr. Monsell, Mr. Ayrton, and the chancellor of the exchequer. "There probably have been times," Mr. Gladstone wrote to the Queen (Aug. 7), "when the three gentlemen who in their several positions have been chiefly to blame would have been summarily dismissed from your Majesty's service. But on none of them could any ill-intent be charged; two of them had, among [461] whatever errors of judgment, done much and marked good service to the state." Under the circumstances he could not resort to so severe a course without injustice and harshness. "The recent exposures," Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Russell, "have been gall and wormwood to me from day to day." "Ever since the failure of the Irish University bill," he said, "the government has been in a condition in which, to say the least, it has had no strength to spare, and has stood in need of all the strength it could derive from internal harmony and vigorous administration." The post office scandal exposed to the broad light of day that neither harmony nor vigour existed or could be counted on. It was evident that neither the postmaster nor the chancellor of the exchequer could remain where they were. In submitting new arrangements to the Queen, Mr. Gladstone said that he would gladly have spared her the irksome duty of considering them, had it been "in his power either on the one side to leave unnoticed the scandals that have occurred, or on the other to have tendered a general resignation,

or to have advised a dissolution of parliament." The hot weather and the lateness of the session made the House of Commons disinclined for serious conflict; still at the end of July various proceedings upon the scandals took place, which. Mr. Gladstone described to the Queen as of "a truly mortifying character." Mr. Ayrton advanced doctrines of ministerial responsibility that could not for a moment be maintained, and Mr. Gladstone felt himself bound on the instant to disavow them.[292]

Sir Robert Phillimore gives a glimpse of him in these evil days:—

> *July 24.*—Gladstone dined here hastily; very unwell, and much worn. He talked about little else than Bishop Wilberforce's funeral and the ecclesiastical appeals in the Judicature bill. 29th.—Saw Gladstone, better but pale. Said the government deserved a vote of censure on Monsell and Lowe's account. Monsell ought to resign; but Lowe, he said, ought for past services to be defended. 30th..—Dined at Gladstone's. [462]
> Radical M.P.'s ... agreed that government was tottering, and that Gladstone did everything. Gladstone walks with a stick. *Aug. 7.*—An interview with Gladstone. He was communicative. A great reform of his government has become necessary. The treasury to be swept out. He looked much better.

Nothing at any time was so painful, almost intolerably painful, to Mr. Gladstone as personal questions, and cabinet reconstruction is made up of personal questions of the most trying and invidious kind. "I have had a fearful week," he wrote to the Duke of Argyll (Aug. 8), "but have come through. A few behave oddly, most perfectly well, some incomparably well;

[292] Rising as soon as Mr. Ayrton sat down he said that his colleague had not accurately stated the law of ministerial responsibility. He then himself laid down its true conditions under the circumstances, with the precision usual to him in such affairs. This was one of the latest performances of the great parliament of 1868.—July 30, *Hans*, 217, p. 1265.

of these last I must name *honoris causâ*, Bright, Bruce, and F. Cavendish." To Mr. Bright he had written when the crisis first grew acute:—

> *Aug. 2.*—You have seen the reports, without doubt, of what has been going on. You can hardly conceive the reality. I apprehend that the House of Commons by its abstinence and forbearance, must be understood to have given us breathing time and space to consider what can be done to renovate the government in something like harmony and something like dignity. This will depend greatly upon men and partly upon measures. Changes in men there must be, and some without delay. A lingering and discreditable death, after the life we have lived, is not an ending to which we ought to submit without effort; and as an essential part of the best effort that can be made, I am most desirous to communicate with you here. I rely on your kindness to come up. Here only can I show you the state of affairs, which is most dangerous, and yet not unhopeful.

From the diary:—

> *Aug. 1.*—Saw Lord F. Cavendish, also Lord Granville, Lord Wolverton, Mr. Cardwell, repeatedly on the crisis. 2.—An anxious day. The first step was taken, Cardwell broke to Lowe the necessity of his changing his office. Also I spoke to Forster and Fortescue. 4.—A very anxious day of constant conversation and reflection, ending with an evening conclave. 5.—My day began with Dr. Clark. Rose at eleven....
> [463] Wrote.... Most of these carried much powder and shot. Some were Jack Ketch and Calcraft [the public executioner] letters. 6.—Incessant interviews.... Much anxiety respecting the Queen's delay in replying. Saw Lord Wolverton late with her reply. 9.—To Osborne. A long and satisfactory audience of H.M. Attended the council, and received a third time the seals of my old office.

This resumption of the seals of the exchequer, which could no longer be left with Mr. Lowe, was forced upon Mr. Gladstone by his colleagues. From a fragmentary note, he seems to have thought of Mr. Goschen for the vacant post, "but deferring to the wishes of others," he says, "I reluctantly consented to become chancellor of the exchequer." The latest instance of a combination of this office with that of first lord of the treasury were Canning in 1827, and Peel in 1884-5.[293]

The correspondence on this mass of distractions is formidable, but, luckily for us it is now mere burnt-out cinder. The two protagonists of discord had been Mr. Lowe and Mr. Ayrton, and we may as well leave them with a few sentences of Mr. Gladstone upon the one, and to the other:—

> Mr. Ayrton, he says, has caused Mr. Gladstone so much care and labour on many occasions, that if he had the same task to encounter in the case of a few other members of the cabinet, his office would become intolerable. But before a public servant of this class can properly be dismissed, there must be not only a sufficient case against him, but a case of which [464]

[293] The following changes were made in the cabinet: Lord Ripon (president of the council), and Mr. Childers (chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster) retired. Mr. Bright succeeded Mr. Childers, Mr. Bruce (home secretary, created Lord Aberdare) Lord Ripon. Mr. Lowe became home secretary, and Mr. Gladstone chancellor of the exchequer in union with the office of first lord. The minor changes were numerous. Mr. Monsell was succeeded at the post office by Dr. Lyon Playfair; Mr. Ayrton was made judge advocate-general, and Mr. Adam took his place as commissioner of public works; Mr. Baxter retired from the treasury, Mr. Dodson becoming financial, and Mr. A. Peel parliamentary secretaries to the treasury; Lord F. Cavendish and Mr. A. Greville were appointed lords of the treasury. On Sir John Coleridge being appointed lord chief justice, and Sir George Jessel master of the rolls, they were succeeded by Mr. Henry James as attorney-general and Mr. Vernon Harcourt as solicitor-general. "We have effectually extracted the brains from below the gangway," Lord Aberdare wrote, Nov. 19, 1873, "Playfair, Harcourt, James, and Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, who is Lowe's private secretary, being gone, will leave Fawcett all alone, for Trevelyan does not share his ill-will towards

> the sufficiency can be made intelligible and palpable to the world. Some of his faults are very serious, yet he is as towards the nation an upright, assiduous, and able functionary.

To Mr. Lowe, who had become home secretary, he writes (Aug. 13):—

> I do not know whether the word "timid" was the right one for L——, but, at any rate, I will give you proof that I am not "timid"; though a coward in many respects I may be. I always hold that politicians are the men whom, as a rule, it is most difficult to comprehend, *i.e.* understand completely; and for my own part, I never have thus understood, or thought I understood, above one or two, though here and there I may get hold of an isolated idea about others. Such an idea comes to me about you. I think the clearness, power, and promptitude of your intellect are in one respect a difficulty and a danger to you. You see everything in a burning, almost a scorching light. The case reminds me of an incident some years back. Sir D. Brewster asked me to sit for my photograph in a black frost and a half mist in Edinburgh. I objected about the light. He said, This is the best light; it is all diffused, not concentrated. Is not your light too much concentrated? Does not its intensity darken the surroundings? By the surroundings, I mean the relations of the thing not only to other things but to persons, as our profession obliges us constantly to deal with persons. In every question flesh and blood are strong and real even if extraneous elements, and we cannot safely omit them from our thoughts.
>
> Now, after all this impudence, let me try and do you a little more justice. You have held for a long time the most important office of the state. No man can do his duty in that office and be popular *while* he holds it. I could easily name the two worst chancellors of the exchequer of the last forty

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the government."

years; against neither of them did I ever hear a word while they were in (I might almost add, nor for them after they were out). "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you." You have fought for the public, tooth and nail. You have been under a storm of unpopularity; but not a fiercer one than I had to stand in 1860, when hardly any one dared to say a word for me; but [465] certainly it was one of my best years of service, even though bad be the best. Of course, I do not say that this necessity of being unpopular should induce us to raise our unpopularity to the highest point. No doubt, both in policy and in Christian charity, it should make us very studious to mitigate and abate the causes as much as we can. This is easier for you than it was for me, as your temper is good, and mine not good.

While I am fault-finding, let me do a little more, and take another scrap of paper for the purpose. (I took only a scrap before, as I was determined, then, not to "afflict you above measure.") I note, then, two things about you. Outstripping others in the race, you reach the goal or conclusion before them; and, being there, you assume that they are there also. This is unpopular. You are unpopular this very day with a poor wretch, whom you have apprised that he has lost his seat, and you have not told him *how*. Again, and lastly, I think you do not get up all things, but allow yourself a choice, as if politics were a flower-garden and we might choose among the beds; as Lord Palmerston did, who read foreign office and war papers, and let the others rust and rot. This, I think, is partially true, I do not say of your reading, but of your mental processes. You will, I am sure, forgive the levity and officiousness of this letter for the sake of its intention and will believe me always and sincerely yours.

Then at last he escaped from Downing Street to Hawarden:—

Aug. 11.—Off at 8.50 with a more buoyant spirit and greater sense of relief than I have experienced for many years on this, the only pleasant act of moving to me in the circuit of the

year. This gush is in proportion to the measure of the late troubles and anxieties.

II

The reader will perhaps not thank me for devoting even a short page or two to a matter that made much clatter of tongue and pen in its day. The points are technical, minute, and to be forgotten as quickly as possible. But the thing was an episode, though a
[466] trivial one enough, in Mr. Gladstone's public life, and paltry use was made of it in the way of groundless innuendo. Being first lord of the treasury, he took besides the office of chancellor of the exchequer. Was this a fresh acceptance of a place of profit under the crown? Did he thereby come within the famous statute of Anne and vacate his seat? Or was he protected by a provision in the Act of 1867, to the effect that if any member had been duly re-elected since his acceptance of any office referred to in the Act of Anne, he should be free to accept any other such office without further re-election? Mr. Gladstone had been re-elected after being first lord of the treasury; was he free to accept the office of chancellor of the exchequer in addition, without again submitting himself to his constituents? The policy and object of the provision were obvious and they were notorious. Unluckily, for good reasons not at all affecting this object, Mr. Disraeli inserted certain words, the right construction of which in our present case became the subject of keen and copious contention. The section that had been unmistakable before, now ran that a member holding an office of profit should not vacate his seat by his subsequent acceptance of any other office "*in lieu of and in immediate succession* the one to the other."[294] Not a word was said in the debate on the clause as to the accumulation of offices, and nobody doubted that the intention of parliament was simply

[294] 30 and 31 Vict., cap. 102, sec. 52, and schedule H.

to repeal the Act of Anne, in respect of change of office by existing ministers. Was Mr. Gladstone's a case protected by this section? Was the Act of 1867, which had been passed to limit the earlier statute, still to be construed in these circumstances as extending it?

Unsuspected hares were started in every direction. What is a first lord of the treasury? Is there such an office? Had it ever been named (up to that time) in a statute? Is the chancellor of the exchequer, besides being something more, also a commissioner of the treasury? If he is, and if the first lord is only the same, and if there is no legal difference between the lords of the treasury, does the assumption of the two parts by one minister constitute a case of immediate succession by one commissioner to another, or is the minister in Mr. Gladstone's circumstances [467] an indivisible personality as commissioner discharging two sets of duties? Then the precedents. Perceval was chancellor of the exchequer in 1809, when he accepted in addition the office of first lord with an increased salary, and yet he was held not to have vacated his seat.[295] Lord North in 1770, then chancellor of the exchequer, was appointed first lord on the resignation of the Duke of Grafton, and he at the same time retained his post of chancellor; yet no writ was ordered, and no re-election took place.

Into this discussion we need not travel. What concerns us here is Mr. Gladstone's own share in the transaction. The plain story of what proved a complex affair, Mr. Gladstone recounted to the Speaker on August 16, in language that shows how direct and concise he could be when handling practical business:—

> I had already sent you a preliminary intimation on the subject of my seat for Greenwich, before I received your letter of

[295] Sir Spencer Walpole thinks that Perceval's case (*Life of Perceval*, ii. P. 55) covered Mr. Gladstone. In its constitutional aspect this is true, but the Act of 1867 introduced technical difficulties that made a new element.

the 14th. I will now give you a more complete account of what has taken place. Knowing only that the law had been altered with the view of enabling the ministers to change offices without re-election, and that the combination of my two offices was a proper and common one, we had made no inquiry into the point of law, nor imagined there was any at the time when, deferring to the wish of others, I reluctantly consented to become C. of E. On Saturday last (Aug. 9) when I was at Osborne, the question was opened to me. I must qualify what I have stated by saying that on Friday afternoon some one had started the question fully into view; and it had been, on a summary survey, put aside. On Monday I saw Mr. Lambert, who I found had looked into it; we talked of it fully; and he undertook to get the materials of a case together. The Act throws the initiative upon me; but as the matter seemed open to discussion, I felt that I must obtain the best assistance, viz., that of the law officers. I advisedly abstained from
[468] troubling or consulting Sir E. May, because you might have a subsequent and separate part to take, and might wish to refer to him. Also the blundering in the newspapers showed that the question abounded in nice matter, and would be all the better understood from a careful examination of precedents. The law officers were out of town; but the solicitor-general [Jessel] was to come up in the later part of the week. It was not possible in so limited a time to get a case into perfect order; still I thought that, as the *adverse* argument lay on the surface, I had better have him consulted. I have had no direct communication with him. But Mr. Lambert with his usual energy put together the principal materials, and I jotted down all that occurred to me. Yesterday Mr. Lambert and my private secretary, Mr. Gurdon, who, as well as the solicitor to the treasury, had given attention to the subject, brought the matter fully before the solicitor-general. He has found himself able to write a full opinion on the questions submitted to him: 1. My office as C. of E. is an office of profit. 2. My commissionership of the treasury under the new patent in

> preparation is an "other office" under the meaning of the late Act. 3. I cannot be advised to certify to you any avoidance of the seat. Had the opinion of Sir G. Jessel been adverse, I should at once have ceased to urge the argument on the Act, strong as it appears to me to be; but in point of form I should have done what I now propose to do, viz., to have the case made as complete as possible, and to obtain the joint opinion of the law officers. Perhaps that of the chancellor should be added. Here ends my narrative, which is given only for your information, and to show that I have not been negligent in this matter, the Act requiring me to proceed "forthwith."

Speaker Brand replied (Aug. 18) that, while speaking with reserve on the main point at issue, he had no hesitation in saying that he thought Mr. Gladstone was taking the proper course in securing the best legal advice in the matter. And he did not know what more could be done under present circumstances.

The Greenwich Seat

The question put to Jessel was "Whether Mr. Gladstone, having accepted the office of chancellor of the exchequer is not, under the circumstances stated, protected by the provision contained in section 52 of the Representation of the People Act, 1867, from vacating his seat?" Jessel answered "I am of opinion that he is so protected." "I may be wrong," this strong lawyer once said, "and sometimes am; but I have never any doubts." His reasons on this occasion were as trenchant as his conclusion. Next came Coleridge, the attorney-general. He wrote to Mr. Gladstone on Sept. 1, 1873:— [469]

> I have now gone carefully through the papers as to your seat, and looked at the precedents, and though I admit that the case is a curious one, and the words of the statute not happily chosen, yet *I have come clearly and without doubt to the same conclusion as Jessel*, and I shall be quite prepared if need be to argue the case in that sense in parliament. Still it may be very proper, as you yourself suggest, that you should have

> a written and formal opinion of the law officers and Bowen upon it.[296]

Selborne volunteered the opposite view (Aug. 21), and did not see how it could be contended that Mr. Gladstone, being still a commissioner of the treasury under the then existing commission, took the office of the chancellor (with increase of pay) in lieu of, and in immediate succession to, the other office which he still continued to hold. A day or two later, Selborne, however, sent to Mr. Gladstone a letter addressed to himself by Baron Bramwell. In this letter that most capable judge and strong-headed man, said: "As a different opinion is I know entertained, I can't help saying that I think it clear Mr. Gladstone has not vacated his seat. His case is within neither the spirit nor the letter of the statute." He then puts his view in the plain English of which he was a master. The lord advocate (now Lord Young) went with the chancellor and against the English law officers. Lowe at first thought that the seat was not vacated, and then he thought that it was. "Sir Erskine May," says Mr. Gladstone (Feb. 2, 1874), "has given a strong opinion that my seat is full." Well might the minister say that he thought "the trial of this case would fairly
[470] take as long as Tichborne." On September 21, the chancellor, while still holding to his own opinion, wrote to Mr. Gladstone:—

> You have followed the right course (especially in a question which directly concerns the House of Commons) in obtaining the opinion of the law officers of the crown.... But having taken this proper course, and being disposed yourself to agree to the conclusions of your official advisers, you are clearly free from all personal fault, if you decide to act upon those conclusions and leave the House, when it meets, to deal with them in way either of assent or dissent, as it may think fit.

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[296] Yet Lord Selborne says that Coleridge 'must have been misunderstood'!—*Memorials*, i. pp. 328-9.

Coleridge and Jessel went on to the bench, and Sir Henry James and Sir William Harcourt were brought up from below the gangway to be attorney and solicitor. In November the new law officers were requested to try their hands. Taking the brilliant and subtle Charles Bowen into company, they considered the case, but did not venture (Dec. 1) beyond the singularly shy proposition that strong arguments might be used both in favour of and against the view that the seat was vacated.

Meanwhile the *Times* had raised the question immediately (Aug. 11), though not in adverse language. The unslumbering instinct of party had quickly got upon a scent, and two keen-nosed sleuth hounds of the opposition four or five weeks after Mr. Gladstone had taken the seals of the exchequer, sent to the Speaker a certificate in the usual form (Sept. 17) stating the vacancy at Greenwich, and requesting him to issue a writ for a new election. The Speaker reminded them in reply, that the law governing the issue of writs during the recess in cases of acceptance of office, required notification to him from the member accepting; and he had received no such notification.[297] Everybody knew that in case of an election, Mr. Gladstone's seat was not safe, though when the time came he was in fact elected. The final state and the outlook could not be better described than in a letter from Lord Halifax to Mr. Gladstone (Dec. 9):— [471]

Lord Halifax to Mr. Gladstone.

Dec. 9, 1873.—On thinking over the case as to your seat, I really think it is simple enough. I will put my ideas shortly for your benefit, or you may burn them. You did not believe that you had vacated your seat on accepting the office of chancellor of the exchequer, and you did not send notice to the Speaker as required by the Act of 1858. Were you right? The solicitor-general said that you were, in a deliberate opinion. The attorney-general concurred. The present law

[297] 21 and 22 Vict., c. 110 (1858).

> officers consider it so very doubtful that they will not give an opinion. The Speaker either from not having your notice, or having doubts, has not ordered a new writ. These are the facts. What should you do? *Up to the meeting* of parliament you clearly must act as if there was no doubt. If you do not, you almost admit being wrong. You must assume yourself to be right, that you are justified in the course which you have taken, and act consistently on that view. When parliament meets, I think the proper course would be for the Speaker to say that he had received a certificate of vacancy from two members, but not the notice from the member himself, and having doubts he referred the matter to the House, according to the Act. This ensures the priority of the question and calls on you to explain your not having sent the notice. You state the facts as above, place yourself in the hands of the House, and withdraw. I agree with what Bright said that the House of Commons will deal quite fairly in such a case. A committee will be appointed. I don't think it can last very long, and you will be absent during its sitting. No important business can be taken during your absence, and I do not know that any evil will ensue from shortening the period of business before the budget. They may vote estimates, or take minor matters.

This sensible view of Lord Halifax and Mr. Bright may be set against Lord Selborne's dogmatic assertion that a dissolution was the only escape. As for his further assertion about his never doubting that this was the determining cause of the dissolution, I can only say that in the mass of papers connected with the Greenwich seat and the dissolution, there is no single word in one of them associating in any way either topic with the other. [472] Mr. Gladstone acted so promptly in the affair of the seat that both the Speaker of the House of Commons and Lord Selborne himself said that no fault could be found with him. His position before the House was therefore entirely straightforward. Finally Mr. Gladstone gave an obviously adequate and sufficient case for

the dissolution both to the Queen and to the cabinet, and stated to at least three of his colleagues what was "the determining cause," and this was not the Greenwich seat, but something wholly remote from it.[298]

III

The autumn recess began with attendance at Balmoral, of which a glimpse or two remain:—

> *To Mrs. Gladstone.*
>
> *Balmoral, Aug. 22, 1873.*—The Queen in a long conversation asked me to-day about you at Holyhead. She talked of many matters, and made me sit down, because odd to say I had a sudden touch of my enemy yesterday afternoon, which made me think it prudent to beg off from dining with her, and keep on my back taking a strong dose of sal volatile.... The Queen had occasion to speak about the Crown Princess, lauded her talents, did not care a pin for her (the Queen's) opinion, used to care only for that of her father....
>
> *Aug. 24.*—To-day I had a long talk. Nothing can be better than her humour. She is going to Fort William on the 8th. I leave on Saturday, but if I make my Highland walk it cannot be till Monday, and all next week will probably be consumed in getting me home.
>
> *Aug. 27.*—I enclose a copy of my intimation to the Queen [the engagement of his eldest daughter], which has drawn forth *in a few minutes* the accompanying most charming letter

[298] Mr. Childers (*Life*, i. p. 220) writing after the election in 1874, says, "It is clear to me that he would not have dissolved but for the question about the double office." In the sentence before he says, "Some day perhaps Gladstone will recognise his mistake in August." This mistake, it appears, was going to the exchequer himself, instead of placing Mr. Childers there (p. 219). I am sure that this able and excellent man thought what he said about "the question of the double office," but his surmise was not quite impartial. Nor was he at the time a member of the cabinet.

[473] from her. I think the original of this should be given to Agnes herself, as she will think it a great treasure; we keeping a copy. Is it not a little odd on our part, more than his, that (at least so far as I am concerned) we have allowed this great Aye to be said, without a single word on the subject of the means of support forthcoming? It is indeed a proceeding worthy of the times of the Acts of the Apostles! You perhaps know a little more than I do. *Your* family were not very worldly minded people, but you will remember that before our engagement, Stephen was spirited up, most properly, to put a question to me about means. Yesterday I was not so much struck at hearing nothing on the subject of any sublunary particular; but lo! again your letter of to-day arrives with all about the charms of the orphanage, but not a syllable on beef and mutton, bread and butter, which after all cannot be altogether dispensed with.

Of this visit Lord Granville wrote to him (Sept. 20): "The Queen told me last night that she had never known you so remarkably agreeable." The journey closed with a rather marked proof of bodily soundness in a man nearly through his sixty-fourth year, thus recorded in his diary:—

Aug. 25.—[At Balmoral]. Walked thirteen miles, quite fresh. 26.—Walked 8-½ miles in 2 h. 10 m. *Sept. 1.*—Off at 9.15 [from Invercauld] to Castleton and Derry Lodge, driving. From the Lodge at 11.15, thirty-three miles to Kingussie on foot. Half an hour for luncheon, 1/4 hour waiting for the ponies (the road so rough on the hill); touched a carriageable road at 5, the top at 3. Very grand hill views, floods of rain on Speyside. Good hotel at Kingussie, but sorely disturbed by rats.

"Think," he wrote to his daughter Mary from Naworth, "of my walking a good three and thirty miles last Monday, some of it the roughest ground I ever passed." He was always wont to enjoy

proofs of physical vigour, never forgetting how indispensable it is in the equipment of the politician for the athletics of public life. On his return home, he resumed the equable course of life associated with that happy place, though political consultations intruded:—

> *Sept. 6.*—Settled down again at Hawarden, where a happy family party gathered to-day. 13.—Finished the long and sad but profoundly interesting task of my letter to Miss Hope-Scott [on her father]. Also sent her father's letters (105) to her.... We finished cutting down a great beech. Our politicians arrived. Conversations with Bright, with Wolverton, with Granville, and with all three till long past twelve, when I prayed to leave off for the sake of the brain. 14.—Church morning and evening.... A stiff task for a half exhausted brain. But I cannot desist from a sacred task. Conversation with Lord Granville, Lord Wolverton, Mr. Bright. 15.—Church, 8-½ A.M. Spent the forenoon in conclave till two, after a preliminary conversation with Bright. Spent the evening also in conclave, we have covered a good deal of ground.... Cut down the half-cut alder. 16.—Final conversation with Granville, with Wolverton, and with Bright, who went last. 18.—Wood-cutting with Herbert, then went up to Stephen's school feast, an animated and pretty scene. 21.—Read Manning's letter to Archbishop of Armagh. There is in it to me a sad air of unreality; it is on stilts all through. 27.—Conversation with Mr. Palgrave chiefly on Symonds and the Greek mythology.... Cut a tree with Herbert. 28.—Conversation with Mr. Palgrave. He is tremendous, but in all other respects good and full of mental energy and activity, only the vent is rather large. 29.—Conversation with Mr. Palgrave, pretty stiff. Wood-cutting with Herbert. Wrote a rough mem. and computation for the budget of next year. I want eight millions to handle! *Oct. 2.*—Off at 8, London at 3. [474]

The memorial letter on the departed friend of days long past, if less rich than the companion piece upon Lord Aberdeen, is

still a graceful example of tender reminiscence and regret poured out in periods of grave melody.[299] It is an example, too, how completely in the press of turbid affairs, he could fling off the load and at once awake afresh the thoughts and associations that in truth made up his inmost life.

The Bath Election

[475]

Next came the autumn cabinets, with all their embarrassments, so numerous that one minister tossed a scrap across the table to another, "We ought to have impeached Dizzy for not taking office last spring." Disraeli had at least done them one service. An election took place at Bath in October. The conservative leader wrote a violent letter in support of the conservative candidate. "For nearly five years," said Mr. Disraeli, "the present ministers have harassed every trade, worried every profession and assailed or menaced every class, institution, and species of property in the country. Occasionally they have varied this state of civil warfare by perpetrating some job which outraged public opinion, or by stumbling into mistakes which have been always discreditable and sometimes ruinous. All this they call a policy and seem quite proud of it; but the country has I think made up its mind to close this career of plundering and blundering."[300] Mr. Gladstone described this curious outburst as "Mr. Disraeli's incomparable stroke on our behalf," and in fact its effect on public opinion was to send the liberal candidate to the head of the poll. But the victory at Bath stood solitary in the midst of reverses.

As for the general legislative business of the coming session, Mr. Gladstone thought it impossible to take up the large subject of the extension of the county franchise, but they might encourage Mr. Trevelyan to come forward with it on an early day, and give him all the help they could. Still the board was bare, the meal too frugal. They were afraid of proposing a change in the laws affecting the inheritance of land, or reform of London government, or a burials bill, or a county government

[299] *Memoir of Hope-Scott* ii. p. 284.

[300] To Lord Grey de Wilton, Oct. 3, 1873.

bill. The home secretary was directed to draw up a bill for a group of difficult questions as to employers and employed. No more sentences were to be provided for Mr. Disraeli's next electioneering letter.

December was mainly spent at Hawarden. A pleasant event was his eldest daughter's marriage, of which he wrote to the Duke of Argyll:—

> The kindness of *all* from the Queen down, to the cottagers and poor folks about us, has been singular and most touching. Our weather for the last fortnight has been delightful, and [476] we earnestly hope it may hold over to-morrow. I have not yet read Renan's *apôtres*. My opinion of him is completely dual. His life of Our Lord I thought a piece of trumpery; his work *Sur les langues sémitiques* most able and satisfactory in its manner and discussion.

The notes in the diary bring us up to the decision that was to end the great ministry:—

> *Dec. 1*.—Dined at Mr. Forster's and went to Drury Lane to see in *Antony and Cleopatra* how low our stage has fallen. Miss K. V. in the ballet, dressed in black and gold, danced marvellously. 2.—To Windsor, and had a long audience of the Queen. Dined with H.M. Whist in evening. 3.—Castle. Prayers at 9; St. George's at 10.30. Off to Twickenham at 11.25. Visited Mr. Bohn, and saw his collection; enormous and of very great interest. Then to Pembroke Lodge, luncheon and long conversation with Lord Russell.... Read *The Parisians*. 6.—Packing, etc., and off to Hawarden. 13.—Walked with Stephen Glynne. I opened to him that I must give up my house at or about the expiry of the present government. 15.—Read Montalembert's *Life*; also my article of 1852 on him. Mr. Herbert (R.A.) came and I sat to him for a short time. 17.—Finished *Life* of Montalembert. It was a pure and noble career personally; in a public view

unsatisfactory; the pope was a worm in the gourd all through. His oratory was great. 19.—With Herbert set about making a walk from Glynne Cottage to W. E. G. door. 20.—Sat to Mr. Herbert. Worked on version of the "Shield" [*Iliad*]. Worked on new path. 23.—Sat 1-3/4 hours to Mr. Herbert. Worked on correcting version of the Shield and finished writing it out. Read Aristophanes. 26.—24 to dinner, a large party gathered for the marriage. 27.—The house continued full. At 10.30 the weather broke into violent hail and rain. It was the only speck upon the brightness of the marriage. 29.—Sixty-four years completed to-day—what have they brought me? A weaker heart, stiffened muscles, thin hairs; other strength still remains in my frame. 31.—Still a full house. The year ends as it were in tumult. My constant tumult of business makes other tumult
[477] more sensible.... I cannot as I now am, get sufficiently out of myself to judge myself, and unravel the knots of being and doing of which my life seems to be full.

Jan. 1, 1874.—A little *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. 2.—Tree-cutting. Read Fitzjames Stephen on *Parliamentary Government*, not wizard-like. (No. 2.) 6.—Read *The Parisians*, vol. iv., Muir's beautiful version of Gray's *Elegy*, and the Dizzy pamphlet on the crisis. 8.—Revised and sent off the long letter to Lord Granville on the political situation which I wrote yesterday. Axe work. 9.—Tree-cutting with Herbert. Sent off with some final touches my version of the Shield and preface. 10.—Mr. Burnett [his agent] died at one A.M. Requiescat. I grieve over this good and able man sincerely, apart from the heavy care and responsibility of replacing him, which must fall on me of necessity. 15.—Worked with Herbert; we finished gravelling the path. It rather strains my chest. 16.—Off to town after an early breakfast. Reached C. H. T. about 3 P.M. Saw Lord Granville and others.

[478]

Chapter XIV. The Dissolution. (1874)

> ... Cette prétendue sagacité qui se croit profonde, quand elle suppose partout des intrigues savantes, et met de petits drames arrangés a la place de la vérité. II n'y a pas tant de préméditation dans les affaires humaines, et leur cours est plus naturel, que ne le croit le vulgaire.—GUIZOT.
>
> The spurious sagacity that thinks itself deep, because it everywhere takes for granted all sorts of knowing intrigues, and puts little artful dramas in the place of truth. There is less premeditation in human affairs, and their course is more natural than people commonly believe.

I

In the summer of 1873 before leaving London for Hawarden, Mr. Gladstone sent for the chairman of the board of inland revenue and for the head of the finance department of the treasury; he directed them to get certain information into order for him. His requests at once struck these experienced officers with a surmise that he was nursing some design of dealing with the income-tax. Here are two entries from his diary:—

> *Aug. 11, 1873.*—Saw Mr. Cardwell, to whom at the war office I told in deep secrecy my ideas of the *possible* finance of next year, based upon the abolition of income-tax and sugar duties, with partial compensation from spirit and death duties.
> *Sept. 29.*—Wrote a rough mem. and computation for budget of next year. I want eight millions to handle!

So much for the charitable tale that he only bethought him of the income-tax, when desperately hunting for a card to play at a general election.

The prospect was dubious and dark. To Mr. Bright he wrote from Hawarden (Aug. 14):—

> MY DEAR BRIGHT,—(Let us bid farewell to *Misters*.) ... As
> [479] to the parliamentary future of the question of education, we had better talk when we meet. I remember your saying well and wisely how we should look to the average opinion of the party. What we want at present is a *positive* force to carry us onward as a body. I do not see that this can be got out of local taxation, or out of the suffrage (whether we *act* in that matter or not, and individually I am more yes than no), or out of education. It may possibly, I think, be had out of *finance*. Of course I cannot as yet see my way on that subject; but until it is cleared, nothing else will to me be clear. If it can be worked into certain shapes, it may greatly help to mould the rest, at least for the time. I think the effect of the reconstruction may be described as follows: First, we have you. Secondly, we have emerged from the discredit and disgrace of the exposures by an administration of mild penal justice, which will be complete all round when Monsell has been disposed of. Thirdly, we have now before us a clean stage for the consideration of measures in the autumn. We must, I think, have a good bill of fare, or none. If we differ on the things to be done, this may end us in a way at least not dishonourable. If we agree on a good plan, it must come to good, *whether* we succeed or fail with it. Such are my crude reflections, and such my outlook for the future. Let me again say how sensible I am of the kindness, friendship, and public spirit with which you have acted in the whole of this matter.

In the early part of the year his mind was drawing towards a decision of moment. On January 8, 1874, he wrote a letter to Lord Granville, and the copy of it is docketed, “First idea of Dissolution.” It contains a full examination of the actual case in which they found themselves; it is instructive on more than one constitutional point, and it gives an entirely intelligible

explanation of a step that was often imputed to injurious and low-minded motives:—

> *Hawarden, Jan. 8, 1874.*—The signs of weakness multiply, and for some time have multiplied, upon the government, in the loss of control over the legislative action of the House of Lords, the diminution of the majority in the House of Commons without its natural compensation in increase of unity and discipline, and the almost unbroken series of [480]
> defeats at single elections in the country.[301] In truth the government is approaching, though I will not say it has yet reached, the condition in which it will have ceased to possess that amount of power which is necessary for the dignity of the crown and the welfare of the country; and in which it might be a godsend if some perfectly honourable difference of opinion among ourselves on a question requiring immediate action were to arise, and to take such a course as to release us collectively from the responsibilities of office.
>
> The general situation being thus unfavourable, the ordinary remedies are not available. A ministry with a majority, and with that majority not in rebellion, could not resign on account of adverse manifestations even of very numerous single constituencies, without making a precedent, and constitutionally a bad precedent; and only a very definite and substantive difficulty could warrant resignation without dissolution, after the proceedings of the opposition in March last, when they, or at any rate their leaders and their whips, brought the Queen into a ministerial crisis, and deserted her when there. If then we turn to consider dissolution, what would be its results? In my opinion the very best that could happen

[301] In 1871-73 the tories gained twenty-three seats against only one gained by the liberals; in the first three years of the government nine seats had been lost and nine gained.

"Individuals may recover from even serious sickness; it does not appear to be the way with governments."—Mr. Gladstone, *Nineteenth Century*, Sept. 1887.

would be that we should come back with a small majority composed of Irish home rulers and a decided minority without them; while to me it seems very doubtful whether even with home rulers counted in, we should command a full half of the House of Commons. In a word, dissolution means either immediate death, or at the best death a little postponed, and the party either way shattered for the time. For one I am anxious to continue where we are, because I am very loath to leave the party in its present menacing condition, without having first made every effort in our power to avert this public mischief.

If I have made myself intelligible up to this point, the question that arises is, can we make out such a course of policy for the session, either in the general conduct of business, or in some departments and by certain measures, as will with reasonable likelihood reanimate some portion of
[481] that sentiment in our favour, which carried us in a manner so remarkable through the election of 1868? I discuss the matter now in its aspect towards party: it is not necessary to make an argument to show that our option can only be among things all of which are sound in principle. First, then, I do not believe that we can find this recovery of vital force in our general administration of public business. As men, notwithstanding the advantage drawn from Bright's return, the nation appears to think that it has had enough of us, that our lease is out. It is a question of measures then: can we by any measures materially mend the position of the party for an impending election?...

Looking to legislation, there are but three subjects which appear to me to be even capable of discussion in the view I have presented. They are local taxation, the county suffrage, and finance. I am convinced it is not in our power to draw any great advantage, as a party, from the subject of local taxation.... Equally strong is my opinion with respect to the party bearings of the question of the county franchise. We have indeed already determined not to propose it as a

government. Had we done so, a case would have opened at once, comfortably furnished not with men opposing us on principle, like a part of those who opposed in 1866, but with the men of pretext and the men of disappointment, with intriguers and with egotists. And I believe that in the present state of opinion they would gain their end by something like the old game of playing redistribution against the franchise....

Can we then look to finance as supplying what we want? This is the only remaining question. It does not admit, as yet, of a positive answer, but it admits conditionally of a negative answer. It is easy to show what will prevent our realising our design through the finance of the year. We cannot do it, unless the circumstances shall be such as to put it in our power, by the possession of a very wide margin, to propose something large and strong and telling upon both the popular mind and the leading elements of the constituency.... We cannot do it, without running certain risks of the kind that were run in the budget of 1853: I mean without some impositions, as well as remissions, of taxes. We cannot do it, without a continuance of the favourable prospects of harvest and of business. Lastly, [482] we cannot do it unless we can frame our estimates in a manner to show our desire to adhere to the principles of economy which we proposed and applied with such considerable effect in 1868-70. But, subject to the fulfilment of these conditions, my opinion is that we *can* do it: can frame a budget large enough and palpably beneficial enough, not only to do much good to the country, but sensibly to lift the party in the public view and estimation. And this, although a serious sum will have to be set apart, even in the present year, for the claims of local taxation....

If we can get from three-quarters of a million upwards towards a million off the naval and military estimates jointly, then as far as I can judge we shall have left the country no reason to complain, and may proceed cheerily with our work; though we should not escape the fire of the opposition for having failed to maintain the level of Feb. 1870; which indeed

> we never announced as our ultimatum of reduction. I have had no communication with those of our colleagues who would most keenly desire reductions; I might say, with any one.... I will only add that I think a broad difference of opinion among us on such a question as this would be a difference of the kind which I described near the opening of this letter, as what might be in certain circumstances, however unwelcome in itself, an escape from a difficulty otherwise incapable of solution.
>
> Let me now wind up this long story by saying that my desire in framing it has been simply to grasp the facts, and to set aside illusions which appear to me to prevail among sections of the liberal party, nowhere so much as in that section which believes itself to be the most enlightened. If we can only get a correct appreciation of the position, I do not think we shall fail in readiness to suit our action to it; but I am bound to confess myself not very sanguine, if the *best* come to the best, as to immediate results, though full of confidence, if we act aright, as to the future and early reward.

II

Actual Occasion For Dissolution

In notes written in the last year of his life, Mr. Gladstone adds a detail of importance to the considerations set out in the letter to Lord Granville. The reader will have observed that among the conditions required for his operation on the income-tax he names economic estimates. In this quarter, he tells us, grave difficulties arose:—

[483]

> No trustworthy account of the dissolution of parliament which took place early in 1874 has ever been published. When I proposed the dissolution to the cabinet, they acceded to it without opposition, or, I think, even discussion. The actual occasion of the measure was known, I think, only to Lord

> Granville and Lord Cardwell with myself, it having a sufficient warrant from other sources.
>
> In 1871, the year of the abolition of purchase and other important army reforms, I had, in full understanding with Cardwell, made a lengthened speech, in which I referred to the immediate augmentations of military expenditure which the reforms demanded, but held out to the House of Commons the prospect of compensating abatements at early dates through the operation of the new system of relying considerably upon reserves for imperial defence.
>
> When Cardwell laid before me at the proper time, in view of the approaching session, his proposed estimates for 1874-5, I was strongly of opinion that the time had arrived for our furnishing by a very moderate reduction of expenditure on the army, some earnest of the reality of the promise made in 1871 which had been so efficacious in procuring the enlargement that we had then required. Cardwell, though not an extravagant minister, objected to my demand of (I think) £200,000. I conferred with Granville, who, without any direct knowledge of the subject, took my side, and thought Cardwell would give way. But he continued to resist; and, viewing the age of the parliament, I was thus driven to the idea of dissolution, for I regarded the matter as virtually involving the whole question of the value of our promises, an anticipation which has proved to be correct. Cardwell entered readily into the plan of dissolving, and moreover thought that if my views carried the day with the constituencies, this would enable him to comply.

The papers in my hands confirm Mr. Gladstone's recollection on this part of the transaction, except that Mr. Goschen, then at the head of the admiralty, was to some extent in the same [484] position as Mr. Cardwell. The prime minister was in active controversy with both the great spending departments, and with little chance of prevailing. It was this controversy that opened the door for immediate dissolution, though the general grounds

for dissolution at some near time were only too abundant. Here is his note of the position,—in a minute addressed to Mr. Cardwell and Mr. Goschen:—

> *Jan. 22, 1874.*—We arrived yesterday at the conclusion that, apart from this or that shade of view as to exact figure of the estimates, the measure now proposed stood well on its own general grounds. This being so, after consulting Lord Granville, and indeed at his suggestion, I have in a preparatory letter to the Queen founded myself entirely on general grounds. This being so, I would propose to consider the point raised between us as one adjourned, though with a perfect knowledge in each of our minds as to the views of the others. My statement to the cabinet must be on the same basis as my statement to the Queen. The actual decision of the estimates would stand over from to-morrow's cabinet, until we saw our way as to their position and as to the time for their production. I am sure I might reckon on your keeping the future as far as possible open, and unprejudiced by contracts for works or for building or construction. Any reference to economy which I make to-morrow will be in general terms such as I propose to use in an address. If I have made myself clear and you approve, please to signify it on this paper, or to speak to me as you may prefer. I am reluctant to go out, with my chest still tender, in the fog.

Cardwell, in the few words of his minute in reply makes no objection. Mr. Goschen says: “I quite take the same view as you do. Indeed, I had proposed myself to ask you whether what had passed between us had not better remain entirely confidential for the present, as it is best not to state differences where the statement of them is not indispensable.”

The diary for these important days is interesting:—

> *Jan.17, '74.*—The prospects of agreement with the two departments on estimates are for the present bad. 18.—This day

> I thought of dissolution. Told Bright of it. In evening at dinner told Granville and Wolverton. All seemed to approve. My first thought of it was as an escape from a difficulty. I soon saw on reflection that it was the best thing in itself. 19.—Confined all day in bed with tightness on the chest. Much physicking. 20.—Bed all day. I spent the chief part of the day and evening in reflection on our "crisis," and then in preparing a letter to go to the Queen for her information at once, and a long address for an unnamed constituency—almost a pamphlet—setting out the case of the government in an immediate appeal to the country. 21.—Altered and modified letter to the Queen, which went off. Came down at two. Much conversation to-day on the question of my own seat. 23.—Cabinet 12-1/4-4. Address further amended there on partial perusal. In evening corrected proofs of address, which runs well. A very busy stirring day of incessant action.

In the letter of Jan. 21 to the Queen, Mr. Gladstone recapitulates the general elements of difficulty, and apprises her Majesty that it will be his duty at the meeting of the cabinet fixed for the 23rd, to recommend his colleagues humbly and dutifully to advise an immediate dissolution, as the best means of putting an end to the disadvantage and the weakness of a false position. He trusts that the Queen may be pleased to assent. The Queen (Jan. 22) acknowledged the receipt of his letter "with some surprise," as she had understood him to say when last at Windsor that he did not think of recommending a dissolution until the end of the session or later. But she expressed her "full appreciation of the difficulties of Mr. Gladstone's position," and assented, thinking that "in the present circumstances it would be desirable to obtain an expression of the national opinion."

The next day (23rd) the cabinet met, and Mr. Gladstone in the evening reported the proceedings to the Queen:—

To the Queen.

Jan. 23, 1874.—... Mr. Gladstone laid before the cabinet a pretty full outline of the case as to the weakness of the government since the crisis of last March, and the increase of that weakness, especially of late, from the unfavourable
[486] character of local indications; as to the false position in which both the crown and the House of Commons are placed when there can be no other government than the one actually existing; finally, as to the present calls of business and prospects of the country, especially as to its finance, which are such as in Mr. Gladstone's judgment, to warrant the presentation of a very favourable picture of what may be effected with energy and prudence during the present year. In this picture is included, as Mr. Gladstone on Wednesday intimated might be the case, the total repeal of the income-tax. The cabinet unanimously concurred, upon a review of its grounds, in the wisdom of the proposed measure. It is as yet profoundly secret, but to-morrow morning it will be placed before the world with a lengthened and elaborate exposition, in the shape of an address from Mr. Gladstone to his constituents at Greenwich. There can be no doubt that a large portion of the public will at first experience that emotion of surprise which your Majesty so very naturally felt on receiving Mr. Gladstone's letter. But, judging from such indications as have reached them, the cabinet are disposed to anticipate that this course will be approved by all those who are in any degree inclined to view their general policy with sympathy or favour. Large portions, and the most important portions, of Mr. Gladstone's address were read to and considered by the cabinet, and it was in some respects amended at the suggestion of his esteemed colleagues. It is, however, so framed as not to commit them equally with himself, except only as to the remissions of taxes and aid to local rates contemplated in the finance of the year. This method of stating generally the case of the government in substance corresponds to the proceedings of Sir R. Peel in 1834-5, when he addressed the electors of Tamworth. Before concluding, Mr. Gladstone will

humbly offer to your Majesty a brief explanation. When he last adverted to the duration of the present parliament, his object was to remind your Majesty of the extreme point to which that duration might extend. When he had the honour of seeing your Majesty at Windsor,[302] the course of the local elections had been more favourable, and Mr. Gladstone had not abandoned the hope of retaining sufficient strength for the due conduct of affairs in the present House. On this question, [487]
the events of the last few weeks and the prospects of the present moment have somewhat tended to turn the scale in his mind and that of his colleagues.[303] But finally it was not within his power, until the fourth quarter of the financial year had well begun, to forecast the financial policy and measures which form a necessary and indeed the most vital part of the matter to be stated to the public. Immediately after he had been able sufficiently to ripen his own thoughts on the matter, he did not scruple to lay them before your Majesty; and your Majesty had yourself in one sense contributed to the present conclusion by forcibly pointing out to Mr. Gladstone on one or more occasions that in the event of difficulty, under the present peculiar circumstances, no alternative remained except a dissolution. The mild weather is very favourable to Mr. Gladstone, and if as he has prayed there shall be a council on Monday, he hopes to have the honour of coming down to Osborne.

To his eldest son he wrote on the following day:—

We here of the cabinet[304] and the whips are in admirable spirits. We dissolve on Finance. The surplus will be over

[302] Dec. 2, 1873.

[303] The conservatives had gained a seat at Stroud on Jan. 6, and greatly reduced the liberal majority at Newcastle-on-Tyne.

[304] "The continual loss of elections," Lord Aberdare wrote to his wife, "and the expediency of avoiding being further weakened in detail, have determined us to take at once the opinion of the country, and to stand or fall by it. I am rejoiced at this resolution."—*Aberdare Papers*, Jan. 23, 1874.

> five millions. We promise as in our judgment practicable,—1. Pecuniary aid to local taxation, but with reform of it. 2. Repeal of the income-tax. 3. Some great remission in the class of articles of consumption. (This last remission probably means sugar, but nothing is to be said by any member of the government as to choice of the article.) We make it a question of confidence on the *prospective* budget. As far as we can judge, friends will much approve our course, although for the public there may at first be surprise, and the enemy will be furious.

III

[488] The prime minister's manifesto to his constituents at Greenwich was elaborate and sustained. In substance it did no more than amplify the various considerations that he had set forth in his letter to Lord Granville. The pith of it was a promise to diminish local taxation, and to repeal the income-tax. At the same time marked relief was to be given to the general consumer in respect of articles of popular consumption. One effective passage dealt with the charge that the liberal party had endangered the institutions of the country. “It is time,” said Mr. Gladstone, “to test this trite and vague allegation. There has elapsed a period of forty, or more exactly forty-three years, since the liberal party acquired the main direction of public affairs. This followed another period of about forty years beginning with the outbreak of the revolutionary war, during which there had been an almost unbroken rule of their opponents, who claimed and were reputed to be the great preservers of the institutions of the country.” He then invited men to judge by general results, and declared that the forty years of tory rule closing in 1830 left institutions weaker than it had found them, whereas the liberal term of forty years left throne, laws, and institutions not weaker but much stronger. The address was a fine bold composition, but perhaps it would

have been more effective with a public that was impatient and out of humour, if it had been shorter.

Electoral Manifesto

The performance was styled by his rival "a prolix narrative," but it is said that in spite of this Mr. Disraeli read it with much alarm. He thought its freshness and boldness would revive Mr. Gladstone's authority, and carry the elections. His own counter-manifesto was highly artificial. He launched sarcasms about the Greenwich seat, about too much energy in domestic legislation, and too little in foreign policy; about an act of folly or of ignorance rarely equalled in dealing with the straits of Malacca (though for that matter not one elector in a hundred thousand had ever heard of this nefarious act). While absolving the prime minister himself, "certainly at present," from hostility to our national institutions and the integrity of the empire, he drew a picture of unfortunate adherents—some assailed the monarchy, others impugned the independence of the House of Lords, while [489] others would relieve parliament altogether from any share in the government of one portion of the United Kingdom; others, again, urged Mr. Gladstone to pursue his peculiar policy by disestablishing the anglican as he has despoiled the Irish church; even trusted colleagues in his cabinet openly concurred with them in their desire altogether to thrust religion from the place which it ought to occupy in national education. What is remarkable in Disraeli's address is that to the central proposal of his adversary he offered no objection. As for remission of taxation, he said, that would be the course of any party or any ministry. As for the promise of reduced local burdens and the abolition of the income-tax, why, these "were measures which the conservative party have always favoured and which the prime minister and his friends have always opposed."

By critics of the peevish school who cry for better bread than can be made of political wheat, Mr. Gladstone's proffer to do away with the income-tax has been contumeliously treated as dangling a shameful bait. Such talk is surely pharisaic stuff.

As if in 1852 Disraeli in his own address had not declared that the government would have for its first object to relieve the agricultural interest from certain taxes. Was that a bribe? As if Peel in 1834-5 had not set forth in the utmost detail all the measures that he intended to submit to parliament if the constituencies would give him a majority. Was this to drive an unprincipled bargain? As if every minister does not always go to the country on promises, and as if the material of any promise could be more legitimate than a readjustment of taxation. The proceeding was styled a sordid huckstering of a financial secret for a majority. Why was it more sordid to seek a majority for abolition of the income-tax, than it was sordid in Peel in 1841 to seek a majority for corn laws, or in whigs and Manchester men to seek to win upon free trade? Why is it an ignoble bargain to promise to remove the tax from income, and pure statesmanship to remove the tax from bread? "Give us a majority," said Mr. Gladstone, "and we will do away with income-tax, lighten local burdens, and help to free the breakfast table." If people believed
[490] him, what better reason could they have than such a prospect as this for retaining him in the place of their chief ruler?

IV

Parliament was dissolved on January 26, and the contending forces instantly engaged. Mr. Gladstone did not spare himself:—

> *Jan. 26, '74.*—8-3/4-5-3/4. To Osborne. Audience of H.M. who quite comprehends the provisional character of the position. ... Boundless newspaper reading. 28.—2-5. To Greenwich. Spoke an hour to 5000. An enthusiastic meeting, but the general prospects are far from clear.[305] 31.—Woolwich meeting. The meeting disturbed by design was

[305] It was an extraordinary feat for a Statesman of sixty-five who had quite recently been confined to his bed with bronchitis. The day was damp and drizzly; numbers, which are variously estimated from six to seven thousand,

> strangely brought round again. *Feb. 2.*—Third great meeting and speech of an hour at New Cross for Deptford. Much enthusiasm and fair order. 3.—Many telegrams and much conversation with Granville and Wolverton in the evening. The general purport was first indifferent, then bad. My own election for Greenwich after Boord the distiller, is more like a defeat than a victory, though it places me in parliament again. A wakeful night, but more I believe from a little strong coffee drunk incautiously, than from the polls, which I cannot help and have done all in my power to mend.

The Greenwich seat, the cause of such long perturbation, was saved after all, but as Mr. Gladstone wrote to a defeated colleague, "In some points of view it is better to be defeated outright, than to be pitched in like me at Greenwich." The numbers were Boord (C.) 6193, Gladstone (L.) 5968, Liardet (C.) 5561, Langley (L.) 5255.

The General Election

The conservative reaction was general. Scotland and Wales still returned a liberal majority, but even in these strongholds a breach was made—a net loss of 3 in Wales, of 9 in Scotland. From the English counties 145 tories were returned, and no more than 27 liberals, a loss of 13. In the greater boroughs, hitherto regarded as staunchly ministerial, some of the most populous returned tories. The metropolitan elections went against the government, and 7 seats were lost—three in the city, one in Westminster, in both cases by immense majorities. The net liberal loss in the English boroughs was 32. In England and Wales the tory majority was 105; in Great Britain it stood at 83. When all was over, the new House contained a conservative majority of 48, or on another estimate, of 50, but really, in Mr. Gladstone's words, "of much greater strength." [491]

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had to be as far as possible brought within the range of his voice, and his only platform was a cart with some sort of covering, in the front of which he had to stand bareheaded.—*Spectator*, Jan. 31, 1874.

Numbers, as Mr. Gladstone said afterwards, did not exhibit the whole measure of the calamity. An extraordinary portent arose in that quarter from which so many portents spring. "The liberal majority reckoned to have been returned from Ireland was at once found to be illusory. Out of the 105 members the liberals were little more than a dozen. The period immediately following the Church Act and Land Act had been chosen as one appropriate for a formal severance of the Irish national party from the general body of British liberals. Their number was no less than fifty-eight, an actual majority of the Irish representation. They assumed the name of home rulers, and established a separate parliamentary organisation. On some questions of liberal opinion co-operation was still continued. But, as regards the party, the weight of the home rulers clearly told more in favour of the conservative ministry than of the opposition; and the liberal party would have been stronger not weaker had the entire body been systematically absent."[306] Before the election was over, Mr. Chichester Fortescue had warned him that he expected defeat in the county of Louth, for which he had sat ever since 1847; the defeat came. Mr. Gladstone wrote to him (Feb. 11):—

> I receive with great concern your dark prognostication of the result of the Louth election. It would be so painful in a public view with regard to the gratitude of Irishmen, that I will still hope for a better result. But with reference to the latter part of your letter, I at once write to say that in the double event of your rejection and your wish, I consider your claim to a [492] peerage indisputable. It would be hard to name the man who has done for Ireland all that you have done, or any man that knew the greatest Irish questions as you know them.

Mr. Parnell, by the way, was not elected for Meath until April 1875.

[306] Mr. Gladstone on Electoral Pacts, *Nineteenth Century*, November 1878.

V

As the adverse verdict became more and more emphatic, Mr. Gladstone stated to the Queen (Feb. 13) what was the bias of his mind, on the question whether the expiring government should await its sentence from parliament. He had no doubt, he said, that this course was the one most agreeable to usage, and to the rules of parliamentary government; any departure from it could only be justified upon exceptional grounds. He was not, however, clear that this case, like that of 1868, was to be treated as exceptional, partly by reason of prevalent opinion, partly because it should be considered what is fair to an incoming administration with reference to the business, especially the financial business, of the year. Lord Granville from the first seems to have been against waiting for formal decapitation by the new House of Commons. To him Mr. Gladstone wrote (Feb. 7):—

> I presume you will answer Bismarck's kind telegram. Please to mention me in your reply or not as you think proper. As to the impending crisis of our fate, one important element, I admit, will be the feeling of the party. I have asked Peel (whose first feeling seems rather to be with you) to learn what he can. I tend to harden in my own view, principle and precedent seeming to me alike clear. There are four precedents of our own time—1835, 1841, 1852, 1859, under three ministers. The only case the other way is that of 1868 of which the circumstances were altogether peculiar. But I admit it to be very doubtful whether we should get beyond the address. On the other hand I admit freely that I have no title to press my view beyond a certain point.

To Meet Parliament Or Resign

"It is parliament," he argued, "not the constituencies, that ought to dismiss the government, and the proper function of the House of Commons cannot be taken from it without diminishing somewhat in dignity and authority." There would be reproach [493]

either way, he said; either it would be clinging to office, or it would be running away. To run away was in every circumstance of politics the thing to Mr. Gladstone most unbearable. According to Sir Robert Phillimore (Feb. 8) "Gladstone would have met parliament but his colleagues objected, though it seems they would have stood by him if he had pressed them to do so; but as he did not mean, or was not going, to fight in the van of opposition, he thought it unfair to press them."

> *Feb. 16, '74.*—Cabinet dinner 8-12. It went well. I did something towards snapping the ties and winding out of the coil. Conversation afterwards with Granville, on the flags up and down. Then with Wolverton. To bed at 1-3/4, but lay three hours awake (rare with me) with an overwrought brain. ... 17.—12-½-6. Went to Windsor, and on behalf of the cabinet resigned. Took with me *Merchant of Venice* and *Thomas à Kempis*, each how admirable in its way![307] 20.—Went by 5.10 to Windsor, final audience and kissed hands. Her Majesty very kind, the topics of conversation were of course rather limited. 21.—I cleared my room in Downing Street and bade it farewell, giving up my keys except the cabinet key. 28.—Set aside about 300 vols. of pamphlets for the shambles. *March 3.*—I have given up all my keys; quitted Downing Street a week ago; not an official box remains. But I have still the daily visit of a kind private secretary; when that drops all is over. 5.—Hamilton paid me his last visit. To-morrow I encounter my own correspondence single-handed.

[307] February 17, 1874.—"I was with the Queen to-day at Windsor for three-quarters of an hour, and nothing could be more frank, natural, and kind, than her manner throughout. In conversation at the audience, I of course followed the line on which we agreed last night. She assented freely to all the honours I had proposed. There was therefore no impediment whatever to the immediate and plenary execution of my commission from the cabinet; and I at once tendered our resignations, which I understand to have been graciously accepted. She left me, I have no doubt, to set about making other arrangements."

The Queen repeated a former proposal of a peerage. In returning some submissions for her approval, she wished "likewise to record her offer to Mr. Gladstone of a mark of her recognition of his services which, however, he declines from [494] motives which she fully appreciates." Mr. Gladstone writes to his brother Sir Thomas (Feb. 13):—

> Accept my best thanks for your kind note of yesterday. My reply to the Queen was first made twelve months ago when we proposed to resign simply from the failure of a great measure in H. of C. I repeated it this year with similar expressions of gratitude, but with the remark that even if my mind had been open on the question, I did not think I could have accepted anything while under that national condemnation which has been emphatically enough pronounced at the elections. I may be wrong in my view of the matter generally; but I can only judge for the best. I do not see that I am wanted or should be of use in the House of Lords, and there would be more discrepancy between rank and fortune, which is a thing on the whole rather to be deprecated. On the other hand, I know that the line I have marked out for myself in the H. of C. is one not altogether easy to hold; but I have every disposition to remain quiet there, and shall be very glad if I can do so.

VI

Letters from two of his colleagues explain the catastrophe. The shrewd Lord Halifax says to him (Feb 12):—

> As far as I can make out people are frightened—the masters were afraid of their workmen, manufacturers afraid of strikes, churchmen afraid of the nonconformists, many afraid of what is going on in France and Spain—and in very unreasoning fear have all taken refuge in conservatism. Ballot enabled them to do this without apparently deserting their principles and

> party. Things in this country as elsewhere are apt to run for a time in opposite directions. The reaction from the quiet of Palmerston's government gave you strength to remove four or five old-standing abuses which nobody had ventured to touch for years. The feelings of those who suffer from the removal of abuses are always stronger than those of the general public who are benefited. Gratitude for the Reform bill and its sequel of improvements hardly gave a liberal majority in 1835, and gratitude for the removal of the Irish church, purchase, etc., has not given us a majority in 1874.

[495]

Explanations Of Defeat

Mr. Bright wrote to him that as things had turned out, it would perhaps have been wiser first to secure the budget; with that and better organisation, the result might have been better three or six months later. In Lancashire, said Bright, publicans and Irishmen had joined together, one for delirium tremens and the other for religious education. The 25th clause and Mr. Forster's obstinacy, he added, had done much to wreck the ship. Mr. Gladstone's own diagnosis was not very different. To his brother Robertson he wrote (Feb. 6):—

> For many years in the House of Commons I have had more fighting than any other man. For the last five years I have had it almost all, and of it a considerable part has been against those "independent" liberals whose characters and talents seem to be much more appreciated by the press and general public, than the characters and talents of quieter members of the party. I do not speak of such men as ——, who leave office or otherwise find occasion to vindicate their independence, and vote against us on the questions immediately concerned. These men make very little noise and get very little applause. But there is another and more popular class of independent liberals who have been represented by the *Daily News*, and who have been one main cause of the weakness of the government, though they (generally) and their organ have rallied to us too late

during the election. We have never recovered from the blow which they helped to strike on the Irish Education bill.

But more immediately operative causes have determined the elections. I have no doubt what is the principal. We have been borne down in a torrent of gin and beer. Next to this has been the action of the Education Act of 1870, and the subsequent controversies. Many of the Roman catholics have voted against us because we are not denominational; and many of the dissenters have at least abstained from voting because we are. Doubtless there have been other minor agencies; but these are the chief ones. The effect must be our early removal from office. For me that will be a very great change, for I do not intend to assume the general functions of leader of the opposition, and my great ambition or design will be to spend the remainder of my days, if it please God, in tranquillity, [496] and at any rate in freedom from political strife.

When a short idle attempt was made in the new parliament to raise a debate upon the date and circumstances of the dissolution, Disraeli used language rightly called by Mr. Gladstone "generous." "The right honourable gentleman's friends," he said, "were silent, and I must confess I admire their taste and feeling. If I had been a follower of a parliamentary chief as eminent, even if I thought he had erred, I should have been disposed rather to exhibit sympathy than to offer criticism. I should remember the great victories which he had fought and won; I should remember his illustrious career; its continuous success and splendour, not its accidental or even disastrous mistakes."[308]

One word upon the place of this election in our financial history. In 1874, the prosperity of the country and the movement of the revenue gave an opportunity for repeal of the income-tax. That opportunity never recurred. The election of 1874 was the

[308] March 19, 1874.

fall of the curtain; the play that had begun in 1842 came to its last scene. It marked the decision of the electorate that the income-tax—introduced in time of peace by Peel and continued by Mr. Gladstone, for the purpose of simplifying the tariff and expanding trade—should be retained for general objects of government and should be a permanent element of our finance. It marked at the same time the prospect of a new era of indefinitely enlarged expenditure, with the income-tax as a main engine for raising ways and means. Whether this decision was wise or unwise, we need not here discuss.

[497]

Book VII. 1874-1880

Chapter I. Retirement From Leadership. (1874-1875)

> "ἐγὼ μὲν, ὦναξ, πρεσβύτερός τε ἤδη εἰμὶ καὶ βαρὺς ἀείρεσθαι; σὺ δέ τινα τῶνδε τῶν νεωτέρων κέλευε ταῦτα ποιέειν."—HERODOTUS iv. 150.
>
> "I am too old, O king, and slow to stir; so bid thou one of the younger men here do these things."

A member of the great government of 1868, in a letter to one of his family, gave an account of the final meeting of the cabinet:—

> *Feb. 17, 1874.*—I doubt—he says—whether I ever passed a more eventful evening than yesterday. The whole cabinet was assembled. We resolved after full discussion of pros and cons, and some slight difference of opinion, to resign at once. After which came the startling announcement that Gladstone would no longer retain the leadership of the liberal party, nor resume it, unless the party had settled its differences. He will not expose himself to the insults and outrages of 1866-8, and he has a keen sense of the disloyalty of the party during the last three years. He will sit as a private member and occasionally speak for himself, but he will not attend the House regularly, nor assume any one of the functions of leader. He does this not from anger, but because he says that it is absolutely necessary to party action to learn that all

[498] the duties and responsibilities do not rest on the leaders, but that followers have their obligations too. As a consequence of this Cardwell retires to the House of Lords. He will not take the leadership, nor will he consent to serve under any one but Gladstone. He is too old, he says. Lowe protests against the anarchical experiment, and talks of Hartington as leader. As neither Lowe, nor Bright, nor Goschen, nor Forster is in a position to act as leader, it may come to this, so that the liberal front benches of the two Houses will be entirely remodelled.[309]

Here is Mr. Gladstone's own account, written twenty-three years later, and confirmed by all other accessible papers of the moment:—

> I was most anxious to make the retirement of the ministry the occasion of my own. I had served for more than forty years. My age—65—was greater than that of Sir Robert Peel at his retirement in 1846, or at his death in 1850, and was much beyond that at which most of the leading commoners of the century had terminated their political career, together with their natural life. I felt myself to be in some measure out of touch with some of the tendencies of the liberal party, especially in religious matters. Sir A. Clark, whom I consulted, would give me on medical grounds no encouragement whatever. But I deeply desired an interval between parliament and the grave. In spite of the solicitations of my friends I persisted. For 1874 there was a sort of compromise "without prejudice." As having a title to some rest I was not a very regular attendant, but did not formally abdicate.

Reasons For Withdrawal

He found specific reasons for withdrawal in the state of the party (Feb. 12):—

[309] *Aberdare Papers.*

> 1. The absence of any great positive aim (the late plan [budget] having failed) for which to co-operate. 2. The difficulty of establishing united and vigorous action in the liberal party for the purposes of economy. 3. The unlikelihood of arriving at any present agreement respecting education.

In another fragment of the same date, he says:—

> I do not forget that I am in debt to the party generally for kindness, indulgence, and confidence, much beyond what I have deserved. Deeming myself unable to hold it together [499] from my present position in a manner worthy of it, I see how unlikely it is that I should hereafter be able to give any material aid in the adjustment of its difficulties. Yet if such aid should at any time be generally desired with a view to arresting some great evil or procuring for the nation some great good, my willingness to enter into counsel for the occasion would follow from all I have said. But always with the understanding that as between section and section I could not become a partisan, and that such interference even in the case of its proving useful would entail no obligation whatever on those accepting it, and carry with it no disturbance of any arrangement subsisting at the time.

The situation proved, as Lowe had foreseen, an anarchic experiment. Mr. Gladstone went up to London for the session, and followed his ordinary social course:—

> *March 9, 1874.*—Off at 4.45 to Windsor for the fête. We dined at St. George's Hall. I was presented to the Duchess of C. by the Queen, and had a few kind words from H.M. 11.—Archbishop Manning, 9-11. It is kind in him to come, but most of it is rather hollow work, limited as we are. 16.—Dined at Marlborough House. A civil talk with Disraeli. 20.—Finished *Vivian Grey*. The first quarter extremely clever, the rest trash.

> *May 15.*—Emperor of Russia's reception at 3.15. He thanked me for my conduct to Russia while I was minister. I assured his Majesty I had watched with profound interest the transactions of his reign, and the great benefits he had conferred upon his people. He hoped the relations of the two countries would always be good.... Dined at Marlborough House. Stafford House ball afterwards. The emperor complained of the burden and late hours of evening entertainments. Princess of Wales so nice about her picture. D[israeli] complained of my absence, said they could not get on without me. 20.—Dined at the F.O. to meet the emperor. It was very kind of Derby. Much work at Hawarden in arranging books and papers.

The House of Commons is hardly attractive to an irregular and
[500] perfunctory attendant; and Mr. Gladstone's thoughts all turned to other fields. To Mrs. Gladstone he wrote early in April:—

> The anti-parliamentary reaction has been stronger with me even than I anticipated. I am as far as possible from feeling the want of the House of Commons. I could cheerfully go there to do a work; but I hope and pray to be as little there as possible, except for such an aim. In London I think we were too much hustled to speak leisurely or effectually of the future. It will open for us by degrees. I shall be glad when the matter of money, after all a secondary one, is disentangled, but chiefly because it seems to put pressure upon you. I spoke to Stephen about these matters on Saturday; he was kind, reasonable, and in all ways as satisfactory as possible. There is one thing I should like you to understand clearly as to my view of things, for it is an essential part of that view. I am convinced that the welfare of mankind does not now depend on the state or the world of politics; the real battle is being fought in the world of thought, where a deadly attack is made with great tenacity of purpose and over a wide field, upon the

> greatest treasure of mankind, the belief in God and the gospel of Christ.

In June Sir Stephen Glynne died,—"a dark, dark day." "My brother-in-law," wrote Mr. Gladstone at a later date, "was a man of singular refinement and as remarkable modesty. His culture was high and his character one of deep interest. His memory was on the whole decidedly the most remarkable known to me of the generation and country. His life, however, was retired and unobtrusive; but he sat in parliament, I think, for about fifteen years, and was lord-lieutenant of his county."

> I thank you much—Mr. Gladstone said to the Duke of Argyll—for your kind note. Your sympathy and that of the duchess are ever ready. But even you can hardly tell how it is on this occasion needed and warranted. My wife has lost the last member of a family united by bonds of the rarest tenderness, the last representative of his line, the best of brothers, who had ever drawn closer to her as the little rank was thinned. As for me, no one can know what our personal relations were, without knowing the interior details of a long family history, and efforts and struggles in common carried on through a long series of years, which riveted into the closest union our original affection. He was a very rare man, but we grieve not for him; he sleeps the sleep of the just. The event is a great one also to the outward frame of our life here.[310] [501]

Ecclesiastical Debate

In the same letter he says it is most painful to him to be dragged into ecclesiastical turmoil, as for example by the Scotch patronage bill, which he considers precipitate, unwise, and daring, or the bill directed against the endowed schools commissioners, of whom his brother-in-law, Lord Lyttelton, was one. In the last case he acted as a leader of an organised party, but in the more important instance of a bill devised, as Mr. Disraeli said, to

[310] See vol. i. p. 337.

put down ritualism, his dissent from most of those around him fulfilled all the anticipations that had pointed to retirement. The House was heartily in favour of the bill, and what is called the country earnestly supported it, though in the cabinet itself at least four ministers were strenuously hostile. Mr. Gladstone writes to his wife a trenchant account of his vigorous dealing with a prominent colleague who had rashly ventured to mark him for assault. He sent word to the two archbishops that if they carried a certain amendment he should hold himself "altogether discharged from maintaining any longer the establishment of the church." He wrote to Lord Harrowby when the recess came:—

> I think, or rather I am convinced, that the effect *either* of one or two more ecclesiastical sessions of parliament such as the last, or of any prolonged series of contentious proceedings under the recent Act, upon subjects of widespread interest, will be to disestablish the church. I do not feel the dread of disestablishment which you may probably entertain: but I desire and seek so long as standing ground remains, to avert, not to precipitate it.

To another correspondent—

> Individually I have serious doubts whether the whole of the penal proceedings taken in this country with respect to church
> [502] matters from the day of Dr. Hampden downwards, have not done considerably more harm than good. There is no doubt at all that all the evils, of whatever kind, at which they were aimed, exist at this moment among us in a far more aggravated shape than when they began.... My object and desire has ever been and still is, to keep the church of England together, both as a church and as an establishment. As a church, I believe she is strong enough, by virtue of the prayer-book, to hold together under all circumstances; but as an establishment, in my opinion, she is not strong enough to bear either serious secession or prolonged parliamentary agitation.

Finally, in a letter dated from Whittinghame (Nov. 17)—

> There are already too many causes of demoralisation operating upon the House of Commons. If it is also to become a debased copy of an ecclesiastical council, all the worst men and worst qualities of the worst men will come to the front, and the place will become intolerable.

Even any member of parliament who shares none of Mr. Gladstone's theology, may sympathise to the full with his deep disgust at theologic and ecclesiastical discussions as conducted in that secular air. We can easily understand how detestable he found it, and how those discussions fortified his sense of estrangement from the ruling sentiments of the parliamentary party of which he was still the titular leader.

Of course the whigs, always for keeping a parliamentary church in its proper place, disliked his line. Liberals like Thirlwall read his speeches "with great pain and suspicion," and declared their confidence to be shaken. Hardly any section was completely satisfied. His mind in the autumn and winter of 1874 was absorbed, as we shall see within a few pages, in an assault upon the decrees of the Vatican Council of 1870. This assault, as he told Lord Granville (Dec. 7, 1874), while tending "to hearten" the party generally, was against his resumption of formal leadership, because it widened the breach with the Irishmen in the House of Commons. Apart from this there were many questions, each with a group of adherents to a special view, but incapable of being pursued by common and united action. He ran through the list in writing to Lord Granville. It has historic [503] interest:—

> 1. Extension of the suffrage, with redistribution of seats abreast or in the rear. 2. Disestablishment in Scotland, England. 3. Land laws. 4. Retrenchment. 5. Colonial policy, territorial extension of the empire. 6. Reform of local government taxation. 7. Secular education. 8. Undenominational

> education. 9. Irish affairs. On no one of these is there known to exist a plan desired by the entire party, or by any clear and decisive majority of it.

On the whole, he was persuaded that neither the party generally nor the country desired another period of active reforms, even if he were fit to conduct them. Besides this he confessed his "apprehension that differences would spring up, and great shrinking from any breach with the party, and a determination, often expressed, never, if he could help it, to lead one branch of it against another." In many forms he carried Lord Granville with him round the circle of his arguments. He once sent his points on half-a-dozen scraps of paper. Granville playfully replied, "I should like to treat them as old Lord Bessborough used to treat his playing-cards when luck was adverse—tear them up into small bits and toss them in the fire." Nothing shook him, not even Mrs. Gladstone's misgivings. To her he wrote from Carlton House Terrace on the eve of the session of 1875:—

> Now for the grave matter about the leadership. I have had much conversation with Granville and Cardwell, and I am going to see Hartington, also Goschen, to-morrow. My letter is rewritten and improved, but I am obliged to stand to my conclusion, for many reasons. Among them the church reason is one of the most serious, and the other the undefined and prolonged character of the service if now undertaken. This, while arguing and deprecating, they admit I think to a great extent. Our old colleagues are inclined to come up on Thursday if they can, and this will be rather to hear than to debate. Hartington will succeed. I am indeed sorry that you and I have not been able to take the same view of
> [504] this important subject, but you know that I am acting on convictions very long entertained, and will I am sure believe that I have probed myself deeply, and used all the means in my power to get at a right conclusion. Nay, I think you will be more reconciled, when I tell you that Granville did

not really see his way either to a nominal leadership, or to making any arrangement by which I could after a short time with some certainty have escaped. I saw Clark last night and this morning; he gives an excellent account of me and makes it impossible for me to plead health as my reason.

The drama went rapidly forward:—

Jan. 12.—I find that the agreement made yesterday that I should meet my former colleagues on Monday will require me to remain until this day, though after a pretty busy morning the pressure is less. I have, however, to preside in the evening at the meeting of the Metaphysical Society, and to listen, though I hope nothing more, to a tough discussion. Manning, I am sorry to say, will be there. His pamphlet is at length going to press, and will extend he says to 150 pages. Newman is not out yet.

11 Carlton House Terrace, Jan. 14, '75.—This great affair is nearly arranged. My old colleagues all submit under protest; and I shall be free. An article in the *Times* this morning is undisguisedly aimed at getting rid of me; but it does not express any of their feelings. We have had a morning at Granville's; Halifax, Granville, Cardwell, Hartington, Aberdare, Forster, Carlingford, Stansfeld, Selborne, Goschen, Lowe, Kimberley,—in short all, I think, except Argyll and Bright. There was argument and exhortation, and much kindness. My letter to Granville will be accompanied by a short reply from him expressing difference of opinion and regret. They are afraid of being blamed by the party if they seem to show indifference.

The Queen thanked Mr. Gladstone for communicating to her his resolution of retiring from the more active duties of parliamentary life. She was not entirely unprepared for it after what he told her himself last year. “She knows that his zeal and untiring energy have always been exerted with the desire of

advancing the welfare of the nation and maintaining the honour of the crown, and she thanks him for his loyal assurances of support on all occasions when it may become necessary." [505]

Bright And Other Colleagues

The Duke of Argyll wrote "sincerely to congratulate" him upon his withdrawal. Bright on the other hand (Jan. 17) said he could not applaud, yet he would not blame: Mr. Gladstone's course seemed so unfortunate if not disastrous to the great public interests committed to him:—

> For myself, says Bright, if I could have foreseen either the result of the election of last year, or your retirement from the conduct of the party, I should certainly have withdrawn from parliament, where now I seem to have quite as little of duty or of a mission as you have. The front opposition bench is full of discord, and when you are not there full of jealousy, and I find myself without any particular attraction to any particular part of the House. However, I will not complain; some door of escape may open for me, and I can become a spectator as you are proposing to be.
>
> I hope on some occasion I may have the chance of seeing you when you come to town. I have had so much pleasure in your friendship, and have gained so much from it, that I would fain hope it need not cease now, when our association will necessarily be less frequent than it has been of late years. Whether you come back to the political field or turn wholly to study and to literature, I am sure you will be usefully employed, and I hope that nothing but blessing may rest upon all your labours.

The feeling among liberals in the country was of deep dismay. Some of the whigs doubtless found solace in the anticipation that a new middle party might be formed, with "a recovery of the old liberal position demolished for the time by John Mill, Gladstone, and Cobden."[311] But this was limited to a narrow circle. "All

[311] *Blachford's Letters*, p. 362.

sunshine is gone out of politics," was a general phrase. The news was compared by one correspondent to Gelon's message to the Greeks, that the spring was taken out of their year.[312]

An organ of the stiff nonconformists said,[313] "Against his government we felt that we had a great grievance; for himself, [506] the nonconformists of this country have long cherished a loyalty more fervent, we are inclined to imagine, than that with which he has been regarded by any other section of the community. He, beyond all other modern statesmen, with perhaps here and there a doubtful exception, gave us the impression of a man who regarded politics as a part of Christian duty." And the same writers most truly added, "We do not know what the English people have done for Mr. Gladstone that can be compared for a moment with what Mr. Gladstone has done for them. Claims on him we have none. He has far more than discharged any debt that he could have owed to the nation." These words are a just remonstrance against the somewhat tyrannical conventions of English public life.

When the session began, he wrote to Mrs. Gladstone (Feb. 15): "I came down to the House and took my seat nearly in the same spot as last year, finding Bright my neighbour, with which I was very well pleased. Granville and Hartington both much preferred my continuing *on* the front bench to my going elsewhere." Lord Hartington, strongly encouraged against his own inclinations by Mr. Gladstone, accepted a thankless and unpromising post, and held it with honour and credit for five difficult years to come.

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[312] *Herod.* vii. 157.
[313] *Congregationalist*, Feb. 1875, p. 66.

Chapter II. Vaticanism. (1874-1875)

> Let no susceptibilities, puritan, protestant, anglican, or other, be startled if we observe that Rome is, and may long be, in some important respects, the centre of the Christian world. It is indeed a centre which repels as well as attracts; which probably repels even more than it attracts; but which, whether repelling or attracting, influences.—-GLADSTONE (1875).

I

One question, as the reader by this time well knows, living deepest in Mr. Gladstone's heart and mind from his first book in 1838 onwards, was the relation of the churches to modern society. English statesmen are wont to be either blind to the existence of such a question, or else they seek an easy refuge from it in a perfunctory erastianism, sometimes intellectually refined, sometimes a little brutish, but always shallow. In all the three great branches of Christianity, the Latin, the Greek or orthodox, the protestant, Mr. Gladstone's interest was incessant, sincere, and profound. It covered their theology, their organisation, their history and principles of growth, the bearings of their system upon individual character and social well-being all over Europe. He was one of the very few public men capable of discerning that the fall of the temporal power of the pope marked a more startling change and a profounder crisis in human history, than the unification of Italy, the unification of Germany, the reconstructed republic in France, perhaps even than the preservation of the American union. He knew the force of ideas in the world; he realised the vast transformations that had in their succession swept over the minds of men since cardinal dogmas had been established; he comprehended the motion in articles of faith, as men made their "voyagings through strange seas of thought";

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he was alive to the fact that moral crises brought on by change in intellectual outlook and temperature, are of deeper concern than questions of territory, or dynasty, or form of government. The moral crisis is what reaches furthest and matters most. A movement of the first magnitude was accentuated by Pius IX., when by the Syllabus of 1864 he challenged modern society in all its foundations, its aims, its principles, in the whole range of its ideals. Some called this daring ultimatum the gravest event since the French uprising in 1789. The Syllabus prepared the way for a more elaborately organised operation on behalf of papal authority. The train was secretly laid for a grand reaction, a grand re-installation of the Christian faith.[314]

The Two Schools

The pope had been despoiled of territory, his sway within the walls of Rome itself was in constant danger, his most powerful protector north of the Alps had been weakened and humiliated by protestant Prussia. He was now to be compensated for his calamities by a majestic demonstration of his hold upon the spiritual allegiance of millions of adherents in every portion of the habitable globe. The twentieth ecumenical council assembled in St. Peter's at Rome on December 8, 1869. In this gathering of catholic prelates from both hemispheres, two antagonistic schools confronted one another. The ultramontanes held that the revolutionary welter and confusion of the modern world could only be healed by solemn affirmation of the principle of sovereign authority lodged in an infallible pope, with absolute power to define by that apostolic authority what ought to be held as articles of faith or morals. The assumptions, the standards, the ruling types of the modern age, they boldly encountered with rigid iteration of maxims of old time, imposing obedience and submission to a fixed social order and a divinely commissioned hierarchy. Inflexibility was to be the single watchword by which the church could recover a world that, from Naples even to

[314] See Cecconi's *Storia del Conc. Vat.* i. p. 3. For Mr. Gladstone's earlier views on the temporal power, see above, vol. i. p. 403.

Mexico, seemed to be rapidly drifting away from her. The
[509] opposing school took other ground. Perhaps they saw that supremacy is one thing, and infallibility another thing quite different. The liberal catholics did not contest the dogma of papal infallibility; they questioned the expediency of its proclamation; they were for associating ideas of religion with ideas of liberty; they were not for extending the domain of miracle and the supernatural.

Then as in the old historic councils, influence of race and nation had decisive effects. It could not be otherwise in what was in essence a conflict between a centralised doctrinal authority on the one hand, and the inextinguishable tendency towards national churches on the other. The Italian bishops went with the pope. The Germans, as of old they had been for emperor against priest, were now on the side of freedom against what certain of them did not hesitate to call tyranny and fraud. Some of the ablest of the French were true to Gallican tradition and resisted the decree. Among the most active and uncompromising of all the ultramontane party was our English Manning.[315]

II

At the end of November 1869, Acton had written to Mr. Gladstone from Rome. "Your letter is a very sad one," Mr. Gladstone answered. "I feel as deep and real an interest in the affairs of other Christian communions as in my own; and most of all in the case of the most famous of them all, and the one within which the largest number of Christian souls find their spiritual food." Before Manning left for Rome, an amiable correspondence took place between Mr. Gladstone and him. "How sad it is for us both"—this was Mr. Gladstone's starting-point—"considering our personal relations, that we should now be in this predicament,

[315] See Purcell, ii. chap. 16.

that the things which the one looks to as the salvation of faith and church, the other regards as their destruction."

To Mr. Odo Russell, now the informal agent of the British government in Rome, the prime minister wrote:—

> It is curious that Manning has so greatly changed his character. When he was archdeacon with us, all his strength was thought [510] to lie in a governing faculty, and in its wise moderation. Now he is ever quoted as the *ultra* of ultras, and he seems greatly to have overshot his mark. The odds seem to be that the child yet unborn will rue the calling of this council. For if the best result arrive in the triumph of the fallibilitarians, will not even this be a considerable shock to the credit and working efficacy of the papal system? You must really be *all* eyes and ears, a very Argus in both organs, until the occasion has gone by.

As for the issue of the council, Acton, having Mr. Odo Russell in agreement with him, from the first conveyed to Mr. Gladstone his opinion that the pope would prevail.

> The only hope in my mind, said Mr. Gladstone in reply, is that there may be a real minority, and that it may speak plainly. A few bold men would easily insure themselves a noble immortality. But will *any* have the courage? The Italian government have one and only one method in their hands of fighting the pope: and that is to run, against nomination from Rome, the old and more popular methods of choosing bishops by clerical election, with the *approbation of the flock*.[316] Unless they resort to this they can do nothing.
>
> All the accounts from Rome, he tells Lacaita (Jan. 2, 1870), are as bad as possible. For the first time in my life, I

[316] "Outside the Roman state, I am amazed at the Italian government giving over into the hands of the pope not only the nomination to the bishoprics as spiritual offices, but a nomination which is to carry with it the temporalities of the sees. They ought to know their own business best; but to me it seems that this is liberality carried into folly; and I know that some Italians think so."—*To Lord Granville, Dec. 21, 1870.*

> shall now be obliged to talk about popery; for it would be a scandal to call the religion they are manufacturing at Rome by the same name as that of Pascal, or of Bossuet, or of Ganganelli. The truth is that ultramontanism is an anti-social power, and never has it more undisguisedly assumed that character than in the Syllabus.

Issue Of The Council

The French government wrote despatches of mild protest but said nothing of withdrawing their garrison. Mr. Gladstone and Lord Clarendon were for informing the Roman court that they were cognizant of the French despatches, and approved of their tenour. The Queen and the cabinet, however, were entirely averse [511] to meddling with the council, and nothing was done officially. This did not prevent Mr. Gladstone from telling Archbishop Manning what impediments would be placed in the way of Irish legislation by the state of English feeling as to the Syllabus and other papal proceedings. "*My* feelings and convictions," he says (April 16), "are as you well know decidedly with your 'opposition,' which I believe to be contending for the religious and civil interests of mankind against influences highly disastrous and menacing to both. But the prevailing opinion is that it is better to let those influences take their course, and work out the damage which they will naturally and surely entail upon the see of Rome and upon what is bound to it." In parliament there was an utter aversion to the Roman policy, and he gives instances, noting even a change of opinion about the Irish land bill. "What I have described is no matter of speculation. I know it by actual and daily touch. I am glad you have moved me to state it in some detail. It is to me matter of profound grief, especially as regards land in Ireland."

To Lord Acton:—

> Of all the prelates at Rome, none have a finer opportunity, to none is a more crucial test now applied, than to those of the United States. For if there, where there is nothing of

> covenant, of restraint, or of equivalent between the church and the state, the propositions of the Syllabus are still to have the countenance of the episcopate, it becomes really a little difficult to maintain in argument the civil rights of such persons to toleration, however conclusive be the argument of policy in favour of granting it. I can hardly bring myself to speculate or care on what particular day the foregone conclusion is to be finally adopted. My grief is sincere and deep, but it is at the whole thing, so ruinous in its consequences as they concern faith. In my view, the size of the minority, though important, is not nearly so important as the question whether there will be a minority at all.

There was a minority. In a division taken at a late stage, 451 composed the majority, 88 resisted, and 62 were for a new examination. Then the minority turned their backs on Rome; and on July 18 the definition of infallibility was acclaimed in St. [512] Peter's in presence of the pope by 533 against 2.

Mr. Gladstone is very glad when Clarendon instructs Mr. Russell to turn his back on the festivities at Rome. “The whole proceeding has been monstrous, and it will hereafter become one of the laughing-stocks of history. The fanaticism of the middle ages is really sober compared with that of the nineteenth century.” “The proclamation of Infallibility,” he said to Bishop Moriarty, “I must own I look upon as the most portentous (taking them singly), of all events in the history of the Christian church.”

III

The next day, as we know, war was declared by France against Germany, the French garrison left Rome, and on September 20 the Italians marched in.

A month before the war broke out, Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Clarendon: “I would avoid any official support of the

Italian application to France for the evacuation of Rome, by saying that this country had always abstained from mixing in that question; and that we were the more induced to persevere in that policy from being well convinced that the French government is perfectly aware that in this country the occupation of any part of the pontifical territories by French troops is regarded with regret, pain, and disapproval. Further, that those who most strongly entertain these sentiments, are generally the persons who most highly value, and have most striven to promote, the good understanding between France and England."

The occupation of Rome by the Italian government brought upon Mr. Gladstone various demands and movements from different parts of the country. His cabinet agreed that the proper course was to decline all interference with a view to the restoration of the temporal power, though they accepted the task of promoting, by means of friendly representations, arrangements to secure the pontiff's freedom and becoming support. Then some of his presbyterian friends asked him why he should even do so much as this, when he would take no such steps for the moderator of the free church. Now consider, Mr. Gladstone replied: "the pope is a sovereign who was in lawful possession of large revenues, and who had charged himself with the support of a body of cardinals, ministers, nuncios, servants, and guards out of those revenues. He has been dispossessed, not for any fault of his own, but because clerical dominion was deemed intolerable. In the maintenance of the pope and his court, followers and agents, six millions of our fellow-subjects or thereabouts are deeply interested; and they are making demands upon us which we are forced to decline. But I should for one be ashamed to deny that there are the strongest equitable claims upon the Italian government growing out of the past state of things; that in these equitable claims the six millions I speak of have a real interest and share; and as the matter is international, and they have no *locus standi* with the Italian government, it is our part so far to

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plead their cause if need be."

IV

Visit To Munich

Four years elapsed before Mr. Gladstone was in a position to follow up his strong opinions on the injury done, as he believed, to human liberty by the Vatican decrees. But the great debate between ultramontanes and old catholics was followed by him with an interest that never slackened. In September 1874 he went to Munich, and we can hardly be wrong in ascribing to that visit the famous tract which was to make so lively a stir before the end of the year. His principal object was to communicate with Dr. Döllinger, and this object, he tells Mrs. Gladstone, was fully gained. "I think," he says, "I have spent two-thirds of my whole time with Dr. Döllinger, who is indeed a most remarkable man, and it makes my blood run cold to think of *his* being excommunicated in his venerable but, thank God, hale and strong old age. In conversation we have covered a wide field. I know no one with whose mode of viewing and handling religious matters I more cordially agree.... He is wonderful, and simple as a child."

"I think it was in 1874," Döllinger afterwards mentioned, "that I remember Gladstone's paying me a visit at six o'clock in the [514] evening. We began talking on political and theological subjects, and became, both of us, so engrossed with the conversation, that it was two o'clock at night when I left the room to fetch a book from my library bearing on the matter in hand. I returned with it in a few minutes, and found him deep in a volume he had drawn out of his pocket—true to his principle of never losing time—during my momentary absence."[317] "In the course of a walk out of Munich in the travelling season of 1874," Mr. Gladstone wrote sixteen years later, "Dr. Döllinger told me

[317] *Conversations of Döllinger*, by Louise von Köbell, p. 100.

that he was engaged in the work of retrial through the whole circle of his Latin teaching and knowledge. The results were tested in his proceedings at Bonn, when he attempted to establish a *formula concordiae* upon the questions which most gravely divided Christendom."[318] Among other topics Mr. Gladstone commended to his mentor the idea of a republication in a series, of the best works of those whom he would call the Henotic or Eirenic writers on the differences that separate Christians and churches from one another. He also read Pichler on the theology of Leibnitz, not without suspicion that it was rather Pichler than Leibnitz. But neither Leibnitz nor Pichler was really in his mind.

After the session of 1874, when the public ear and mind had been possessed by the word Ritualism, he had as usual sought a vent in a magazine article for the thoughts with which he was teeming.[319] He speaks with some disdain of the question whether a handful of the clergy are or are not engaged in "an utterly hopeless and visionary effort to Romanise the church and people of England." At no time, he says, since the sanguinary reign of Mary has such a scheme been possible. Least of all, he proceeds, could the scheme have life in it "when Rome has substituted for the proud boast of *semper eadem* a policy of violence and change
[515] in faith; 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." If these strong words expressed his state of mind before he went abroad, we may readily imagine how the Bavarian air would fan the flame.

Though Dr. Döllinger himself—"so inaccessible to religious

[318] Mr. Gladstone in *Speaker*, Jan, 18, 1890.

[319] *Gleanings*, vi. pp. 107-191. There the reader will also find (p. 141) the six resolutions deemed by him to furnish a safer and wiser basis of legislation than the Public Worship Regulation Act.

passions"—was not aware of the purpose of his English friend, there can be little doubt that Mr. Gladstone returned from Munich with the same degree of internal ferment as that which had possessed his mind on his return from Naples three-and-twenty years before. In October he writes to Lord Acton from Hawarden:—

> What you have said on the subject of ultramontanism and of the mode in which it should be handled, appears to me to be as wise and as good as is possible. It is really a case for hitting hard, but for hitting the right men. In anything I say or do on the subject, I would wish heartily and simply to conform to the spirit of your words. But I feel myself drawn onwards. Indeed some of your words help to draw me. The question with me now is whether I shall or shall not publish a tract which I have written, and of which the title would probably be, "The Vatican Decrees in their bearing on Civil Allegiance: a Political Expostulation." I incline to think that I ought to publish it. If it were in your power and will to run over here for a night or two I should seek to profit by your counsel, and should ask you to read as much of the MS. as your patience would endure. A more substantial attraction would be that I could go over much of my long and interesting conversations with Döllinger.

V

Publication Of The Pamphlet

The pamphlet[320] appeared in November, and was meant for an argument that the decree of infallibility aimed a deadly blow at the old historic, scientific, and moderate school; it was a degradation of the episcopal order; it carried to its furthest point that spirit of absolutist centralisation, which in its excesses is as [516]

[320] *The Vatican Decrees in their bearing on Civil Allegiance: a Political Expostulation.*

fatal to vigorous life in the church, as in the state; it overthrew the principle not even denied by the council of Trent in the sixteenth century, that the pope and his judgments were triable by the assembled representatives of the Christian world.

Thrice in history it seemed as if the constitutional party in the church was about to triumph: at the council of Constance in the fifteenth century; in the conflict between the French episcopate and Innocent XI. in the days of Bossuet; and thirdly, when Clement XIV., exactly a hundred years before now, dealt with the Jesuits and "levelled in the dust the deadliest foes that mental and moral liberty have ever known." From July 1870 all this had passed away, and the constitutional party had seen its death-warrant signed and sealed. The "myrmidons of the apostolic chamber" had committed their church to revolutionary measures. The vast new claims were lodged in the reign of a pontiff, who by the dark Syllabus of 1864 had condemned free speech, a free press, liberty of conscience, toleration of nonconformity, the free study of civil and philosophic things independently of church authority, marriage unless sacramentally contracted, and all definition by the state of the civil rights of the church.

The Pamphlet

"It has been a favourite purpose of my life," Mr. Gladstone said, "not to conjure up, but to conjure down, public alarms. I am not now going to pretend that either foreign foe or domestic treason can, at the bidding of the court of Rome, disturb these peaceful shores. But although such fears may be visionary, it is more visionary still to suppose for one moment that the claims of Gregory VII., of Innocent III., and of Boniface VIII. have been disinterred in the nineteenth century, like hideous mummies picked out of Egyptian sarcophagi, in the interests of archæology, or without a definite and practical aim." What, then, was the clear and foregone purpose behind the parade of all these astonishing reassertions? The first was—by claims to infallibility in creed, to the prerogative of miracles, to dominion over the unseen world—to satisfy spiritual appetites, sharpened

into reaction and made morbid by "the levity of the destructive speculations so widely current, and the notable hardihood of the anti-Christian writing of the day." This alone, however, would [517] not explain the deliberate provocation of all the "risks of so daring a raid upon the civil sphere." The answer was to be found in the favourite design, hardly a secret design, of restoring by the road of force when any favourable opportunity should arise, and of re-erecting, the terrestrial throne of the popedom, "even if it could only be re-erected on the ashes of the city, and amidst the whitening bones of the people."

And this brings the writer to the immediate practical aspects of his tract. "If the baleful power which is expressed by the phrase *Curia Romana*, and not at all adequately rendered in its historic force by the usual English equivalent 'Court of Rome,' really entertains the scheme, it doubtless counts on the support in every country of an organised and devoted party; which, when it can command the scales of political power, will promote interference, and while it is in a minority, will work for securing neutrality. As the peace of Europe may be in jeopardy, and as the duties even of England, as one of its constabulary authorities, might come to be in question, it would be most interesting to know the mental attitude of our Roman catholic fellow-countrymen in England and Ireland with reference to the subject; and it seems to be one on which we are entitled to solicit information." Too commonly the spirit of the convert was to be expressed by the notorious words, "a catholic first, an Englishman afterwards"—words that properly convey no more than a truism, "for every Christian must seek to place his religion even before his country in his inner heart; but very far from a truism in the sense in which we have been led to construe them." This, indeed, was a new and very real "papal aggression." For himself, Mr. Gladstone said, it should not shake his allegiance to "the rule of maintaining equal civil rights irrespectively of religious differences." Had he not given conclusive indications of that view, by supporting in

parliament as a minister since the council, the repeal in 1871 of the law against ecclesiastical titles, whose enactment he had opposed twenty years before?

That the pamphlet should create intense excitement, was
[518] inevitable from the place of the writer in the public eye, from the extraordinary vehemence of the attack, and above all from the unquenchable fascination of the topic. Whether the excitement in the country was more than superficial; whether most readers fathomed the deep issues as they stood, not between catholic and protestant, but between catholic and catholic within the fold; whether in fastening upon the civil allegiance of English Romanists Mr. Gladstone took the true point against Vaticanism—these are questions that we need not here discuss. The central proposition made a cruel dilemma for a large class of the subjects of the Queen; for the choice assigned to them by assuming stringent logic was between being bad citizens if they submitted to the decree of papal infallibility, and bad catholics if they did not. Protestant logicians wrote to Mr. Gladstone that if his contention were good, we ought now to repeal catholic emancipation and again clap on the fetters. Syllogisms in action are but stupid things after all, unless they are checked by a tincture of what seems paradox.[321] Apart from the particular issue in his Vatican pamphlet, Mr. Gladstone believed himself to be but following his own main track in life and thought in his assault upon "a policy which declines to acknowledge the high place assigned to liberty in the counsels of Providence, and which upon the pretext of the abuse that like every other good she suffers, expels her from its system."

[321] Republishing his article on ritualism in 1878 (*Gleanings*, vi. p. 127) Mr. Gladstone appends in a footnote on the passage that stated the anti-vatican campaign, an expression of belief and hope that "some at least who have joined the Latin church since the great change effected by the Vatican council, would upon occasion given, *whether with logical warrant or not*, adhere under all circumstances to their civil loyalty and duty."

Among the names that he was never willing to discuss with me—Machiavelli, for instance—was Joseph de Maistre, the hardiest, most adventurous, most ingenious, and incisive of all the speculative champions of European reaction.[322] In the pages of de Maistre he might have found the reasoned base on which the ultramontane creed may be supposed to rest. He would have found liberty depicted less as a blessing than a scourge; even Bossuet denounced as a heretic with dubious chances of salvation, for his struggle on behalf of a national church against Roman centralisation; the old Greeks held up to odium as a race of talkers, frivolous, light, and born incorrigible dividers. In dealing with de Maistre, Mr. Gladstone would have had a foeman worthier of his powerful steel than the authors of the Syllabus, Schema, Postulatum, and all the rest of what he called the Vaticanism of 1870. But here, as always, he was man of action, and wrote for a specific though perhaps a fugitive purpose. [519]

VI

Labours Of The Controversy

At the end of the year the total number printed of the tract was 145,000, and of these 120,000 were in a people's edition. “My pamphlet,” he tells Lacaita, “has brought upon me such a mass of work as I can hardly cope with, and I am compelled to do all things as succinctly as possible, though my work is with little intermission from morning till night. I agree with you that the pamphlet in the main tells its own story; and I am glad there is no need to select in a hurry some one to write on the difference between papism and Catholicism.... There is no doubt that the discussion opens, *i.e.* makes a breach in the walls of the papal theology, and it ought to be turned to account. But I shall have enough to do with all my hands, if I am to work properly through the task I have undertaken. Not, I trust, for long, for I think

[322] He died in 1821, when Mr. Gladstone was a boy at Eton.

another pamphlet should suffice to end it on my side. But I am vexed that Manning (as if he had been pulled up at Rome), after having announced his formal reply six weeks ago, hangs fire and now talks of delaying it." The result, he assures Lord Granville (Nov. 25), "must be injurious to the pestilent opinions that have so grievously obtained the upper hand in that church, and to the party which *means* to have a war in Europe for the restoration of the temporal power. To place impediments in their way has been my principal purpose."

He told Acton (Dec. 18), "When you were putting in caveats and warnings, you did not say to me, 'Now mind, this affair will absorb some, perhaps many, months of your life.' It has been so up to the present moment, and it evidently will be so for some time." With Acton he carried on elaborate correspondence
[520] upon some of the questions raised by the Syllabus, notably on the effect of the pope's disciplinary judgment on anglican marriages, converting them into relations that were not marriage at all. He fears that he has conceded too much to the papal party in not treating the Syllabus as *ex cathedra*; in allowing that the popes had been apt to claim dogmatic infallibility for wellnigh a thousand years; as to the ecumenicity of the Vatican council. Among other matters he was reading "the curious volumes of *Discorsi di Pio IX.*, published at Rome, and he might find it his duty to write collaterally upon them." This duty he performed with much fidelity in the *Quarterly Review* for January 1875. He is active in interest about translations; keen to enlist auxiliaries in every camp and all countries; delighted with all utterances from Italy or elsewhere that make in his direction, even noting with satisfaction that the agnostic Huxley was warm in approval. "I pass my days and nights," he tells the Duke of Argyll (Dec. 19), "in the Vatican. Already the pope has given me two months of incessant correspondence and other hard work, and it may very well last two more. Nor is this work pleasant; but I am as far as possible from repenting of it, as no one else to whom the

public would listen saved me the trouble. It is full of intense interest. Every post brings a mass of general reading, writing, or both. Forty covers of one kind or another to-day, and all my time is absorbed. But the subject is well worth the pains." The Italians, Lord Granville told him, "generally approved, but were puzzled why you should have thought it necessary." Retorts and replies arose in swarms, including one from Manning and another from Newman. He was accused by some of introducing a Bismarckian *Kulturkampf* into England, of seeking to recover his lost popularity by pandering to no-popery, of disregarding the best interests of the country for the sake of his own restoration to power.[323]

> I have now finished reading—he said at the beginning of February—the 20th reply to my pamphlet, They cover 1000 pages. And I am hard at work preparing mine with a good [521] conscience and I think a good argument. Manning has been, I think, as civil as he could. *Feb. 5.*—All this morning I have had to spend in hunting up one important statement of Manning's which I am almost convinced is a gross mis-statement.... *Feb. 6.*—Manning in his 200 pages has not, I venture to say, made a single point against me. But I shall have to show up his quotations very seriously. We have exchanged one or two friendly notes. 8.—Worked on Vaticanism nearly all day and (an exception to my rule) late at night. 14.—Eight hours' work on my proof sheets. 15.—Went through Acton's corrections and notes on my proofs. 19.—Worked much in evening on finishing up my tract, Dr. Döllinger's final criticisms having arrived. He thinks highly of the work, which he observes will cut deeper than the former one, and be more difficult to deal with. By midnight I had the revises ready with the corrections. 20.—Inserted one or two references and wrote "Press" on the 2nd revises. May the power and blessing of God go with the work.

[323] Dr. Michael's *Ignaz von Döllinger*, p. 296.

The second tract was more pungent than the first, and it gave pleasure to an important minister abroad who had now entangled himself by Falk laws and otherwise in a quarrel with the papacy. "I have had a letter of thanks," Mr. Gladstone writes to Hawarden (March 6), "from Bismarck. This pamphlet is stouter, sharper, and cheaper than the last, but is only in its eleventh thousand, I believe." Among others who replied to *Vaticanism* was Dr. Newman; he appended a new postscript of four-and-twenty pages to his former answer to the first of Mr. Gladstone's pamphlets. Its tone is courteous and argumentative—far too much so to please the ultras who had the pope's ear—and without the wild hitting that Mr. Gladstone found in Manning.

Newman wrote to thank him (Jan. 17, 1875) for a letter that he described as "forbearing and generous." "It has been a great grief to me," said Newman, "to have had to write against one whose career I have followed from first to last with so much (I may say) loyal interest and admiration. I had known about you from others, and had looked at you with kindly curiosity, before you came up to Christ Church, and from the time that you
[522] were launched into public life, you have retained a hold on my thoughts and on my gratitude by the various marks of attention which every now and then you have shown me, when you had an opportunity, and I could not fancy my ever standing towards you in any other relation than that which had lasted so long. What a fate it is, that now when so memorable a career has reached its formal termination [retirement from leadership], I should be the man, on the very day on which it closed, to present to you amid the many expressions of public sympathy which it elicits, a controversial pamphlet as my offering." But he could not help writing it, he was called upon from such various quarters; and his conscience told him that he who had been in great measure the cause of so many becoming catholics, had no right to leave them in the lurch, when charges were made against them as serious as unexpected. "I do not think," he concluded, "I ever can be sorry

for what I have done, but I never can cease to be sorry for the necessity of doing it."

VII

Change Of Abode

This fierce controversial episode was enough to show that the habit and temperament of action still followed him in the midst of all his purposes of retreat. Withdrawal from parliamentary leadership was accompanied by other steps, apparently all making in the same direction. He sold the house in Carlton House Terrace, where he had passed eight-and-twenty years of work and power and varied sociability. "I had grown to the house," he says (April 15), "having lived more time in it than in any other since I was born, and mainly by reason of all that was done in it." To Mrs. Gladstone he wrote (Feb. 28):—

> I do not wonder that you feel parting from the house will be a blow and a pang. It is nothing less than this to me, but it must be faced and you will face it gallantly. So much has occurred there; and thus it is leaving not the house only but the neighbourhood, where I have been with you for more than thirty-five years, and altogether nearly forty. The truth is that innocently and from special causes we have on the whole been housed better than according to our circumstances. All along Carlton House Terrace I think you would not find any one with less than £20,000 a year, and most of them with, much more. [523]

He sold his collection of china and his Wedgwood ware.[324] He despatched his books to Hawarden. He can hardly have resolved on retirement that should be effective and complete, or else he must have arranged to quit the House of Commons. In his diary he entered (March 30, 1875):—

[324] For a detailed description of this collection, see *Times*, June 21, 26, 1875. His London house for the next five years was 73 Harley Street.

> Views about the future and remaining section of my life. In outline they are undefined but in substance definite. The main point is this: that setting aside exceptional circumstances which would have to provide for themselves, my prospective work is not parliamentary. My ties will be slight to an assembly with whose tendencies I am little in harmony at the present time; nor can I flatter myself that what is called the public out of doors is more sympathetic. But there is much to be done with the pen, all bearing much on high and sacred ends, for even Homeric study as I view it, is in this very sense of high importance; and what lies beyond this is concerned directly with the great subject of belief.

To Mrs. Gladstone he wrote (May 19, 1875): "I am feeling as it were my way towards the purposes of the rest of my life. It will I dare say clear by degrees. For the general business of the country, my ideas and temper are thoroughly out of harmony with the ideas and temper of the day, especially as they are represented in London."

The movement of negation had been in full swing for a dozen years before the force and weight of it had, amid the stress and absorption of daily business, reached his inner mind. In May 1872, in a speech as member of the council of King's College—"averse from, and little used to platform speaking," as he described himself to Manning—he used some strong language about those who promulgate as science what is not science and as religion what is not religion; but he took care to sever himself from the recent Roman decrees, which "seemed much
[524] to resemble the proclamation of a perpetual war against the progress and the movement of the human mind."[325] In December 1872, he caused a marked sensation by an address at Liverpool, in which he spoke of Strauss's book on *New and Old Belief*.[326]

[325] *Guardian*, May 22, 1872.

[326] In the preface to his fourth edition Strauss said, "My countrymen might learn from the foreigner how the earnest conscientious statesman recognises a

He had become a member of the metaphysical society, where eminent representatives of every faith and of no faith discussed every aspect of the foundations of human creeds. He was of too masculine and energetic a cast of mind to feel mere shock as he listened to Huxley, Tyndall, Clifford, Harrison, firmly arguing materialism or positivism or agnosticism or other unhistoric forms. That his whole soul was energetically oppugnant, I need not say. His reverence for freedom never wavered. He wrote to an editor who had criticised his Liverpool address (Jan. 3, 1873):—

> In the interest of my address, I wish to say that not a word to my knowledge fell from me limiting the range of free inquiry, nor have I ever supposed St. Paul to say anything so silly as "Prove all things: but some you must not prove." Doubtless some obscurity of mine, I know not what, has led to an error into which the able writer of the article has fallen, not alone.

To the Duke of Argyll he wrote:—

> *Dec. 28, '72.*—I have been touching upon deep and dangerous subjects at Liverpool. Whether I went beyond my province many may doubt. But of the extent of the mischief I do not doubt any more than of its virulence. All that I hear from day to day convinces me of the extension of this strange epidemic, for it is not, considering how it comes, worthy of being called a rational or scientific process. Be it however, what it may, we politicians are children playing with toys in comparison to that great work of and for manhood, which has to be done, and will yet be done, in restoring belief.

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similar quality in an author whose influence he nevertheless considers to be dangerous. They might learn how the true gentleman speaks of one whom he cannot but admit to have devoted a long life to the search of truth, and allow to have sacrificed every personal prospect to the promulgation of that which appeared to him as such."

Sir Robert Morier sent him from Munich Frohschammer's reply to Strauss. “If I understand him aright,” said Mr. Gladstone, “he is a Unitarian, minus Miracle and Inspiration.” The whole book seemed to him able, honest, and diligent:—

> But, he adds, I am one of those who think the Christianity of Frohschammer (as I have described it) is like a tall tree scientifically prepared for the saw by the preliminary process, well known to wood-cutters, of clearing away with the axe all projecting roots, which as long as they remained rendered the final operation impossible. This first process leaves the tree standing in a very trim condition, much more mathematical in form, as it is more near a cylinder, than in its native state. The business of the saw, when the horse and the man arrive, is soon accomplished.

To his article on ritualism he prefixed as motto two short lines of Pindar, about days that are to come being wisest witnesses.[327] In spite of retreat, it was impossible that he should forget the vast responsibility imposed upon him, both by his gifts and by the popular ascendency into which they had brought him. His was not the retreat of self-indulgence, and the days that were to come speedily brought him duties that were to bear him far into regions of storm and conflict now unforeseen. Meanwhile, with occasional visits to Westminster, he lived even and industrious days at Hawarden, felling trees, working at Greek mythology and ethnology, delighting in the woods and glades of the park, above all delighting in the tranquillity of his “temple of peace.” Besides being the bookroom of a student, this was still a far-shining beacon in the popular eye. If sages, scholars, heroes, saints, with time's serene and hallowed gravity looked upon him from their shelves, yet loud echoes sounded in his ear from roaring surges of an outer world—from turbid ebb and flow of all the struggle

[327] Olymp. i. 53.

and clamorous hopes and half-blind mysterious instincts of the nations.

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Chapter III. The Octagon.

> It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.—EMERSON.

Near the end of the eighties, Mr. Gladstone built for himself a fire-proof room at the north-western corner of his temple of peace. In this Octagon—"a necessity of my profession and history"—he stored the letters and papers of his crowded lifetime. He estimated the "selected letters" addressed to himself at sixty thousand, and the mass of other letters that found their way into the Octagon without selection, along with more than a score of large folios containing copies of his own to other people, run to several tens of thousands more. There are between five and six hundred holographs from the Queen, afterward designated by him in his will to be an heirloom. "It may amuse you," he told Lord Granville, who always wrote the shortest letters that ever were known, "to learn that your letters to me weigh fifteen pounds and a-half." Probably no single human being ever received sixty thousand letters worth keeping, and of these it
[527] is safe to say that three-fourths of them might as well have been destroyed as soon as read, including a certain portion that might just as well never have been either written or read. This slightly improvident thrift recalls the jealous persons who will not suffer the British Museum to burn its rubbish, on the curious principle that what was never worth producing must always be worth preserving.

Correspondence

As for Mr. Gladstone's own share, he explains his case in what he says (1865) to the widow of Mr. Cobden: "Of the kind of correspondence properly called private and personal, I have none: indeed for many long long years it has been out of my power, except in very few instances, to keep up this

kind of correspondence." The exceptions are few indeed. Half of the contents of this crowded little chamber are papers of business,—nightly letters to the Queen, telling her what had gone on in the House and what sort of figure had been cut by its debaters, reports of meetings of the cabinet, memoranda for such meetings, notes for speeches, endless correspondence with colleagues, and all the other operations incident to the laborious machinery of government in the charge of a master engineer. In this region of his true calling, all is order, precision, persistency, and the firmness and ease of the strong. For many years in that department all was action, strength, success. Church leaders again contribute considerable piles, but these, too, mainly concern church business for the hour, and the business has now even for adherents naturally fallen out of memory. The more miscellaneous papers are different. There a long and strange procession flits before our eye—dreams, "little bustling passions," trivialities, floating like a myriad motes into the dim Octagon. We are reminded how vast a space in our ever-dwindling days is consumed by social invitations and the discovery of polite reasons for evading them. "Bona verba" is a significant docket prompting the secretary's reply. It is borne in upon us how grievously the burden of man's lot is aggravated by slovenly dates, illegible signatures, and forgetfulness that writing is something meant to be read. There is a mountain of letters from one correspondent so mercilessly written, that the [528] labour of decyphering them would hardly be justified, even if one could hope to recover traces of the second decade of Livy or the missing books of the *Annals* of Tacitus. Foreign rulers, Indian potentates, American citizens, all write to the most conspicuous Englishman of the time. In an unformed hand a little princess thanks him for a photograph, and says, "I am so glad to have seen you at Windsor, and will try and remember you all my life." There are bushels of letters whose writers "say all that they conscientiously can" for applicants, nominees, and candidates

in every line where a minister is supposed to be able to lend a helping hand if he likes. Actors send him boxes, queens of song press on him lozenges infallible for the vocal cords, fine ladies dabbling in Italian seek counsel, and not far off, what is more to the point, are letters from young men thanking him for his generosity in aiding them to go to Oxford with a view to taking orders. Charles Kean, a popular tragedian of those times, and son of one more famous still, thanks Mr. Gladstone for his speech at a complimentary dinner to him (March 1862), and says how proud he is to remember that they were boys at Eton together. Then there are the erudite but unfruitful correspondents, with the melancholy docket, "*Learning thrown away*"; and charming professors of poetry—as though the alto should insist on singing the basso part—impressively assure him how dreadfully uneasy they are about the weakness of our army, and how horribly low upon the security of our Indian Empire.

Variety Of Correspondence

Some have said that to peruse the papers of a prime minister must lower one's view of human nature. Perhaps this may partly depend upon the prime minister, partly on the height of our expectations from our fellow-creatures. If such a survey is in any degree depressing, there can be no reason why it should be more so than any other large inspection of human life. In the Octagon as in any similar repository we come upon plenty of baffled hopes, chagrin in finding a career really ended, absurd over-estimates of self, over-estimates of the good chances of the world, vexation of those who have chosen the wrong path at the unfair good luck of those who have chosen the right. We may smile, but surely in good-natured sympathy, at the zeal of poor ladies for a post for husbands of unrecognised merit, or at the importunity of younger sons with large families but inadequate means. Harmless things of this sort need not turn us into satirists or cynics.

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All the riddles of the great public world are there—why one man becomes prime minister, while another who ran him close at

school and college ends with a pension from the civil list; why the same stable and same pedigree produce a Derby winner and the poor cab-hack; why one falls back almost from the start, while another runs famously until the corner, and then his vaulting ambition dwindles to any place of "moderate work and decent emolument"; how new competitors swim into the field of vision; how suns rise and set with no return, and vanish as if they had never been suns but only ghosts or bubbles; how in these time-worn papers, successive generations of active men run chequered courses, group following group, names blazing into the fame of a day, then like the spangles of a rocket expiring. Men write accepting posts, all excitement, full of hope and assurance of good work, and then we remember how quickly clouds came and the office ended in failure and torment. In the next pigeon-hole just in the same way is the radiant author's gift of his book that after all fell still-born. One need not be prime minister to know the eternal tale of the vanity of human wishes, or how men move,

> Thundering like ramping hosts of warrior horse
> To throw that faint thin line upon the shore.[328]

Nor are things all one way. If we find Mr. Gladstone writing to the Queen of "the excellent parliamentary opening" of this man or that, who made the worst possible parliamentary close, there is the set-off of dull unmarked beginnings to careers that proved brilliant or weighty. If there are a thousand absurdities in the form of claims for place and honours and steps in the peerage, all the way up the ladder, from a branch post-office to the coveted blue riband of the garter, "with no infernal nonsense of merit about it," there are, on the other hand, not a few modest [530] and considerate refusals, and we who have reasonable views of human nature, may set in the balance against a score of the begging tribe, the man of just pride who will not exchange his

[328] George Meredith.

earldom for a marquisate, and the honest peer who to the proffer of the garter says, with gratitude evidently sincere, “I regret, however, that I cannot conscientiously accept an honour which is beyond my deserts.” Then the Octagon contains abundant material for any student of the lessons of a parliamentary crisis, though perhaps the student knew before how even goodish people begin to waver in great causes, when they first seriously suspect the horrid truth that they may not after all be in a majority. Many squibs, caricatures, and malicious diatribes, dated in Mr. Gladstone's own hand, find shelter. But then compensation for faintheartedness or spite abounds in the letters of the staunch. And these not from the party politicians merely. Mr. Gladstone stirred different and deeper waters. The famous fighting bishop, Phillpotts of Exeter, then drawing on towards ninety and the realms of silence, writes to him on the Christmas Day of 1863: “A Christian statesman is a rare object of reverence and honour. Such I entirely believe are you. I often remember the early days of my first intercourse with you. Your high principles gave an early dignity to your youth, and promised the splendid earthly career which you are fulfilling. I shall not live to witness that fulfilment.” A whole generation later, General Booth wrote: “Throughout the world no people will pray more fervently and believingly for your continued life and happiness than the officers and soldiers of the salvation army.” Here is Mr. Spurgeon, the most popular and effective of the nonconforming preachers and workers of the time, writing:—

> I felt ready to weep when you were treated with so much contumely by your opponent in your former struggle; and yet I rejoiced that you were educating this nation to believe in conscience and truth.... I wish I could brush away the gadflies, but I suppose by this time you have been stung so often that the system has become invulnerable.... You are loved by hosts of us as intensely as you are hated by certain of the savage party.

And when Mr. Gladstone was to visit Spurgeon's tabernacle (Jan. 1882):— [531]

> I feel like a boy who is to preach with his father to listen to him. I shall try not to know that you are there at all, but just preach to my poor people the simple word which has held them by their thousands these twenty-eight years. You do not know how those of us regard you, who feel it a joy to live when a premier believes in righteousness. We believe in no man's infallibility, but *it is restful to be sure of one man's integrity*.

That admirable sentence marks the secret.

All the religious agitations of the time come before us. Eminent foreign converts from the Roman church still find comfort in warning this most unshaken of believers against "a superficial and sceptical liberalism." Others, again, condemned for heresy hail him as "dear and illustrious master"—with no cordial response, we may surmise. Relying on Mr. Gladstone's character for human-heartedness and love of justice, people submit to him some of the hard domestic problems then and so often forced upon the world by the quarrels of the churches. One lady lays before him (1879) with superabundant detail a case where guardians insisted on the child of a mixed marriage being brought up as a protestant, against the fervid wishes of the surviving parent, a catholic. Mr. Gladstone masters the circumstances, forms his judgment, elaborates it in a closely argued memorandum, and does not evade the responsibility of advising. In another of these instances the tragedy is reversed; the horrid oppression is perpetrated on the protestant mother by the catholic father, and here too it is Mr. Gladstone to whom the sufferer appeals for intercession.

His correspondents have not always so much substance in them. One lady of evangelical strain, well known in her time,

writes to him about turbulence in Ireland on the last day of 1880. The private secretary dockets: “Wishes you a blessed new year; but goes on in a very impertinent strain attributing your ‘inaction’ in Ireland to unprincipled colleagues, and to want of heavenly guidance. Encloses suggestions for prayer.” In such instances, [532] even when the appeal came near to raving, Mr. Gladstone whenever he thought the writer's motives sincere, seems to have replied with patience, and at a length very different from the pithy brevity of the Iron Duke upon the like occasions. Sometimes we may assume that the secretary's phlegmatic docket sufficed, as on an epistle thus described: “1. Sends review in —— on his book. 2. Would like you to read —— and —— (his poems). 3. Will send you soon his prose on ——. 4. Hopes you will not overwork yourself. 5. His children call you St. William.” Sometimes we know not whether it is simplicity or irony that inspires the grave politeness of his replies. He seems to be in all sincerity surprised at the view taken by somebody “of the reluctance of public men to hold interviews for unexplained and indefinite purposes, and their preference for written communications.” Somebody writes a pamphlet on points of the ministerial policy, and suggests that each member of the government might order and distribute a competent number of copies. Mr. Gladstone immediately indicates two serious difficulties, first that the ministers would then make themselves responsible for the writer's opinion in detail no less than in mass, and second their intervention would greatly detract from its weight. Even importunity for a subscription never makes him curt: “I am sure you will not misconstrue me, when I beg respectfully to state that your efforts will stand better without my personal co-operation.”

Polygot And Encyclopædic

The correspondence is polyglot. In one little bundle, Cavour writes in Italian and French; the Archbishop of Cephalonia congratulates him in Greek on the first Irish Land bill; and in the same tongue the Archbishop of Chios gives him a book on the union of the Armenian with the Anatolian communion;

Huber regales him with the luxury of German *cursivschrift*. The archimandrite Myrianthes forwards him objects from the Holy Land. The patriarch of Constantinople (1896) sends greetings and blessings, and testifies to the bonds of fellowship between the eastern and anglican churches undisturbed since the days of Cyril Lukaris. Dupanloup, the famous Bishop of Orleans (1869), applauds the plan of *Juventus Mundi*, its grandeur, its beauty, its [533] moral elevation; and proceeds to ask how he can procure copies of the articles on *Ecce Homo*, as to which his curiosity has been aroused. A couple of notes (1864 and 1871) from Garibaldi, the great revolutionist, are neighbours to letters (1851-74) from Guizot, the great conservative. Three or four lines in French from Garibaldi were given to Mr. Gladstone the day before leaving Cliveden and England (April 24, 1864): "In leaving you pray accept a word of recognition for all the kindness you have heaped upon me, and for the generous interest you have at all times shown for the cause of my country.—Your devoted G. GARIBALDI." The other shorter still (1871) begs him to do something for a French refugee. Minghetti, Ricasoli, and others of that celebrated group commemorate his faithful and effective good will to Italy. Daniel Manin the Venetian thanks him in admirable English for some books, as well as for his energetic and courageous act in drawing a perfidious king (Naples) before the bar of public opinion. Manzoni gives to a friend a letter of introduction (1845), and with Italian warmth of phrase expresses his lively recollection of the day on which he made Mr. Gladstone's acquaintance, and the admiration with which his name is followed. Mérimée, the polished and fastidious genius, presents to him a French consul at Corfu (1858) who in his quality of philhellene and hellenist desires ardently to make the acquaintance of Homer's learned and eloquent commentator. Lesseps, whose hand gave so tremendous and impressive a turn to forces, policies, currents of trade, promises (1870) to keep an appointment, when he will have the double honour of being presented to the Princess Louise

by a man so universally respected for the high services he has rendered to the Queen, to his country, and to the progress of the world.

If the language is polyglot, the topics are encyclopædic. Bishops send him their charges; if a divine translates a hymn, he submits it; if he hits upon an argument on the mysteries of the faith, or the vexed themes of theological debate, he despatches pages and pages to Hawarden, and receives page upon page in
[534] reply. Young authors, and especially young authoresses pestered him to review their books, though his patience and good nature make 'pester' seem an inapplicable word. A Scotch professor for some reason or another copies out and forwards to him one of Goethe's reflections and maxims:—

> How may a man attain to self-knowledge? By Contemplation? certainly not: but by Action. Try to do your Duty and you will find what you are fit for. But what is your Duty? The Demand of the Hour.

As if of all men then living on our planet, Mr. Gladstone were not he to whom such counsel was most superfluous. He replies (Oct. 9, 1880), "I feel the immense, the overmastering power of Goethe, but with such limited knowledge as I have of his works, I am unable to answer the question whether he has or has not been an evil genius of humanity."

Spirit Of Tolerance

In 1839 Spedding, the Baconian, to whom years later the prime minister proposed that he should fill the chair of history at Cambridge, wrote to him that John Sterling, of whom Mr. Gladstone already knew something, was prevented by health from living in London, and so by way of meeting his friends on his occasional visits, had proposed that certain of them should agree to dine together cheaply once a month at some stated place. As yet Sterling had only spoken to Carlyle, John Mill, Maurice, and Bingham Baring. "I hope," says Spedding, "that your devotion to the more general interests of mankind will

not prevent your assisting in this little job." Mr. Gladstone seems not to have assisted, though his friend Bishop Wilberforce did, and fell into some hot water in consequence. A veteran and proclaimed freethinker sets out to Mr. Gladstone his own recognition of what ought to be a truism, that he is for every man being faithful to his faith; that his aggressive denial of the inspiration of the Bible did not prevent him from sending a copy in large type to his old mother to read when her eyes were dim; that he respected consolations congenial to the conscience. "I hope," he says to Mr. Gladstone, "there is a future life, and if so, my not being sure of it will not prevent it, and I know of no better way of deserving it than by conscious service of humanity. The [535] Universe never filled me with such wonder and awe as when I knew I could not account for it. *I admit ignorance is a privation. But to submit not to know where knowledge is withheld, seems but one of the sacrifices that reverence for truth imposes on us.*" The same correspondent speaks (1881) of "the noble toleration which you have personally shown me, notwithstanding what you must think seriously erroneous views of mine, and upon which I do not keep silence." Mr. Gladstone had written to him six years before (1875): "Differing from you, I do not believe that secular motives are adequate either to propel or to restrain the children of our race, but I earnestly desire to hear the other side, and I appreciate the advantage of having it stated by sincere and high-minded men." There is a letter too from the son of another conspicuous preacher of negation, replying to some words of Mr. Gladstone which he took to be disparaging of his parent, and begging him, "a lifelong idealist yourself," to think more worthily and sympathetically of one whom if he had known he would have appreciated and admired.

A considerable correspondence is here from the learned Bishop Stubbs (1888) on the character of Bishop Fisher of Rochester, the fellow-sufferer of More; on the Convocation Act of 1531 and the other Convocation Acts of Elizabeth; on

Father Walsh's letters, and other matters of the sixteenth century. In fact, it is safe to assume that Mr. Gladstone has always some ecclesiastical, historical, theological controversy running alongside of the political and party business of the day. Nobody that ever lived tried to ride so many horses abreast. Another prelate puts a point that is worth remembering by every English school of foreign policy. "In 1879," writes Bishop Creighton (Feb. 15, 1887), "when foreign affairs were much before the public, I suggested to a publisher a series of books dealing quite shortly and clearly with the political history and constitution of the chief states of Europe from 1815. I designed them for popular instruction, thinking it of great importance that people in general should know what they were talking about, when they spoke of
[536] France or Russia.... The result of my attempt was to convince me that our ignorance of the last sixty years is colossal."

Lord Stanhope has been reading (1858) the "Tusculan Questions," and confides to Mr. Gladstone's sympathetic ear Cicero's shockingly faulty recollection of Homer,—mistaking Euryclea for Anticlea, the nurse for the mother, and giving to Polyphemus a speech that Polyphemus never spoke. A bishop says Macaulay told him that one of the most eloquent passages in the English language is in Barrow's Seventy-Fifth Sermon, on the Nativity—"Let us consider that the Nativity doth import the completion of many ancient promises...."[329] Letters abound and over-abound on that most movable of topics—"the present state of the Homeric controversy." Scott, the lexicographer, sends him Greek epigrams on events too fugitive to be now worth recalling—discusses Homeric points, and while not surrendering at discretion, admits them worthy of much consideration. There are many pages from Thirlwall, that great scholar and enlightened man, upon points of Homeric ethnology, Homeric geography, and such questions as whether a line in the *Iliad* (xiv. 321)

[329] Barrow's *Works*, iv. p. 107 (ed. 1830).

makes the mother of Minos to be a Phœnician damsel or the daughter of Phœnix, or whether it is possible to attach a meaning to ἐννέωρος that would represent Minos as beginning his reign when nine years old—a thing, the grave bishop adds, even more strange than the passion of Dante for Beatrice at the same age.

Darwin—Hooker—Huxle

Huxley sends him titles of books on the origin of the domestic horse; Sir Joseph Hooker supplies figures of the girth of giant trees; the number of annual rings in a fallen stump which would seem to give it 6420 years; tells him how the wood of another was as sound after 380 years as if just felled. Somebody else interests him in Helmholtz's experiments on the progression of the vibrations of the true vowel sounds. Letters pass between him and Darwin (1879) on colours and names for colours. Darwin suggests the question whether savages have names for shades of colours: "I should expect that they have not, and this would be remarkable, for the Indians of Chili and Tierra del Fuego [537] have names for every slight promontory and hill to a marvellous degree." Mr. Gladstone proposes to nominate him a trustee of the British Museum (April 1881), and Darwin replies, "I would gladly have accepted, had my strength been sufficient for anything like regular attendance at the meetings." Professor Owen thanks him for the honour of Knight of the Bath, and expresses his true sense of the aid and encouragement that he has uniformly received from Mr. Gladstone throughout the course of the labours from which he is now retiring.

He corresponds with a learned French statesman, not on the insoluble Newfoundland problem, turning so much on the nice issue whether a lobster is a fish, and not on the vexed Egyptian question, but on the curious prohibition of pork as an article of food—a strange contradiction between the probable practice of the Phœnicians and that of the Jews, perpetuated in our times through all Mussulman countries, and a prohibition not to be explained on sanitary grounds, because to the present day Christians in the East all indulge in pork and are none the

worse for it. A young member of parliament one night fell into conversation with him, as a branch from the subject of the eating of bovine flesh by the Greeks, on the eating of horseflesh, and the next day writes to mention to him that at a council in 785 with the Bishop of Ostia as president, it was decreed, "Many among you eat horses, which is not done by any Christians in the East: avoid this;" and he asks Mr. Gladstone whether he believed that by reason of the high estimation in which the Greeks held the horse, they abstained from his flesh. Mr. Gladstone (August 1889) replies that while on his guard against speaking with confidence about the historic period, he thought he was safe in saying that the Greeks did not eat the horse in the heroic period, and he refers to passages in this book and the other. "It was only a conjecture, however, on my part that the near relation of the horse to human feeling and life may probably have been the cause that prevented the consumption of horse-flesh." In a further letter he refers his correspondent to the closing part of the [538] *Englishman in Paris* for some curious particulars on hippophagy. Then he seems to have interested himself in a delicate question as to the personal claims of Socrates in the light of a moral reformer, and the sage's accommodation of moral sentiment to certain existing fashions in Athenian manners. But as I have not his side of the correspondence, I can only guess that his point was the inferiority of the moral ideals of Socrates to those of Christ. Gustave d'Eichthal, one of the celebrated group of Saint-Simonians who mingled so much of what was chimerical with much that was practical and fruitful, draws the attention of Mr. Gladstone, statesman, philosopher, and hellenist, to writings of his own on the practical use of Greek, as destined to be the great national language of humanity, perhaps even within the space of two or three generations. Guizot begs him to accept his book on Peel; and thanking him for his article on the "Royal Supremacy" (Feb. 9, 1864), says further what must have given Mr. Gladstone lively satisfaction:—

> Like you, I could wish that the anglican church had more independence and self-government; but such as it is, and taking all its history into account, I believe that of all the Christian churches, it is that in which the spiritual régime is best reconciled with the political, and the rights of divine tradition with those of human liberty.... I shall probably send you in the course of this year some meditations on the essence and history of the Christian religion. Europe is in an anti-Christian crisis; and having come near the term of life, I have it much at heart to mark my place in this struggle.

Men Of Letters

For some reason Henry Taylor encloses him (April 5, 1837) "a letter written by Southey the other day to *a wild girl* who sent him some rhapsodies of her writing, and told him she should be in an agony till she should receive his opinion of them." This recalls a curious literary incident, for the "wild girl" was Charlotte Brontë, and Southey warned her that "literature cannot be the business of a woman's life and ought not to be," and yet his letter was both sensible and kind, though as time showed it was a bad shot.[330] Thackeray has been asked to breakfast but "I only got your note at 2 o'clock this afternoon, when the tea would [539] have been quite cold; and next Thursday am engaged to lecture at Exeter, so that I can't hope to breakfast with you. I shall be absent from town some three weeks, and hope Mrs. Gladstone will permit me to come to see her on my return." Froude, who was often at his breakfasts, gives him a book (year doubtful): "I took the liberty of sending it you merely as an expression of the respect and admiration that I have felt towards you for many years,"—sentiments that hardly stood the wear and tear of time and circumstance.

In 1850 what Macaulay styles a most absurd committee was appointed to devise inscriptions for medals to be given to the exhibitors at the great world-show of next year. Its members

[330] See Southey's *Life*, vi. p. 327.

were, besides Macaulay himself and Gladstone, Milman, Liddell, Lyttelton, Charles Merivale. Milman bethought him of looking into Claudian, and sent to Mr. Gladstone three or four alternative lines fished out from the last of the poets of Roman paganism. Macaulay had another idea;—

> MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—I am afraid that we must wait till Thursday. I do not much, like taking words from a passage certainly obscure and probably corrupt. Could we not do better ourselves? I have made no Latin verses these many years. But I will venture. I send you three attempts:—
>
> Pulcher et ille labor, pulchros ornare labores.
> Pulchrum etiam, pulchros palma donare labores.
> Pulchrum etiam, pulchris meritam decernere palmam.
>
> You will easily make better. If we can produce a tolerable line among us, we may pretend, as Lardner did, that it is in Haphorstrus or Masenius.—Yours ever, T. B. MACAULAY.

Francis Newman, the cardinal's high-minded and accomplished brother, writes to Mr. Gladstone (1878) in a strain of exalted recognition of his services to the nation, and quotes (a little oddly perhaps) the beautiful lines in Euripides, foretelling the approaching triumph of Dionysus over his mortal foe.[331]

[540]

The poets are not absent. Wordsworth, as we have already seen (i. p. 269 *n.*), sends to him at the board of trade his remonstrance and his sonnet on the railway into Windermere. Tennyson addresses to him for his personal behoof the sonnet upon the Redistribution bill of 1884—

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[331] εὐδαίμων μὲν ὅς ἐκ θαλάσσας ἔφυγε χεῖμα, λιμένα δ'ἔκιχεν; εὐδαίμων δ'ὅς ὕπερθε μόχθων ἐγένεθ.

Happy the man who from out the floods has fled the storm and found the haven; happy too is he who has surmounted toil and trouble.—*Bacchae*, 902-5.

"Steersman, be not precipitate in thine act
Of steering ..."

and on a sheet of note-paper at a later date when Irish self-government was the theme, he copies the Greek lines from Pindar, "how easy a thing it is even for men of light weight to shake a state, how hard to build it up again."[332] Rogers (1844) insists that, "if one may judge from experience, perhaps the best vehicle in our language for a translator of verse is prose. He who doubts it has only to open his Bible.... Who could wish the stories of Joseph and of Ruth to be otherwise than they are? Or who but would rejoice if the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were so translated? I once asked Porson to attempt it, and he seemed to like the idea, but said that it would be a labour of ten or twelve years."

Matthew Arnold—Watts

There was one true poet, and not only a poet but a man, as we now see, with far truer insight into the intellectual needs of his countrymen than any other writer of the closing quarter of the century, who is sometimes supposed to have been overlooked by Mr. Gladstone. And here in the Octagon is Matthew Arnold's letter soliciting his recommendation (1867) for the strictly prosaic post of librarian of the House of Commons, which happily he did not obtain. The year before, Arnold had wished to be made a commissioner under the Endowed Schools Act, but a lawyer was rightly thought necessary by Lord Russell or his advisers, and there is no good reason to suppose that Mr. Gladstone meddled either way. He was responsible in 1882 for a third disappointment, but here again it has been truly said that to appoint to the charity commission a man of sixty, who had no intimate knowledge of charity law, and who had recently in [541] his articles irritated all the nonconformists in England by his ironical references to dissent and dissenters, would not have been

[332] Pyth. iv. 485; *Life of Tennyson*, ii. pp. 332, 308. Mr. Gladstone's share in the pensions to Wordsworth and Tennyson is described in Mr. Parker's *Peel*, iii. pp. 437-442.

conducive to the efficient transaction of public business. A year later Mr. Gladstone proffered him, and his friends made him accept, a civil list pension of two hundred and fifty pounds a year, "in public recognition of service to the poetry and literature of England." Arnold in a letter here tries to soften Mr. Gladstone's heart on the subject of copyright, on which, as I often made bold to tell him, he held some rather flagrant heresies. Here the poet begs the minister to consider whether an English author ought not to have property in his work for a longer time than he has now. "For many books the sale begins late, the author has to create, as Wordsworth said, the taste by which he is to be enjoyed. Such an author is surely the very man one would wish to protect." I fear he made no convert.

Another poet, with no eye on patronage or pension, hopes to be permitted to say (1869), "how very many of your countrymen whom you have forgotten or never saw, follow your noble and courageous development of legislation with the same personal devotion, gratitude, and gladness that I feel." Then five years later he still assures him that among men of letters he may have antagonists but he cannot have enemies—rather a fine distinction, with painfully little truth in it as things happened.

To Miss Martineau, who had done hard work in more than one good cause, he proposes a pension, which she honourably declines: "The work of my busy years has supplied the needs of a quiet old age. On the former occasions of my declining a pension I was poor, and it was a case of scruple (possibly cowardice). Now I have a competence, and there would be no excuse for my touching the public money. You will need no assurance that I am as grateful for your considerate offer, as if it had relieved me of a wearing anxiety."

In 1885 he wrote to Mr. Watts, the illustrious painter, to request, with the sanction of the Queen, that he would allow himself to be enrolled among the baronets of the United Kingdom. "It gives me lively pleasure," he said, "to have the means of

thus doing honour to art in the person of so distinguished a representative of the noble pursuit." Mr. Watts, in words that I am permitted to transcribe, declined; as he did also a second time in 1894 when the proposal was repeated. [542]

> While I feel very strongly, and acknowledge with sincere gratitude, that you have honoured in my person, making me a sort of standard bearer, the pursuit of art for its own sake, and have so afforded an enduring encouragement to those who, like myself, may be willing to relinquish many good and tangible things for purposes believed to be good, but not likely to meet with general sympathy, still, I feel it would be something like a real disgrace to accept for work merely attempted, reward and payment only due to work achieved.... I should have the ghost of the Lycian chief reproaching me in my dreams! Also the objects to which I wish to dedicate the rest of my life will best be carried out in quiet and obscurity, so please do not be vexed with me if I again beg respectfully and gratefully to decline.... Sarpedon's words[333] always ring in my ears, and so I think you will understand the things I cannot attempt to say.... I am so far from undervaluing distinctions that I should like to be a Duke, and deserve the title.... Still, it is true that, living mainly in a world of my own, my views are narrowed (I hope I may also say simplified), till a sense of the four great conditions which to my mind comprise all that can be demonstrated of our existence, Life and Death, Light and Darkness, so dominate my mental vision that they almost become material entities and take material forms, dwarfing and casting into shadow ordinary considerations. Over the two first, human efforts broadly speaking avail nothing; but we have it in our power to modify the two last (of course I include in the terms all that belongs to good and bad, beauty and ugliness). Labouring by

[333] The glorious lines of the Lycian chief in *Iliad*, xii. 322-8, valiantly repeated, by the way, by Carteret, as he lay dying, and the very essence and spirit of the minister to whom Mr. Watts was writing.

> the side of the poet and the statesman, the artist may deal with those great issues, and here I think the art of England has been at fault.... Your overestimate of my work has hastened the execution of an intention I have long had, and which indeed amounts to retirement from the ranks of professional men. I have concluded, dating from June, to undertake no portraits and accept no commissions, but, contented with the little I have to live upon, work only with the idea of making my efforts worthy, at least as efforts, of the nation's acceptance alike before and after my death.

[543]

"You have adopted a resolution," said Mr. Gladstone in his reply, "of the kind that makes the nineteenth century stare or blink, as those blink who stand in a great brightness and have not eyes for it. The course that you purpose is indeed a self-denying, an unworldly, and a noble one."

Death Of Mill

One packet touches a matter that at the moment did Mr. Gladstone some harm in the judgment of men whose good opinion was worth having. In 1873 John Stuart Mill died, and a public memorial was proposed. Mr. Gladstone intimated that he was willing to co-operate. Then a liberal clergyman attacked the obituary notice in the *Times* as too frigid, and the author of the notice retorted by tales of Mill's early views on the question of population. He was well acquainted with Mr. Gladstone, and set busily to work to persuade him that Mill in his book on political economy advocated obnoxious checks, that he was vaguely associated with American publications on the matter, and that he did not believe in God, which was not to the point. Mr. Gladstone passed on this tissue of innuendo to the Duke of Argyll. The Duke reported that he had consulted men thoroughly conversant both with Mill and his writings; that he was assured no passage could bear the construction imputed, and that the places which he had himself looked into, clearly referred to prudential restraints on marriage. Certainly a school of social economy that deals only with foreign exchanges and

rent and values and the virtues of direct taxes and indirect, and draws the curtain around the question of population, must be a singularly shallow affair. The Duke of Argyll manfully brushed wasps aside, and sent his subscription. So did men as orthodox as Lord Salisbury, and as cautious as Lord Derby. Mr. Gladstone on the other hand wrote to the promoters of the memorial: "In my view this painful controversy still exists. I feel that it is not possible for me, situated as I am at the present time, to decide [544] it or to examine it with a view to decision. The only course open to me is to do no act involving a judgment either way, and, therefore, while I desire to avoid any public step whatever, I withdraw from co-operation, and request that my name may be no further mentioned." Unfortunately, the withdrawal of such a name could not be other than a public step. To say, moreover, that the controversy still existed, was to go a longish way in public opinion towards deciding it. The curious thing is that Mr. Gladstone had known Mill so well—his singleminded love of truth, his humanity, his passion for justice—as to call him by the excellent name of "the Saint of Rationalism." A saint of any sort is surely uncommon enough in our fallen world, to claim an equity that is not refused to sinners. Yet fifteen years later he wrote a letter doing Mill more justice. "Of all the motives, stings, and stimulants," he wrote, "that reach men through their egoism in parliament, no part could move or even touch him. His conduct and his language were in this respect a sermon. Again, though he was a philosopher he was not, I think, a man of crotchets. He had the good sense and practical tact of politics, together with the high independent thought of a recluse."[334]

A learned Unitarian (Beard) sends him a volume of Hibbert lectures. "All systems," Mr. Gladstone writes in acknowledging it, "have their *slang*, but what I find in almost every page of your book is that you have none." He complains, however,

[334] Mr. Gladstone to Mr. W. L. Courtney, Sept. 5, 1888.

of finding Augustine put into a leash with Luther and Calvin. "Augustine's doctrine of human nature is substantially that of Bishop Butler; and he converted me about forty-five years ago to Butler's doctrine." Of far earlier date than this (1839) is an interesting letter from Montalembert:—

> *London, July 4, 1839.*—It seems to me that amidst many *dissentimens*, and although you pass generally in this country for an enemy to my faith and my church, there is a link between us; since admitting every superiority of talent and
> [545] influence on your side, we stand on the same ground in public life—that of the inalienable rights of spiritual power. I have, therefore, received your book with gratitude, and read it with the sincerest interest. I now take the liberty of offering you a portion of the work I have published, not on matter of actual controversy, but on an unknown and delightful subject of religious history. If you ever find leisure enough to throw a glance on the *History of St. Elizabeth*, and more particularly on the *Introduction*, which is a rapid *résumé* of the thirteenth century, you will perhaps gain some slight information on what the Rev. Hugh McNeile so appropriately called "the filth and falsehood of the middle ages," in his splendid speech on church extension, at Freemasons' Hall a few days ago. And allow me to add, my dear sir, with the utter frankness which I cannot divest myself of, that what you seem to me to stand the most in need of at present, is a deeper and more original knowledge of the laws and events of Catholic Europe.

Then come others, recalling illustrious names and famous events in English history. There are a dozen letters of business (1837-1846) from the Duke of Wellington. The reader may be curious to see the earliest communication between two such men—

> *London, Nov. 27, 1837.*—I have by accident mislaid the petition from the Cape of Good Hope, if it was ever sent me.

> But I shall be happy to see you and converse with you upon the subject; and consider whether it is desirable or possible that I can bring the subject before the consideration of the House of Lords at the same time that you will in the H. of C. I would propose to you to come here, or that I should go to you to-morrow, Tuesday, at any hour you will name.—I have the honour to be, dear sir, your most faithful, humble servant,
>
> WELLINGTON.[335]

Once he uses his well-known laconic style—

> *Strathfieldsaye, January 3, 1842.*—F. M. the Duke of Wellington presents his compliments to Mr. Gladstone. He has received Mr. Gladstone's letter of the 1st inst. He begs leave to decline to interfere in any manner in the matter to which Mr. Gladstone's letter refers.

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What the matter was we cannot tell; but we may guess that it was perhaps less tersely propounded. The rest touch military affairs in the colonies, and are now of no concern.

Here we have a last vision of one of the forlorn shadows of ruined power:—

> *Chislehurst, le 5 Juillet, 1871.*—Monsieur le Ministre, j'ai reçu la copie du nouveau Ballot bill que votre excellence a bien voulu m'envoyer et je profite de cette occasion pour vous dire combien je suis touché des marques d'attention que je reçois en Angleterre. Je vous prie de recevoir l'assurance de mes sentimens de haute estime.
>
> NAPOLÉON.

Notes from and to his illustrious adversary in the stirring arena of public life are not without a delicate accent of pathos and

[335] See above, vol. i. p. 143.

sincerity. The first was on some occasion of Mrs. Disraeli's illness,[336] the second on her death:—

> *Nov. 20, 1867.*—I was incapable yesterday of expressing to you how much I appreciate your considerate sympathy. My wife had always a strong personal regard for you, and being of a vivid and original character, she could comprehend and value your great gifts and qualities. There is a ray of hope under this roof since the last four and twenty hours: round your hearth, I trust, health and happiness will be ever present.—Yours sincerely, B. DISRAELI.

Six years later when Lady Beaconsfield died, Mr. Gladstone wrote (Jan. 19, 1873):—

> DEAR MR. DISRAELI,—My reluctance to intrude on the sacredness and freshness of your sorrow may now, I think, properly give way to a yet stronger reluctance to forego adding our small but very sincere tribute of sympathy to those abundant manifestations of it which have been yielded in so many forms. You and I were, as I believe, married in the same year. It has been permitted to both of us to enjoy a priceless boon through a third of a century. Spared myself the blow which has fallen on you, I can form some conception of what it must have been and must be. I do not presume to offer you the consolation which you will seek from another and higher quarter. I offer only the assurance which all who know you,
> [547] and all who knew Lady Beaconsfield, and especially those among them who like myself enjoyed for a length of time her marked, though unmerited regard, may perhaps tender without impropriety, the assurance that in this trying hour they feel deeply for you and with you.—Believe me, sincerely yours,
>
> W. E. GLADSTONE.

[336] Referred to by Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons, Nov. 19, 1867.

> *Hughenden Manor, Jan. 24, 1873.*—DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,—I am much touched by your kind words in my great sorrow. I trust, I earnestly trust, that you may be spared a similar affliction. Marriage is the greatest earthly happiness, when founded on complete sympathy. That hallowed lot was mine, and for a moiety of my existence; and I know it is yours.—With sincere regard, D.

A last note, with the quavering pen-strokes of old age (Nov. 6, 1888), comes from the hand, soon to grow cold, of one who had led so strange a revolution, and had stood for so much in the movement of things that to Mr. Gladstone were supreme:—

> It is a great kindness and compliment your wishing to see me. I have known and admired you so long. But I cannot write nor talk nor walk, and hope you will take my blessing, which I give from my heart.—Yours most truly, JOHN H. CARD. NEWMAN.

So the perpetual whirl of life revolves, "by nature an unmanageable sight," but—

> Not wholly so to him who looks
> In steadiness; who hath among least things
> An under-sense of greatest; sees the parts
> As parts, but with a feeling of the whole.[337]

Such steadiness, such under-sense and feeling of the whole, was Mr. Gladstone's gift and inspiration, never expending itself in pensive musings upon the vain ambitions, illusions, cheats, regrets of human life—such moods of half-morbid moralising were not in his temperament—but ever stirring him to duty and manful hope, to intrepid self-denial and iron effort.

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[337] *The Prelude*, vii.

Chapter IV. Eastern Question Once More. (1876-1877)

The dead have been awakened—shall I sleep?
  The world's at war with tyrants—shall I crouch?
The harvest's ripe—and shall I pause to reap?
  I slumber not—the thorn is in my couch:
Each day a trumpet soundeth in mine ear,
  Its echo in my heart.

—BRYON.

I

Preserved in the Octagon is a large packet of notes on "Future Retribution," and on them is the docket, "*From this I was called away to write on Bulgaria.*" In the spring of 1876 the Turkish volcano had burst into flame. Of the Crimean war the reader has already seen enough and too much.[338] Its successes, in Mr. Gladstone's words, by a vast expenditure of French and English life and treasure, gave to Turkey, for the first time perhaps in her bloodstained history, twenty years of a repose not disturbed either by herself or by any foreign power. As Cobden and Bright had foreseen, as even many European statesmen who approved the war on grounds of their own had foreseen, Turkish engagements were broken, for this solid reason if for no other that Turkey had not in the resources of her barbaric polity the means to keep them.

Fierce revolt against intolerable misrule slowly blazed up in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and a rising in Bulgaria, not dangerous in itself, was put down by Turkish troops despatched for the purpose from Constantinople, with deeds described by the British

[338] Vol. i. pp. 476 and 521.

agent who investigated them on the spot, as the most heinous crimes that had stained the history of the century. The consuls of France and Germany at Salonica were murdered by the [549] Turkish mob. Servia and Montenegro were in arms. Moved by these symptoms of a vast conflagration, the three imperial courts of Russia, Austria, and Germany agreed upon an instrument imposing on the Turk certain reforms, to be carried out under European supervision. To this instrument, known as the Berlin memorandum, England, along with France and Italy, was invited to adhere (May 13). The two other Powers assented, but Mr. Disraeli and his cabinet refused,—a proceeding that, along with more positive acts, was taken by the Turk and other people to assure the moral support of Great Britain to the Ottoman, and probably to threaten military support against the Russian.

Rejection Of Berlin Memorandum

This rejection of the Berlin memorandum in May marked the first decisive moment in British policy. The withdrawal of England from the concert of Europe, the lurid glare of the atrocities in Bulgaria, and his abiding sense of the responsibility imposed upon us by the Crimean war and all its attendant obligations, were the three main elements in the mighty storm that now agitated Mr. Gladstone's breast. Perhaps his sympathies with the Eastern church had their share. In a fragment of reminiscence twenty years after, he says:—

> When, in 1876, the eastern question was forced forward by the disturbances in the Turkish empire, and especially by the cruel outrages in Bulgaria, I shrank naturally but perhaps unduly from recognising the claim they made upon me individually. I hoped that the ministers would recognise the moral obligations to the subject races of the east, which we had in honour contracted as parties to the Crimean war and to the peace of Paris in 1856. I was slow to observe the real leanings of the prime minister, his strong sympathy with the Turk, and his mastery in his own cabinet. I suffered others, Forster in particular, to go far ahead of me. At the close

of the session [1876] a debate was raised upon the subject, and I had at length been compelled to perceive that the old idol was still to be worshipped at Constantinople, and that, as the only person surviving in the House of Commons who had been responsible for the Crimean war and the breaking
[550] of the bulwark raised by the treaty of Kainardji on behalf of the eastern Christians, I could no longer remain indifferent. Consequently in that debate Mr. Disraeli had to describe my speech as the only one that had exhibited a real hostility to the policy of the government. It was, however, at that time an opposition without hope. I went into the country, and had mentally postponed all further action to the opening of the next session, when I learned from the announcement of a popular meeting to be held in Hyde Park that the question was alive.[339] So I at once wrote and published on the Bulgarian case. From that time forward, till the final consummation in 1879-80, I made the eastern question the main business of my life. I acted under a strong sense of individual duty without a thought of leadership; nevertheless it made me again leader whether I would or no. The nation nobly responded to the call of justice, and recognised the brotherhood of man. But it was the nation, not the classes. When, at the close of the session of 1876, there was the usual dispersion in pursuit of recreation, I thought the occasion was bad. It was good, for the nation did not disperse and the human heart was beating. When the clubs refilled in October, the Turkish cause began again to make head. Then came a chequered period, and I do not recollect to have received much assistance from the "front bench." Even Granville had been a little startled at my proceedings, and wished me to leave out the "bag and baggage" from my pamphlet.

Before the end of the session of 1876 Mr. Disraeli quitted the House of Commons and became the Earl of Beaconsfield.

[339] Mr. Stead, then at the *Northern Echo* in Darlington, began his redoubtable journalistic career in pressing this question into life.

Lord Granville informed Mr. Gladstone, on the authority of a high personage, that Disraeli had said to the Queen he must resign; "that the peerage was then suggested; that at first he said, 'Yes, but accompanied with resignation,' but was told that in the present state of Europe that was impossible." In reporting to Sir Arthur Gordon, then abroad, what was not merely a piece of news but an event, Mr. Gladstone says (Aug. 16):—

> Disraeli assumes his earldom amidst loud acclaims. I had better be mute about him and his influence generally, except as to a full acknowledgment of his genius and his good [551] points of character. His government is supposed now to stand mainly upon its recent foreign policy: the most selfish and least worthy I have ever known. Whatever was open to any degree of exception in Palmerston, has this year received a tenfold development in Disraeli. Derby's influence, I think, has been for good; but too little of it.

To the Duke of Argyll a couple of days before, he had written:—

> I am entirely in harmony with you as to your view of the eastern policy. It has been depressing and corrupting to the country; a healthier air has been generated by indignation at the Bulgarian massacres, which have thrown us back on our rather forgotten humanity. I hope the subject will not slumber through the recess. Dizzy's speech (so I call him with all due respect to the peerage) in the Turkish debate gave me a new light on his views. He is not quite such a Turk as I had thought. What he hates is Christian liberty and reconstruction. He supports old Turkey, thinking that if vital improvements can be averted, it must break down; and his fleet is at Besika Bay, I feel pretty sure, to be ready to lay hold of Egypt as his share. So he may end as the Duke of Memphis yet.

II

Then came the pamphlet. The story of this memorable publication is told in the diary:—

> *Aug. 28, 1876.*—Church 8-½ A.M. Worked on a beginning for a possible pamphlet on the Turkish question. I stupidly brought on again my lumbago by physical exertion. Was obliged to put off my pamphlet. Read *The Salvation of all Men* ... 29.—Kept my bed long. Wrote to Lord Granville, etc. ... and as a treat began *Waverley* once more. Lumbago bad. 30.—Much bed; forswear all writing. Read St. Thomas Aquinas on the Soul.... *Waverley*. A snug evening in the Temple of Peace. 31.—Kept my bed till four, and made tolerable play in writing on Bulgarian horrors. *Sept. 1*.—Wrote [16 letters]. Again worked hard in bed and sent off more than half to the printers. Read *Waverley*. Short drive with C. 2.—This day I wrote again a good piece of the
[552] pamphlet in bed, but improved considerably. Rose at four. Read *Waverley* in the evening. 3.—Hawarden Church 11 A.M. and 6-½ P.M. Wrote [16 letters]. Off at 10.15 P.M. for London. 4.—Reached 18 C.H.T. at five in the morning by limited mail; bed till nine. Saw Lord Granville, Mr. Delane, Sir A. Panizzi, Mr. Clowes, Messrs. Murray, the American minister. In six or seven hours, principally at the British Museum, I completed my MS., making all the needful searches of papers and journals. Also worked on proof sheets.
>
> *To Mrs. Gladstone.*—We had an interesting little party at Granville's. I had a long talk with Delane. We, he and I, are much of one mind in thinking the Turks must go out of Bulgaria, though retaining a titular supremacy if they like. Between ourselves, Granville a little hangs back from this, but he could not persuade me to hold it back.
>
> 5.— ... Saw Lord Granville, Lord Hartington.... Finished the correction of revises before one, discussing the text with Lord Granville and making various alterations of phrase which he recommended. At seven I received complete copies. We

> went to the Haymarket theatre. Arranged my papers after this, and sent off copies in various directions.

Bulgarian Pamphlet

The pamphlet spread like fire.[340] Within three or four days of its first appearance forty thousand copies had gone. It was instantly followed up by a tremendous demonstration among his constituents. "Sept. 9, 1876.—Thought over my subject for Blackheath. Off at two. A very large meeting. The most enthusiastic far that I ever saw. Spoke over an hour." This is his very prosaic story of the first of those huge and excited multitudes of which for months and years to come he was to confront so many. The pamphlet and the Blackheath speech were his rejoinder to the light and callous tones of Mr. Disraeli, and the sceptical language of his foreign secretary, "I have a strong suspicion," he told the Duke of Argyll, who was a fervent sympathiser, "that Dizzy's crypto-Judaism has had to do with his policy. The Jews of the east *bitterly* hate the Christians; who have not always used them well." This suspicion was constant. "Disraeli," he said to Mr. Gladstone, "may be willing to risk his [553] government for his Judaic feeling,—the deepest and truest, now that his wife has gone, in his whole mind."

The tract beats with a sustained pulse and passion that recall Burke's letters on the *Regicide Peace*. The exhortation against moral complicity with "the basest and blackest outrages upon record within the present century, if not within the memory of man"; the branding of the Turkish race as "the one great anti-human specimen of humanity"; the talk of "fell satanic orgies"; the declaration that there was not a criminal in a European gaol nor a cannibal in the South Sea Islands, whose indignation would not rise at the recital of that which had been done, which remained unavenged, which had left behind all the foul and all the fierce passions that produced it, and might again spring up in another murderous harvest, from the soil soaked and reeking with blood,

[340] *The Bulgarian Horrors, and the Question of the East.*

and in the air tainted with every imaginable deed of crime and shame,—all this vehemence was hailed with eager acclamation by multitudes who felt all that he felt, and found in his passionate invective words and a voice. Mr. Gladstone was not the man, his readers and his public were not the men, for mere denunciation. They found in him a policy. Indignation, he said in a thoroughly characteristic sentence, indignation is froth, except as it leads to action; mere remonstrance is mockery. There are states of affairs, he told them, in which human sympathy refuses to be confined by the rules, necessarily limited and conventional, of international law. Servia and Montenegro in going to war against Turkey might plead human sympathies, broad, deep, and legitimate, and that they committed no moral offence. The policy of the British government was the *status quo*, "as you were." This meant the maintenance of Turkish executive authority. What was really needed was the total withdrawal of the administrative rule of the Turk. And here he used words that became very famous in the controversy:—

> But I return to, and end with, that which is the omega as well as the alpha of this great and most mournful case. An old servant
> [554] of the crown and state, I entreat my countrymen, upon whom far more than perhaps any other people of Europe it depends, to require and to insist that our government which has been working in one direction shall work in the other, and shall apply all its vigour to concur with the other states of Europe in obtaining the extinction of the Turkish executive power in Bulgaria. Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner, namely by carrying off themselves. Their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbashis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas, one and all, bag and baggage, shall I hope clear out from the province they have desolated and profaned.

At Blackheath, under dripping rain clouds, he said the same, though with the invective tempered. "You shall receive your

regular tribute," he said in slow sentences to imaginary Ottomans, whom he seemed to hold before his visual eye, "you shall retain your titular sovereignty, your empire shall not be invaded, but never again as the years roll in their course, so far as it is in our power to determine, never again shall the hand of violence be raised by you, never again shall the flood-gates of lust be open to you, never again shall the dire refinements of cruelty be devised by you for the sake of making mankind miserable."

Once again, it was not words that made the power of the orator, it was the relation in purpose, feeling, and conviction between him and his audience. He forced them into unity with himself by the vivid strength of his resolution and imagination; he could not believe that his own power of emotion was not theirs too:—

> On Monday morning last between four and five o'clock, I was rattling down from Euston station through the calm and silent streets of London, when there was not a footfall to disturb them. Every house looked so still, that it might well have been a receptacle of the dead. But as I came through those long lines of streets, I felt it to be an inspiring and a noble thought that in every one of these houses there were intelligent human beings, my fellow-countrymen, who when they woke would give many of their earliest thoughts, aye and some of their most energetic actions, to the terrors and sufferings of Bulgaria.

[555]

All this was the very spirit of Milton's imperishable sonnet upon the late Massacre in Piedmont; the spirit that made Cromwell say that the slaughter in the Waldensian valleys "came as near to his heart as if his own nearest and dearest had been concerned."

Lord Stratford de Redcliffe

Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, who had been one of the most responsible promoters of the policy of the Crimean war, told Mr. Gladstone of his own strong impression (Sept. 10), that the formidable crisis would not have arisen, had England in

the first instance taken part with the other Powers. Not that he believed that Russia was always and fully trustworthy, but she was so circumstanced then as to be open to the full bearing of our moral influence. Six weeks later Lord Stratford again expressed his unaltered opinion that if in the beginning England had taken her place at the side of the three emperors, the cloud on the horizon would never have swelled out into its present colossal proportions. "It seems to me," he said, "that Russia has been gradually drawn into a position from which she can hardly retreat with credit." "Whatever shades of difference appear in our opinions," he told Mr. Gladstone in September, "may be traced in a great measure to your having made Bulgaria the main object of your appeal, whereas the whole eastern question was my theme, and the Bulgarian atrocities, execrable as they were, only a part of it." The truth was that in making the atrocious doings in Bulgaria the main object of his appeal, Mr. Gladstone had both displayed a sure instinct as to the most effective method of popular approach, and at the same time did justice to his own burning and innate hatred of all cruelty and oppression, whether in Bourbon or Bashi-Bazouk. Humanity was at the root of the whole matter; and the keynote of this great crusade was the association of humanity with a high policy worthy of the British name.

October was passed in a round of visits to great houses, the popular tide in the north still appearing to rise around him. To Lord Granville he writes:—

[556] *Alnwick Castle, Oct. 3, 1876.*—We have advanced thus far in a northern and eastern tour, and we hope to be at Castle Howard on Wednesday. I left home at this particular time partly with ideas of health and relaxation, partly because I thought that being everywhere and nowhere I should escape a little from the turmoil of the time. Through Cheshire and Lancashire we accomplished the first stage of our journey to Raby without witnessing any particular indication of public

sentiment; and this rather encouraged our extending a little the circle of our visits, which I am now half tempted to regret. For at every point I have had the greatest difficulty in maintaining any show of privacy, and avoiding strong manifestations. I never saw such keen exhibitions of the popular feeling, appearing so to pervade all ranks and places. A tory county member said to my wife two days ago, "If there were a dissolution now, I should not get a vote." This may be in some degree peculiar to the northerners with their strong character and deep emotions....

Castle Howard, Oct. 7, 1876.—Before receiving your letter of the 5th, I had been driven to the conclusion that I must make a further utterance, following the actual course of the transactions. And upon the whole I adhere to this conclusion, notwithstanding your opinion, to which I attach great weight. There is a great difference in our situations, which I think accounts for this difference of view. I found Ailesbury, of course, full of friendship and loyalty to you, but disposed to regret that you had not been able to see your way to a more advanced and definite policy. I told him that I found no cause for surprise in your reserve, and thought you held yourself in hand for the purpose of holding your party in hand—a view which I think he more or less embraced. Now, I have not your responsibilities to the party, but I have for the moment more than your responsibilities to the country, in this sense that I feel myself compelled to advise from time to time upon the course of that national movement which I have tried hard to evoke, and assist in evoking. I regard myself as an outside workman, engaged in the preparation of materials, which you and the party will probably have to manipulate and then to build into a structure. For though I do not wish to shut the door upon the government, I despair of them, after so many invitations and so many refusals....

[557]

Feeling In The Country

To Madame Novikoff, a Russian lady who at this time began to exercise a marked influence upon the opinions of important men

with much influence on the opinions of many other people,[341] he indicated some doubtful symptoms:—

> *Hawarden, Oct. 17, 1876.*—There is an undoubted and smart rally on behalf of Turkey in the metropolitan press. It is in the main representative of the ideas and opinions of what are called the upper ten thousand. From this body there has never on any occasion within my memory proceeded the impulse that has prompted, and finally achieved, *any* of the great measures which in the last half century have contributed so much to the fame and happiness of England. They did not emancipate the dissenters, Roman catholics, and Jews. They did not reform the parliament. They did not liberate the negro slave. They did not abolish the corn law. They did not take the taxes off the press. They did not abolish the Irish established church. They did not cheer on the work of Italian freedom and reconstitution. Yet all these things have been done; and done by other agencies than theirs, and despite their opposition. When I speak of *them*, I speak of course of the majority among them. Unhappily, the country is understood abroad mainly through the metropolitan press.

He was no sooner back at Hawarden than he fell to work on subsidiary branches of the question of questions.

> *Oct. 22.*—Worked hard and finished my paper on Russia in Turkestan, and sent it off. Criminal justice on Sunday! But it is for peace. 24.—To London. 27.—Up at 6. Went with Harry to Dover, saw him off on board the packet and pier [on his way to India]. Drove over to Walmer, reviewed the place, saw Lord Granville and Sir W. James. Returned to London, and at 9.30 to the Gaiety, saw a miserable burlesque of which I had

[341] The story of the heroic death of Colonel Kiréeff, her brother, was vividly told by Kinglake in the introduction to the cabinet edition of his *Invasion of the Crimea*. This episode is supposed by some to have helped to intensify Mr. Gladstone's feeling on the issues of the eastern war.

heard a most inviting but false account. 28.—To Hawarden. 31.—Tennyson and H. T. came. *Nov. 1*.—Tennyson read to us his *Harold*. It took near 2-½ hours. Walk with him and a party. 2.—Read Bagehot on Lord Spencer's *Life*—very [558] clever, very imperfect. Conversation with Tennyson on future retribution and other matters of theology. He has not thought, I conceive, systematically or thoroughly upon them, but is much alarmed at the prospect of the loss of belief. He left us at one. Walk and long conversation with Lord Acton, who seems in opinion to go beyond Döllinger, though in certain things he stops short of him. 8.—Read aloud the debate of the first *Iliad* from Pope. 9.—Read aloud my version of the Assembly—*Iliad* i. 10.—Read aloud Lord Derby's and Cowper's version of the Assembly. 14.—The Olympian part of *Iliad* I. in Pope's version aloud, and then my own. 17.—We went to Liverpool, where we attended the theatre to see Pennington in *Hamlet*. It was really excellent. I never was so well received in that town. 21.—Finished revision of my MS., "The Hellenic Factor in the Eastern Problem," and sent it to press.

III

At the Lord Mayor's feast in November, the prime minister used menacing language. The policy of England, he said, was peace, but no country was so well prepared for war as ours. If England were to enter into a righteous war, her resources were inexhaustible. "She is not a country that, when she enters into a campaign, has to ask herself whether she can support a second or a third campaign. She enters into a campaign which she will not terminate till right is done." This was a hardly veiled threat to Russia, it was encouragement to Turkey, it was incitement to a war party in Great Britain. "The provocation offered by Disraeli at the Guildhall," wrote Mr. Gladstone, "is almost incredible.

Some new lights about his Judaic feeling in which he is both consistent and conscientious have come in upon me."

Still the general feeling was strongly adverse to any action on behalf of Turkey. Mr. Gladstone eagerly noted even the most trivial incident that pointed this way. "Yesterday night," he wrote (Nov. 26), "in the tory town of Liverpool, when Othello was being acted, and the words were reached 'The Turks are drowned,' the audience rose in enthusiasm and interrupted the performance for some time with their cheering. These things are not without meaning." Men who commonly stood aside from political activity were roused. "Mr. Carlyle," says Mr. Ruskin, "Mr. Froude, and several other men of creditable name gathered together at call of Mr. Gladstone as for a great national need, together with other men of more retired mind—Edward Burne-Jones for one, and myself for another."

[559]

Conference At St. James's Hall

The reply to the Guildhall speech was a conference at St. James's Hall (Dec. 8), one of the most remarkable gatherings of representative men of every type and from every part of the kingdom ever held in this country. "I have most flourishing accounts of the progress of preparations for the conference of which I have been a promoter from the beginning. They urge me to speak on the 8th, but I should much prefer that others should put themselves in the foreground." Besides the eminent politicians, great territorial magnates were there, and men of letters, and divines of various churches, and men who had never been to a militant assembly in their lives before,—all with a resolute purpose expressed by Mr. Trevelyan, "No matter how the prime minister may finger the hilt of the sword, the nation will take care that it never leaves the scabbard." Mr. Gladstone reached London a day or two before. On the 8th, he enters:—

> 8.—Made notes and extracts for speech. Attended the meetings at St. James's Hall, 12-1-½ and 4-8. Spoke (I fear) 1-½ hours with some exertion, far from wholly to

> my satisfaction. The meetings were great, notable, almost historical.
>
> The day after this important and impressive gathering he was back at Hawarden, busy at his article upon the life of the Prince Consort. Then came Christmas day,—"The most solemn I have known for long; I see that eastward sky of storm and of underlight!"

At a suggestion from the London foreign office, a conference of the great Powers met at Constantinople in the middle of December. Lord Salisbury went as the representative of England. [560] To a correspondent Mr. Gladstone spoke of this as an excellent selection:—

> I think it right at once to give you my opinion of Lord Salisbury, whom I know pretty well in private. He has little foreign or eastern knowledge, and little craft; he is rough of tongue in public debate, but a great gentleman in private society; he is very remarkably clever, of unsure judgment, but is above anything mean; has no Disraelite prejudices; keeps a conscience, and has plenty of manhood and character. In a word the appointment of Lord Salisbury to Constantinople is the best thing the government have yet done in the eastern question.

As the conference met, so it ran a usual course, and then vanished. The Powers were in complete accord as to the demands that were to be made upon Turkey for the protection of the unfortunate Christian rayahs. The Turk in just confidence that he should find a friend, rejected them, and the envoys departed to their homes. Mr. Gladstone, however, found comfort in the thought that by the agitation two points had been gained: the re-establishment of the European concert, and extrication from a disgraceful position of virtual complicity with Turkey.

In the spring of 1877 he wrote a second pamphlet,[342] because a speech in the House could not contain detail enough, and because parliamentary tradition almost compelled a suspension of discussion while ministers were supposed to be engaged in concert with other Powers in devising a practical answer to Russian inquiry. He found that it "produced no great impression," the sale not going beyond six or seven thousand copies. Still, the gala remained from the proceeding in the autumn, that the government dared not say they had nothing to do with the condition of the Christian rayahs of Turkey, and any idea of going to war for Turkey was out of the question.

Public feeling had waxed very hot, yet without any clear precision of opinion or purpose on the side opposed to Mr. Gladstone's policy of emancipation. Dean Church (Dec. 1876) describes how "everybody was very savage with everybody about Turks and Russians: I think I never remember such an awkward time for meeting people (until you know you are on the same side) except at the height of the Tractarian row."[343]

[561]

J. R. Green's Description

A little later we have one of the best pictures of him that I know, from the warm and vivid hand of J. R. Green, the historian:—

> *Feb. 21, 1877.*—Last night I met Gladstone—it will always be a memorable night to me; Stubbs was there, and Goldwin Smith, and Humphry Sandwith, and Mackenzie Wallace, whose great book on Russia is making such a stir, besides a few other nice people; but one forgets everything in Gladstone himself, in his perfect naturalness and grace of manner, his charming abandon of conversation, his unaffected modesty, his warm ardour for all that is noble and good. I felt so proud of my leader—the chief I have always clung to through good report and ill report—because, wise or unwise as he might seem in this or that, he was always noble of soul. He was very

[342] *Lessons in Massacre.*
[343] Church, *Life*, p. 252.

> pleasant to me, and talked of the new historic school he hoped we were building up as enlisting his warmest sympathy. I wish you could have seen with what a glow he spoke of the Montenegrins and their struggle for freedom; how he called on us who wrote history to write what we could of that long fight for liberty! And all through the evening not a word to recall his greatness amongst us, simple, natural, an equal among his equals, listening to every one, drawing out every one, with a force and a modesty that touched us more than all his power.

In another letter, says the same ardent man, "I begin to see that there may be a truer wisdom in the 'humanitarianism' of Gladstone than in the purely political views of Disraeli. The sympathies of peoples with peoples, the sense of a common humanity between nations, the aspirations of nationalities after freedom and independence, *are* real political forces; and it is just because Gladstone owns them as forces, and Disraeli disowns them, that the one has been on the right side, and the other on the wrong in parallel questions such as the upbuilding of Germany or Italy. I think it will be so in this upbuilding of the Sclave."[344]

It was my own good fortune to pass two days with him at this moment at High Elms. Huxley and Playfair were of the party. Mr. Gladstone had with him the printer's proofs of his second pamphlet, and was in full glow against Turkish terrorism and its abettors. This strong obsession could not be concealed, nor was there any reason why it should be; it made no difference in his ready courtesy and kindness of demeanour, his willingness to enter into other people's topics, his pliant force and alacrity of mind. On the Sunday afternoon Sir John Lubbock, our host, took us all up to the hilltop whence in his quiet Kentish village Darwin was shaking the world. The illustrious pair, born in the same year, had never met before. Mr. Gladstone as soon as seated [562]

[344] *Letters of J. R. Green*, pp. 446-7.

took Darwin's interest in lessons of massacre for granted, and launched forth his thunderbolts with unexhausted zest. His great, wise, simple, and truth-loving listener, then, I think, busy on digestive powers of the drosera in his green-house, was intensely delighted. When we broke up, watching Mr. Gladstone's erect alert figure as he walked away, Darwin, shading his eyes with his hand against the evening rays, said to me in unaffected satisfaction, "What an honour that such a great man should come to visit me!" Too absorbed in his own overwhelming conflict with the powers of evil, Mr. Gladstone makes no mention of his afternoon call, and only says of the two days that "he found a notable party, and made interesting conversation," and that he "could not help liking" one of the company, then a stranger to him. In his absence at church, we were talking of the qualities that send men forward and keep them back. "I should like to know," cried Huxley, "what would keep such a man as that back," pointing to where Mr. Gladstone had been sitting; "why, put him in the middle of a moor, with nothing in the world but his shirt, and you could not prevent him from being anything he liked." And Huxley was as far as possible from being a Gladstonian.

IV

Episode Of The Resolutions

Events meanwhile had moved. The failure of the conference in December, and the futility of an instrument known as the London protocol devised in March, led up to a declaration of war by Russia against Turkey in April. [563] We now come to an episode in this controversy, that excited lively passions at the moment, and subjected Mr. Gladstone's relation to his party to a strain that would have been profoundly painful, if his heroic intensity had not for the time taken him beyond the region of pain and pleasure.

To Lord Granville. 73 Harley Street, April 23, 1877.—The protocol, the refusal of Turkey, the insistence of Russia, have been followed to-night by the announcement that the Russian Chargé has suspended relations with Turkey. Is not the moment now come for raising the rather stiff question whether a policy, or a substantive motion, is to be submitted to parliament? I hold back from a conclusion as long as I can, that I may benefit by the views of others. But it is perfectly plain that Salisbury is at a discount, and that the government grow more Turkish every day; reasonably plain that some grave arguments against moving have now lost their force. My own inclination is towards a series of resolutions with such points as are rudely indicated on the enclosed scrap. Please to let me have it again at some time; I have no copy.

To the Duke of Argyll. April 26, 1877.—I have drawn some resolutions of which I intend to give notice to-day unless the leaders will move. If they will move, though they may say much less, I can support them and express my fuller ideas in a speech. I cannot leave my bed, but notice will be given in my name.

From the Diary. April 27, 1877.—Ill in the night; kept my bed. Saw Dr. Clark twice. Saw Mr. Goschen, Lord Wolverton, Mr. Bright, Lord Frederick Cavendish. This day I took my decision, a severe one, in face of my not having a single approver in the *upper* official circle. But had I in the first days of September asked the same body whether I ought to write my pamphlet, I believe the unanimous answer would have been No. Arranged for the first (general) notice to be given, in my absence.

The resolutions were five in number, and the pith of them was, first, an expression of complaint against the Porte; second, a declaration that, in the absence of guarantees on behalf of the subject populations, the Porte had lost all claim to support, [564]
moral or material; third, a desire that British influence should be employed on behalf of local liberty and self-government in

the disturbed provinces; fourth, this influence to be addressed to promoting the concert of the Powers in exacting from the Porte such changes as they might deem to be necessary for humanity and justice; fifth, an address to the crown accordingly. On the expediency of these resolutions, at a moment when a war with many complexities had just broken out, opinion in the party was divided. The official liberals and their special adherents doubted. The radicals below the gangway, headed by Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, supported the resolutions with enthusiasm. Adverse notices of the previous question were put upon the paper. Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone (May 2) that his colleagues on the front opposition bench had met, and were still of opinion, "that it was not opportune at this moment to move resolutions, and thought that the least antagonistic course as regarded you would be to vote for one of the motions announced for the previous question." To the Duke of Argyll Mr. Gladstone wrote on the 4th:—

> Our friends of the late cabinet have fallen into a sad series of errors, some of which I fear will be greatly resented in the country. To meet on Wednesday; to use the private pressure which is being used, as I am told, against the resolutions; and above all to have announced the result of the meeting in the papers of yesterday; these form a combination, in my opinion, deplorable and almost incredible. I shall do all in my power to avert consequences, but my difficulties are greatly increased.

It looked as if a mortal split within the party were inevitable.

> *From the Diary. May 5.*—The post brought me near 140 letters to-day which took some hours to examine, but they are most remarkable. Saw Lord Granville with Lord Wolverton. They opened the means of bridging over the chasm inadvertently made; and I readily went into the scheme. It was carried through by Granville at a meeting of his friends after the Academy dinner, and he came to me at Wolverton's with

> Hartington to make known the result and consider some details of execution. What they ask of me is really, from my point of view, little more than nominal. They have in truth been awakened as from a slumber by the extraordinary demonstrations in the country. 3—4-½ attended the Academy exhibition. 6-½-10-1/4 at the dinner; spoke for literature! My reception surprised me, it was so good. [565]

Episode Of The Resolutions

What was asked was that he should consent to an amended form of his second resolution, declaring more simply and categorically that the Turk, by his misgovernment, had lost his claims. As to the other resolutions, according to a common usage, it was at his choice to accept a division on the first or first two, and not divide upon the rest. His speech, of course, would cover the ground of all the resolutions. This reduction was, as he truly said, "little more than nominal." A friendly question was to be put when the time came, and in reply he would state how things stood.

The critical day arrived, and not often has parliamentary excitement been so high. It was a battle of high national and even European policy, for England was now at the front; it was a battle between two sections of a party; it was the ordeal of a man admitted to be the greatest in the House, and perhaps some of the onlookers felt much like the curious Florentines, as they wondered what would happen to Savonarola and the monks in the great Trial by Fire.

> *From the Diary. May 7.*—This day came in about 100 meetings and say 200 letters or 250. Worked hard upon the blue book, and references and notes for speech. House at 4-1/4. For over two hours I was assaulted from every quarter, except the opposition bench, which was virtually silent. Such a sense of solitary struggle I never remember. At last I rose on the main question nearly in despair as to the result; but resolved at least not to fail through want of effort. I spoke 2-½

> hours, voice lasting well. House gradually came round and at the last was more than good. It was over at 9.30. Never did I feel weaker and more wormlike. Dinner at Sir W. James's and H. of C. again 10-3/4-12-3/4. 8.—I am the spoiled child of sleep. This night was an exception.

[566]

The scene began with the question as preconcerted, put by Mr. Trevelyan. Such moves never fail to provoke some measure of mockery, and this time both regular opponents and opponents in more or less disguise thought that they had got the monarch of the forest down. The situation was one that opened the way for Mr. Gladstone's love of over-precision, and his various explanations prolonged the wrangle. It lasted until the dinner-hour. "While many members," says one observer, "were streaming out to dine and those who remained looked dejectedly at their watches, Mr. Gladstone, who is sixty-eight years of age, sprang again to his feet, and without any sign of diminished spirit delivered a noble speech lasting two hours and a half. It was perhaps the greatest triumph of irrepressible moral and physical vitality over depressing conditions that was ever won in the House of Commons."[345]

The record of a distinguished eyewitness, himself one day to be prime minister, ought not to be omitted:—

> There was one of those preliminary parliamentary debates—or series of debates—which preceded the main business of the evening. In this Mr. Gladstone had to speak not once or twice, but several times, and it was not until hour after hour had passed in this preliminary skirmish in a House hostile, impatient, and utterly wearied, that he got up to present his case with that conviction that he was right, which was his great strength as a speaker in and out of the House. I never shall forget the impression that speech left on my mind. As a mere feat of physical endurance it was almost unsurpassed; as a feat

[345] *Spectator*.

> of parliamentary courage, parliamentary skill, parliamentary endurance, and parliamentary eloquence, I believe it will always be unequalled.[346]

As he drew to his close, he looked according to Mr. Forster, "*like an inspired man*," and I have heard many hearers of cool temperament declare the passage about the Montenegrins and onwards, to have been the most thrilling deliverance that could ever be conceived. Here is this noble peroration:—

> Sir, there were other days when England was the hope of freedom. Wherever in the world a high aspiration was [567]
> entertained, or a noble blow was struck, it was to England that the eyes of the oppressed were always turned—to this favourite, this darling home of so much privilege and so much happiness, where the people that had built up a noble edifice for themselves would, it was well known, be ready to do what in them lay to secure the benefit of the same inestimable boon for others. You talk to me of the established tradition and policy in regard to Turkey. I appeal to an established tradition older, wider, nobler far—a tradition not which disregards British interests, but which teaches you to seek the promotion of these interests in obeying the dictates of honour and justice. And, sir, what is to be the end of this? Are we to dress up the fantastic ideas some people entertain about this policy and that policy in the garb of British interests, and then, with a new and base idolatry, fall down and worship them? Or are we to look, not at the sentiment, but at the hard facts of the case, which Lord Derby told us fifteen years ago—viz., that it is the populations of those countries that will ultimately possess them—that will ultimately determine their abiding condition? It is to this fact, this law, that we should look. There is now before the world a glorious prize. A portion of those unhappy people are still as yet making an effort to retrieve what they have lost so long, but have not

[346] Mr. Balfour, House of Commons, May 20, 1898.

ceased to love and to desire. I speak of those in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Another portion—a band of heroes such as the world has rarely seen—stand on the rocks of Montenegro, and are ready now, as they have ever been during the 400 years of their exile from their fertile plains, to sweep down from their fastnesses and meet the Turks at any odds for the re-establishment of justice and of peace in those countries. Another portion still, the 5,000,000 of Bulgarians, cowed and beaten down to the ground, hardly venturing to look upwards, even to their Father in heaven, have extended their hands to you; they have sent you their petition, they have prayed for your help and protection. They have told you that they do not seek alliance with Russia, or with any foreign power, but that they seek to be delivered from an intolerable burden of woe and shame. That burden of woe and shame—the greatest that exists on God's earth—is one that we thought united Europe
[568] was about to remove; but to removing which, for the present, you seem to have no efficacious means of offering even the smallest practical contribution. But, sir, the removal of that load of woe and shame is a great and noble prize. It is a prize well worth competing for. It is not yet too late to try to win it. I believe there are men in the cabinet who would try to win it, if they were free to act on their own beliefs and aspirations. It is not yet too late, I say, to become competitors for that prize; but be assured that whether you mean to claim for yourselves even a single leaf in that immortal chaplet of renown, which will be the reward of true labour in that cause, or whether you turn your backs upon that cause and upon your own duty, I believe, for one, that the knell of Turkish tyranny in these provinces has sounded. So far as human eye can judge, it is about to be destroyed. The destruction may not come in the way or by the means that we should choose; but come this boon from what hands it may, it will be a noble boon, and as a noble boon will gladly be accepted by Christendom and the world.

V

The division, after a debate that lasted five days, resulted in 354 for ministers, against 223 for Mr. Gladstone.

> Of course if you had gone on alone, Lord Granville told him, you would only have had either more or less than half the liberal party. If Hartington had moved the first two resolutions, the government would certainly have had some 160 or 170 majority. All the malcontents behind the opposition front benches were obliged to vote on Monday, in consequence of having so vigorously preached allegiance during the previous ten days. As it is, the party voted pretty well.

Tacks In Public Opinion

"The assumed laughter of the conservatives," he adds, "showed their vexation, and *some* of the radicals showed their cards—that it is not the eastern question, but the hopes of breaking up the party that really excites them." The radicals on their part were extremely sore at the withdrawal of the resolutions. "Your goodness," wrote their leading man to Mr. Gladstone the following day, "has been abused in the interests of a section of the party who deserve least at your hands. The current report [569] in the lobbies last night, spread by these gentlemen, and easily believed by their friends, was that you had 'caved in.' " Could he not take some further opportunity of showing that he had not abandoned the policy of joint intervention, and that the liberal party in the country had no reason to regret that they rose almost as one man to his call?

At first it was thought that the discussion had done good by impressing the government with the desire of the country, if not for coercion at least for real neutrality, and that Lord Beaconsfield had submitted to the better influences in the cabinet. It soon appeared that this had not happened. "The fidelity of the party," said Lord Granville, "and the large majority have given Beaconsfield the lead, of which he has not been slow to avail

himself. It is very serious." The war in the Balkans went on; the Turks fought with valour and constancy: sufferings on both sides were frightful. In England the sympathy with the miserable victims of Turkish misrule became modified by the re-awakened jealousy of Russian power. Mr. Gladstone held his ground with invincible tenacity against all comers. He took his share in such parliamentary operations as were possible, but these operations were necessarily fruitless, and the platform now for the first time became the effective field for moving national opinion.

Great parties of tourists from the northern and midland towns began to make it a fashion to go on high pilgrimage to Hawarden, where besides a fine park they saw the most interesting man in the country, and had a good chance of hearing an eloquent speech, or watching a tree fall under the stroke of his vigorous arm. If they brought him the tribute of a casket or an axe or some cunning walking-stick, he was obliged to thank them, and if he opened his lips to thank them, the all-engrossing theme was sure to well up. Some of these earnest utterances jarred even on his admirers in the press and out of it. Just so would critics in colleges and cathedral closes have found Wesley and Whitefield in their evangelising mission north, south, east, and west, excessive, exaggerated, indiscreet, and deficient in good
[570] taste. They could not understand how one supposed to be so knowing in all the manœuvres of parliament and party, was at the same time so naïf. This curious simplicity in fact marked him in all the movements into which he put his heart. Like every other grand missionary—the abolitionist, the gospel missionary, the free trader, the peace man, the temperance man—he could not believe that the truths, arguments, and appeals, of which he was the bearer, could fail to strike in all who heard them the same fire that blazed in bosoms fervid as his own.

He went to Birmingham and was received with tumultuous acclamations by many tens of thousands:—

> *May 31*.—[Hawarden.] Off before 11. Reached Birmingham at 3-1/4. A triumphal reception. Dinner at Mr. Chamberlain's. Meeting 7 to 9-½, half occupied by my speech. A most intelligent and duly appreciative audience—but they were 25,000 and the building I think of no acoustic merits, so that the strain was excessive. A supper followed. *June 1*.—Breakfast party 9.30. Much conversation on the Birmingham school board system. Off at 10.45 to Enfield factory, which consumed the forenoon in a most interesting survey with Colonel Dickson and his assistants. Then to the fine (qy. overfine?) board school, where addresses were presented and I spoke over half an hour on politics. After luncheon to the town hall; address from the corporation, made a municipal speech of say 20 minutes. A good deal of movement in the streets with us even to-day. Thence to the Oratory and sat with Dr. Newman.[347] Saw Mr. Chamberlain's very pleasing children. Then to the dinner, spoke again. To Hagley at 11.5.

Well was, it said of this visit by Dale, that strenuous whole-hearted man, "Forsaken or but feebly supported by many of those with whom he had shared many glorious conflicts, and who owed to him their place and fame, his courage remained undaunted, and his enthusiasm for righteousness and freedom unquenched." [571]

Mr. Gladstone described, the general situation in a letter to a correspondent out of England:—

> I cannot say much for the conduct of the Powers. That of the pope and his court has been vile; Manning and most part of Ireland have followed suit; France and Germany are thinking of themselves and one another; and Italy, for fear of the pope, is obliged to look very much to Germany. Austria is to some

[347] At this interview Mr. Chamberlain was present. He had asked Mr. Gladstone what he would like to do or see in Birmingham. Mr. Gladstone said he thought he should like to call upon Dr. Newman. The wonderful pair were nervous and constrained, and each seemed a little relieved when, after twenty minutes of commonplace conversation, they rose to part.

> extent in a false position. For us there is no excuse: there was no difficulty whatever in our doing our duty. I have said in parliament, and I deeply feel, it is the most deplorable chapter of our foreign policy since the peace of 1815. The good cause has been further weakened by the bad conduct, in varying degrees, of many races, Magyars and Jews above all. You see I cannot help filling up my paper with this subject.

In July he made a pleasure trip in one of Sir Donald Currie's steamers, from London to Dartmouth. "We set out at 10.20," he says, "for the docks. Started in the *Dublin Castle* at noon. We spent the night at the Nore, good weather, kind reception, splendid fare. The Cape deputies came with us as far as Gravesend." Among these deputies was Mr. Kruger.

In October he paid his first and only visit to Ireland. It lasted little more than three weeks, and did not extend beyond a very decidedly English Pale. He stayed in great houses, was feasted by the provost of Trinity, in spite of disestablishment, and he had a friendly conversation with Cardinal Cullen, in spite of Vaticanism. "You know, Mr. Gladstone," said the Cardinal, "we could have given you a warmer reception if it had not been for certain pamphlets which we in Ireland did not like very well." He received the freedom of the city of Dublin, broke bread with the Duke of Marlborough at the vice-regal lodge, admired the picturesque site of the castle at Kilkenny, enjoyed sympathetic talks with host and hostess at Abbeyleix, and delighted in the curious antiquities and exquisite natural beauties of the county of Wicklow. Of the multitudes of strange things distinctively Irish, he had little chance of seeing much.

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Chapter V. A Tumultuous Year. (1878)

> On these great questions, which cut so deep into heart and mind, the importance of taking what they think the best course for the question will often seem, even to those who have the most just sense of party obligation, a higher duty than that of party allegiance.—GLADSTONE (*to Granville*, 1878).

I

Of 1878 Mr. Gladstone spoke as "a tumultuous year." In January, after a fierce struggle of five months in the Balkan passes, the Russian forces overcame the Turkish defence, and by the end of January had entered Adrianople and reached the Sea of Marmora. Here at San Stefano a treaty of peace was made at the beginning of March. The last word of the eastern question, as Lord Derby said in those days, is this: Who is to have Constantinople? No great Power would be willing to see it in the hands of any other great Power, no small Power could hold it at all, and as for joint occupation, all such expedients were both dangerous and doubtful.[348] This last word now seemed to be writing itself in capital letters. Russia sent the treaty to the Powers, with the admission that portions of it affecting the general interests of Europe could not be regarded as definitive without general concurrence. A treaty between Russian and Turk within the zone of Constantinople and almost in sight of St. Sophia, opened a new and startling vista to English politicians. Powerful journalists, supposed to be much in the confidence of ministers, declared that if peace were ultimately concluded on anything like the terms proposed, then beyond all doubt the outworks of our empire were gone, and speedy ruin must begin. About such a situation there had been but one opinion among our statesmen for many [573]

[348] *Speeches of the Fifteenth Earl of Derby*, i. p. 297.

generations. Until Mr. Gladstone, “all men held that such a state of things [as the Russians at Constantinople] would bring the British empire face to face with ruin.”[349]

Treaty Of San Stefano

Before the treaty of San Stefano, an angry panic broke out in parts of England. None of the stated terms of British neutrality were violated either by the treaty or its preliminaries, but even when no Russian force was within forty miles of Constantinople, the cabinet asked for a vote of six millions (January), and a few days later the British fleet passed the Dardanelles. Two years earlier, Mr. Gladstone had wished that the fleet should go to Constantinople as a coercive demonstration against the Porte; now, in 1878, the despatch of the fleet was a demonstration against Russia, who had done alone the work of emancipation that in Mr. Gladstone's view should have been done, and might have been done without war by that concert of the Powers from which England had drawn back. The concert of the Powers that our withdrawal had paralysed would have revived quickly enough, if either Austria or Germany had believed that the Czar really meant to seize Constantinople. “I have done my best,” wrote Mr. Gladstone to a friend, “against the vote of six millions; a foolish and mischievous proposition. The liberal leaders have, mistakenly as I think, shrunk at the last moment from voting. But my opinion is that the liberal party in general are firmly opposed to the vote as a silly, misleading, and mischievous measure.” He both spoke and voted. The opinion of his adherents was that his words, notwithstanding his vote, were calculated to do more to throw oil on the troubled waters, than either the words or the abstention of the official leader.

The appearance of the British fleet with the nominal object of protecting life and property at Constantinople, was immediately followed by the advance of Russian troops thirty miles nearer to Constantinople with the same laudable object. The London

[349] *Pall Mall Gazette*, Feb. 26, 1898.

cabinet only grew the wilder in its Projects, among them being a secret expedition of Indian troops to seize Cyprus and Alexandretta, with the idea that it would be fairer to the Turk not to ask his leave. Two ministers resigned in succession, rather than follow Lord Beaconsfield further in designs of this species.[350] [574]

"It is a bitter disappointment," Mr. Gladstone wrote to Madame Novikoff, "to find the conclusion of one war, for which there was a weighty cause, followed by the threat of another, for which there is no adequate cause at all, and which will be an act of utter wickedness—if it comes to pass, which God forbid—on one side or on both. That unhappy subject of the bit of Bessarabia,[351] on which I have given you my mind with great freedom (for otherwise what is the use of my writing at all?) threatens to be in part the pretext and in part the cause of enormous mischief, and in my opinion to mar and taint at a particular point the immense glory which Russia had acquired, already complete in a military sense, and waiting to be consummated in a moral sense too."

Public men do not withstand war fevers without discomfort, as Bright had found in the streets of Manchester when he condemned the Crimean war. One or two odious and unusual incidents now happened to Mr. Gladstone:—

> *Feb. 24.*—Between four and six, three parties of the populace arrived here, the first with cheers, the two others hostile. Windows were broken and much hooting. The last detachment was only kept away by mounted police in line across the street both ways. This is not very sabbatical. There is strange work behind the curtain, if one could only get at it. The instigators are those really guilty; no one can wonder at the tools.

[350] Lord Carnarvon resigned in January, 1878, when the fleet was ordered to the Dardanelles, and Lord Derby in March on the calling out of the reserves.

[351] Russia demanded from Turkey the Dobrudscha in order to cede it to Roumania in exchange for the Roumanian province of Bessarabia.

One Sunday afternoon a little later (March 4):—

> Another gathering of people was held off by the police. I walked down with C., and as a large crowd gathered, though in the main friendly, we went into Dr. Clark's, and then in a hansom off the ground.

[575] Stories were put about that Lord Beaconsfield reported the names of dissentient colleagues to the Queen. Dining with Sir Robert Phillimore (Jan. 17), Mr. Gladstone—

> was emphatic and decided in his opinion that if the premier mentioned to the Queen any of his colleagues who had opposed him in the cabinet, he was guilty of great baseness and perfidy. Gladstone said he had copies of 250 letters written by him to the Queen, in none of which could a reference be found to the opinion of his colleagues expressed in cabinet.

On the same occasion, by the way, Sir Robert notes: "Gladstone was careful to restrain the expression of his private feelings about Lord Beaconsfield, as he generally is."

II

Congress Of Berlin

In the summer the famous congress assembled at Berlin (June 13 to July 13), with Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury as the representatives of Great Britain, to sanction, reject, or modify the treaty of San Stefano. Before the congress met, the country received a shock that made men stagger. While in London it was impossible to attempt to hold a meeting in favour of peace, and even in the northern towns such meetings were almost at the mercy of anybody who might choose to start a jingo chorus; while the war party exulted in the thought that military preparations were going on apace, and that the bear would soon

be rent by the lion; a document was one afternoon betrayed to the public, from which the astounding fact appeared that England and Russia had already entered into a secret agreement, by which the treaty of San Stefano was in substance to be ratified, with the single essential exception that the southern portion of Bulgaria was to be severed from the northern. The treaty of Berlin became in fact an extensive partition of the Turkish empire, and the virtual ratification of the policy of bag and baggage. The Schouvaloff memorandum was not the only surprise. Besides the secret agreement with Russia, the British government had made a secret convention with Turkey. By this convention England undertook to defend Turkey against Russian aggression in Asia, though concessions were made to Russia that rendered Asiatic Turkey indefensible; and Turkey was to carry out reforms which [576] all sensible men knew to be wholly beyond her power. In payment for this bargain, the Sultan allowed England to occupy and administer Cyprus.

At the end of the session Mr. Gladstone wound up his labours in parliament with an extraordinarily powerful survey of all these great transactions. Its range, compass, and grasp are only matched by the simplicity and lucidity of his penetrating examination. It was on July 30:—

> Finished the protocols and worked up the whole subject. It loomed very large and disturbed my sleep unusually. H. of C. Spoke 2-½ hours. I was in body much below par, but put on the steam perforce. It ought to have been far better. The speech exhausted me a good deal, as I was and am below par.

He sketched, in terse outline, the results of the treaty—the independence of Roumania, Servia, and Montenegro; the virtual independence of northern Bulgaria; the creation in southern Bulgaria (under the name of Eastern Roumelia) of local autonomy, which must soon grow into something more. Bosnia and Herzegovina, though Mr. Gladstone would have hoped for

their freedom from external control, had been handed over to Austria, but they were at any rate free from the Ottoman. The cardinal fact was that eleven millions of people formerly under Turkish rule, absolute or modified, were entirely exempted from the yoke. "Taking the whole of the provisions of the treaty of Berlin together, I most thankfully and joyfully acknowledge that great results have been achieved in the diminution of human misery and towards the establishment of human happiness and prosperity in the East." A great work of emancipation had been achieved for the Slavs of the Turkish empire. He deplored that equal regard had not been paid to the case of the Hellenes in Thessaly and Epirus, though even in 1862, Palmerston and Russell were in favour of procuring the cession of Thessaly and Epirus to Greece. As for the baffling of Russian intrigue, it was true that the Bulgaria of Berlin was reduced from the Bulgaria
[577] of San Stefano, but this only furnished new incentives and new occasions for intrigue.[352] Macedonia and Armenia were left over.

The British Plenipotentiaries

On the conduct of the two British plenipotentiaries at Berlin he spoke without undue heat, but with a weight that impressed even adverse hearers:—

> I say, sir, that in this congress of the great Powers, the voice of England has not been heard in unison with the institutions, the history, and the character of England. On every question that arose, and that became a subject of serious contest in the congress, or that could lead to any important practical result, a voice has been heard from Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury which sounded in the tones of Metternich, and not in the tones of Mr. Canning, or of Lord Palmerston, or of Lord Russell. I do not mean that the British government ought to have gone to the congress determined to insist upon the unqualified prevalence of what I may call British ideas.

[352] As it happened, the severance of northern from southern Bulgaria only lasted seven years.

> They were bound to act in consonance with the general views of Europe. But within the limits of fair differences of opinion, which will always be found to arise on such occasions, I do affirm that it was their part to take the side of liberty; and I do also affirm that as a matter of fact they took the side of servitude.

The agreement with Russia had in truth constantly tied their hands. For instance, Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury might make to Russia as many eloquent speeches as they liked against the restoration of Bessarabia, but everybody in the room knew that the British government had taken the lead in virtually assuring Russia that she had only to hold to her point and Bessarabia should again be hers. Most effective of all was his exposure of the convention with Turkey, a proceeding by which we had undertaken, behind the back of Europe and against the treaty of Paris, to establish a sole protectorate in Asiatic Turkey.[353] We had made a contract of such impossible scope as to bind us to manage the reform of the judicature, the police, the finances, the civil service of Turkey, and the stoppage of the sources of corruption at Constantinople. The load, if we took it [578] seriously, was tremendous; if we did not take it seriously, then what was the whole story of the reform of Asiatic Turkey, but a blind to excuse the acquisition of Cyprus? This great presentation of a broad and reasoned case contained a passage near its close, that had in it the kernel of Mr. Gladstone's policy in the whole controversy that was now drawing to an end:—

> I think we have lost greatly by the conclusion of this convention; I think we have lost very greatly indeed the sympathy and respect of the nations of Europe. I do not expect or believe that we shall fall into that sort of contempt which follows upon weakness. I think it to be one of the most

[353] Mr. Gladstone made an important speech on the treaty-making power on June 13, 1878.

> threadbare of all the weapons of party warfare when we hear, as we sometimes hear, on the accession of a new government, that before its accession the government of England had been despised all over the world, and that now on the contrary she has risen in the general estimation, and holds her proper place in the councils of nations. This England of ours is not so poor and so weak a thing as to depend upon the reputation of this or that administration; and the world knows pretty well of what stuff she is made.... Now, I am desirous that the standard of our material strength shall be highly and justly estimated by the other nations of Christendom; but I believe it to be of still more vital consequence that we should stand high in their estimation as the lovers of truth, of honour, and of openness in all our proceedings, as those who know how to cast aside the motives of a narrow selfishness, and give scope to considerations of broad and lofty principle. I value our insular position, but I dread the day when we shall be reduced to a moral insularity.... The proceedings have all along been associated with a profession as to certain British interests, which although I believe them to be perfectly fictitious and imaginary, have yet been pursued with as much zeal and eagerness as if they had been the most vital realities in the world. This setting up of our own interests, out of place, in an exaggerated form, beyond their proper sphere, and not merely the setting up of such interests, but the mode in which they have been pursued, has greatly diminished, not, as I have [579] said, the regard for our material strength, but the estimation of our moral standard of action, and consequently our moral position in the world.

Kernel Of The Case

Lord Beaconsfield lost some of his composure when Mr. Gladstone called the agreement between England and Turkey an insane convention. “I would put this issue,” he said, “to an intelligent English jury: Which do you believe most likely to enter into an insane convention? A body of English gentlemen, honoured by the favour of their sovereign and the confidence

of their fellow-subjects, managing your affairs for five years—I hope with prudence, and not altogether without success—or a sophistical rhetorician, inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity,"[354]—and so forth, in a strain of unusual commonness, little befitting either Disraeli's genius or his dignity. Mr. Gladstone's speech three days later was as free from all the excesses so violently described, as any speech that was ever made at Westminster.

No speech, however, at this moment was able to reduce the general popularity of ministers, and it was the common talk at the moment that if Lord Beaconsfield had only chosen to dissolve, his majority would have been safe. Writing an article on "England's Mission" as soon as the House was up, Mr. Gladstone grappled energetically with some of the impressions on which this popularity was founded. The *Pall Mall Gazette* had set out these impressions with its usual vigour. As Mr. Gladstone's reply traverses much of the ground on which we have been treading, I may as well transcribe it:—

> The liberals, according to that ably written newspaper, have now imbibed as a permanent sentiment a "distaste for national greatness." This distaste is now grown into matter of principle. "The disgust at these principles of action ever grew in depth and extent," so that in the Danish, the American, and the Franco-German wars, there was "an increasing portion of the nation ready to engage in the struggle on almost any side," as a protest against the position that it was bound not to engage in it at all! The climax of the whole matter was reached when the result of the Alabama treaty displayed to the world an England [580] overreached, overruled, and apologetic. It certainly requires the astounding suppositions, and the gross ignorance of facts, which the journalist with much truth recites, to explain the manner in which for some time past pure rhodomontade has not only done the work of reasoning, but has been accepted as

[354] At Knightsbridge, July 27, 1878.

a cover for constant miscarriage and defeat; and doctrines of national self-interest and self-assertion as supreme laws have been set up, which, if unhappily they harden into "permanent sentiment" and "matter of principle," will destroy all the rising hopes of a true public law for Christendom, and will substitute for it what is no better than the Communism of Paris enlarged and exalted into a guide of international relations. It is perhaps unreasonable to expect that minds in the condition of the "increasing portion" should on any terms accept an appeal to history. But, for the sake of others, not yet so completely emancipated from the yoke of facts, I simply ask at what date it was that the liberal administrations of this country adopted the "permanent sentiment" and the "matter of principle" which have been their ruin? Not in 1859-60, when they energetically supported the redemption and union of Italy. Not in 1861, when, on the occurrence of the Trent affair, they at a few days' notice despatched ten thousand men to Halifax. Not when, in concert with Europe, they compelled the sultan to cut off the head of his tyrannical pasha, and to establish a government in the Lebanon not dependent for its vital breath on Constantinople. Not when in 1863 they invited France to join in an *ultimatum* to the German Powers, and to defend Denmark with us against the intrigues which Germany was carrying on under the plea of the Duke of Augustenburg's title to the Duchies; and when they were told by Louis Napoleon in reply that that might be a great British interest, but that it had no significance for France. Not when in 1870 they formed in a few days their double treaty for the defence of Belgium. Does, then, the whole indictment rest on this—that, in conformity with the solemn declaration of the European Powers at Paris in 1856, they cured a deep-seated quarrel with America by submitting to the risk of a very unjust award at Geneva; and reconciled a sister nation, and effected a
[581] real forward step in the march, of civilisation at about half the cost which the present administration has recently incurred (but without paying it) in agitating and disturbing Europe? Or

> is it that during all those years, and many more years before them, while liberty and public law were supported, and British honour vindicated, territorial cupidity was not inflamed by the deeds or words of statesmen, British interests were not set up as "the first and great commandment," and it was thought better to consolidate a still undeveloped empire, which might well satisfy every ambition, as it assuredly taxes to the utmost every faculty.

III

Miscellaneous Activities

Though this was a "tumultuous year," he noted with some complacency that the work of his pen produced a thousand pounds. He laboured hard at his Homeric primer, "just contriving to squeeze the completion of it into the Easter recess"; wrote articles on the "Peace to Come," on the "Paths of Honour and of Shame," on the Abbé Martin, on "England's Mission," on "Electoral Statistics," the "Friends and Foes of Russia," and other matters. He finished a paper on Iris, "a charming little subject, and for once I am a little pleased with my work." He toiled diligently at a collection of old articles, which he christened *Gleanings*:—

> *November 14.*—Worked on articles for reprint. Reperusal of Patteson moves me unto tears.[355] What a height he reached! What he did for God and the church. Praise to the Highest in the height! 21.—This morning the rain on the trees was wonderful and lovely. When it fell under the trees in the afternoon it was like snow or small icicles an inch deep. 25.—Read *Maud* once more, and, aided by Doyle's criticism, wrote my note of apology and partial retractation.[356] The fact is I am wanting in that higher poetical sense, which distinguishes the true artist.

[355] See *Gleanings*, ii. p. 213.
[356] *Ibid.* ii. pp. 146-7.

Again and again he gives himself the delightful refreshment of arranging his books. He finds that he has 700 volumes of English poetry. "After 30 hours my library is now in a passable state, and I enjoy, in Ruskin's words, 'the complacency of possession and the pleasantness of order.' " He sat to Millais in the summer for what was to be the most popular of his portraits. "*July 5.*—Went with C. to examine the Millais portrait, surely a very fine work. 6—Sat once more to Millais, whose ardour and energy about his picture inspire a strong sympathy." On Good Friday he hears Bach's passion music, "most beautiful, yet not what I like for to-day." In the afternoon: "We drove down to Pembroke Lodge. For a few minutes saw Lord Russell at his desire—a noble wreck. He recognised us and overflowed with feeling."

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In December the Argylls and Mr. Ruskin came to Hawarden:—

> *Dec. 12.*—Mr. Ruskin's health better, and no diminution of charm. 14.—Mr. Ruskin at dinner developed his political opinions. They aim at the restoration of the Judaic system, and exhibit a mixture of virtuous absolutism and Christian socialism. All in his charming and modest manner.

From a pleasing account of Ruskin at Hawarden privately printed, we may take one passage:—

> Something like a little amicable duel took place at one time between Ruskin and Mr. G., when Ruskin directly attacked his host as a "leveller." "You see *you* think one man is as good as another and all men equally competent to judge aright on political questions; whereas I am a believer in an aristocracy." And straight came the answer from Mr. Gladstone, "Oh dear, no! I am nothing of the sort. I am a firm believer in the aristocratic principle—the rule of the best. I am an out-and-out *inequalitarian*," a confession which Ruskin treated with intense delight, clapping his hands triumphantly.

The true question against Ruskin's and Carlyle's school was how you are to get the rule of the best. Mr. Gladstone thought that freedom was the answer; what path the others would have us tread, neither Ruskin nor his stormy teacher ever intelligibly told us.

IV

Writing on November 1 to Madame Novikoff, Mr. Gladstone said:—

> *Nov. 1, '78.*—My opinion is that this government is moving to its doom, and I hope the day of Lord Granville's succession to it may be within a twelvemonth. It is not to be desired that this should take place at once. The people want a little more experience of Beaconsfield toryism. [583]

Unfortunately this experience, whatever be the precise name for it, now came with disastrous promptitude, and the nation having narrowly escaped one war, found itself involved in two. The peril of a conflict in Europe had hardly passed, before the country found itself committed to an attack for which the government themselves censured their high-handed agent, upon the fiercest of the savage tribes of South Africa. A more formidable surprise was the announcement that, by a headlong reversal of accepted Indian policy, war had been declared against the Ameer of Afghanistan.

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Chapter VI. Midlothian. (1879)

μηδὲ μαλθακὸς γένῃ.
τί δρᾷς? ἀνίστω, μή σε νικάτω κόπος.

ÆSCH. *Eum.*, 74-128.

Turn not faint of heart. What doest thou? Let not weariness overcome thee.

I

Candidature Decided

After the general election of 1874, Mr. Gladstone resolved not again to offer himself as candidate for Greenwich, and in 1878 he formally declined an invitation from the liberals in that constituency. At the end of the year it was intimated to him that he might have a safe seat in the city of Edinburgh without a contest. In January 1879, more ambitious counsels prevailed, and it was resolved by the liberal committee of Midlothian, with Lord Rosebery in the front, and amid infinite resolution, enthusiasm, and solid sense of responsibility, that Mr. Gladstone should be invited to contest the metropolitan county of Scotland. Mr. Adam, the Scotch whip, entered into the design, Lord Wolverton approved, and Lord Granville sent Adam a letter assenting. The sitting member was Lord Dalkeith, eldest son of that Duke of Buccleuch who had been Mr. Gladstone's colleague in Peel's cabinet nearly forty years before, and who had left it in the memorable December of 1845. Parties had always been closely balanced, although the tories had held their own pretty firmly, and only two contests had been fought for forty years. The Midlothian tory was described to Mr. Gladstone as of the hardest and narrowest type, and the battle was therefore sure to be fierce. Some of the voters, however, told the canvassers that they would no longer support ministers. “If the government continues much longer,” they said, “the whole nation will be in

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the poorhouse." The delight of the constituency was intense at the prospect of having for their champion one whom they described as the greatest living Scotchman, and Adam (January 10, 1879) predicted a majority of two hundred. Mr. Gladstone rapidly, but not without deliberation, entered into the project. "I am now only anxious," he wrote to Mr. Adam (January 11), "under your advice and Wolverton's, about making the ground sure before the plunge is taken; after it is taken, you may depend on me." On the same day he wrote to Lord Granville:—

> I believe you have been cognizant of the proceedings about the county of Midlothian, which are now beginning to bear a practical aspect. Generally, when one knows the tree is a large tree, yet on coming close up to the trunk it looks twice as large as it did before. So it is with this election. If it goes on, it will gather into itself a great deal of force and heat, and will be very prominent. Thus far I am not sure whether I have put the matter pointedly before you, or have been content to assume your approval of what I found Adam pressing strongly upon me. It will be a tooth and nail affair.

Lord Granville replied, that he was doing a "very plucky and public-spirited thing." "Your friends," he said, "must begin working the coach at once, but I should think you had better not appear too early in the field. Act Louis XIV." "Having received your approval," Mr. Gladstone told Lord Granville, "I wrote on the same day to Adam accordingly." He then went into details with his usual care and circumspection. When the public were made aware of what was on foot, the general interest became hardly less lively all over the island than it was in the constituency itself. It was observed at the time how impossible many people seemed to find it to treat anything done by Mr. Gladstone as natural and reasonable. Nothing would appear to be a more simple and unobjectionable act than his compliance with the request of the electors of Midlothian, yet "he was

attacked as if he were guilty of some monstrous piece of vanity
[586] and eccentricity."[357] Relentless opponents amused themselves by saying that "Mr. Gladstone lives personally in Wales and intends to live politically in Scotland; and his most fervently held opinions, like the Celtic population of the island, have very much followed the same line of withdrawal."

Mr. Gladstone described the general outlook in a letter to his son Henry in India (May 16):—

> The government declines, but no one can say at what rate. Elections are tolerably satisfactory to us—not, I think, more. A sure though evil instinct has guided them in choosing rather to demoralise our finance, than to pay their way by imposing taxes, but I do not see how they are long to escape this difficulty.... Our people look forward comfortably to the election. The government people say they will not have it this year. But if we come to the conclusion that we ought to have it, I am by no means sure but that though a minority, we can force it by putting our men into the field, and making it too uncomfortable for them to continue twelve or fifteen months in hot water. I am safe in Midlothian, unless they contrive a further and larger number of faggot votes.

Adam looked forward with alarm to the mischief that might be done if the general election were to be protracted beyond the autumn of 1880. "In order to neutralise the present majority," he told Mr. Gladstone, "they will have to create faggots to a *disgraceful* extent, but they are not troubled by scruples of conscience." The charity that thinketh no evil is perhaps less liberally given to party whips than even to other politicians.

Apart from Midlothian Mr. Adam, in January 1879, said to Mr. Gladstone that the liberals were helpless even in the best agricultural counties of England; that he saw no hope of improvement; they had neither candidates nor organisation in

[357] *Spectator*, February 8, 1879.

most of them, and there was no means that he knew of (and he had done all that he could) to wake them up. By November 1879, he reported that he had been carefully over the list, taking a very moderate calculation of the chances at the coming election; and [587] he believed they ought to have a majority of 20 to 30, independent of home rulers. Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Granville:—

> *Aug. 6, '79.*—Salisbury's speech indicates, and for several reasons I should believe, that they intend sailing on the quiet tack. Having proved their spirit, they will now show their moderation. In other words they want all the past proceedings to be in the main "stale fish" at the elections. Except financial shuffling they will very likely commit no new enormity before the election. In my view that means they will not supply any new matter of such severe condemnation as what they have already furnished. Therefore, my idea is, we should keep the old alive and warm. This is the meaning of my suggestion as to autumn work, rather than that I expect a dissolution. It seems to me good policy to join on the proceedings of 1876-9 by a continuous process to the dissolution. Should this happen, which I think likely enough about March, there will have been no opportunity immediately before it of stirring the country. I will not say our defeat in 1874 was owing to the want of such an opportunity, but it was certainly, I think, much aggravated by that want.

II

Journey To Edinburgh

It was on November 24 that Mr. Gladstone soon after eight in the morning quitted Liverpool for Edinburgh, accompanied by his wife and Miss Gladstone. "The journey from Liverpool," he enters, "was really more like a triumphal procession." Nothing like it had ever been seen before in England. Statesmen had enjoyed great popular receptions before, and there had been plenty of cheering and bell-ringing and torchlight in individual

places before. On this journey of a bleak winter day, it seemed as if the whole countryside were up. The stations where the train stopped were crowded, thousands flocked from neighbouring towns and villages to main centres on the line of route, and even at wayside spots hundreds assembled, merely to catch a glimpse of the express as it dashed through. At Carlisle they presented addresses, and the traveller made his first speech, declaring that never before in the eleven elections in which he had taken part, [588] were the interests of the country so deeply at stake. He spoke again with the same moral at Hawick. At Galashiels he found a great multitude, with an address and a gift of the cloth they manufactured. With bare head in the raw air, he listened to their address, and made his speech; he told them that he had come down expressly to raise effectually before the people of the country the question in what manner they wished to be governed; it was not this measure or that, it was a system of government to be upheld or overthrown. When he reached Edinburgh after nine hours of it, the night had fallen upon the most picturesque street in all our island, but its whole length was crowded as it has never been crowded before or since by a dense multitude, transported with delight that their hero was at last among them. Lord Rosebery, who was to be his host, quickly drove with him amidst tumults of enthusiasm all along the road to the hospitable shades of Dalmeny. "I have never," Mr. Gladstone says in his diary, "gone through a more extraordinary day."

All that followed in a week of meetings and speeches was to match. People came from the Hebrides to hear Mr. Gladstone speak. Where there were six thousand seats, the applications were forty or fifty thousand. The weather was bitter and the hills were covered with snow, but this made no difference in cavalcades, processions, and the rest of the outdoor demonstrations. Over what a space had democracy travelled, and what a transition for its champion of the hour, since the days half a century back when the Christ Church undergraduate, the disciple of Burke and Canning,

had ridden in anti-reform processions, been hustled by reform mobs, and had prayed for the blessing of heaven on the House of Lords for their honourable and manly decision in throwing out the bill. Yet the warmest opponent of popular government, even the Duke of Buccleuch himself, might have found some balm for this extraordinary display of popular feeling, in the thought that it was a tribute to the most splendid political career of that generation; splendid in gifts and splendid in service, and that it was repaid, moreover, with none of the flattery associated with the name of demagogue. Mr. Gladstone's counsels may have been wise or [589] unwise, but the only flattery in the Midlothian speeches was the manly flattery contained in the fact that he took care to address all these multitudes of weavers, farmers, villagers, artisans, just as he would have addressed the House of Commons,—with the same breadth and accuracy of knowledge, the same sincerity of interest, the same scruple in right reasoning, and the same appeal to the gravity and responsibility of public life. An aristocratic minister, speaking at Edinburgh soon after, estimated the number of words in Mr. Gladstone's Midlothian speeches in 1879 at 85,840, and declared that his verbosity had become "a positive danger to the commonwealth." Tory critics solemnly declared that such performances were an innovation on the constitution, and aggravated the evil tendencies of democracy.[358] Talk of this kind did not really impose for an instant on any man or woman of common sense.

Oratory ever since the days of Socrates, and perhaps long before, has been suspected as one of the black arts; and both at the time and afterwards Mr. Gladstone's speeches in his first Midlothian campaign were disparaged, as I have just said, as sentiment rather than politics, as sophistry not sound reason, as illusory enchantment not solid and subsisting truth. We are challenged to show passages destined to immortality. With all Oratory

[358] *Saturday Review*, November 29, 1879.

admiration for the effulgent catalogue of British orators, and not forgetting Pitt on the slave trade, or Fox on the Westminster scrutiny, or Sheridan on the begums of Oude, or Plunket on the catholic question, or Grattan, or Canning, or Brougham, we may perhaps ask whether all the passages that have arrived at this degree of fame and grandeur, with the exception of Burke, may not be comprised in an extremely slender volume. The statesman who makes or dominates a crisis, who has to rouse and mould the mind of senate or nation, has something else to think about than the production of literary masterpieces. The great political speech, which for that matter is a sort of drama, is not made by passages for elegant extract or anthologies, but by personality, [590] movement, climax, spectacle, and the action of the time. All these elements Midlothian witnessed to perfection.

It was my fortune to be present at one whole day of these performances. "An overpowering day," Mr. Gladstone calls it in his diary (December 5, 1879). "After a breakfast-party," he says, "I put my notes in order for the afternoon. At twelve delivered the inaugural address as lord rector of the university" [Glasgow]. This discourse lasted an hour and a half, and themes, familiar but never outworn nor extinct, were handled with vigour, energy, and onward flow that made them sound as good as novel, and even where they did not instruct or did not edify, the noble music pleased. The great salient feature of the age was described as on its material side the constant discovery of the secrets of nature, and the progressive subjugation of her forces to the purposes and will of man. On the moral side, if these conquests had done much for industry, they had done more for capital; if much for labour, more for luxury; they had variously and vastly multiplied the stimulants to gain, the avenues of excitement, the solicitations to pleasure. The universities were in some sort to check all this; the habits of mind formed by universities are founded in sobriety and tranquillity; they help to settle the spirit of a man firmly upon the centre of gravity; they tend to self-

command, self-government, and that genuine self-respect which has in it nothing of mere self-worship, for it is the reverence which each man ought to feel for the nature that God has given him, and for the laws of that nature. Then came an appeal, into which the speaker's whole heart was thrown, for the intellectual dignity of the Christian ministry. If argument failed to the great Christian tradition, he would set small value on the multitude of uninstructed numerical adhesions, or upon the integrity of institutions and the unbroken continuity of rite. "Thought," he exclaimed,—"*thought is the citadel*." There is a steeplechase philosophy in vogue—sometimes specialism making short cuts to the honours of universal knowledge; sometimes by the strangest of solecisms, the knowledge of external nature being thought to convey a supreme capacity for judging within the sphere of moral action and of moral needs. The thing to do is to put [591] scepticism on its trial, and rigorously to cross-examine it: allow none of its assumptions; compel it to expound its formulæ; do not let it move a step except with proof in its hand; bring it front to front with history; even demand that it shall show the positive elements with which it proposes to replace the mainstays it seems bent on withdrawing from the fabric of modern society. The present assault, far from being destined to final triumph, is a sign of a mental movement, unsteady, though of extreme rapidity, but destined, perhaps, to elevate and strengthen the religion that it sought to overthrow. "*In the meantime*," he said, in closing this branch of his address, "*I would recommend to you as guides in this controversy, truth, charity, diligence, and reverence, which indeed may be called the four cardinal virtues of all controversies, be they what they may*." This was followed by an ever-salutary reminder that man is the crown of the visible creation, and that studies upon man—studies in the largest sense of humanity, studies conversant with his nature, his works, his duties and his destinies—these are the highest of all studies. As the human form is the groundwork of the highest training in

art, so those mental pursuits are the highest which have man, considered at large, for their object. Some excellent admonitions upon history and a simple, moving benediction, brought the oration to an end.

Blue caps as well as red cheered fervently at the close, and some even of those who had no direct interest in the main topics, and were not much or not at all refreshed by his treatment of them, yet confessed themselves sorry when the stream of fascinating melody ceased to flow. Then followed luncheon in the university hall, where the principal, in proposing the lord rector's health, expressed the hope that he had not grudged the time given to the serene, if dull, seclusion of academic things. “I only quarrel with your word dull,” said Mr. Gladstone in reply. “Let me assure you, gentlemen, nothing is so dull as political agitation.” By this time it was four o'clock. Before six he was at St. Andrew's Hall, confronting an audience of some six thousand
[592] persons, as eager to hear as he was eager to speak; and not many minutes had elapsed before they were as much aflame as he, with the enormities of the Anglo-Turkish convention, the spurious harbour in Cyprus, the wrongful laws about the press in India, the heavy and unjust charges thrown upon the peoples of India, the baseless quarrel picked with Shere Ali in Afghanistan, the record of ten thousand Zulus slain for no other offence than their attempt to defend against our artillery with their naked bodies their hearths and homes.

Once mentioning a well-known member of parliament who always showed fine mettle on the platform, Mr. Gladstone said of him in a homely image, that he never saw a man who could so quickly make the kettle boil. This was certainly his own art here. For an hour and a half thus he held them, with the irresistible spell of what is in truth the groundwork of every political orator's strongest appeal—from Athenians down to Girondins, from Pericles to Webster, from Cicero to Gambetta—appeal to public law and civil right and the conscience of a free and high-minded

people. This high-wrought achievement over, he was carried off to dine, and that same night he wound up what a man of seventy hard-spent years might well call “an overpowering day,” by one more address to an immense audience assembled by the Glasgow corporation in the city hall, to whom he expressed his satisfaction at the proof given by his reception in Glasgow that day, that her citizens had seen no reason to repent the kindness which had conferred the freedom of their city upon him fourteen years before.

Character Of The Campaign

The audience in St. Andrew's Hall at Glasgow was, we may presume, like his audiences elsewhere, and the sources of his overwhelming power were not hard to analyse, if one were in analytic humour. For one thing, the speeches were rallying battle-cries, not sermons, and everybody knew the great invisible antagonist with whom the orator before them was with all his might contending. It was a gleaming array of the political facts of a political indictment, not an aerial fabric of moral abstractions. Nor, again, had the fashion in which Mr. Gladstone seized opinion and feeling and personal allegiance in Scotland, anything in common with the violent if splendid improvisations [593] that made O'Connell the idol and the master of passionate Ireland. One of the most telling speeches of them all was the exposure of the government finance in the Edinburgh corn-exchange, where for an hour and a half or more, he held to his figures of surplus and deficit, of the yield of bushels to the acre in good seasons and bad, of the burden of the income-tax, of the comparative burden per head of new financial systems and old, with all the rigour of an expert accountant. He enveloped the whole with a playful irony, such as a good-humoured master uses to the work of clumsy apprentices, but of the paraphernalia of rhetoric there is not a period nor a sentence nor a phrase. Fire is suppressed. So far from being saturated with colour, the hue is almost drab. Yet his audience were interested and delighted, and not for a moment did he lose hold,—not even, as one observer puts it, “in

the midst of his most formidable statistics, nor at any point in the labyrinthine evolution of his longest sentences."

Let the conclusion be good or let it be bad, all was in groundwork and in essence strictly on the plane and in the tongue of statesmanship, and conformable to Don Pedro's rule, "What need the bridge much broader than the flood?"[359] It was Demosthenes, not Isocrates. It was the orator of concrete detail, of inductive instances, of energetic and immediate object; the orator confidently and by sure touch startling into watchfulness the whole spirit of civil duty in a man; elastic and supple, pressing fact and figure with a fervid insistence that was known from his career and character to be neither forced nor feigned, but to be himself. In a word, it was a man—a man impressing himself upon the kindled throngs by the breadth of his survey of great affairs of life and nations, by the depth of his vision, by the power of his stroke. Physical resources had much to do with the effect; his overflowing vivacity, the fine voice and flashing eye and a whole frame in free, ceaseless, natural and spontaneous motion. So he bore his hearers through long chains of strenuous periods, calling up by the marvellous transformations of his mien
[594] a strange succession of images—as as if he were now a keen hunter, now some eager bird of prey, now a charioteer of fiery steeds kept well in hand, and now and again we seemed to hear the pity or dark wrath of a prophet, with the mighty rushing wind and the fire running along the ground.

All this was Mr. Gladstone in Midlothian. To think of the campaign without the scene, is as who should read a play by candle-light among the ghosts of an empty theatre. When the climax came, it was found that Mr. Gladstone's tremendous projectiles had pounded the ministerial citadel to the ground, and that he had a nation at his back. What had been vague misgiving about Lord Beaconsfield grew into sharp certainty;

[359] *Much Ado,* Act I.{FNS Sc. i.

shadows of doubt upon policy at Constantinople or Cabul or the Cape, became substantive condemnation; uneasiness as to the national finances turned to active resentment; and above all, the people of this realm, who are a people with rather more than their share of conscience at bottom, were led to consider whether when all is said, there is not still a difference between right and wrong even in the relations of states and the problems of empire. It was this last trait that made the atmosphere in which both speaker and his hearers drew their inspiration. It may be true, if we will, that, as a great critic sardonically hints, "eloquence, without being precisely a defect, is one of the worst dangers that can beset a man."[360] Yet after all, to disparage eloquence is to depreciate mankind; and when men say that Mr. Gladstone and Midlothian were no better than a resplendent mistake, they forget how many objects of our reverence stand condemned by implication in their verdict; they have not thought out how many of the faiths and principles that have been the brightest lamps in the track of human advance they are extinguishing by the same unkind and freezing breath. One should take care lest in quenching the spirit of Midlothian, we leave sovereign mastery of the world to Machiavelli.

I need not here go through the long list of topics. As an attack upon ministers Mr. Gladstone made out the upshot to be finance in confusion, legislation in arrear, honour compromised by breach [595] of public law, Russia aggrandized and yet estranged, Turkey befriended, as they say, but sinking every year, Europe restless and disturbed; in Africa the memory of enormous bloodshed in Zululand, and the invasion of a free people in the Transvaal; Afghanistan broken; India thrown back. He disclaimed all fellowship with those who believe that the present state of society permits us to make any vow of universal peace, and of renouncing in all cases the policy of war. He enumerated

[360] Faguet.

the six principles that he thought to be the right principles for us: to foster the strength of the empire by just laws and by economy; to seek to preserve the world's peace; to strive to the uttermost to cultivate and maintain the principle of concert in Europe; to avoid needless and entangling engagements; to see that our foreign policy shall be inspired by such love of freedom as had marked Canning, Palmerston, Russell; to acknowledge the equal right of all nations. He denounced "the policy of denying to others the rights that we claim ourselves" as untrue, arrogant, and dangerous. The revival of the analogy of imperial Rome for the guidance of British policy he held up as fundamentally unsound and practically ruinous. For have not modern times established a sisterhood of nations, equal, independent, each of them built up under the legitimate defence which public law affords to every nation living within its own borders, and seeking to perform its own affairs? He insisted that we should ever "remember the rights of the savage, as we call him." "Remember," he exclaimed, "that the sanctity of life in the hill villages of Afghanistan, among the winter snows, is as inviolable in the eye of Almighty God as can be your own. Remember that He who has united you as human beings in the same flesh and blood, has bound you by the law of mutual love; that that mutual love is not limited by the shores of this island, is not limited by the boundaries of Christian civilisation; that it passes over the whole surface of the earth, and embraces the meanest along with the greatest in its unmeasured scope."

It was this free movement and pure air that gave to the
[596] campaign its marking character. The campaign had a soul in it. Men were recalled to moral forces that they had forgotten. In his last speech at Edinburgh, Mr. Gladstone's closing words were these:—

> I am sustained and encouraged, and I may almost say driven on in public life, by the sentiment believed and entertained

> by me most sincerely, whether erroneously or not, that the principles at issue are much broader than those of ordinary contention.... I humbly ask for confidence when I state my own belief that the objects we have in view at the present time are objects connected with the welfare of mankind upon the widest scale.... Whatever we may say amidst the clash of arms and amidst the din of preparation for warfare in time of peace—amidst all this yet there is going on a profound mysterious movement, that, whether we will or not, is bringing the nations of the civilised world, as well as the uncivilised, morally as well as physically nearer to one another, and making them more and more responsible before God for one another's welfare.... I do most heartily thank you for having given me the credit of being actuated by the desire to consider in public transactions the wider interests of mankind, and I venture to assure you that so far as my objects and intentions are concerned, objects of that nature, and nothing meaner or narrower, will ever be taken as the pole-star of my life.

III

End Of The Year At Hawarden

Two days after a departure from Glasgow which he calls royal, the unwearied warrior made his way through scenes of endless stir all along the journey, back to his temple of peace at Hawarden (December 8). There he at once resumed his habits of daily industry, revising proofs of speeches "reaching 255 pages!" placing books and reading them—Catullus, Hodgson's *Turgot*, somebody on Colour Sense, somebody else on Indian finance, Jenkins on Atheism, Bunbury's Geography—and so forth. Also, "wrote on mythology and on economics; together rather too much. I am not very fit for composition after 5 P.M." Meanwhile Christmas arrived, and then the eve of his birthday, with its reflections—reflections of one— [597]

"Who though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence
Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans ...
Where what he most doth value must be won."

December 28. ... And now I am writing in the last minutes of the seventh decade of my life. This closing is a great event. The days of our life are three score years and ten. It is hardly possible that I should complete another decade. How much or how little of this will God give me for the purposes dear to my heart? Ah! what need have I of what I may term spiritual leisure, to be out of the dust and heat and blast and strain, before I pass into the unseen world. But perhaps this is a form of self-love. For the last three and a half years I have been passing through a political experience which is, I believe, without example in our parliamentary history. I profess to believe it has been an occasion when the battle to be fought was a battle of justice, humanity, freedom, law, all in their first elements from the very root, and all on a gigantic scale. The word spoken was a word for millions, and for millions who for themselves cannot speak. If I really believe this, then I should regard my having been morally forced into this work as a great and high election of God. And certainly I cannot but believe that He has given me special gifts of strength on the late occasion, especially in Scotland.... Three things I would ask of God over and above all the bounty which surrounds me. This first, that I may escape into retirement. This second, that I may speedily be enabled to divest myself of everything resembling wealth. And the third—if I may—that when God calls me He may call me speedily. To die in church appears to be a great euthanasia, but not at a time to disturb worshippers. Such are some of an old man's thoughts, in whom there is still something that consents not to be old.

Among the other books that he had been reading was the biography of one of the closest of his friends, and in the last hours of this *annus mirabilis* he writes:—

Read the *Life of Bishop Wilberforce*. It is indeed an edifying book. I knew him, admired him, loved him living. But the laying out of his full character from early days onwards tells me much I did not know, and lifts upwards my conception of him both in greatness and in goodness.

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Chapter VII. The Eve Of The Battle. (1879)

> Perhaps no man has ever had a mighty influence over his fellows without having the innate need to dominate, and this need usually becomes the more imperious in proportion as the complications of life make Self inseparable from a purpose which is not selfish.—GEORGE ELIOT.

I

It is interesting to get what light we may on Mr. Gladstone's frame of mind between his first astounding triumph in Midlothian and the crowning mercy of the general election. In October he had written to his son Henry in India as to the probable date of the dissolution, that the government had in his opinion "to choose between a minor or a less smashing defeat now, or probably a more smashing one after the disclosure and real presentation of their most discreditable finance, which can hardly be delayed beyond the spring." They had a chance of better trade, but the likelihood also of worse revenue. The great reason against dissolution was that they were in possession, and every day's delay was another day's exercise of power. He then proceeds to mention his personal position:—

> They are beginning to ask *who* is to succeed if Beaconsfield is displaced. Voices are coming up here and there, some of them very confident, that the people will call for me. Nothing, however, but a very general, a nearly unanimous, call from the liberals, with the appearance of a sort of national will, could bring this demand to a form in which it could or ought to be obeyed. The reasons against my coming forward are of immense force; those against my indicating any shadow of desire or willingness to come forward are conclusive. Nor

do I at present see any indication of a state of things which would bring it about.

[599]
To Mr. Bright On Leadership

Before leaving Dalmeny at the end of his campaign, Mr. Gladstone wrote a letter to Mr. Bright, a copy of which, along with the reply, and two letters from Lord Wolverton, he left tied up in a separate packet.

To Mr. Bright.

Nov. 28, 1879.—You will probably recollect that during your last visit to Hawarden you suggested to me in a walk the expectation or the possibility that when the return of liberals to power seemed probable, there might be a popular call for my resuming the leadership of the party, and that I stated to you what I believed, and you I think admitted, to be the reasons against it. These, if I remember right, were four, and I attached to them differing degrees of weight.

The first was that my health and strength would be unequal to the strain at my time of life.

The second, that the work to be done was so formidable that hardly any amount of courage availed to look it in the face.

The third, weightier than these, was that a liberal government under me would be the object from the first of an amount and kind of hostility, such as materially to prejudice its acts and weaken or, in given circumstances, neutralise its power for good.

The fourth, that I was absolutely precluded under present circumstances, being bound by the clearest considerations of honour and duty to render a loyal allegiance to Granville as leader of the party, and to Hartington as leader in the Commons, and was entirely disabled from so much as entertaining any proposition that could directly or indirectly tend to their displacement.

There is a fifth consideration that now presses me, of which the grounds had hardly emerged in regard to myself

personally at the time when we conversed together. Nothing could be so painful, I may almost say so odious to me, as to force myself, or to be forced, upon the Queen, under circumstances where the choice of another from the ranks of the same party would save her from being placed in a difficulty of that peculiar kind. This, it may be said, belongs to the same category as my first and second objections; but there it is.

The enthusiasm of Scotland is something wonderful. As to
[600] the county of Midlothian, I doubt whether the well-informed tories themselves in the least expect to win. We go to Taymouth on Monday. I hope you are well and hearty and see cause to be contented with the progress of opinion. The more I think about the matter, the more strange and mysterious does it seem to me that any party in this free nation should be found to sanction and uphold policy and proceedings like those of the last two years in particular. I have written this because I am desirous you should have clearly before you the matter of my conversation with you, and the means of verifying it.

Mr. Bright to Mr. Gladstone.

Rochdale, Dec. 12, 1879.—Perhaps I ought to have written to you sooner to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 28th ult., but I preferred to let you get home before I wrote, and I was in truth rather puzzled as to what I ought to say.

You, with sufficient accuracy, describe the purport of your remarks during our conversation when I was with you a year ago. I saw the difficulty, then in the future, now perhaps near upon us. But it is one in which nothing can be done, and "a masterly inactivity" seems the only wise course. If a break-up of the present concern comes, the Queen will be advised to send, for Granville or Hartington. The one sent for will accept and attempt to form a government, or he may have grave doubts, and say that you are the only man, etc.; he will consult the other, and will consult you. Meantime there may be a "pronouncement" on the part of the people, through the press and public meetings, which will have a sudden effect

on negotiations and on the views of the Queen, and may decide the question. If such a time should come, then you will have to say what is possible, and I hope you will be able to decide rightly, and with reference solely to the interests of the country and the service you owe to the crown as representing the nation. You will act with a most strict honour to Granville and Hartington, as I believe they will act to you. If, as I hope for and believe, no selfish ambition will come in to make mischief, the question will be determined in such a manner as to content all honest men, and what is best for all will be done. I am often asked as to the future. I reply only so as to say nothing to add to the evident difficulty of the situation. [601]

Your Scotch expedition has been one of discovery and of conquest. The tory press and partizans are evidently astonished at it. The government speakers have no new defence, and they want the past to be forgotten. Mr. Smith, first lord, I see, entirely rejoices in what has been done in South Africa, though "a few lives" have been lost by it. This official life seems sorely to demoralise some homely and decent people. I am fairly well so far during the winter, but I seem feeble when I compare myself with your activity and power.... We are to have meetings in Birmingham during January. I should prefer the quiet of obscurity to these meetings. I hope Mrs. Gladstone and your daughter have enjoyed their Scotch trip and are well after it.

Five days later came Lord Wolverton's report of the state of feeling on these delicate topics in high places in London. He had seen Lord Granville on the evening of the 16th:—

To most affectionate inquiries as to your health and powers, I gave a most satisfactory account, and the conversation then went to the question as to the effect which your recent triumphant progress in Midlothian and the North had produced upon your mind. I frankly said that you had in my opinion not anticipated such a marked expression of public feeling,

and that it had doubtless tended to lead your mind to the consideration of the position of the party, and to the fact that public opinion might call upon you to an extent which no one could have looked for. I then (with anxiety to convey what I know to be your desire) most earnestly impressed upon Lord Granville that you had upon every occasion when the subject was alluded to, prefaced all you had to say with the strongest expressions of loyalty to Hartington and himself. That I felt convinced that nothing would induce you to encourage, or to even listen to, any attempt which others might make to disturb the existing state of things as to the leadership, unless the wish was very clearly expressed to you by Hartington and himself, and you would demand full proof that their interests and that of the party strongly pointed to the reconsideration of your own position. I need hardly say that, though I felt it my duty to take care that I did not understate your feelings, it was not necessary to reassure Granville upon that point.

[602] The conversation then went to the state of the party and its present position. I learnt that a private meeting had been held at Devonshire House in the morning. I believe Hartington, Granville, Cardwell, Adam, and Harcourt were present. My *impression* is that the advice Adam gave as to the elections, was that "union in the party at this moment would not be promoted by a change of front." I do not mean to say that the question of leadership was *actually discussed*, but I *suspect* the conversation turned somewhat upon the point which you place "*third*" in your letter to Bright. To sum it all up, I do not think you will at present be troubled by any application to you from Granville and Hartington.[361]

The third point in the letter to Mr. Bright was the question

[361] Lord Selborne (*Memorials*, i. 471) says that Lord Granville reported to him (Dec. 21), that Lord Hartington at this meeting wished to insist upon Mr. Gladstone resuming the lead, but that the rest were, for the present at all events, against any such step. Lord Granville's own view was that the question, like many other questions, would have to be solved *ambulando*.

whether a liberal government under Mr. Gladstone would not be exposed to a special degree of hostility, due to the peculiar antagonism that his personality excited. In a later letter (December 20), Wolverton tells Mr. Gladstone that in the conversation of the 16th, "Lord Granville raised the point you made your third in your note to Bright, and that he did converse upon at *some length*, evidently having real fears that many of our weak-kneed ones would feel some alarm if Hartington went from the front *now*, and that the tories would intensify this to the uttermost. I think this was all." Another sentence indicates Lord Wolverton's own view:—

> Lord Granville is not sanguine as to the future. As you know, he is always inclined to "temporise"; this is his line now, and he is perhaps right. You know my fear was that without your name in front, the battle at the election would be fought at a great disadvantage. But I see the immense difficulty of a change of front *now*, even if they desired it and you consented to it. This you also feel, I know.

To all this Mr. Gladstone replied to Wolverton as follows:—

> *Hawarden, December 18, 1879.*—I thank you much for your letter. What you report yourself to have said is quite [603] satisfactory to me. If Granville said more than you had mentioned, anything that fell from him would be acceptable to me. When I saw your envelope, I felt a dread lest the contents should be more substantive; a relief came on reading them. But these communications are useful, as they give distinctness to ideas, and through ideas to intentions. I may state mine as follows: 1. My ears are shut against all the world, except it were Granville and Hartington. 2. And even to them unless they spoke together, and in clear and decisive language. 3. They are the judges whether to speak, as well as when to speak. But as an individual, I am of opinion that there is not a case for their speaking *now*. 4. Were they to

> speak now, and as I have defined above, I should then say let us have nothing more than a formula, and let the substance of it be that by the nature of things no man in my position could make beforehand an absolute renunciation, and that the leadership in the next parliament must, like everything else, be considered in connection with what may appear at the dissolution to be the sense of the country, but that my action individually has been and will continue to be that of a follower of Lord Granville and Lord Hartington. One thing I would ask of you as a fast friend. If you think that in anything I fall short by omission or commission of perfect loyalty as a member of the party, I beg you to tell me.

II

As usual with him, these grave political preoccupations were not engrossing, but only a part of the day's task. He carried on a pretty profuse correspondence, he worked hard on his favourite diversion of arranging books and papers, he gave much thought and time to estate matters with his eldest son, with him too he felled now a chestnut, now a sycamore; he corrected the proofs of his speeches and wrote an article for Mr. Knowles; he read books and articles about Eleusis, and the Hebrew migration from Egypt, and the Olympian system, and Newman on the Eirenicon, and Westcott on St. John, and somebody else upon St. Thomas Aquinas. For two or three days he was partially disabled by "a low face-ache: the reaction after heavy pressure, under which I received from the mercy of God such remarkable support." In the middle of January alarming accounts came from his sister Helen, who lay dying at Cologne. Thither he sped with his eldest brother and his sister-in-law. They found life fast ebbing, and four days after their arrival the end came, in the midst of pious exercises and affectionate care. They were satisfied that she had been "freely restored to the unity of spirit and the bond of peace,"

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and had died not in the actual Roman communion. A few days after his return home he records: “Wrote a long memorandum of the evidence in regard to dear Helen's religious profession.” The remains they bore to Fasque, and by the end of the month he was again at Hawarden, once more at work with his eldest son upon the “accumulated disorder,” and the rest of the round of his familiar employments. Among other things he read Cowper's *Task*—“the fifth book very noble in its moral strain”; and another entry will interest many,—“*Feb. 15.*—Read the biography of noble Dora Pattison. How by reflex action it stings.... Yet even to her (like Bishop Butler), death was terrible.” “He was haunted,” he writes, “with recollections of Sister Dora.” Then after a Sunday passed in church exercises, and “skimming many theological books,” on February 23 he “left Hawarden with a heavy heart.”

He quickly found himself in the London whirlpool, attending conclaves of his political friends, dining out, seeing Irving in the *Merchant of Venice* (“his best, I think”), speaking once or twice in the House, and twice at London meetings in St. Pancras and Marylebone, where the popular enthusiasm made even his most hardened critics begin to suspect that the tide had really turned since the days when the Londoners mobbed him in the street and broke his windows.

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Chapter VIII. The Fall Of Lord Beaconsfield. (1880)

> In causa facili cuivis licet esse disertum,
> Et minimae vires frangere quassa valent;
> Subruere est arces et stantia moenia virtus.
>
> —Ov. *Trist.*, iii. XI. 21.
>
> In an easy case any man can plead, and against shattered walls the puniest strength prevails; 'tis the overthrow of standing towers and frowning ramparts that tests manhood.

I

At last one day (March 8) when Mr. Gladstone was "writing a little on Homer," he heard the fated news that the dissolution was announced. Lord Beaconsfield published the famous letter to the lord lieutenant of Ireland, and in deep accents and sonorous sentences endeavoured to make home rule the issue of the election. Shrewd politicians, with time to reflect, found it not easy to divine why the government had chosen the particular moment. It might be, as some supposed, that they thought the opposition had lately got into bad odour with the country by coquetting with home rulers, as shown by the elections at Liverpool and Southwark. But, in fact, little importance was to be attached to these two defeats of the opposition, for Liverpool had always been conservative, and Southwark was thoroughly disorganised by liberal divisions. "The general opinion seems to be," says Speaker Brand (Mar. 15), "that the opposition may gain slightly at the general election, but not to an extent to break down altogether the conservative majority."

In what was in effect his election address, Lord Beaconsfield [606] warned the country that a danger, in its ultimate results scarcely

less disastrous than pestilence and famine, distracted Ireland. A portion of its population was endeavouring to sever the constitutional tie that united it to Great Britain in that bond which was favourable to the power and prosperity of both. "It is to be hoped," he went on, "that all men of light and leading will resist this destructive doctrine. The strength of this action depends on the unity of feeling which should pervade the United Kingdom and its widespread dependencies. The first duty of an English minister should be to consolidate that co-operation which renders irresistible the community educated, as our own, in an equal love of liberty and law. And yet there are some who challenge the expediency of the imperial character of this realm. Having attempted and failed to enfeeble our colonies by their policy of decomposition, they may perhaps now recognise in the disintegration of the United Kingdom, a mode which will not only accomplish, but precipitate their purpose.... Rarely in this century has there been an occasion more critical. The power of England and the peace of Europe will largely depend upon the verdict of the country.... Peace rests on the presence, not to say the ascendency of England in the councils of Europe. Even at this moment the doubt supposed to be inseparable from popular elections, if it does not diminish, certainly arrests her influence, and is a main reason for not delaying an appeal to the national voice."

To this manifesto Mr. Gladstone, with his usual long pains in the drafting of such pieces, prepared his counterblast. He went with direct force to what Lord Beaconsfield had striven to make the centre of his appeal:—

> In the electioneering address which the prime minister has issued, an attempt is made to work upon your fears by dark allusions to the repeal of the union and the abandonment of the colonies. Gentlemen, those who endangered the union with Ireland were the party that maintained there an alien church, an unjust land law, and franchises inferior to our own; and the

> true supporters of the union are those who firmly uphold the supreme authority of parliament, but exercise that authority
> [607] to bind the three nations by the indissoluble tie of liberal and equal laws. As to the colonies, liberal administrations set free their trade with all the world, gave them popular and responsible government, undertook to defend Canada with the whole strength of the empire, and organised the great scheme for uniting the several settlements of British North America into one dominion, to which, when we quitted office in 1866, it only remained for our successors to ask the ready assent of parliament. It is by these measures that the colonies have been bound in affection to the empire, and the authors of them can afford to smile at baseless insinuations. Gentlemen, the true purpose of these terrifying insinuations is to hide from view the acts of the ministry, and their effect upon the character and condition, of the country.

To those ministerial misdeeds he proceeded to draw the attention of the electors, though he declared with threescore years and ten upon his head, how irksome he felt the task. “At home,” he said, “the ministers have neglected legislation, aggravated the public distress by continual shocks to confidence which is the life of enterprise, augmented the public expenditure and taxation for purposes not merely unnecessary but mischievous, and plunged the finances, which were handed over to them in a state of singular prosperity, into a series of deficits unexampled in modern times.” After shooting this heavy bolt he looked abroad. “Abroad they have strained, if they have not endangered, the prerogative by gross misuse, and have weakened the empire by needless wars, unprofitable extensions, and unwise engagements, and have dishonoured it in the eyes of Europe by filching the island of Cyprus from the Porte under a treaty clause distinctly concluded in violation of the treaty of Paris, which formed part of the international law of Christendom.” As to the domestic legislation of the future, it was in the election address of the

prime minister a perfect blank. It was true that in default of reform in this kingdom, the nation was promised the advantages of "presence, not to say ascendency," in the councils of Europe.

> There is indeed, he said, an ascendency in European councils to which Great Britain might reasonably aspire, by steadily [608] sustaining the character of a Power no less just than strong; attached to liberty and law, jealous of peace, and therefore opposed to intrigue and aggrandizement, from whatever quarter they may come; jealous of honour, and therefore averse to the clandestine engagements which have marked our two latest years. To attain a moral and envied ascendency such as this, is indeed a noble object for any minister or any empire.

II

Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Acton on March 14:—

> On Tuesday I am to set out for Midlothian and my *last* general election. My general elections have been 1832, 1835, 1837, 1841, 1847, 1852, 1857, 1859, 1865, 1874, and now 1880—what a list! I believe that among the official men of this century I am now beaten only by Lord Palmerston in the length of my career in the House of Commons. A clear answer from the nation, a clear answer in the right sense, and a decisive accession of the liberal party to power without me, this is what I hope and pray. I think that the experts and the party generally are pretty sanguine. None doubt that the government are to lose; a few doubt whether they will be weaker than liberals and home rulers; very many whether weaker than liberals alone. All agree that Scotland will do its duty.

On the morning of the 16th, Mr. Gladstone started. Hundreds of people grew to thousands long before his train left King's Cross, and all the way to Edinburgh he found the same vivid

interest and acclamation on the east coast that had greeted him in November on the west. At Grantham the mayor and a crowd estimated by nimble statisticians at two thousand, awaited him at the station; at York the lord mayor and six thousand; at Newcastle-on-Tyne too many thousands to count. The little addresses made at these stopping-places were described as a sort of table of contents of the more elaborate speeches to be delivered in Midlothian itself. As he crossed the Tweed the fervour did not cool, and when at last he reached Edinburgh, he encountered a scene almost as wonderful as that which had met him four
[609] months before.

Again he was the guest at Dalmeny, and again he renewed his prodigious exertions amid a vehemence of admiration and delight that became more intense as the days passed. Here is an entry or two from the diary:—

> Travelled forty miles and delivered three speeches of forty-five or fifty minutes each, at Juniper Green, Colinton, and Mid Calder. Enthusiasm unabated.... Corrected and despatched proofs of *Religion, Achaian and Semitic*. *Mar. 21, Palm Sunday.*—Drove to Edinburgh cathedral; service 11-1-½. Free St. George's in the afternoon. Walked out seven miles with Lord Rosebery. 22.—To Edinburgh (after working as usual on my papers) at 1.15. Short complimentary address at liberal club. Then to George Street and on to the city election committee; short speech. Then by train to Gilmerton; spoke forty-five or fifty minutes; next after tea to Loanhead, and after more tea, spoke again for some time on Russian aggrandizement. Everywhere the greatest enthusiasm. Mr. C[owan] gave me interesting details about Magyar and Bohemian students. Back to Dalmeny at 7.20.

And so day after day did panting time toil after him in vain. Many of us have known long spells of hard electioneering—but not in one's seventy-first year, with every single word as it fell

into print on the morrow watched with the lynx eyes of party scrutiny, and all loaded with the heaviest personal responsibility.

Dissolution

On March 24 the parliament was dissolved. On March 30 the first elections took place, and the first pollings on the day following. From the early returns it was pretty evident that the liberals would have a majority. On the first day they made a net gain of fifteen seats in sixty-nine constituencies. By the end of the fourth day a total net gain of fifty seats was recorded. The ministerial majority was already gone. The county elections brought new surprises, and by the end of the second week the liberal gains were reckoned at ninety-nine.

Mr. Gladstone's fortnight of discourse ended on the 2nd of April. “So,” he records, “ends the second series of the speeches in which I have hammered with all my poor might at the fabric of the present tory power. *April 3.*—Cut down a Spanish chestnut [610] in Dalmeny Park by order. The day was quiet, but my papers and letters and the incoming news made it busy. It seemed as if the arm of the Lord had bared itself for work that He has made His own. 4.—A lull in election news, but the reflections on what has passed are overpowering.” Here are his closing words, and they are not without historic import:—

> The great trial, gentlemen, proceeds. You have great forces arrayed against you. I say “You”; if you will permit me to identify myself with you, I will say, We have great forces arrayed against us, and apparently we cannot make our appeal to the aristocracy, excepting that which must never be forgotten, the distinguished and enlightened minority of that body of able, energetic, patriotic, liberal-minded men, whose feelings are with those of the people, and who decorate and dignify their rank by their strong sympathy with the entire community. With that exception, in all the classes of which I speak, I am sorry to say we cannot reckon upon what is called the landed interest, we cannot reckon upon the clergy of the established church either in England or in Scotland,

subject again and always in each case to the most noble exceptions—exceptions, I trust, likely to enlarge and multiply from day to day. On none of these can we place our trust. We cannot reckon on the wealth of the country, nor upon the rank of the country, nor upon the influence which rank and wealth usually bring. In the main these powers are against us, for wherever there is a close corporation, wherever there is a spirit of organised monopoly, wherever there is a narrow and sectional interest apart from that of the country, and desiring to be set up above the interest of the public, there, gentlemen, we, the liberal party, have no friendship and no tolerance to expect. Above all these, and behind all these, there is something greater than these—there is the nation itself. This great trial is now proceeding before the nation. The nation is a power hard to rouse, but when roused, harder still and more hopeless to resist.... I figure to myself those who have constituted the majority of the late House of Commons as the persons arraigned, and the constituencies of the country as those who are called together in the solemn order of the constitution to hear the evidence, and to pronounce the verdict.

[611] That evidence has been pretty largely given. That verdict we await. We have none of the forms of a judicial trial. There are no peers in Westminster Hall, there are no judges on the woolsack; but if we concentrate our minds upon the truth of the case as apart from its mere exterior, it is a grander and a more august spectacle than was ever exhibited either in Westminster Hall or in the House of Lords. For a nation, called to undertake a great and responsible duty,—a duty which is to tell, as we are informed from high authority, on the peace of Europe and on the destinies of England,—has found its interests mismanaged, its honour tarnished, and its strength burdened and weakened by needless, mischievous, unauthorised, and unprofitable engagements, and it has resolved that this state of things shall cease, and that right and justice shall be done.[362]

[362] Speech at West Calder, April 1, 1880.

Elected For Midlothian And Leeds

Mr. Gladstone was already member for Leeds. So far back as the March of 1878 Sir James Kitson had written to ask him to become a candidate for the great city of the West Siding, but Mr. Gladstone declined the proposal. Then a deputation came to him in Harley Street, and he made them a speech on the Eastern question, but avoided any reference to the subject which they had come to handle. The stout Yorkshiremen were not to be baffled, and Mr. Gladstone, nominated without action of his own, was now returned by the unprecedented vote of 24,622.[363] He was right in calling the Leeds election "one of the most conspicuous and imposing victories ever won for the liberal cause."[364] Still public interest was concentrated upon Midlothian, and the might with which he prevailed over men's minds there, was admitted by his foes to be the most impressive tribute ever paid to political man and his vast powers as orator and popular leader. In Midlothian the crusade had been opened, and in Midlothian its triumph was sealed.

The poll was declared in Edinburgh soon after seven on the evening of April 5, and a few minutes later the result, amid every demonstration of extravagant delight from the triumphant multitude as they rushed away from the courthouse, was made [612] known to Mr. Gladstone at a house in George Street taken by Lord Rosebery for the occasion. A couple of candles were brought from the dining-table and held on each side of him, so that his face might be seen, as from the balcony he spoke a few words of thanks.[365] "Drove into Edinburgh about four," Mr. Gladstone records. "At 7.20 Mr. Reid brought the figures of the poll—Gladstone, 1579; Dalkeith, 1368; quite satisfactory.

[363] The other candidates stood:—Barran (L.), 23,674; Jackson (C), 13,331; Wheelhouse (C), 11,965. As the constituency was three-cornered, Gladstone, Barran, and Jackson were elected.

[364] Letter to electors of Leeds, April 7, 1880.

[365] The iron railing of this balcony is now a sacred relic in the hands of a faithful follower.

Soon after, 15,000 people being gathered in George Street, I spoke very shortly from the windows, and Rosebery followed, excellently well. Home about 10. Wonderful and nothing less has been the disposing guiding hand of God in all this matter." The majority was not of great dimensions, but it was adequate and sufficient, and the victory was celebrated half through the night with bonfires, illuminations, fireworks, and all the other fashions of signifying public joy, throughout Scotland and the north of England. The astrologers, meteorologists, and prognosticators of Pall Mall and Fleet Street felt that this time at least they had not rightly plumbed the depths of the democratic seas.

Lord Beaconsfield was staying alone at that time in the historic halls of Hatfield, their master being then abroad. There, hour by hour and day after day, news of the long train of disasters reached him. From one in confidential relations with him, and who saw much of him at this moment, I have heard that the fallen minister, who had counted on a very different result, now faced the ruin of his government, the end of his career, and the overwhelming triumph of his antagonist, with an unclouded serenity and a greatness of mind, worthy of a man who had known high fortunes and filled to the full the measure of his gifts and his ambitions.

III

Results

Some writers complained that the language of Midlothian was as solemn as if the verdict of the country were about to settle the issues of the battle of Armageddon. It was not exactly the battle [613] of Armageddon, but the election of 1880 was, at any rate, one of the most remarkable in party history. For one thing, activity was unprecedented, and Mr. Gladstone's fiery spirit seemed to have spread over the country. A list prepared by the liberal whips, and preserved by Mr. Gladstone, describes the new parliament as composed of 347 liberals, 240 conservatives, and 65 nationalists.

Looking at the divisions of the three kingdoms, we find England and Wales contributing 282 liberals against 207 tories; Scotland 52 liberals against 8 tories; and Ireland, 13 liberals against 25 tories. The Irish nationalists were of two shades: 35 followers of Mr. Parnell, 26 moderate home rulers who followed Mr. Shaw, and 4 dubious. In England and Wales therefore the liberal majority was 75, and in Scotland it was 44. Turning to electoral aspects with special social significance, we note that of the county constituencies 63 sent liberal members as against 124 tories. In the metropolis, as a whole, the government gained one seat and lost four, with the result that London was represented in the new parliament by 8 tories and 14 liberals. One victory of real importance was won by the government, for they beat the liberal by two to one in the City of London, the heart and centre of many of those powerful influences that Mr. Gladstone had described in his last speech in the Midlothian election as determined foes from whom the liberal party had no tolerance to expect. "The tory party," Mr. Gladstone noted, "has never had a majority on any one of its own four dissolutions—1852, 1859, 1868, 1880."

Mr. Gladstone to Lord Rosebery.

Hawarden, April 10, 1880.—... I should like to write about these marvellous events, but how can I? The romance of politics which befel my old age in Scotland, has spread over the whole land. You remember perhaps my series of fractions, comparing daily the net gains with the gross returns. The first day began with 1/13 or thereabouts. It had got to 1/10 or 1/9 when we left you. It is now 1/6. How idle to talk about the caprice of household suffrage; the counties have given quite as remarkable results as the boroughs. I was stunned at the end of the first night; and I am still out of breath from the [614] endeavour to keep up with the rapidity of events. I suppose the conservative Scotch will fill the first class compartment, or nearly so, but no more. Wales, I beg you to observe, has not

(as I think) been behind Scotland in her achievements. Most of the wretched percentage of compensation on "tory gains" on the general list is wretched in quality as well as quantity, and consists of the *district* places. To scarcely one of these gains can they point with any keen satisfaction. As to Midlothian the moral effect, before and after, has I think surpassed all our hopes. The feeling until it was over (since which there has justly been a centring of thought on E. Lancashire) was so fastened on it, that it was almost like one of the occasions of old when the issue of battle was referred to single combat. The great merit of it I apprehend lay in the original conception, which I take to have been yours, and to overshadow even your operations towards the direct production of the result. But one thing it cannot overshadow in my mind: the sense of the inexpressible aid and comfort derived day by day from your considerate ever-watchful care and tact. [*Latin not to be identified.*] Let me apply these same words (calling on you for a translation if needful) to Lady Rosebery. I should feel profoundly ashamed of the burdens we brought you, had I not seen how truly they were borne in the spirit, which alone makes all burdens light. It is a very pleasant subject of reflection to me that the riveting effect of companionship in a struggle like this, does not pass away with the struggle itself but abides.

Our stratagem for a quiet exit was on the whole successful. At Carlisle there was perfect quiet. At most of the few places where the train stopped there were a score or two of people and no more. At Hawarden, arriving between 9 and 10 A.M., we cheated the triumphal preparations; but made amends by carrying them over to Herbert the following day. We now become eager for the East Worcestershire election and are sanguine about my son's return. At Warrington we got over the three hours wonderfully, and succeeded in sleeping, though not exactly μαλθακῶς κατακείμενος through a succession of the most violent and unearthly noises, banging, crashing, roaring, squealing, that a railway station traversed

by innumerable goods' trains can supply..... I will not trouble you with, more words of thanks, I feel them so poor and idle. [615]

Two days later Mr. Gladstone wrote to the Duke of Argyll:—

April 12, 1880.—All our heads are still in a whirl from the great events of the last fortnight, which have given joy, I am convinced, to the large majority of the civilised world. The downfall of Beaconsfieldism is like the vanishing of some vast magnificent castle in an Italian romance. It is too big, however, to be all taken in at once. Meantime, while I inwardly rejoice, I am against all outward signs, beyond such as are purely local, of exultation, for they are not chivalrous, and they would tend to barbarise political warfare. We may be well content to thank God in silence. But the outlook is tremendous! The gradual unravelling of the tangled knots of the foreign and Indian policy will indeed be a task for skilled and strong hands, if they can be found; and these can hardly be found such as the case requires.

[616]

Chapter IX. The Second Ministry. (1880)

> There is indeed one great and critical act, the responsibility for which falls momentarily or provisionally on the Sovereign: it is the dismissal of an existing Ministry, and the appointment of a new one. This act is usually performed with the aid drawn from authentic manifestations of public opinion, mostly such as are obtained through the votes or conduct of the House of Commons.—GLADSTONE.

The day after the declaration of the poll in Midlothian, Mr. Gladstone and his wife and daughter quitted Dalmeny, and made their way homewards, as we have just seen.

> *April 6.*—A heavy day with post, incessant telegrams, and preparations for departure. We drove, however, to Linlithgow, saw the beautiful church and fine old castle, and I made a short non-polemical speech to the people.... Careful concealment of the plans of departure until well on in the evening. Left this most hospitable of all houses at 8.30, and got into the 9.25, escaping by secrecy all demonstration except from some 200 who seemed to gather on the instant. Travelled all night, and had time to ruminate on the great hand of God, so evidently displayed.
>
> *April 7, Wed.*—After three hours of successful sleep amid frightful unearthly noises at Warrington, we went off to Chester and Hawarden, saluted enthusiastically, but escaping all crowds.... Set to work at once on a mass of letters and papers.... The day occupied with papers, letters, and telegrams, and reading my Vatican tracts.... The triumph grows and grows; to God be the praise.
>
> *April 9.*—Letters passed 100. *April 10, Sat.*—Church, 8-½ A.M. Wrote to ... Postal arrivals, 140; terrible! Wolverton arrived to dinner, and I spent the evening in full conversation

with him. He threatens a request from Granville and Hartington. Again, I am stunned, but God will provide.

April 11, Sun.—Church, 8-½ A.M., Holy Communion; 11 A.M. Wrote etc. Read *Gospel for the 19th Century*. Examined liturgical books. Further conversation with Wolverton on the London reception, on Leeds, and on the great matter of all. *April 12.*—Wolverton went off in the morning, and is to see Granville and Hartington to-day. Read Brugsch's *Hist. Egypt*. *Guy Mannering.* Wrote some memoranda of names applicable to this occasion. Hard day. But all are pretty hard in this my "retirement." *April 13.*—Began tentatively an anonymous letter on the Conservative Collapse,[366] really drawn forth by the letter of Lord Bath.... Read *Guy Mannering* and that most heavenly man George Herbert.... *April 16.*—Mr. Bright came over from Llandudno, and we spent nearly all the time in conversing on the situation. He is most kind and satisfactory. *April 17.*—Finished my letter and revision of it. Cut down a sycamore with W. H. G. *April 18, Sun.*—Holy Communion 8 A.M.; morning service and evening. Wrote to [17 letters]. *Read Divine Veracity or Divine Justice*, Caird on the *Philosophy of Religion*. *April 19.*—A reluctant goodbye before 1. London at 6.30. A secret journey, but people gathered at Chester station and Euston. I vaguely feel that this journey is a plunge out of an atmosphere of peace into an element of disturbance. May He who has of late so wonderfully guided, guide me still in the critical days about to come. *April 20.*—This blank day is, I think, probably due to the Queen's hesitation or reluctance, which the ministers have to find means of [covering].

One joyous element in these days at Hawarden was the arrival first of the youngest son of the house, then of the eldest, the latter of them having won a seat in Worcestershire, and the former having failed in Middlesex, after a display of qualities that delighted his family and friends much more than mere

[366] Published anonymously in the *Fortnightly Review*, May 1880.

victory could have done. "About one," Mr. Gladstone marks on the 8th, "Herbert entered in triumph. We were there, and could not but be much moved." And on the 14th, "Willy made his triumphal entry at four, and delivered a very good speech. Neville Lyttelton, too, spoke well from the carriage." As Lord Acton wrote to Miss Gladstone about Middlesex, "The picture
[618] of the young, untried son bursting into sudden popularity, and turning men's thoughts from the absorbing exploits of his father, adds an affecting domestic feature to that great biography. That meeting at Hawarden, after such a revolution and such a growth, is a thing I cannot think of without emotion." A little later, when Mr. Gladstone's option of Midlothian left the Leeds seat vacant, his son was elected without opposition to fill it. Mr. Gladstone's letters on this operation, which had its delicacies, are an excellent example of his habits of careful and attentive judgment in handling even secondary affairs.

II

Question Of Leadership

From the moment when it became clear that Lord Beaconsfield would be swept out of office, it was just as clear to sensible men that only one successor was possible. It was Mr. Gladstone, as everybody knew and said, who had led and inspired the assault. A cabinet without him would hold its councils without the most important of the influences on which it depended. If the majorities that carried the election could have been consulted on the choice of a minister, nobody doubted upon whom with unanimity their choice would fall. Even those who most detested the result, even those who held that a load of anxiety would be lifted from the bosoms of many liberals of official rank if they were to hear of Mr. Gladstone's definite retirement from public life, still pronounced that it was Mr. Gladstone's majority, and that was what the contributors to that majority intended to vote

for was, above all else, his return to office and his supremacy in national affairs. If he would not lay down his power, such persons said, it was best for everybody that he should exercise it openly, regularly, and responsibly as head of the government.[367] The very fact that he had ceased to be the leader of the opposition five years before, was turned into an argument for his responsibility now; for it was his individual freedom that had enabled him to put forth all his strength, without any of that management [619] and reserve that would have been needed in one who was titular leader of a party, as well as real leader of the nation. The victory would have been shorn of half its glory if any other chief had been given to the party. In short, no minister, not Pitt in 1784, nor Grey in 1831, nor Peel ten years later, nor Palmerston in 1855, was ever summoned by more direct and personal acclaim. Whatever liberty of choice the theory of our constitution assigned to the Queen, in practice this choice did not now exist. It was true that in the first of his Midlothian speeches Mr. Gladstone had used these words, "I hope the verdict of the country will give to Lord Granville and Lord Hartington the responsible charge of its affairs."[368] But events had wrought a surprise, and transformed the situation.

Some, indeed, there were whom a vision of another kind possessed; a vision of the moral grandeur that would attend his retirement after putting Apollyon and his legions to flight, and planting his own hosts in triumph in the full measure of their predominance. Some who loved him, might still regretfully cherish for him this heroic dream. Retirement might indeed have silenced evil tongues; it would have spared him the toils of many turbid and tempestuous years. But public life is no idyll. Mr. Gladstone had put himself, by exertions designed for public objects, into a position from which retreat to private

[367] See, for instance, *Pall Mall Gazette*, April 2 and 22, then conducted by Mr. Greenwood, the most vigorous and relentless of Mr. Gladstone's critics.
[368] November 25, 1879.

ease would have been neither unselfish nor honourable. Is it not an obvious test of true greatness in a statesman, that he shall hold popularity, credit, ascendency and power such as Mr. Gladstone now commanded, as a treasure to be employed with regal profusion for the common good, not guarded in a miser's strong-box? For this outlay of popularity the coming years were to provide Mr. Gladstone with occasions only too ample.

If retreat was impossible, then all the rest was inevitable. And it is easy to guess the course of his ruminations between his return from Midlothian and his arrival in Harley Street. Mr. Gladstone [620] himself, looking back seventeen years after, upon his refusal in 1880 to serve in a place below the first, wrote: "I conceive that I was plainly right in declining it, for had I acted otherwise, I should have placed the facts of the case in conflict with its rights, and with the just expectations of the country. Besides, as the head of a five years' ministry, and as still in full activity, I should have been strangely placed as the subordinate of one twenty years my junior, and comparatively little tested in public life."

As the diary records, on Monday, April 12, Lord Wolverton left Hawarden, and was to see the two liberal leaders the same day. He did so, and reported briefly to his chief at night:—

> I hope the Plimsoll matter[369] is at an end. The clubs to-night think that Lord Beaconsfield will meet parliament, and that when the time comes, if asked, he will advise that Hartington should be sent for. I do not believe either. I have seen Lord Granville and Hartington; both came here upon my arrival, and Adam with them. Lord Granville hopes you may be in

[369] The Plimsoll matter was a movement to give Mr. Gladstone a public reception on his arrival in London. Mr. Gladstone declined the reception as inconsistent with his intention, expressed at Edinburgh, to avoid all demonstration, and also because it would be regarded as an attempt made for the first time to establish a practice of public rejoicing in the metropolis over the catastrophe of an administration and a political party, and would wound feelings which ought to be respected as well as spared.

> London on Friday. I told him I thought you would be. He has gone to Walmer, and will come up on Friday. He has a good deal to think of in the meantime as to "the position of the party." I need not say more than this, as it embraces the whole question, which he *now quite appreciates*.... Nothing could be more cordial and kind than Granville and Hartington, but I hardly think till to-day they *quite* realised the *position*, which I confess seems to me as clear as the sun at noon. They will neither of them speak to any one till Friday, when Lord Granville hopes to see you. Adam is much pleased with your kind note to him. He has gone home till Friday. It is well to be away just now, for the gossip and questioning is unbearable.

Acknowledging this on the following day (April 13), Mr. Gladstone says to Lord Wolverton:—

> The claim, so to speak, of Granville and Hartington, or rather, I should say, of Granville with Hartington as against me, or rather as compared with me, is complete. My labours as an individual cannot set me up as a Pretender. Moreover, if they should on surveying their position see fit to apply to me, there is only one form and ground of application, so far as I see, which could be seriously entertained by me, namely, their conviction that on the ground of public policy, all things considered, it was best in the actual position of affairs that I should come out. It cannot be made a matter of ceremonial, as by gentlemen waiving a precedence, or a matter of feeling, as by men of high and delicate honour determined to throw their bias against themselves. They have no right to throw their bias against themselves—they have no right to look at anything but public policy; and this I am sure will be their conviction. Nothing else can possibly absolve them from their presumptive obligation as standing at the head of the party which for the time represents the country. [621]

As a matter of fact, I find no evidence that the two leaders ever did express a conviction that public policy required that he

should stand forth as a pretender for the post of prime minister. On the contrary, when Lord Wolverton says that they "did not quite realise the position" on the 12th, this can only mean that they hardly felt that conviction about the requirements of public policy, which Mr. Gladstone demanded as the foundation of his own decision.

III

The last meeting of the outgoing cabinet was held on April 21. What next took place has been described by Mr. Gladstone himself in memoranda written during the days on which the events occurred.

Interview with Lord Hartington.

April 22, 1880. At 7 P.M. Hartington came to see me at Wolverton's house and reported on his journey to Windsor.

The Queen stood with her back to the window—which *used* not to be her custom. On the whole I gathered that her manner was more or less embarrassed but towards him not
[622] otherwise than gracious and confiding. She told him that she desired him to form an administration, and pressed upon him strongly his duty to assist her as a responsible leader of the party now in a large majority. I could not find that she expressed clearly her reason for appealing to him as *a* responsible leader of the party, and yet going past *the* leader of the party, namely Granville, whom no one except himself has a title to displace. She however indicated to him her confidence in his moderation, the phrase under which he is daily commended in the *Daily Telegraph*, at this moment I think, Beaconsfield's personal organ and the recipient of his inspirations. By this moderation, the Queen intimated that Hartington was distinguished from Granville as well as from me.

Hartington, in reply to her Majesty, made becoming acknowledgments, and proceeded to say that he did not think a government could be satisfactorily formed without me; he had not had any direct communication with me; but he had reason to believe that I would not take any office or post in the government except that of first minister. Under those circumstances he advised her Majesty to place the matter in my hands. The Queen continued to urge upon him the obligations arising out of his position, and desired him to ascertain whether he was right in his belief that I would not act in a ministry unless as first minister. This, he said, is a question which I should not have put to you, except when desired by the Queen.

I said her Majesty was quite justified, I thought, in requiring positive information, and he, therefore, in putting the question to me. Of my action he was already in substantial possession, as it had been read to him (he had told me) by Wolverton. I am not asked, I said, for reasons, but only for Aye or No, and consequently I have only to say that I adhere to my reply as you have already conveyed it to the Queen.

In making such a reply, it was my duty to add that in case a government should be formed by him, or by Granville with him, whom the Queen seemed to me wrongly to have passed by—it was to Granville that I had resigned my trust, and he, Hartington, was subsequently elected by the party to the leadership in the House of Commons—my duty would be plain. It would be to give them all the support in my power, both negatively, as by absence or non-interference, [623] and positively. Promises of this kind, I said, stood on slippery ground, and must always be understood with the limits which might be prescribed by conviction. I referred to the extreme caution, almost costiveness, of Peel's replies to Lord Russell, when he was endeavouring to form a government in December 1845 for the purpose of carrying the repeal of the Corn Law. In this case, however, I felt a tolerable degree of confidence, because I was not aware of any substantive divergence of

ideas between us, and I had observed with great satisfaction, when his address to North-East Lancashire came into my hands, after the writing but before the publication of mine to Midlothian, that they were in marked accordance as to opinions, if not as to form and tone, and I did not alter a word. In the case of the first Palmerston government I had certainly been thrown into rather sharp opposition after I quitted it, but this was mainly due to finance. I had not approved of the finance of Sir George Lewis, highly as I estimated his judgment in general politics; and it was in some ways a relief to me, when we had become colleagues in the second Palmerston government, to find that he did not approve of mine. However, I could only make such a declaration as the nature of the case allowed.

He received all this without comment, and said his conversation with her Majesty had ended as it began, each party adhering to the ground originally taken up. He had not altered his advice, but had come under her Majesty's command to learn my intentions, which he was to make known to her Majesty returning to Windsor *this* day at one.

He asked me what I thought of the doctrine of obligation so much pressed upon him by the Queen. I said that in my opinion the case was clear enough. Her Majesty had not always acted on the rule of sending for the leader of the opposition. Palmerston was the known and recognised leader of the opposition in 1859, but the Queen sent for Granville. The leader, if sent for, was in my opinion bound either to serve himself, or to point out some other course to her Majesty which he might deem to be more for the public advantage. And if that course should fail in consequence of the refusal of the person pointed out, the leader of the party could not
[624] leave her Majesty unprovided with a government, but would be bound in loyalty to undertake the task.

I did not indicate, nor did he ask, what I should do if sent for. He did not indicate, nor did I ask, what he should do if the Queen continued to press him to go on, in spite of his advice

to her to move in another direction.—*April 23, 1880.*

A barren controversy was afterwards raised on the question whether at this exciting moment Lord Hartington tried to form a government. What he did, according to the memorandum, was to advise the Queen to send for Mr. Gladstone, on the ground of his belief that Mr. Gladstone would join no government of which he was not the head. The Queen then urged him to make sure of this, before she would acquiesce in his refusal to undertake the commission. The Queen, as Mr. Gladstone says, had a right to require positive information, and Lord Hartington had a right, and it was even his duty, to procure this information for her, and to put the direct question to Mr. Gladstone, whether he would or would not act in an administration of which he was not the head. He went back to Windsor, not in the position of a statesman who has tried to form a government and failed, but in the position of one who had refused a task because he knew all along that failure was certain, and now brought proof positive that his refusal was right.[370]

What happened next was easy to foresee:—

Interview with Lord Granville and Lord Hartington.

April 23, 1880.—Soon after half-past three to-day, Lord Granville and Lord Hartington arrived from Windsor at my house, and signified to me the Queen's command that I should repair to Windsor, where she would see me at half-past six.

The purport of Lord Hartington's conversation with me yesterday had been signified. They had jointly advised thereupon that I should be sent for with a view to the formation of a government, and her Majesty desired Lord Granville would convey to me the message. I did not understand that there had been any lengthened audience, or any reference to details. [625]

[370] See an interesting letter from Viscount Esher, *Times*, Feb. 22, 1892.

Receiving this intimation, I read to them an extract from an article in the *Daily News* of yesterday,[371] descriptive of their position relatively to me, and of mine to them, and said that, letting drop the epithets, so I understood the matter. I presumed, therefore, that under the circumstances as they were established before their audience, they had unitedly advised the sovereign that it was most for the public advantage to send for me. To this they assented. I expressed, a little later, my sense of the high honour and patriotism with which they had acted; said that I had endeavoured to fulfil my own duty, but was aware I might be subject to severe criticism for my resignation of the leadership five years ago, which I had forced upon them; but I did it believing in good faith that we were to have quiet times, and for the first years, 1875 and 1876, and to the end of the session I had acted in a manner conformable to that resignation, and had only been driven from my corner by compulsion. They made no reply, but Granville had previously told me he was perfectly satisfied as to my communications with him.

I at once asked whether I might reckon, as I hoped, on their co-operation in the government. Both assented. Granville agreed to take the foreign office, but modestly and not as of right. I proposed the India office as next, and as very near in weight, and perhaps the most difficult of all at this time, to Hartington, which he desired time to consider. I named Childers as the most proper person for the war office. As I had to prepare for Windsor, our interview was not very long; and they agreed to come again after dinner.

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[371] "Without their full acquiescence—and indeed their earnest pressure—he could not even now take a step which would seem to slight claims which he has amply and generously acknowledged.... If either now or a few days later he accepts the task of forming and the duty of presiding over a liberal administration, it will be because Lord Granville and Lord Hartington, with characteristic patriotism, have themselves been among the first to feel and the most eager to urge Mr. Gladstone's return to the post to which he has been summoned."—*Daily News*, April 22.

We spoke of the governor-generalship, at least I spoke to Granville who stayed a little after Hartington, and I said Goschen's position as to the franchise would prevent his being in the cabinet now, but he should be in great employ. Granville had had the lead in the conversation, and said the Queen requested *him* to carry the message to me. [626]

Audience at Windsor.

Windsor Castle, April 23, 1880.—At 6.50 I went to the Queen, who received me with perfect courtesy, from which she never deviates. Her Majesty presumed I was in possession of the purport of her communications with Lord Granville and with Lord Hartington, and wished to know, as the administration of Lord Beaconsfield had been "turned out," whether I was prepared to form a government. She thought she had acted constitutionally in sending for the recognised leaders of the party, and referring the matter to them in the first instance. I said that if I might presume to speak, nothing could in my views be more correct than her Majesty's view that the application should be so made (I did not refer to the case as *between* Lord Granville and Lord Hartington), and that it would have been an error to pass them by and refer to me. They had stood, I said, between me and the position of a candidate for office, and it was only their advising her Majesty to lay her commands upon me, which could warrant my thinking of it after all that had occurred. But since they had given this advice, it was not consistent with my duty to shrink from any responsibility which I had incurred, and I was aware that I had incurred a very great responsibility. I therefore humbly accepted her Majesty's commission.

Her Majesty wished to know, in order that she might acquaint Lord Beaconsfield, whether I could undertake to form a government, or whether I only meant that I would make the attempt. I said I had obtained the co-operation of Lord Granville and Lord Hartington, and that my knowledge and belief as to prevailing dispositions would, I think, warrant me in undertaking to form a government, it being her Majesty's

pleasure. I had ascertained that Lord Granville would be willing to accept the foreign office; and I had also to say that the same considerations which made it my duty to accept office, seemed also to make it my duty to submit myself to her Majesty's pleasure for the office of chancellor of the exchequer together with that of first lord of the treasury.

She asked if I had thought of any one for the war office, which was very important. The report of the Commission would show that Lord Cardwell's system of short service had entirely broken down, and that a change must be made at
[627] any rate as regarded the non-commissioned officers. Lord Hartington had assured her that no one was committed to the system except Lord Cardwell, and he was very unwell and hardly able to act. Lord Hartington knew the war office, and she thought would make a good war minister. I said that it seemed to me in the present state of the country the first object was to provide for the difficulties of statesmanship, and then to deal with those of administration. The greatest of all these difficulties, I thought, centred in the India office, and I was very much inclined to think Lord Hartington would be eminently qualified to deal with them, and would thereby take a place in the government suitable to his position and his probable future.

She asked, to whom, then, did I think of entrusting the war office? [Resumed this afternoon, April 24.][372] I said Mr. Childers occurred to me as an administrator of eminent capacity and conciliatory in his modes of action; his mind would be open on the grave subjects treated by the Commission, which did not appear to me to be even for Lord Cardwell matters of committal, but simply of public policy to be determined by public advantage. She thought that Mr. Childers had not been popular at the admiralty, and that it was desirable the secretary for war should be liked by the army.

[372] Up to this point the memorandum is on Windsor notepaper, and must have been written between the end of the audience and the time for the train—a very characteristic instance of his alacrity.

I said that there was an occurrence towards the close of his term which placed him in a difficult position, but relied on his care and discretion. (She did not press the point, but is evidently under strong professional bias.)

She spoke of the chancellorship, and I named Lord Selborne.

She referred to general action and hoped it would be conciliatory. I said that every one who had served the crown for even a much smaller term of years than I had the good or ill fortune to reckon, would know well that an incoming government must recognise existing engagements, and must take up, irrespective of its preferences, whatever was required by the character and honour of the country. I referred to the case of Scinde and Sir R. Peel's cabinet in 1843; which she recognised as if it had been recently before her.

She said, "I must be frank with you, Mr. Gladstone, and must fairly say that there have been some expressions"—I [628] think she said some little things, which had caused her concern or pain. I said that her Majesty's frankness, so well known, was a main ground of the entire reliance of her ministers upon her. That I was conscious of having incurred a great responsibility, and felt the difficulty which arises when great issues are raised, and a man can only act and speak upon the best lights he possesses, aware all the time that he may be in error. That I had undoubtedly used a mode of speech and language different in some degree from what I should have employed, had I been the leader of a party or a candidate for office. Then as regarded conciliation, in my opinion the occasion for what I had described had wholly passed away, and that so far as I was concerned, it was my hope that her Majesty would not find anything to disapprove in my general tone; that my desire and effort would be to diminish, her cares, in any case not to aggravate them; that, however, considering my years, I could only look to a short term of active exertion and a personal retirement comparatively early. With regard to the freedom of language I had admitted, she

said with some good-natured archness, “But you will have to bear the consequences,” to which I entirely assented. She seemed to me, if I may so say, “natural under effort.” All things considered, I was much pleased. I ended by kissing her Majesty's hand.

IV

Construction Of Cabinet

The usual embarrassments in building a government filled many days with unintermittent labour of a kind that, like Peel, Mr. Gladstone found intensely harassing, though interesting. The duty of leaving out old colleagues can hardly have been other than painful, but Mr. Gladstone was a man of business, and lie reckoned on a proper stoicism in the victims of public necessity. To one of them he wrote, “While I am the oldest man of my political generation, I have been brought by the seeming force of exceptional circumstances to undertake a task requiring less of years and more of vigour than my accumulating store of the one and waning residue of the other, and I shall be a solecism in the government which I have undertaken to form. I do not feel able to ask you to resume the toils of office,” etc., but [629] would like to name him the recipient for a signal mark of honour. “I have not the least right to be disappointed when you select younger men for your colleagues,” the cheerful man replied. Not all were so easily satisfied. “It is cruel to make a disqualification for others out of an infirmity of my own,” Mr. Gladstone wrote to the oldest of his comrades in the Peelite days, but—et cetera, et cetera, and he would be glad to offer his old ally the red riband of the Bath when one should be vacant. The peer to whom this letter with its dubious solatium was addressed, showed his chagrin by a reply of a single sentence: that he did not wish to leave the letter unanswered, lest it should seem to admit that he was in a state of health which he did not feel

to be the case; the red riband was not even declined. One admirable man with intrepid *naïveté* proposed himself for the cabinet, but was not admitted; another no less admirable was pressed to enter, but felt that he could be more useful as an independent member, and declined—an honourable transaction repeated by the same person on more than one occasion later. To one excellent member of his former cabinet, the prime minister proposed the chairmanship of committee, and it was with some tartness refused. Another equally excellent member of the old administration he endeavoured to plant out in the viceregal lodge at Dublin, without the cabinet, but in vain. To a third he proposed the Indian vice-royalty, and received an answer that left him "stunned and out of breath." As the hours passed and office after office was filled up, curiosity grew vivacious as to the fate appointed for the younger generation of radicals. The great posts had gone to patrician whigs, just as if Mr. Gladstone had been a Grey or a Russell. As we have seen, he had secured Lord Granville and Lord Hartington before he went to Windsor, and on the evening of his return, the first person to whom he applied was Lord Derby, one of the most sagacious men of his day, but a great territorial noble and a very recent convert. He declined office on the ground that if a man changes his party connection, he is bound to give proof that he wishes the change from no merely personal motive, and that he is not a gainer by it. [630]

Mr. Bright had joined, it was true, and Mr. Forster, but Bright the new radicals honoured and revered without any longer following, and with Forster they had quarrelled violently upon education, nor was the quarrel ever healed. One astute adviser, well acquainted with the feeling and expectations of the left wing, now discovered to his horror that Mr. Gladstone was not in the least alive to the importance of the leaders of the radical section, and had never dreamed of them for his cabinet. His view seems to have been something of this kind, "You have been saved from whig triumph in the person of Lord Hartington;

now that you have got me to keep the balance, I must have a whig cabinet." He was, moreover, still addicted to what he called Peel's rule against admitting anybody straight into the cabinet without having held previous office. At last he sent for Sir Charles Dilke. To his extreme amazement Sir Charles refused to serve, unless either himself or Mr. Chamberlain were in the cabinet; the prime minister might make his choice between them; then the other would accept a subordinate post. Mr. Gladstone discoursed severely on this unprecedented enormity, and the case was adjourned. Mr. Bright was desired to interfere, but the pair remained inexorable. In the end the lot fell on Mr. Chamberlain. "Your political opinions," Mr. Gladstone wrote to him (April 27), "may on some points go rather beyond what I may call the general measure of the government, but I hope and believe that there can be no practical impediment on this score to your acceptance of my proposal." So Mr. Chamberlain took office at the board of trade, where Mr. Gladstone himself had begun his effective career in administration nearly forty years before; and his confederate went as under-secretary to the foreign office. At that time the general feeling was that Sir Charles Dilke, long in parliament and a man of conspicuous mark within its walls, was rather badly used, and that Mr. Gladstone ought to have included both. All this was the ominous prelude of a voyage that was to be made through many storms.[373]

[631]

One incident of these labours of construction may illustrate Mr. Gladstone's curious susceptibility in certain kinds of personal contest. He proposed that Mr. Lowe should be made a viscount, while the Queen thought that a barony would meet the claim. For once it broke the prime minister's sleep; he got up in the middle of the night and dashed off a letter to Windsor. The letter written, the minister went to bed again, and was in an instant sound asleep.

[373] The reader will find the list of the members of the cabinet, now and at later periods of its existence, in the Appendix.

"The new parliament," he told his old friend at school and college, Sir Francis Doyle (May 10), "will be tested by its acts. It will not draw its inspiration from me. No doubt it will make changes that will be denounced as revolutionary, and then recognised as innocent and even good. But I expect it to act in the main on well-tried and established lines, and do much for the people and little to disquiet my growing years, or even yours." All fell out strangely otherwise, and disquiet marked this second administration from its beginning to its end. To lay all the blame on a prime minister or his cabinet for this, is like blaming the navigator for wild weather. In spite of storm and flood, great things were done; deep, notable, and abiding results ensued. The procedure of parliament underwent a profound revolution. So too did our electoral system in all its aspects. New lines of cleavage showed themselves in the divisions of political party. A not unimportant episode occurred in the chapter of religious toleration. The Irish peasant, after suffering centuries of oppression and tyrannic wrong, at last got the charter of his liberation. In a more distant region, as if to illustrate the power of events against the will of a statesman and the contemporary opinion of a nation, England for good or evil found herself planted in the valley of the Nile, and became a land-power on the Mediterranean.

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Appendix

Budget Of 1860

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Sir William Heathcote wrote to Mr. Gladstone, May 4, 1861:—

I understood you in your rebukes of Lewis in 1857, to be aiming not only at a change of his plan of finance in that particular year, but (if that were impossible, or at least could not be carried), at a resumption as early as circumstances would allow, of what you thought the proper line of action which he insisted on suspending. Income-tax and war duties on tea and sugar were and would continue to be, as I understood, the primary claimants for reduction of taxation, in your judgment.... The very vehemence of your convictions and expressions on *both* occasions perplexes me.

Mr. Gladstone replied the same day:—

... You think, 1. That I bound myself to the reduction of the tea and sugar duties as a policy for future occasions, and not merely for the issue then raised. 2. That in like manner I was bound to the reduction and abolition of the income-tax. 3. That even if there arose in the system of our expenditure a great change, involving an increase of ten or fifteen millions of money over 1853, I was still in consistency bound to hold over the first chance of reduction for income-tax, tea and sugar. 4. That consequently until these duties were remitted I could not propose to prosecute

any commercial reforms involving, as nearly all of them do, a sacrifice of revenue for a time. 5. It is because I have departed from these positions by proposing a multitude of reductions and abolitions of duty, other than the three mentioned, and partly or wholly in preference to them, that you have lost confidence in my judgment on these matters (a confidence to which I do not pretend that I had ever any claim).

If I have interpreted you aright, and I hope you will tell me whether I have done so or not, this is all to me exceedingly curious; such are the differences in the opinions of men formed from their different points of view. Now I will give you mine. To give effect to the pledge of honour, by which I became bound in 1853, I made a desperate effort in 1857, with all the zeal of which I was capable, and with all the passion to which I am liable. It was my opinion that the course then taken would be decisive as to the operations in 1860, for the income-tax never can be got rid of except by prospective finance, reaching over several [633] years, and liable to impediment and disturbance accordingly. I therefore protested against the whole scale of expenditure then proposed; as well as against particular kinds of expenditure to which I might refer. I likewise protested against the provision for that expenditure which the government of the day proposed. First, because the expenditure itself was excessive, in my view. Secondly, because in the mode of that provision I thought the remission of income-tax was large out of all proportion to the remission on indirect taxes; and this disproportion I regarded as highly dangerous. I determined to let no political prejudice stand in my way, and to test to the best of my very feeble power the opinion of parliament with respect to tea and sugar. I stated that if the opinion of parliament were against me I should not factiously prolong the contest but should withdraw from it. Not only was the opinion of parliament against me, but it so happened that the opinion of the country was immediately afterwards taken by a dissolution on that and on other kindred questions. The country

affirmed the policy of Lord Palmerston, and the policy of a materially increased expenditure, by an overwhelming majority. I had misjudged public opinion; they had read it aright. After the dissolution of 1857, Sir George Lewis, who had previously raised the tea and sugar duties for one year, proposed to raise them for two more. I immediately followed in debate, and thanked him warmly for doing it. All this of course I can prove. I said, we are going to have more expenditure, we must therefore have more taxation.

As I have gone thus far with my history, I will conclude it. Notwithstanding what had happened, I did not absolutely abandon at that time the hope that we might still reach in 1860 a state which might enable us to abolish the income-tax. I had a faint expectation of more economy under another government. When Lord Derby's administration came in in 1858, they professed to reduce expenditure by £800,000, and to contemplate further reductions. I expressed my satisfaction, and gave them the extreme of support that I could. But I then clearly pointed out that, even with the scale of expenditure they then proposed, we could not abolish the income-tax in 1860. In a few months, their reductions vanished into air. In 1859 came the famous "reconstruction." I took office in June, and found a scale of expenditure going on in the treasury far more prodigal and wanton than I had ever charged upon Lord Palmerston's first government. I found also that when the estimates had been completed, I believe entirely on *their* basis, there was a probable deficiency of four or five millions for a year of which nearly one-third had passed. And the expenditure was I think nearly seventy millions, or some fourteen millions more than in 1853. This was not the act only of the government. The opposition halloed them on; and the country, seized with a peculiar panic, was in a humour even more lavish than the opposition. [634]

My view was, and I stated it, that we ought to provide for this expenditure in a due proportion between direct and indirect taxes.

I showed that this proportion had not been observed; that we had continued to levy large amounts of war tax on tea and sugar, and had returned to the scale of 1853 for income. I proposed to provide the necessary sums chiefly by an increase of income-tax. But neither then (in July 1859), nor for nearly two and a half years before, had I ever (to my knowledge) presumed to speak of any one as bound to abolish the income-tax or to remit the additional duties on tea and sugar.

I fully expect from *you* the admission that as to these measures I could not in the altered circumstances be bound absolutely to the remissions. But you say I was bound to give them a preference over all other remissions. Nowhere I believe can one word to this effect be extracted from any speech of mine. I found in 1860 that all the reforming legislation, which had achieved such vast results, had been suspended for seven years. We were then raising by duties doomed in 1853, from twelve to thirteen millions. It would in my opinion have been no less than monstrous on my part to recognise the preferences you claim for these particular duties. All of them indeed would have been reliefs, even the income-tax which is I think proved to be the least relief of any. But, though reliefs, they were hardly reforms; and experience had shown us that reforms were in fact double and treble reliefs. I may be wrong, but it is my opinion and I found it on experience, that the prospect of the removal of the three collectively (income, tea extra, and sugar extra) being in any case very remote, it is less remote with than without the reforming measures of the last and (I hope I may add) of the present year. Had the expenditure of 1853 been resumed, there would notwithstanding the Russian war have been, in my opinion, room for all these three things. 1. Abolition of income-tax by or near 1860; 2. remission of increases on tea and sugar within the same time; 3. the prosecution of the commercial reforms.

It may be said that having set my face against an excess of expenditure I ought to have considered that a holy war, and not

to have receded. Although I place public economy somewhat higher as a matter of duty than many might do, I do not think it would have been right, I do think it would have been foolish and presumptuous in me to have gone beyond these two things: first, making an effort to the utmost of my power at the critical moment (as I took it to be), and secondly, on being defeated to watch for opportunities thereafter. Since it should be remembered I do not recommend or desire sweeping and sudden reductions.

The chief errors that I see myself to have committed are these. In 1853 when I took the unusual course of estimating our income for seven years, and assuming that our expenditure would either continue as it was, or only move onwards gradually and gently, I ought no doubt to have pointed out explicitly, that a great
[635] disturbance and increase of our expenditure would baffle my reckonings. Again in 1857 the temper of the public mind had undergone a change which I failed to discern; and I attacked the government and the chancellor of the exchequer of that day for doing what the country desired though I did not. I name these as specific errors, over and above the general one of excess of heat.

The budget of last year I cannot admit to have been an error. People say it should have been smaller. My belief is that if it had been a smaller boat it would not have lived in such a sea. I speak of the period of the session before the China war became certain. When it did so, we were in a great strait about the paper duty. We felt the obligation incurred by the vote on the second reading, and we construed it according to the established usage. We took the more arduous, but I think the more honourable course for a government to pursue. Had we abandoned the bill, I know not how we could have looked in the face those who had acted and invested on the faith of an unbroken practice. I admit that political motives greatly concurred to recommend the budget of last year. It was a budget of peace, and peace wanted it. The budget of this year followed from the budget of last, given the other circumstances. At the same time I can understand how the

claim of tea could be set up, but not well after the occurrences of last year how it could be supported.

This is a long egotistical story. But when you consider that it contains my whole story (except *pièces justificatives*) in answer to so many speeches in both Houses and elsewhere, for never to this hour have I opened my lips in personal defence, you will understand why I might be garrulous....

Notwithstanding the mild doctrine I have held about expenditure I admit it may be said I ought not to have joined a government which had such extended views in that direction, even though they were the views of the nation. Much may be said on this. I may, however, remark that when the government was formed I did not fully conceive the extent to which we should proceed.

The Cabinet. 1860

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Mr. Gladstone's memorandum on the currents of opinion in the cabinet of 1860 concludes as follows:—

1. The most Italian members of the cabinet have been: Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell, W.E.G., Gibson, Argyll. The least Italian: Lewis, Wood, Grey, Herbert, Villiers (especially).

2. In foreign policy generally the most combative have been: Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell, Duke of Newcastle, the chancellor. The least combative: Duke of Somerset, Duke of Argyll, Granville, Gibson, Herbert, Lewis, Grey, W.E.G., Wood, the same in feeling but not active. [636]

3. In defences and expenditure, the most alarmed, or most martial (as the case may be), have been: Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell, Duke of Newcastle, S. Herbert, followed by Duke of Somerset, the chancellor, Granville, Cardwell. Inclined the

other way: Gibson, W.E.G., Lewis, Grey, Duke of Argyll (Elgin, I think).

4. In finance some are for movement, some stationary or retrograde so as to be ready for immediate war. Yet here we are not divided simply as combative or anti-combative. The onward men in finance are: Lord John Russell, Duke of Newcastle, Granville, Argyll, Gibson, W.E.G., and, I think, the chancellor. The stationary men are, first and foremost: Sir George Lewis, Sir C. Wood; next to these, Lord Palmerston, Cardwell, and, I think, Villiers, Herbert.

5. On reform I must distinguish between (*a*) extension of the franchise and (*b*) redistribution of seats. In the first the more liberal men are: Lord John Russell, Duke of Somerset, Duke of Newcastle, Duke of Argyll, Gibson, W.E.G. The fearful or opposed are: Lord Palmerston, C. Villiers, S. Herbert. In the second, for small disfranchisement were, I think, all the first except Newcastle. For larger disfranchisement: Newcastle, Villiers, and Lord Palmerston, I think not greatly averse. In fact, I think that larger disfranchisement of places may have been favoured by him, 1. as a substitute for enlargement of the franchise, which he chiefly dreads; 2. as perhaps an obstacle to the framing of a measure.

6. In church matters Herbert, Newcastle, and I are the most conservative and the most church-like; with a sympathy from Argyll. But, as I said, there is no struggle here: patronage, the sore subject, not being a cabinet affair.

Session Of 1860

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Extract from a Letter to the Duke of Argyll.

Penmaen., September 3, 1860.—The session has been one to make all of us thoughtful, and me perhaps most of all. It is indeed much before my mind, but my head has not ceased to whirl, so that I cannot get a clear view of what Seward would call my position. Two things I know, one is that it produced the greatest pleasures and the greatest pains I have ever known in politics; the other that 1 have had to take various decisions and perform acts that could neither be satisfactory to others, nor from the doubt attaching to one side or the other of the alternative, even to myself. To have been the occasion of the blow to the House of Commons, or as I call it the "gigantic innovation," will be a grief to me as long as I live; if by wildness and rashness I have been its cause, it will be a much greater grief. Of that I am not yet able to judge. On the whole when I think of the cabinet, [637] I always go back to Jacob and Esau fighting in their mother's womb; only here there have been many Jacobs and Esaus, by which I do not mean the sixteen members of the cabinet, but the many and very unhandy causes of division. Perhaps I should find it easiest in the work of confession to own my neighbour's faults, *i.e.* to dwell upon those strange sins of foreign policy which have happily for the most part been nipped in the bud almost *à l'unanimité* (yet with what exceptions!); but avoiding that task, I will make my own confession. I cannot justify the finance of the year as a whole.... As to the amount of the final demand [for the China war], what it really demonstrates is *one* among the follies and dangers of our high-handed policy, our want of control over proceedings at the other end of the world. But the weak point is the fortification plan; I do not now speak of its own merits or demerits, but I speak of it in relation to the budget.... It is a vile precedent to give away money by remission, and borrow to supply the void; and in the full and *chief* responsibility for having established this precedent I am involved, not by the budget of February but by the consent of July to the scheme which involved the borrowing. No doubt there are palliating circumstances; and

lastly the grievous difficulty of choice between mischievous [*illegible*] and mischievous resignation. Still I must say, it is in retrospect, as the people and parliament have a right to judge it, a bad and unworkmanlike business, and under a skilful analysis of it in the House of Commons (which there is no one opposite fit to make, except it be Northcote, who perhaps scruples it) I should wince. All these things and others more inward than these, make sore places in the mind; but on the other hand, that I may close with a gleam of sunshine like that which is now casting its shadow on my paper from Penmaenmawr after a rough morning, I am thankful in the highest degree to have had a share in resisting the alarmist mania of the day by means of the French treaty, to which, if we escape collision, I think the escape will have been mainly due; and likewise in one at least negative service to the great Italian cause, which is not Italian merely but European.

Mr. Pitt's War Finance

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Mr. Gladstone to Herbert Gladstone

March 10, 1876.—Mr. Pitt's position in the Revolutionary war was, I think, a false one. To keep out of that war demanded from the people of this country an extraordinary degree of self-control, and this degree of it they did not possess. The consequence of our going into it was to give an intensity and vitality to the struggle, which but for the tenacity of English character it would not have possessed. Mr. Pitt did not show the great genius in war
[638] which he possessed as a peace minister. Until the epoch of the Peninsula our military performances were small and poor, and the method of subsidy was unsatisfactory and ineffective. The effect of borrowing money in three per cents. was to load us with a very heavy capital of national debt. I think at one time we only

got £46, or some such amount, for the £100. It must, however, be taken into view that a perpetual annuity of £3, redeemable upon paying £100, brought *more* than 3/4 of what a perpetual annuity of £4, similarly redeemable, would have brought; or than 3/5 of what a £5 annuity, similarly redeemable, would have brought. It is not easy to strike the balance. Mr. Newmarch, a living economist of some authority, I believe, thinks Mr. Pitt was right. I do not think the case is so clear against him as to *detract* from his great reputation. But were I in the unhappy position of having to call for a large loan, I should be disposed to ask for the tender in more than one form, *e.g.*, to ask for a tender in three per cents, pure and simple, and an alternative in 4 or 5 per cents., with that rate of interest guaranteed for a certain number of years. Sir Robert Walpole had not to contend with like difficulties, and I think his administration should be compared with the *early years* of Pitt's, in which way of judging he would come off second, though a man of cool and sagacious judgment, while morally he stood low.

French Commercial Treaty. 1860

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Mr. Gladstone at Leeds, October 8, 1881:—

I, for my part, look with the deepest interest upon the share that I had in concluding—I will not say so much in concluding, but in conducting on this side of the water, and within the walls of parliament as well as in administration—the proceedings which led to the memorable French treaty of 1860. It is quite true that that treaty did not produce the whole of the benefits that some too sanguine anticipations may possibly have expected from it, that it did not produce a universal smash of protective duties, as I wish it had, throughout the civilised world. But it did something. It

enormously increased the trade between this country and France. It effectually checked and traversed in the year 1860 tendencies of a very different kind towards needless alarms and panics, and tendencies towards convulsions and confusion in Europe. There was no more powerful instrument for confining and controlling those wayward and angry spirits at that particular crisis, than the commercial treaty with France. It produced no inconsiderable effect for a number of years upon the legislation of various European countries, which tended less decisively than we could have desired, but still intelligibly and beneficially, in the direction of freedom of trade.

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Lord Aberdeen

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Mr. Gladstone to Sir Arthur Gordon (Lord Stanmore)

Downing Street, April 21, 1861.—MY DEAR ARTHUR,—When, within a few days after your father's death, I referred in conversation with you to one or two points in his character, it was from the impulse of the moment, and without any idea of making my words matter of record. Months have now passed since you asked me to put on paper the substance of what I said. The delay has been partly, perhaps mainly, owing to the pressure of other demands upon my time and thoughts. But it has also been due to this, that an instinct similar to that which made me speak, has made me shrink from writing. It is enough in conversation to give the most partial and hasty touches, provided they be not in the main untrue. Those same touches when clothed in a form of greater assumption have but a meagre and unsatisfactory appearance, and may do even positive injustice. Most of all in the

case of a character which was not only of rare quality, but which was so remarkable for the fineness of its lights and shadows. But you have a right to my recollections such as they are, and I will not withhold them.

I may first refer to the earliest occasion on which I saw him; for it illustrates a point not unimportant in his history. On an evening in the month of January 1835, during what is called the short government of Sir Robert Peel, I was sent for by Sir Robert Peel, and received from him the offer, which I accepted, of the under-secretaryship of the colonies. From him I went on to your father, who was then secretary of state in that department, and who was thus to be, in official home-talk, my master. Without any apprehension of hurting you, I may confess, that I went in fear and trembling. [*Then follows the passage already quoted in vol. i. p. 124.*] I was only, I think, for about ten weeks his under-secretary. But as some men hate those whom they have injured, so others love those whom they have obliged; and his friendship continued warm and unintermitting for the subsequent twenty-six years of his life.

Some of his many great qualities adorned him in common with several, or even with many, other contemporary statesmen: such as clearness of view, strength of the deliberative faculty, strong sense of duty, deep devotion to the crown, and the most thorough and uncompromising loyalty to his friends and colleagues. In this loyalty of intention many, I think, are not only praiseworthy but perfect. But the loyalty of intention was in him so assisted by other and distinctive qualities, as to give it a peculiar efficacy; and any one associated with Lord Aberdeen might always rest assured that he was safe in his hands. When our law did not allow prisoners the benefit of counsel, it was commonly said that the judge was counsel for the prisoner. Lord Aberdeen was always counsel for the absent. Doubtless he had pondered much [640] upon the law, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” It had entered profoundly into his being, and formed a large part of

it. He was strong in his self-respect, but his respect for others, not for this man or that but for other men as men, was much more conspicuous. Rarely indeed have I heard him utter a word censuring opponents, or concerning those who actually were or had been friends, that could have given pain. If and when it was done, it was done so to speak judicially, upon full and reluctant conviction and with visible regret.

If I have said that he had much in common with other distinguished men who were like him statesmen by profession, it has been by way of preface to what I have now to say; namely, that what has ever struck me in his character as a whole, was its distinctiveness. There were several mental virtues that he possessed in a degree very peculiar; there were, I think, one or two in which he stood almost alone. I am not in myself well qualified for handling a subject like this, and also my life has been too hurried to give me the most favourable opportunities. Still I must try to explain my meaning. I will name then the following characteristics, one and all of which were more prominent in him than in any public man I ever knew: mental calmness; the absence (if for want of better words I may describe it by a negative) of all egoism; the love of exact justice; a thorough tolerance of spirit; and last and most of all an entire absence of suspicion.

There was something very remarkable in the combination of these qualities, as well as in their separate possession. Most men who might be happy enough to have one half his love of justice, would be so tossed with storms of indignation at injustice as to lose the balance of their judgment. But he had or seemed to have all the benefits, all the ennobling force of strong emotion, with a complete exemption from its dangers. His mind seemed to move in an atmosphere of chartered tranquillity, which allowed him the view of every object, however blinding to others, in its true position and proportion.

It has always appeared to me that the love of justice is one of the rarest among all good qualities, I mean the love of it with

full and commanding strength. I should almost dare to say there are five generous men to one just man. The beauty of justice is the beauty of simple form; the beauty of generosity is heightened with colour and every accessory. The passions will often ally themselves with generosity, but they always tend to divert from justice. The man who strongly loves justice must love it for its own sake, and such a love makes of itself a character of a simple grandeur to which it is hard to find an equal.

Next to Lord Aberdeen, I think Sir Robert Peel was the most just of the just men I have had the happiness to know. During the years from 1841 to 1846, when they were respectively foreign secretary and prime minister, as I was at the board of trade for [641] much of the time, I had occasion to watch the two in the conduct of several negotiations that involved commercial interests, such as that on the Stade Dues and that on the project of a commercial treaty with Portugal. Now and then Sir Robert Peel would show some degree of unconscious regard to the mere flesh and blood, if I may so speak, of Englishmen; Lord Aberdeen was invariably for putting the most liberal construction upon both the conduct and the claims of the other negotiating state.

There is perhaps no position in this country, in which the love of justice that I have ascribed in such extraordinary measure to your father, can be so severely tested, as that very position of foreign minister, with which his name is so closely associated. Nowhere is a man so constantly and in such myriad forms tempted to partiality; nowhere can he do more for justice; but nowhere is it more clear that all human force is inadequate for its end. A nation is rarely just to other nations. Perhaps it is never truly just, though sometimes (like individuals) what may be called more than just. There can be no difficulty in any country, least of all this, in finding foreign ministers able and willing to assert the fair and reasonable claims of their countrymen with courage and with firmness. The difficulty is quite of another kind; it is to find the foreign minister, first, who will himself view those claims in

the dry light both of reason and of prudence; secondly, and a far harder task, who will have the courage to hazard, and if need be to sacrifice himself in keeping the mind of his countrymen down to such claims as are strictly fair and reasonable. Lord Aberdeen was most happy in being secretary of state for foreign affairs in the time and in the political company of two such men as the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel. He was also happy in the general prevalence of a spirit of great sobriety in the country, which was singularly free under the government of Sir Robert Peel, from the opposite but sometimes associated extremes of wantonness and fear. I am glad to think that his administration of his department earned a decided public approval. So just a man will, I think, rarely attain in that department to the same measure of popularity, while a less just man might easily obtain one far greater.

To fall short of perfect candour would deprive all I have said of the little value it can possess, as that little value is all summed up in its sincerity. On one subject to which my mind has been directed for the last twelve or fourteen years, I had the misfortune to differ from your father. I mean the state of Italy and its relation to Austria in particular. I will not pretend to say that his view of the case of Italy appeared to me to harmonize with his general mode of estimating human action and political affairs. It seemed to me as if, called in early youth to deal with a particular combination of questions which were truly gigantic, his mind had received from their weight and force at an impressible period, a fixed form in relation to them, while it ever remained open and elastic in a peculiar degree upon all others.
[642] But my mode of solution for what appeared to me an anomaly is immaterial. I thankfully record that the Italian question was almost the only one within my recollection, quite the only one of practical importance, on which during the twenty-six years I have named, I was unable to accept his judgment. I bear witness with yet greater pleasure that, when I returned from

Naples in 1851 deeply impressed with the horrible system that I had witnessed, his opinions on Italian politics did not prevent his readily undertaking to read the statement I had drawn, nor his using, when he had read it, more strong words on the subject, which came from lips like his with such peculiar force. As readily did he undertake to invoke the aid of the court of Vienna; to which, if I remember right, he transmitted the statement in manuscript.

Though I feel that I cannot by any effort do justice to what I have termed his finely-shaded character, I also feel that I might be drawn onwards to great length on the subject. I must resist the impulse, but I cannot stop without saying a word on the quality which I regard as beyond all others his own, I mean the absence from his nature of all tendency to suspicion. Those who have read his state papers, and have admired their penetrating force and comprehensive scope, will not misunderstand me when I say that he was, in this respect, a little child; not from defect of vision, but from thorough nobleness of nature.

I do not think it was by effort and self-command that he rid himself of suspicion. In the simple and strong aim of the man to be good himself, it belonged to the very strength and simplicity of that aim, that he should also think others good. I recollect, and I dare say you better recollect, one of his sayings: “I have a habit of believing people.” To some these words may not seem to import a peculiarity. But as descriptive of him they indicate what of all the points of his character seemed to me most peculiar. I have known one man as free from suspicions as was Lord Aberdeen, but he was not a politician. I am far from thinking statesmen, or politicians, less honourable than other men, quite the reverse; but the habit of their life renders them suspicious. The vicissitudes of politics, the changes of position, the changes of alliance, the sharp transitions from co-operation to antagonism, the inevitable contact with revolting displays of self-seeking and self-love; more than all these perhaps, the constant habit of forecasting

the future and shaping all its contingencies beforehand, which is eminently the merit and intellectual virtue of the politician, all these tend to make him, and commonly do make him, suspicious even of his best friend. This suspicion may be found to exist in conjunction with regard, with esteem, nay with affection. For it must be recollected that it is not usually a suspicion of moral delinquency, but at least as it dwells in the better and higher natures, of intellectual error only, in some of its numerous forms, or at most of speaking with a reserve that may be more or less or even wholly unconscious. None of these explanations are
[643] needed for Lord Aberdeen. He always took words in their direct and simple meaning, and assumed them to be the index of the mind; and its full index too, so that he did not speculate to learn what undiscovered residue might still remain in its dark places. This entire immunity from suspicion, which makes our minds in general like a haunted place, and the sense of the immunity that he conveyed to his friends in all his dealings with them, combined with the deep serenity of his mind, which ever seemed to beguile and allay by some kindly process of nature excitement in others, gave an indescribable charm to all intercourse with him in critical and difficult circumstances. Hence perhaps in great part, and not merely from his intellectual gifts, was derived the remarkable power he seemed to me to exercise in winning confidences without seeking to win them; and, on the whole, I believe that this quality, could we hold it as it was held in him, would save us from ten erroneous judgments for one into which it might lead. For the grand characteristic of suspicion after all, as of superstition, is to see things that are not.

I turn now to another point: Lord Aberdeen was not demonstrative; I do not suppose he could have been an actor; he was unstudied in speech; and it is of interest to inquire what it was that gave such extraordinary force and impressiveness to his language. He did not deal in antithesis. His sayings were not sharpened with gall. In short, one might go on disclaiming for

him all the accessories to which most men who are impressive owe their impressiveness. Yet I never knew any one who was so impressive in brief utterances conveying the sum of the matter....

History has also caught and will hold firmly and well the honoured name of your father. There was no tarnish upon his reputation more than upon his character. He will be remembered in connection with great passages of European policy not only as a man of singularly searching, large, and calm intelligence, but yet more as the just man, the man that used only true weights and measures, and ever held even the balance of his ordered mind. It is no reproach to other statesmen of this or other periods, to say that scarcely any of them have had a celebrity so entirely unaided by a transitory glare. But if this be so, it implies that while they for the most part must relatively lose, he must relatively and greatly gain. If they have had stage-lights and he has had none, it is the hour when those lights are extinguished that will for the first time do that justice as between them which he was too noble, too far aloft in the tone of his mind, to desire to anticipate. All the qualities and parts in which he was great were those that are the very foundation-stones of our being; as foundation-stones they are deep, and as being deep they are withdrawn from view; but time is their witness and their friend, and in the final distribution of posthumous fame Lord Aberdeen has nothing to forfeit, he has only to receive.

I see on perusing what I have written, that in the endeavour to set forth the virtues and great qualities of your father, I seem more or less to disparage other men, including even Sir Robert [644] Peel whom he so much esteemed and loved. I had no such intention, and it is the fault of my hand, not of my will. He would not have claimed, he would not have wished nor borne, that others should claim for him superiority, or even parity in all points with all his contemporaries. But there was a certain region of character which was, so to speak, all his own; and there other men do seem more or less dwarfed beside him. In

the combination of profound feeling with a calm of mind equally profound, of thorough penetration with the largest charity, of the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove, in the total suppression and exclusion of self from his reckonings and actions—in all this we may think him supreme, and yet have a broad array of good and noble qualities in which he may have shared variously with others. There are other secrets of his character and inner life into which I do not pretend to have penetrated. It always seemed to me that there was a treasure-house within him, which he kept closed against the eyes of men. He is gone. He has done well in his generation. May peace and light be with him, and may honour and blessing long attend his memory upon earth.—Believe me, my dear Arthur, affectionately yours, W. E. GLADSTONE.

Cabinet Of 1868-1874

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First lord of the treasury, W. E. Gladstone.
Lord chancellor, Lord Hatherly (Page Wood).
President of the council, Earl de Grey (created Marquis of Ripon, 1871).
Lord privy seal, Earl of Kimberley.
Chancellor of the exchequer, Robert Lowe.
Home secretary, Henry Austin Bruce.
Foreign secretary, Earl of Clarendon.
Colonial secretary, Earl Granville.
War secretary, Edward Cardwell.
First lord of the admiralty, H. C. E. Childers.
Indian secretary, Duke of Argyll.
President of the board of trade, John Bright.

Chief secretary for Ireland, Chichester Fortescue.
Postmaster general, Marquis of Hartington.
President of the poor law board, George J. Goschen.

On Lord Clarendon's death in June 1870, Lord Granville became foreign secretary; Lord Kimberley, colonial secretary; Viscount Halifax (Sir C. Wood), lord privy seal; and Mr. Forster, vice-president of the privy council, entered the cabinet.

On Mr. Bright's resignation in December 1870, Mr. Chichester Fortescue became president of the board of trade; Lord Hartington succeeded him as chief secretary for Ireland; Mr. Monsell was appointed postmaster general without a seat in the cabinet. [645]

On Mr. Childers's resignation in March 1871, Mr. Goschen became first lord of the admiralty, and Mr. James Stansfeld president of the poor law board.

In August 1872 Mr. Childers rejoined the cabinet, succeeding Lord Dufferin as chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster. In October Sir Roundell Palmer (created Lord Selborne) became lord chancellor on the retirement of Lord Hatherley.

In August 1873 Lord Ripon and Mr. Childers retired, Mr. Gladstone became chancellor of the exchequer as well as first lord; Mr. Bright rejoined the cabinet as chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster; Mr. Lowe became home secretary and Mr. Bruce (created Lord Aberdare) president of the council.

Irish Church Bill

Page 276

Mr. Gladstone to the Queen

July 21, 1869.—Mr. Gladstone presents his humble duty to your Majesty and reports that the cabinet met at 11 this day, and considered with anxious care its position and duty in regard

to the Irish Church bill. The vote and declaration of the House of Lords last night were regarded as fatal if persisted in; and the cabinet deemed it impossible to meet proceedings of such a character with any tender of further concessions. The cabinet, however, considered at much length a variety of courses; as (1) To announce at once that they could no longer, after the vote and announcement of last night, be responsible for further proceedings in connection with the bill, but that they would leave it to the majority of the House of Lords to take such steps as it might think proper; (2) To go through the whole of the amendments of the bill [*i.e.* in the House of Lords], and then if they were adversely carried to declare and proceed as above; (3) To go through not the whole of the amendments but the endowment amendments, and to conclude that when these had been adversely decided, they could (as before) assume no further responsibility, but must leave the matter to the majority to consider; (4) To send the bill back to the House of Commons with the declaration that it would not be accepted there, and with the intention of simply moving the House to adhere to its amendments as last adjusted.

Your Majesty has already been apprized by Mr. Gladstone's telegram in cipher of this afternoon, that (under the influence of a strong desire to exhibit patience, and to leave open every opportunity for reconsideration), the third of these courses had been adopted; although there was no doubt that the House of Commons was fully prepared to approve and sustain the first. Lord Granville deemed it just possible that the peers might be prepared to give way before another return of the bill from the House of Commons; and the question therefore was left open whether, if evidence to this effect should appear, the government
[646] should then fall in with that course of proceeding. Although the government have felt it to be impossible to make biddings in the face of the opposition, the Archbishop of Canterbury has been apprised, in strict confidence, of the nature and extent of the

concession, which for the sake of peace they would be prepared to recommend. Sir R. Palmer is also substantially aware of it, and has expressed his opinion that on such terms the opposition ought to be ready to conclude the matter.

Board And Voluntary Schools

Page 310

Mr. Gladstone to M. Bright

Aug. 21, 1873.—An appeal to me was made to introduce board schools into Hawarden on account of my share in the Education Act. I stated the two views held by different supporters of the Act, respectively on the question of board schools and voluntary schools. For myself, I said, not in education only but *in all things including education, I prefer voluntary to legal machinery, when the thing can be well done either way*. But this question is not to be decided by a general preference or a general formula. Parliament has referred it to the choice of the local communities. They should decide according to the facts of the case before them. What are the facts in Hawarden? Four-fifths are already provided for; were it only one-fifth or were it two-fifths the case for the board (I said) would be overwhelming. But besides the four-fifths, arrangements are already made for a further provision in a voluntary school. Nothing remains to be done except to build three *infant* schools. The voluntary schools will be governed by a committee, including the churchwardens, and having a majority of laymen. The machinery of a board is of necessity cumbrous, and the method costly in comparison. I hold that we ought not to set up this machinery, in order to create three infant schools, where all the other wants of some 2000 people are already provided for.

Views On A Classical Education

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Mr. Gladstone to Lord Lyttelton

Penmaenmawr, Aug. 29, 1861.—-Thanks for the brief notice which you recently took of the Public Schools Commission. I was heartily glad to hear that you had formed a drastic set of questions. I take the deepest interest in the object of the commission, and I have full confidence in its members and organs; and at all times I shall be very glad to hear what you are doing. Meantime I cannot help giving you, to be taken for what it is worth, the sum of my own thoughts upon the subject.... The *low* utilitarian argument in matter of education, for giving it what is termed a practical direction, is so plausible that I
[647] think we may on the whole be thankful that the instincts of the country have resisted what in argument it has been ill able to confute. We still hold by the classical training as the basis of a liberal education; parents dispose of their children in early youth accordingly; but if they were asked why they did so, it is probable they would give lamentably weak or unworthy reasons for it, such for example as that the public schools and universities open the way to desirable acquaintance and what is termed "good society." Your commission will not I presume be able to pass by this question, but will have to look it in the face; and to proceed either upon a distinct affirmative, or a substantial negative, of the proposition that the classical training is the proper basis of a liberal education. I hope you will hold by affirmation and reject negation.

But the reason why I trouble you upon the subject is this, that I think the friends of this principle have usually rather blinked the discussion, and have been content with making terms of compromise by way of buying off the adversary, which might be in themselves reasonable unless they were taken as mere instalments of a transaction intended in the long run to swallow

up the principle itself. What I feel is that the relation of pure science, natural science, modern languages, modern history, and the rest of the old classical training ought to be founded on a principle and ought not to be treated simply as importunate creditors, that take a shilling in the £ to-day, because they hope to get another shilling to-morrow, and in the meantime have a recognition of their title. This recognition of title is just what I would refuse. I deny their right to a parallel or equal position; their true position is auxiliary, and as auxiliary it ought to be limited and restrained without scruple, as a regard to the paramount matter of education may dictate.

But why after all is the classical training paramount? Is it because we find it established? because it improves memory or taste, or gives precision, or develops the faculty of speech? All these are but partial and fragmentary statements, so many narrow glimpses of a great and comprehensive truth. That truth I take to be that the modern European civilisation from the middle age downwards is the compound of two great factors, the Christian religion for the spirit of man, and the Greek, and in a secondary degree the Roman discipline for his mind and intellect. St. Paul is the apostle of the Gentiles, and is in his own person a symbol of this great wedding—the place, for example, of Aristotle and Plato in Christian education is not arbitrary nor in principle mutable. The materials of what we call classical training were prepared, and we have a right to say were advisedly prepared, in order that it might become not a mere adjunct but (in mathematical phrase) the complement of Christianity in its application to the culture of the human being formed both for this world and for the world to come.

If this principle be true it is broad and high and clear enough, and supplies a key to all questions connected with the relation [648] between the classical training of our youth and all other branches of their secular education. It must of course be kept within its proper place, and duly limited as to things and persons. It can

only apply in full to that small proportion of the youth of any country, who are to become in the fullest sense educated men. It involves no extravagant or inconvenient assumptions respecting those who are to be educated for trades and professions in which the necessities of specific training must limit general culture. It leaves open every question turning upon individual aptitudes and inaptitudes and by no means requires that boys without a capacity for imbibing any of the spirit of classical culture are still to be mechanically plied with the instruments of it after their unfitness has become manifest. But it lays down the rule of education for those who have no internal and no external disqualification; and that rule, becoming a fixed and central point in the system, becomes also the point around which all others may be grouped.

Mr. Gladstone to Sir S. Northcote

Nov. 12, 1861.—The letter I wrote to Lyttelton about the classical education suggested topics, which as you justly perceive are altogether esoteric. They have never to my knowledge been carefully worked out, and I think they well deserve it; but clearly your report is not the place. I will not say you are not prudent in suggesting that you should not even give an opinion upon the great question: What is the true place of the old classical learning in the human culture of the nineteenth century? I am far from venturing to say the contrary. But one thing I do think, namely, that it is desirable that, as far as may be, the members of the commission should have some answer to that question in their minds, and should write their report with reference to it. For centuries, through the lifetime of our great schools this classical culture has been made the *lapis angularis* of all secular culture of the highest class. Was this right or was it wrong, aye or no? I think it much to be desired that the commission should, if they will, proceed upon the affirmative or negative of that proposition, and should also make their choice for the former. This would be a long note to their report; but it need not be distinctly and separately heard in it. Such is my notion.

As to particulars I have little to say that is worth hearing; but I think these three things. First, that we give much too little scope for deviation from what I think the normal standard to other and useful branches, when it has become evident that the normal standard is inapplicable; just as was the case in Oxford before the reform of the examinations, or let me rather say the new statutes. Secondly, I am extremely jealous of any invasion of modern languages which is to displace classical culture, or any portion of it in minds capable of following that walk. (I take it that among the usual modern tongues Italian has by far the greatest capacity for strict study and scholarship; whereas it is the one least in [649] favour and the whole method of dealing with them is quite alien to strict study.) Lastly, I confess I grieve over the ignorance of natural history which I feel in myself and believe to exist in others. At some time, in some way, much more of all this ought to be brought in, but clearly it would serve in a great degree as recreation, and need not thrust aside whatever hard work boys are capable of doing.

Position Of The Commander-In-Chief In Parliament

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Mr. Gladstone to the Queen

July 8, 1871.—Mr. Gladstone believes that according to precedent the commander-in-chief, when a peer, has not shrunk from giving his opinion on measures submitted to the House of Lords. In 1847, the government of that day introduced the Short Service bill, of which on the merits it is believed that the Duke of Wellington, then commander-in-chief, did not approve. Indeed he expressed in debate on April 26th, 1847, his doubts whether the

measure would produce the advantages which were anticipated from it; nevertheless, while having no political connection with the government, he spoke and voted in a division for the bill. It is probable, as the numbers were only 108 to 94, that his speech and vote alone carried the bill. Your Majesty will not fail to bear in mind that until 1855, there was always a very high military authority who was in political connection with the government, namely, the master of the ordnance. Indeed, unless Mr. Gladstone's recollection deceives him, Lord Beresford was required by the Duke of Wellington in 1829, as master of the ordnance, to support the Roman Catholic Relief bill. And it is still regretted by many that ministries have not since comprehended any such officer. All question, however, as to the political support of a ministry by the military chiefs of the army is now at an end.

A Soldier At The War Office

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Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Cardwell

Jan. 5, 1871.—It was a great advantage before 1854, that there was always a considerable soldier either in the cabinet or at least at the head of an important military department, and politically associated with the government. This we lost by the crude and ill-advised reconstructions of '55. But you, following in this point a wise initiative of your predecessor, have endeavoured to bring the appointment of Sir H. Storks into a position which makes it probably the best substitute for the former plan that can be had at present. The demand that a soldier shall be appointed
[650] at the present time would hold good *a fortiori* for all periods of greater emergency. I know not where that principle has been admitted in our military administration. If we have committed gross errors, it has been owing to an excess much more than to

a defect of professional influence and counsel. In my opinion the qualities of a good administrator and statesman go to make a good war minister, especially at this juncture, far more than those of a good soldier. Show me the soldier who has those equally with you, and then let him take your place as S.S. But not till then. You were chosen for your office, not because you would do tolerably for easy times, and then could walk out, but because you were the best man the party could supply for the post. The reproaches aimed at you now are merely aimed at the government through you, and you are chosen to be the point of attack because the nation is sore on military matters in times of crisis, and the press which ought to check excitement, by most of its instruments ministers to its increase. You find yourself unable to suggest a successor; and I have seen no plan that would not weaken the government instead of strengthening it. You see what eulogies have been passed on Bright, now he is gone. You would rise in the market with many after resigning, to depreciate those who remain behind; but as I have said, you would not be allowed to have had a legitimate cause of going, and as far as my observation goes, retirements are quite as critically judged as acceptances of office, perhaps more so. What is really to be desired, is that we should get Storks into parliament if possible.

Mr. Gladstone's Financial Legacy, 1869

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Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Lowe

Hawarden, Jan. 9, 1869.—I have referred to my list of remnants; and I will begin with those that I tried in parliament and failed in: 1. Collection of taxes by Queen's officers instead of local officers. 2. Taxation of charities. 3. Bill for restraining, with a view to ultimately abolishing, the circulation of the notes

of private banks. 4. Plan for bringing the chancery and other judicial accounts under the control of parliament. Here I had a commission (on chancery accounts) but did not dare to go farther.

The following are subjects which I was not able to take in hand:—

1. Abolition of the remaining duty upon corn; an exceeding strong case. 2. I should be much disposed to abolish the tea licences as greatly restrictive of the consumption of a dutiable and useful commodity. I modified them; but am not sure that this was enough. The B.I.R. could throw light on this subject. 3. The probate duty calls, I fear, loudly for change; but I wanted [651] either time or courage to take it in hand. 4. The remaining conveyance duties, apart from railways, I always considered as marked for extinction. On this subject Mr. Ayrton has rather decided antecedents. 5. The fire insurance duty is sure to be further assailed. Though not as bad (relatively to other taxes) as is supposed, it is bad enough to be very hard to defend in an adverse House; and this is one of the questions on which it is not likely that the opposition will help to see fair play. The promises that liberal reduction will lead to recovery of anything like the old or previous revenue have always been confidently pressed by irresponsible men, and are in my opinion illusory. The tax is a tax on property: and, as we have too few of these rather than too many, what would seem desirable is to commute it; leaving no more than a penny stamp on the policy. This might perhaps be done, if it were made part of a large budget. 6. The income-tax at 6d., I suppose, presents a forward claim. 7. The commutation of malt duty for beer duty must always, I presume, be spoken of with respect; but the working objections to it have thus far been found too hard to deal with.

There is always room in detail for amendments of stamp duties, but the great case as among them is the probate. They are of a class which, without any legal knowledge, I found very hard to work through the House of Commons. I do not look upon

the Act of 1844 as the *end* of legislation in currency; but this subject is a big one. Scotch and Irish notes would be hard to deal with until the English case is disposed of. I forget whether we have abolished the last of the restrictions on newspapers. If not, they deserve to be taken in hand, according to me. I have always wished to equalise the outgoings of the exchequer as much as possible over the several weeks of the year. Few incomes admit of this advantage in the same degree as the public income. It would make our "account" much more valuable to our bankers; therefore to us.

These, I think, were the main matters which lay more or less in perspective before me. I must add that I am strongly in favour of paying off the national debt, not only by annual surpluses, but by terminable annuities *sold to the national debt commissioners for securities held by them against deposit monies*. The opponents of this plan were Mr. Hubbard and Mr. Laing. I am satisfied that neither of them had taken the trouble, and it requires some trouble, to understand it. I admit them to be no mean authorities. Terminable annuities sold to others than yourself are quite another matter. I got into the law some power of this kind over post office savings bank monies to be exercised by the chancellor of the exchequer from time to time.

This is all I need trouble you with, and I have endeavoured to keep clear of all idiosyncratic propositions as much as in me lies. Of course such a letter calls for no answer. As this legacy opinion to you takes the form of a donation *inter vivos* it will, I hope, escape duty.

[652]

Prince Albert, 1854

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Mr. Gladstone wrote an elaborate article in the *Morning Chronicle* (Jan. 16, 1854) warmly defending the court against attacks that had clouded the popularity of the Prince Consort. They came to little more than that the Prince attended meetings of the privy council; that he was present when the Queen gave an audience to a minister; that he thwarted ministerial counsels and gave them an un-English character; that in corresponding with relatives abroad he used English influence apart from the Queen's advisers. Mr. Gladstone had no great difficulty in showing how little this was worth, either as fact supported by evidence, or as principle supported by the fitness of things; and he put himself on the right ground. “We do not raise the question whether, if the minister thinks it right to communicate with the sovereign alone, he is not entitled to a private audience. But we unhesitatingly assert that if the Prince is present when the Queen confers with her advisers, and if his presence is found to be disadvantageous to the public interests, we are not left without a remedy; for the minister is as distinctly responsible for those interests in this as in any other matter, and he is bound on his responsibility to parliament, to decline compliance even with a personal wish of the sovereign when he believes that his assent would be injurious to the country.”

Parliamentary Crises

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Extract from Mr. Gladstone's letter to the Queen, March 15, 1873

There have been within that period [1830-1873] twelve of what may be properly called parliamentary crises involving the question of a change of government. In nine of the twelve

cases (viz., those of 1830, 1835, 1841, 1846, 1852, 1858, 1859, 1866, and 1868), the party which had been in opposition was ready to take, and did take, office. In the other three it failed to do this (viz., in 1832, 1851, 1855), and the old ministry or a modification of it returned to power. But in each of these three cases the attempt of the opposition to form a government was not relinquished until after such efforts had been made by its leaders to carry the conviction to the world that all its available means of action were exhausted; and there is no instance on record during the whole period (or indeed so far as Mr. Gladstone remembers at an earlier date) in which a summary refusal given on the instant by the leader was tendered as sufficient to release the opposition from the obligations it had incurred. This is the more remarkable because in two of the three instances the opposition had not, in the same mode or degree as on Wednesday morning last, contributed by concerted action to bring about the crisis. On the 7th of May 1832 the opposition of the day carried in the House of Lords a motion which went only to alter the order of [653] the opening (and doubtless very important) clauses of the Reform bill, but which the government of Lord Grey deemed fatal to the integrity of the measure. Their resignation was announced, and Lord Lyndhurst was summoned to advise King William iv. on the 9th of May. On the 12th the Duke of Wellington was called to take a share in the proceedings, the details of which are matters of history. It was only on the 15th that the Duke and Lord Lyndhurst found their resources at an end, when Lord Grey was again sent for, and on the 17th the Duke announced in the House of Lords his abandonment of the task he had strenuously endeavoured to fulfil. On the 20th February 1851 the government of Lord Russell was defeated in the House of Commons on Mr. Locke King's bill for the enlargement of the county franchise by a majority composed of its own supporters. Lord Derby, then Lord Stanley, being sent for by your Majesty on the 22nd, observed that there were at the time three parties in the House

of Commons and that the ministry had never yet been defeated by his political friends. He therefore counselled your Majesty to ascertain whether the government of Lord Russell could not be strengthened by a partial reconstruction, and failing that measure he engaged to use his own best efforts to form an administration. That attempt at reconstruction (to which nothing similar is now in question) did fail, and Lord Derby was therefore summoned by your Majesty on the 25th, and at once applied himself, as is well known, to every measure which seemed to give him a hope of success in constructing a government. On the 27th he apprised your Majesty of his failure in these efforts; and on March 3rd the cabinet of Lord Russell returned to office. (This recital is founded on Lord Derby's statement in the House of Lords, Feb. 28, 1851.) On Jan. 29, 1855, the government of Lord Aberdeen was defeated in the House of Commons on a motion made by an independent member of their own party and supported by twenty-five of the liberal members present. Though this defeat resembles the one last named in that it cannot be said to be due to the concerted action of the opposition as a party, Lord Derby, being summoned by your Majesty on the 1st of Feb. proceeded to examine and ascertain in every quarter the means likely to be at his disposal for rendering assistance in the exigency, and it was not until Feb. 3 that he receded from his endeavours.

Cabinet Of 1880-1885

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First lord of the treasury, chancellor of the exchequer, W. E. Gladstone.
Lord chancellor, Lord Selborne.
President of the council, Earl Spencer.
Lord privy seal, Duke of Argyll.
Home secretary, Sir W. V. Harcourt.
Foreign secretary, Earl Granville. [654]
Colonial secretary, Earl of Kimberley.
War secretary, H. C. E. Childers.
First lord of the admiralty, Earl of Northbrook.
Indian secretary, Marquis of Hartington.
President of the board of trade, Joseph Chamberlain.
Chief secretary for Ireland, W. E. Forster.
Chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster, John Bright.
President of the local government board, J. G. Dodson.

On the resignation of the Duke of Argyll, April 1881, Lord Carlingford (Mr. Chichester Fortescue) became lord privy seal.

In May 1882, Earl Spencer became lord-lieutenant of Ireland. On Mr. Forster's resignation he was succeeded by Lord Frederick Cavendish, and then by Mr. G. O. Trevelyan, neither of whom had a seat in the cabinet.

On the resignation of Mr. Bright in July 1882, Mr. Dodson became chancellor of the duchy, and Sir Charles Dilke president of the local government board.

In December 1882, Mr. Gladstone resigned the chancellorship of the exchequer to Mr. Childers; Lord Hartington became war secretary; Lord Kimberley, Indian secretary, and Lord Derby colonial secretary.

In March 1883, Lord Carlingford succeeded Earl Spencer as president of the council.

In October 1884, Mr. Trevelyan succeeded Mr. Dodson as chancellor of the duchy (with the cabinet), Mr. Campbell-Bannerman becoming Irish secretary without a seat in the cabinet.

In February 1885, Lord Rosebery, first commissioner of works, succeeded Lord Carlingford as lord privy seal (with the cabinet) [Lord Carlingford had also been president of the council from March 1883 in succession to Lord Spencer], and Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, postmaster-general, entered the cabinet.

[655]

Chronology

All speeches unless otherwise stated were made in the House of Commons.

1860.

Jan. 25. Defends good understanding with France.

Feb. 10. Introduces budget.

Feb. 20. Replies to criticisms on commercial treaty.

Feb. 24. Defends his financial proposals.

Feb. 27. Defends proposed reduction of duty on foreign wines.

March 5. Explains objects of Savings Banks bill.

March 9. Defends commercial treaty.

March 12. On Paper Duty Repeal bill.

March 26. On Refreshment Houses and Wine Licences bill.

April 16. Inaugural address before University of Edinburgh on the Work of Universities.

May 3. In support of Representation of the People bill.

May 8. On Paper Duty Repeal bill.

July 5 and 17. Protests against interference of House of Lords with supply bills.

Aug. 6. Defends reduction of Customs Duty on paper.

Nov. 8. At Chester on the volunteer movement.

1861.

Feb. 8. Explains provisions of Post Office Savings Bank bill.

Feb. 19. Opposes inquiry into income-tax.

Feb. 21. Introduces Bank of England Payments bill.

Feb. 27. Opposes bill for abolishing church rates.

March 4. Explains provisions of Consolidated Fund and Exchequer Bills Act.

March 7. Defends the government's Italian policy.

March 14. On Chinese war expenditure.

April 15. Introduces budget.

April 29. Replies to criticisms on financial proposals.

May 2. Moves continuance of tea and sugar duties.

May 6. Announces decision to embody all financial proposals in a single bill.

May 7. Defends his acts as lord high commissioner of Ionian Islands.

May 16 and 30. On second reading of Customs and Inland Revenue bill.

July 12. Opposes third reading of Universities Elections bill.

July 19. On misgovernment of Italy.

Oct. 10. At Liverpool on the Pursuit of Science.

Nov. 27. At Willis's Room, London, on the Christian aspect of education.

Publishes *Translations by Lord Lyttelton and the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone*.

1862.

Jan. 11. At Edinburgh on American Civil War and results of French treaty.

April 3. Introduces budget.

April 7. Replies to criticisms on budget.

April 10. Defends proposed brewers' licences.

April 11. Defends government's Italian policy.

April 23. At Manchester on value of competitive examinations
[656] and the death of Prince Albert.

April 24. At Manchester condemns extravagance in public expenditure.

May 8. Replies to criticisms of Sir S. Northcote on his financial proposals.

May 13. Defends principles on which income-tax is levied.

May 16. In favour of economy.

June 16. At Archbishop Tenison's grammar school on middle class education.

July 26. Pays tribute to Sir Hugh Myddelton at inauguration of his statue on Islington Green.

Aug. 1. Opposes Night Poaching Prevention bill.

Sept. 24. On agriculture at Mold.

Oct. 7. At Newcastle-on-Tyne on the American Civil War and French treaty.

Oct. 8. Makes a tour of inspection of the Tyne.

Oct. 9. At Sunderland on government's foreign policy.

At Middlesborough on commercial and social progress.

Oct. 10. At York on America and Italy.

Oct. 22. At Wrexham on minor railways.

Dec. 27. At Chester on distress in Lancashire.

1863.

Jan. 5. At Hawarden on his visit to Sicily, 1838.

Feb. 13. Explains provisions of Post Office Savings Bank bill.

March 4. Supports Qualification for Office Abolition bill.

April 15. Supports Burials bill.

April 16. Introduces budget.

April 23. Opposes levying income-tax on precarious incomes at a lower scale than on permanent.

May 4. Receives deputation protesting against income-tax on charity trust funds. Defends the proposal in debate.

May 8. Defends government's Italian policy.

May 12. On condition of Ionian Islands.

May 29. On Turkey and her dependencies.

June 9. On relaxation of the Act of Uniformity.

June 12. On the condition of Ireland.

June 30. Opposes recognition of the Southern Confederacy.

July 20. On condition of Poland.

July 24. On petition for abolition of tests at Oxford.

Oct. 26. Lays foundation stone of Wedgwood Memorial Institute at Burslem.

1864.

Jan. 4. At Buckley on thrift.

Feb. 4. On Schleswig-Holstein question.

Feb. 8. On his bill for regulating collection of taxes.

Feb. 11. Introduces Bank Act (Scotland) bill.

Feb. 26. On taxation of Ireland.

March 7. Defends provisions of Government Annuity bill.

March 16. Receives deputation of London Trades Council on Annuity bill.

March 16. In support of bill abolishing tests for degrees at Oxford.

March 18. On cession of Ionian Islands to Greece.

April 7. Introduces budget.

April 21. On departure of General Garibaldi from England.

May 6. On English public school education.

May 10. On direct and indirect taxation.

May 11. On Mr. Baines's bill for the extension of the suffrage in towns.

July 3. On the Roman question.

July 4. Replies to Mr. Disraeli's resolution of censure on Schleswig-Holstein.

Oct. 11. At Bolton on progress of the past thirty years.

Oct. 12. Opens Farnworth Park, Bolton: on the factory system and open spaces. At town hall, Liverpool, on principles of colonial and foreign policy.

[657] Oct. 13. At Liverpool on direct and indirect taxation.

Oct. 14. At Manchester appeals to the nation to protest against extravagant expenditure. Distributes prizes at Manchester to competitors in Oxford middle-class examinations: on older and newer pursuits of Christian civilisation.

Nov. 7. Closes the North London Industrial Exhibition.

Nov. 8. In praise of law and lawyers at banquet to M. Berryer.

Nov. 10. Commends volunteer movement at dinner of volunteers of the St. Martin's division.

Dec. 30. At Mold on our coal resources.

1865.

Feb. 10. Explains provisions of Bank of Issue bill.

Feb. 14. Announces appointment of commission on railways.

Feb. 24. On state of Ireland.

March 28. On Irish church establishment.

April 7. On Irish railway system.

April 27. Introduces budget.

May 31. At Chester on liberal principles and parliamentary reform.

June 14. Opposes Mr. Goschen's bill for abolition of tests at Oxford.

June 15. Explains provisions of Exchequer and Public Audit bill.

June 20. On Irish university education.

July 18. Defeated at Oxford university,—Sir William Heathcote, 3236; Mr. Gathorne Hardy, 1904; Mr. Gladstone, 1724. At free trade hall, Manchester. In the evening, at St. George's hall, Liverpool, replies to Mr. Disraeli's attack on his finance.

July 22. Elected for South Lancashire,—Egerton, 9171; Turner, 8806; Gladstone, 8786; Legh, 8476; Thompson, 7703; Heywood, 7653.

July 27 to Aug. 7. Correspondence with Lord Malmesbury on responsibility for Chinese expedition of 1860.

Oct. 18. Tribute to memory of the Duke of Newcastle at Shire Oaks, Notts.

Nov. 1. Presented with address by Parliamentary Reform Union, in trades hall, Glasgow. Presented with freedom of the city in city hall: on increase of commerce and decrease of wars. In Scotia hall on results of free trade, a cheap press, and social legislation.

Nov. 3. Delivers valedictory address before Edinburgh University on 'The Place of Ancient Greece in the Providential Order of the World.'

1866.

Feb. 8. On the condition of Ireland.

Feb. 9. Introduces bill to consolidate the duties of exchequer and audit departments.

Feb. 17. Defends suspension of Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland.

Feb. 22. Tribute to memory of Lord Palmerston.

Feb. 23. On Fenianism in America.

Feb. 26. On economy in public expenditure.

March 2. Brings in bill consolidating laws regulating the preparation, issue, and payment of exchequer bills.

March 7. Suggests compromise for settling church rate question.

March 12. Explains provisions of Representation of the People bill.

April 5. At Liverpool replies to Mr. Lowe's criticisms of the Reform bill.

April 6. On reform at the Amphitheatre, Liverpool.

April 12. Moves second reading of Reform bill.

April 27. Closes debate on Earl Grosvenor's amendment to Reform bill.

[658] May 3. Introduces budget.

May 7. Brings in Redistribution of Seats bill.

May 8. Brings in Compulsory Church Rate Abolition bill.

May 24. Explains provisions of Terminable Annuities bill.

June 11. On the state of Europe; Austro-Prussian question, etc.

June 15. Tribute to Mr. Hume.

June 18. Moves second reading of Church Rates bill.

June 18. Opposes Lord Dunkellin's amendment substituting rateable for rental for borough franchise.

June 26. Announces resignation of Lord Russell's government.

July 16. On the Queen's Universities, Ireland.

July 20. On the state of Europe and the Italian policy of Lord Palmerston's government.

July 21. At inaugural meeting of Cobden Club; tribute to work of Mr. Cobden.

Aug. 2. Supports renewal of Habeas Corpus Suspension Act.

Sept. 7. At Salisbury in defence of Reform bill and on Lord Herbert.

Oct. to Jan. In Rome.

1867.

Jan. 27. Speech in praise of free trade at dinner of Society of Political Economy, Paris.

Feb. 5. On the question of reform.

Feb. 11. On the government's intention of proceeding by way of resolutions.

Feb. 15. On the condition of Crete.

Feb. 27. Supports bill enabling Roman catholics to hold office of lord lieutenant of Ireland.

March 18. Criticises provisions of the Reform bill.

March 20. On Church Rates Abolition bill.

March 21. Meeting of 278 liberal members; advises agreement to second reading of Reform bill.

March 21. On bill to repeal the Ecclesiastical Titles Act.

March 25. Criticises Reform bill on second reading.

March 28. On England's share in the defence of the colonies.

April 4. On Mr. Disraeli's financial statement.

April 10. On abolition of religious tests at Oxford.

April 11, 12. Moves amendment making personal payment of rates not an essential qualification for the franchise.

April 18. Letter to Mr. R. W. Crawford announcing intention not to attempt further alteration in basis of borough franchise.

May 3. On right of public meeting in parks and open spaces.

May 7. On Irish church establishment.

May 9. On “compound householders.”

May 11. Receives deputation from National Reform Union to express confidence in his leadership.

May 13. On Scotch Reform bill.

May 16. Defends policy of reduction of national debt.

May 28. On inconsistency of the government on reform.

May 29. On Mr. Fawcett's Uniformity Act Amendment bill.

May 30. On penalties for corrupt practices at elections.

May 31. On late ministry's action regarding Queen's Universities, Ireland.

June 28. On representation of Ireland.

July 10. On Mr. H. A. Bruce's Education bill.

Aug. 1. On Irish railways.

Aug. 8. Opposes Lords' minority representation amendment to Reform bill.

Oct. “The Session and its Sequel” in *Edinburgh Review*.

Nov. 10. On Abyssinian campaign, protests against territorial aggrandisement.

[659] Nov. 26. On Abyssinian expedition.

Nov. 28. On financial proposals to meet expenses of Abyssinian war.

Dec. 18. At Oldham on national prosperity and the condition of Ireland. Opens Mechanics' Institute at Werneth: on education. Distributes prizes to science and art students, Oldham: on education, machinery, and foreign competition.

Dec. 19. At Ormskirk on Reform bill. At Southport on Fenianism and the condition of Ireland.

1868.

Jan. “Phœnicia and Greece” in *Quarterly*.

Feb. 3. At Hawarden on Sir Walter Scott.

Feb. 18. To deputation from London Trades Unions on labour questions.

March 6. On *Alabama* claims.

March 16. Declares for disestablishment of Irish church.

March 19. On Compulsory Church Rates Abolition bill.

March 23. Gives notice of three resolutions on Irish church establishment.

March 30. In support of his resolutions.

April 3. Replies to Mr. Disraeli's criticisms.

April 30. Replies to criticisms of first resolution.

May 4. Protests against intention to dissolve parliament.

May 7. Moves second and third resolutions on Irish church.

May 22. On Suspensory bill.

June 9, July 26. On proposal to purchase the telegraph system.

June 25. Replies to Mr. Disraeli's attack on foreign policy of Lord Russell's ministry.

July 2. Seconds vote of thanks to army on conclusion of Abyssinian war.

July 4. Presides at meeting of Social Science Association: on relations of capital and labour.

July 22. At Romsey on England's duty to Ireland.

July 27. Tribute to memory of Lord Brougham.

Aug. 5. At St. Helens on disestablishment of Irish church.

Oct. 9. Issues election address to S.-W. Lancashire.

Oct. 12. At Warrington on retrenchment of public expenditure and the Irish church.

Oct. 14. At Liverpool on tory Reform bill and Irish church.

Oct. 16. At Old Swan, Liverpool, on conservative party as party of monopoly.

Oct. 17. At Newton criticises proposals for reforming Irish church.

Oct. 20. At Leigh on retrenchment and Ireland.

Oct. 21. At Ormskirk on English and Irish church establishments. At Southport on finance and Ireland.

Oct. 23. At Wigan on Irish church.

Nov. 13. At Bootle replies to personal calumnies, and on ritualism.

Nov. 14. At Garston on condition of conservative party. At Wavertree on Irish church.

Nov. 16. At Widnes on national expenditure. At St. Helens on Ireland.

Nov. 17. Elected for Greenwich,—Salomons, 6645; Gladstone, 6351; Parker, 4661; Mahon, 4342.

Nov. 18. At Preston on Irish church.

Nov. 23. *A Chapter of Autobiography* published.

Nov. 24. Defeated in S.-W. Lancashire,—Cross, 7729; Turner, 7676; Gladstone, 7415; Grenfell, 6939.

Dec. 9. First ministry formed.

Dec. 21. Returned unopposed for Greenwich: on the liberal programme.

Articles on *Ecce Homo* published volume form.

1869.

Feb. 11. At Fishmongers' hall on work before liberal
[660] government.

March 1. Introduces bill for disestablishment of Irish church.

March 23. Closes debate on second reading of Irish Church bill.

April 15. Replies to criticisms of Irish Church bill.

May 31. On third reading of Irish Church bill.

June 29. Defends change of opinion on university tests.

July 15, 16. Moves rejection of Lords' amendments to Irish Church bill.

July 20. Supports Mr. Chambers's Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister bill.

July 23. Moves to agree to final amendments of Lords.

Aug. 5. Explains Bishops' Resignation bill.

Publishes *Juventus Mundi, The Gods and Men of the Heroic Age*.

1870

Feb. 8. On condition of Ireland.

Feb. 15. Brings in Irish Land bill.

March 1. On state-aided emigration to British colonies.

March 11. On second reading of Irish Land bill.

March 18. On Elementary Education bill.

March 22. On Peace Preservation (Ireland) bill.

April 1. On position of Trinity College, Dublin.

April 4. Opposes Mr. Disraeli's amendment to clause 3 of Irish Land bill.

April 5. Opposes payment of members.

April 11. Moves for committee to inquire into law regarding corrupt practices.

April 26. On his principles of colonial policy.

April 27. In support of Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister bill.

May 10. On Indian opium revenue.

May 23. In support of University Tests bill.

May 24. Opposes motion in favour of disestablishing church of England in Wales.

May 30. On third reading of Irish Land bill.

June 15. In support of bill abolishing minority representation.

June 16 and 24. On Elementary Education bill.

June 21. In favour of presence of bishops in House of Lords.

June 30. On conscience clause in Education bill. On religious teaching in elementary schools.

July 14. Defends vote by ballot in Education bill.

July 22. Replies to reproaches from Mr. Miall and Mr. Dixon on Education bill.

July 27. Supports second reading of Ballot bill.

Aug. 1. On Franco-German war and neutrality of Belgium.

Aug. 10. On treaty guaranteeing independence and neutrality of Belgium.

Oct. “Germany, France, and England” in *Edinburgh Review*.

Nov. 1. Closes Workman's International Exhibition, Islington: on benefit to English commerce of foreign competition.

Nov. 9. At Lord Mayor's banquet on Franco-German war.

1871.

Feb. 9. Replies to Mr. Disraeli's criticisms of government's foreign policy.

Feb. 10. On University Tests bill.

Feb. 13. Defends Princess Louise's dowry and annuity.

Feb. 17. Defends the government's foreign policy.

Feb. 24. Replies to Mr. Disraeli's attack on his interpretation of treaty of Paris (1856).

March 2. On appointment of committee to inquire into Ribandism in West Meath.

March 17. Replies to criticisms on Mr. Cardwell's Army Regulation bill.

March 23. On Mr. Mundella's motion that army might be [661] made efficient without increasing estimates.

March 29. On Parochial Councils bill.

March 31. Explains policy during Franco-German war.

April A poem on “An infant who was born, was baptized, and died on the same day,” in *Good Words*.

April 18. On dismissal of Sir Spencer Robinson.

April 24. Defends moderate increase of public expenditure under his government.

May 1. Defends modification in budget.

May 3. On Mr. Jacob Bright's bill granting parliamentary suffrage to single women.

May 4. Defends principle of reduction of national debt.

May 9. Opposes motion for disestablishment of the church of England.

May 26. On Protection of Life (Ireland) bill.

June 29. On Ballot bill.

July 3. On third reading of Army Regulation bill.

July 20. Announces abolition of purchase by royal warrant.

July 31. Proposes annuity of £15,000 for Prince Arthur.

Aug. 2. On Mr. Fawcett's Trinity College, Dublin, bill.

Aug. 4. On treaty of Washington.

Aug. 8. On obstruction to Ballot bill.

Aug. 15. Defends abolition of purchase.

Sept. 2. At Whitby on the Ballot bill.

Sept. 26. Presented with freedom of Aberdeen: on Irish agitation for home rule.

Oct. 23. At Blackheath Common on the policy of government.

1872.

Feb. 6. Replies to Mr. Disraeli's criticisms on Address.

Feb. 7. Replies to the criticisms of treaty of Washington.

Feb. 8. Moves vote of thanks to Speaker Denison on retirement.

Feb. 9. On office of speaker.

Feb. 19. Defends appointment of Sir R. Collier.

March 8. Defends appointment of Mr. Harvey to Ewelme.

March 19. Replies to Sir Charles Dilke's motion for inquiry into Civil List.

March 20, April 25. On University of Dublin (Tests) bill.

April 12. On England's treaty obligations for intervention in affairs of foreign states.

April 26. On motion for extending rural franchise.

May 2. On the demand for home rule.

May 13. On United States indirect claims.

May 14. At King's College, London, in favour of positive religious teaching.

June 14. On denunciation by France of treaty of commerce.

June 25. On proposal to annex Fiji Islands.

June 28. On Lords' amendment to Ballot bill making its adoption optional.

July 2. Opposes inquiry into revenues of church of England.

Aug. 1. Pledges government to bring in large measures on local government and taxation.

Nov. 14. At Middle Temple on legal opposition to legal reforms and on arbitration.

Nov. 28. At American Thanksgiving dinner on good understanding between England and United States.

Dec. 3. At Society of Biblical Archæology on results of excavations in the East.

Dec. 21. At Liverpool College on unbelief.

1873.

Feb. 6. On *Alabama* award.

Feb. 13. Introduces Irish University bill.

Feb. 14. On resolution that treaties with foreign powers be submitted to House of Commons.

Feb. 18. On Mr. Harcourt's motion that the rate of public [662] expenditure is excessive.

March 6. At Croyden on Irish University bill.

March 7. On relations between England and the colonies.

March 11. On second reading of Irish University bill.

March 13. Resignation of ministry.

March 20. Resumes office. Explains history of crisis.

March 21. On the three rules of Washington treaty.

April 21. On University Tests (Dublin) bill.

April 29. On proposal for state purchase of Irish railways.

May 2. On German Emperor's award on Canadian-American boundary.

May 6. On resolution urging redress of electoral inequalities.

May 16. On disestablishment of church of England.

May 26. On *Alabama* award and arbitration.

July 8. On international arbitration.

July 10. On Judicature bill.

Aug. 15. At Hawarden on school boards.

Aug. 19. Presides at Welsh National Eisteddfod at Mold: on Welsh language.

Dec. Letter on “Evolution” in *Contemporary Review*.

1874.

Jan. 23. Issues election address.

Jan. 28. Speech on Blackheath Common on issues before the electors.

Jan. 31. At Woolwich.

Feb. “The Shield of Achilles” in *Contemporary Review*.

Feb. 2. Replies to Mr. Disraeli's speeches at New Cross.

Feb. 4. Re-elected for Greenwich,—Boord (C.), 6193; Gladstone (L.), 5968; Liardet (C.), 5561; Langley (L.), 5255.

Feb. 17. Resignation of ministry.

March 5. On the office of speaker.

March 12. Letter to Lord Granville on leadership.

March 19. Defends the late dissolution.

March 20. On Mr. Butt's Home Rule motion.

March 30. On the Ashantee war.

April 23. On Sir S. Northcote's budget.

April 24. On proposed vote of censure on late government for dissolution.

May "The Reply of Achilles to the envoys of Agamemnon" in *Contemporary Review*.

June "Homer's place in history" in *Contemporary Review*.

July "The place of Homer in history and in Egyptian chronology" in *Contemporary Review*.

July 6. Opposes the Scotch Church Patronage bill.

July 9. Opposes Public Worship Regulation bill, explains his Six Resolutions.

July 14, 21, 24. Opposes Endowed Schools Act Amendment bill.

Aug. 4. Protests against premature annexation of Fiji.

Aug. 5. On Public Worship Regulation bill.

Sept. 7-25. Visits Dr. Döllinger in Munich.

Oct. "Ritualism and Ritual" in *Contemporary Review*.

Oct. Reviews Miss Yonge's *Life of Bishop Patteson* in *Quarterly Review*.

Nov. *The Vatican Decrees in their bearing on civil allegiance: a political expostulation.*

1875.

Jan. "Speeches of Pope Pius IX." in *Quarterly Review*.

Jan. 13. Announces retirement from leadership.

Feb. *Vaticanism: an answer to replies and reproofs.*

March Sells 11 Carlton House Terrace.

April 21. Supports Burials bill.

May "Life and Speeches of the Prince Consort" in *Contemporary Review*.

May 5. In support of Irish Sunday Closing bill.

May 7. Criticises Sir S. Northcote's budget.

[663] May 27. Criticises Savings Bank bill.

June 8. On National Debt (Sinking Fund) bill.

July "Is the Church of England worth Preserving?" in *Contemporary Review*.

Sept. 9. Lays foundation-stone of King's School, Chester: on English public schools.

Sept. 14. At Hawarden on mental culture.

Oct. "Italy and her Church" in *Church Quarterly Review*.

Nov. 11. Distributes prizes to science and art students at Greenwich: on education.

Dec. Latin translation of "Art thou weary, art thou languid?" in *Contemporary Review*.

1876.

Feb. 8. On the Andrassy note and the Crimean war.

Feb. 16. Presented with freedom of Turners' Company: on city companies.

Feb. 21. On purchase of Suez Canal shares.

March "Homerology: I. Apollo" in *Contemporary Review*.

March 6. On danger of future complications in Egypt.

March 9. On Royal Titles bill.

March 23. In support of House of Charity at annual meeting in Soho.

March 23. On third reading of Royal Titles bill.

April "Homerology: II. Hippos, the Horse. III. Diphros, the Chariot," in *Contemporary Review*.

May 23. On city of London companies.

May 31. Presides at dinner in celebration 100th anniversary of publication of *Wealth of Nations*.

June “Courses of Religious Thought” in *Contemporary Review*.

June “A Letter on Newman and Wesley” in *Contemporary Review*.

July “Homerology: IV. Athené. V. Aiolas,” in *Contemporary Review*.

July “Lord Macaulay” in *Quarterly Review*.

July “Memoir of Norman Macleod, D.D.,” in *Church Quarterly Review*.

July 6. Distributes prizes at King's College: on knowledge.

July 13. Distributes prizes at London Hospital Medical College: on medical education.

July 21. On Turkish Loan of 1854.

July 31. Defends Crimean war and European concert.

Aug. 17. On cottage gardening at Hawarden.

Aug. 19. Receives five hundred Lancashire liberals at Hawarden.

Sept. 6. *The Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East* published.

Sept. 9. On Blackheath Common on Bulgarian atrocities.

Nov. “Russian Policy and Deeds in Turkestan” in *Contemporary Review*.

Dec. “The Hellenic Factor in the Eastern Problem” in *Contemporary Review*.

Dec. Publishes, *The Church of England and Ritualism*.

Dec. *A Biographical Sketch of Lord Lyttelton.*

Dec. *Homeric Synchronism: an Inquiry into the Time and Place of Homer.*

1877.

Jan. “Life of the Prince Consort” in *Church Quarterly Review*.

Jan. 16. At Hawarden on the Turks, the Greeks, and the Slavs.

Jan. 22. At Bath railway station on Eastern Question.

Jan. 27. At Taunton railway station on duty of England in Near East.

Feb. 3. Address to boys of Marlborough College on value of simple habits.

Feb. 8. On Eastern Question.

Feb. 16. Attacks government's Turkish policy.

Feb. 28. In support of Servian Relief Fund at Grosvenor [664] House.

March “On the influence of authority in matters of opinion” in *Nineteenth Century*.

March *Lessons in Massacre* published.

March 22. On Preaching at the City Temple.

March 23. Supports Mr. Fawcett's resolution that Turkish promises without guarantees are useless.

April 24. On a motion in favour of an Irish parliament.

April 30. Gives notice of five resolutions—on the Eastern Question.

May “Montenegro: a sketch” in *Nineteenth Century*.

May 7. Moves first of his resolutions.

May 12. On ceramic art at the Cymmodorian Society, London Institution.

May 14. Closes debate on his first resolution.

May 31. At Birmingham on the Eastern Question.

June 1. At Bristol Street Board School, Birmingham, on Ireland and Irish representatives. Presented with address by the City: on municipal life.

June 4. Supports amendment to Universities bill, providing that holy orders shall not be a condition of holding any headship or fellowship.

June 30. Opens Caxton Exhibition: on the work of Caxton.

July “Rejoinder on authority in matters of opinion” in *Nineteenth Century*.

July “Piracy in Borneo and the Operations of July 1849” in *Contemporary Review*.

July 13. At Plymouth and Exeter on liberal party and Eastern Question.

July 16. On behalf of Bosnian refugees at Willis's Rooms.

July 20. On Irish demand for pardon of Fenian convicts.

Aug. “Aggression on Egypt and Freedom in the East” in *Nineteenth Century*.

Aug. 4, 18, 20. Receives deputations of 5200 liberals at Hawarden on Eastern Question.

Sept. 19. At Hawarden Grammar School on education.

Sept. 27. At University College, Nottingham, on higher education. At Alexandra Hall on Eastern Question.

Oct. “The colour sense” in *Nineteenth Century*.

Oct. “The Dominions of the Odysseus and the island group of the Odyssey” in *Macmillan's Magazine*.

Oct. 17. Visits Ireland.

Nov. “The County Franchise and Mr. Lowe thereon” in *Nineteenth Century*.

Nov. 7. Presented with freedom of Dublin: on Irish questions. Entertained at luncheon by corporation of Dublin: on Irish municipalities.

Nov. 12. At Holyhead on Eastern Question.

Nov. 15. Elected Rector of Glasgow University,—Mr. Gladstone, 1153; Sir Stafford Northcote, 609.

Nov. 23. At Hawarden on Russians, Turks, and Bulgarians.

1878.

Jan. “The Life of the Prince Consort” in *Church Quarterly Review*. “Last words on the County Franchise” in *Nineteenth Century*.

Jan. 17. Comments on Sir S. Northcote's explanation of the government's Eastern policy.

Jan. 30. At Corn Exchange, Oxford, on the vote of credit for six millions. At Palmerston Club dinner on Canning, Palmerston, and liberal party.

Feb. “The Peace to Come” in *Nineteenth Century*.

Feb. 4. On Mr. Forster's amendment against vote of credit. [665]

March. "The Paths of Honour and of Shame" in *Nineteenth Century*.

March 19. On Indian press law.

March 23. Receives deputation of Greenwich liberals: on unpopularity of economy in public expenditure.

March 28. To deputation from Leeds on the Eastern Question.

April "The Iris of Homer: and the relation of Genesis ix. 11-17" in *Contemporary Review*.

April 1. Supports Irish Sunday Closing bill.

April 3. On Vaccination Law (Penalties) bill.

April 5. On government and the Berlin Congress.

April 8. On government's Eastern policy in debate on calling out army reserves.

April 18. At Memorial Hall on Eastern Question at conference of 400 London nonconformist ministers.

May 21. Protests against use of Indian troops in Europe without consent of parliament.

May 23. Receives deputation of Scotch Presbyterian ministers: on the Eastern Question.

May 27. Protests against despatch of Indian contingent to Malta.

June "Liberty in the East and West" in *Nineteenth Century*.

June 13. On treaties of 1856 and 1871.

June 18. On a motion to appoint select committee on Scotch Church Patronage act, 1874.

July Contributes paper to symposium,—"Is the popular judgment of politics more just than that of the higher orders?" in *Nineteenth Century*.

July 6. On Homer at Eton.

July 11. In London on spendthrift administration of charity.

July 15. Supports Irish Intermediate Education bill.

July 20. At Bermondsey on Anglo-Turkish convention.

July 23. Moves address that proceedings under Indian Vernacular Press Act be reported to parliament.

July 30. Criticises action of British plenipotentiaries at Berlin Congress.

Aug. 6. Criticises Sir S. Northcote's finance.

Aug. 15. On art-labour at Hawarden.

Sept. “England's Mission” in *Nineteenth Century*.

Oct. “The Sixteenth Century arraigned before the Nineteenth: a Study on the Reformation” in *Contemporary Review*.

Oct. 1-7. Visits Isle of Man.

Oct. 31. At Rhyl on the political situation.

Nov. “Electoral Facts” in *Nineteenth Century*.

Nov. 11. At Buckley on books.

Nov. 30. At Greenwich on liberal organisation. At Woolwich on Afghan war.

Dec. 10. On Afghan war and policy.

Dec. 16. Protests against charging Indian revenues with expenses of Afghan war.

Dec. Publishes a Literary Primer on *Homer*.

1879.

Jan. “The Friends and Foes of Russia” in *Nineteenth Century*.

Feb. 10. At Hawarden on Life and Labours of Dr. Hook.

March “On Epithets of Movement in Homer” in *Nineteenth Century*.

April 21. At Mentmore on liberal party and foreign policy.

April 28. On increase in national expenditure.

May “Probability as the Guide of Conduct” in *Nineteenth Century*.

May 2. In favour of enabling Irish tenants to purchase their holdings. [666]

May 5. In explanation and defence of his financial policy in 1860.

May 13. Opposes resolution protesting against government's abuse of prerogative of the crown.

May 19. On church home missions at Willis's Rooms.

June. “Greece and the Treaty of Berlin” in *Nineteenth Century*.

June. 11. On education at Mill Hill School.

June. 12. On financial condition of India.

June 14. On tendency of political life to mar a literary career at Savage Club.

June 20. On condition of Cyprus under English administration.

June 24. Letter to Principal Rainy on Scotch disestablishment.

July. "The Evangelical Movement, its Parentage, Progress, and Issue," in *British Quarterly Review*.

July 5. On Homer at Eton College.

July 22. On unfulfilled stipulations of Berlin treaty.

Aug. "The Country and the Government" in *Nineteenth Century*.

Aug. 11. Opens Fine Art Exhibition, Chester: on art and manufacture.

Aug. 19. At Chester on government's foreign policy.

Aug. 21. At St. Pancras workhouse.

Aug. 28. At Hawarden on garden cultivation.

Sept. 14-Oct. 21. Travelling in Bavaria and Italy.

Oct. "The Olympian System versus the Solar Theory" in *Nineteenth Century*.

Nov. 3. To students at Wellington College on knowledge.

Nov. 25. At Music Hall, Edinburgh, on issues before the electors.

Nov. 26. At Dalkeith on domestic questions.

Nov. 27. At West Calder on right principles of foreign policy.

Nov. 29. At Edinburgh on tory finance. In Waverley Market on Balkan principalities.

Dec. 5. Inaugural address at Glasgow University. In St. Andrew's Hall on government's European, Indian, and South African policies.

Dec. Publishes *Gleanings of Past Years* 1843-79, in seven volumes.

Footnotes

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