

## CHAPTER XLIV

1881-93

### HOME RULE

THE greater part of the Duke's political correspondence during the critical years immediately following the introduction of the Irish Land Act had reference to affairs in Ireland. The policy of the Government made the gulf between him and his former leader an ever widening one. The Duke had acquiesced in the Land Act of 1870 in order to avert social disturbance, which would have been an even greater evil ; but he could not consent to be a party to the Act of 1881, and he had accordingly resigned.

To Mr. Gladstone he wrote (December 6th, 1881) :

‘ Those who are alarmed, as I am, by the condition of Ireland have, in the meantime, to support the Government in suppressing the reign of ruffianism. I may think, and I do think, that where the disease is a universal unsettlement of mind and of opinion it was a terrible aggravation of the evil to speak and to legislate in a way so alien to clear and definite conceptions on the fundamental principles on which society rests. Some day I may have something to put down on this aspect of the question. But in the meantime I wish to be silent if I can, and to limit my endeavours to prevent the spread of the mischief which has been done.’

*To Mr. Gladstone (May 29th, 1882).*

‘ I know you set a small value on the opinion of men who are “ up in a balloon ” ; nevertheless, it may not always be a bad post of observation.

‘ I write one line to express an opinion only on one point, and that is, the immense importance, as it seems to me, of not giving way on the duration of the new law for the protection of life and property in Ireland. Be the apparent success of any such law what it may, it cannot effect the work of settlement in one year, and the annual debates on questions which cut so deep are a supreme evil. It is really despairing to see how men’s opinions on the necessity of such measures are affected by the daily bulletin of crime from Ireland. If there are four or five consecutive days without a murder or other conspicuous outrage, people begin to breathe, and say, “ Oh, things are on the mend ! ” It is possible that the fear of this new measure may of itself, for a moment, produce an abatement. But I should have no confidence in its continuance, and if the whole controversy is to be renewed from session to session, there will be no paralysis of crime, but only a too certain paralysis of Parliament.

‘ I have heard no rumour of any intention on your part to give way on this point. But it is just the sort of compromise which the Radical section will be apt to grasp at and to press upon you.’

Shortly afterwards the Duke, in a letter to Lord Dufferin (August 1st, 1882), implied that he did not exonerate his former leader from all responsibility for Irish disorders :

‘ I believe Gladstone eases his conscience by the argument that had it not been for the Irish Land Bill there would have been a universal strike against rent all over Ireland, and that he has saved the landlords

from a great social revolution at the sacrifice of an average 20 per cent.

‘This is all very well, except that it omits the fact (as I believe it to be) that the social revolution was greatly due to the language of his own party, and (at least) to his complicity by silence.’

*To Mr. Gladstone (April 25th, 1886).*

‘The only temptation I feel to Home Rule is the temptation of getting rid of the Parnellites at Westminster. If experiments in the government of mankind were a legitimate amusement it would be most entertaining to see what follies an Irish Parliament would indulge in. I should allow them to try “protection” much rather than leave them free to try “plunder.” All this would be most amusing!

‘But one cannot indulge in such play with a good conscience. At least, I cannot. I believe in what you told us of the Parnellite party in 1881 and 1882, and up to a more recent date, and I have seen no evidence whatever to justify or account for any change of opinion. This being so, it is with me a matter of personal honour not to hand over Ireland to their sway, merely to get rid of a bad crew from Westminster, or to look on upon an experiment which will involve the liberty and property of our fellow-countrymen.’

*To Mr. Gladstone (May 4th, 1886).*

‘Your letter of April 29th only reached me this morning, having been forwarded from Scotland. It has surprised me very much, because, until I received it, I did not know that any doubt could be entertained as to the truth of my statement that up to the last General Election “you had been loud in your denunciation of the Parnellite policy, both social and political.” You now ask me for a proof of this allegation, and I at once respond to your appeal in so far as, on the instant, I have the materials for doing so at hand.

“The Parnellite policy” has been expressed in a thousand different forms from the commencement of your last Government. It became exceedingly active and pronounced after you had accomplished the passing of your last Land Act. In defence of your own Act, you took the field against the Parnellite policy, denouncing its author and all his works in many speeches, which were as unsparing in their severity as they were truthful in their description.

‘These speeches were delivered chiefly in the year 1881, but the substance of them was repeated in the House of Commons on the 25th of May, 1882, in a speech in which you denounced the Parnellite policy in the person of Mr. Dillon, and in which you described his demand for the abandonment of coercion as a demand “that no Bill of restraint is to be introduced against any evil-doers whatever in Ireland.”

‘From this date to the close of your last Government, the Parnellite policy was under the strong restraints which you then placed upon it, and both the legislative and executive action of your Government superseded the necessity of farther speeches.

When your last Government fell, and when, a few months afterwards, the General Election came on, you appealed, I think in more speeches than one, to the Liberal party to give you such a following as might enable you to command an ample majority even over a Tory and Parnellite combination.

‘I have not now before me all those speeches, but I have a distinct recollection of one in which you said you would not trust your own party itself, if it were placed in such circumstances of temptation as to have to lean upon the support of the Parnellite party.

‘The severity of tone in which you spoke of the Parnellites, when occasion led you to do so, did not, to my eye, present any contrast or even any change since your speeches of 1881 and 1882. There seemed to be a perfect continuity, and in one speech, delivered, I think, in Edinburgh on November 23rd, 1885, I find

a passage in which you spoke almost bitterly of the personal power, amounting to compulsion, which you expected Mr. Parnell to exercise over voters in Ireland. No one could have anticipated from that speech that you should now characterize the late election in Ireland as specially a "constitutional" expression of national opinion. The words I refer to are these: "Let him order every Irishman to vote against every Liberal, let him pour out floods of vituperation and abuse, yet he and his party know perfectly well that all these actions, all these words, will not have the slightest effect on the policy of the Liberal party."

'Taking these words in connection with a whole series of transactions, perfectly continuous, through the whole period of your last Government, and in connection with the farther fact that, as far as I know, you had never given any indication of any change of opinion respecting the Parnellite policy, I submit to your fairness that I had reasonable grounds for my assertion that "up to the last General Election you were loud in your denunciation" of that policy.'

When Mr. Gladstone, in reply to this communication, argued that his silence between 1882 and 1885 regarding the Irish members showed that he did not entertain such opinions as the Duke ascribed to him previous to the opening of the Home Rule question, the Duke replied, first in a personal letter, and secondly in a letter to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, both of the date May 6th, 1886.

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

'Your letter places me in a difficulty, because it puts a value and a significance on your silence between 1882 and November, 1885, which you may have a perfect right to place upon it, but which, on the other hand, no one else can be expected to recognise who was not in the secrets of your mind.'

‘The natural course would be to publish our correspondence with a reply from me to your last. But I don’t think that your letters were written with this in view, or in terms exactly suitable for publication.

‘Therefore, I think my best course would be to write a letter to the *Pall Mall* setting forth the grounds of my original allegation, and then simply admitting as a fact that during the interval between the release of Mr. Parnell and the late election you had abstained from denunciations of Mr. Parnell and his party. I wish to avoid personal controversy with you, but I cannot give up my contention that your party and old friends have just ground of complaint against your leadership on the Irish question, and I need not say that this complaint I regard as much deepened and aggravated since you have denounced us all in your late manifesto.

‘But for any sake let us keep free from private and personal controversy. I therefore confine myself strictly to the acknowledgment of a fact, leaving all further comment to public utterances on a public matter.

‘I send you now a copy of the letter I am prepared to write to the *Pall Mall*. If you prefer a publication of the whole correspondence, I could easily turn it, in form, into a letter to you.’

A letter followed (May 9th, 1886) in which the Duke acknowledged his blindness as to the meaning of that silence. It was not the silence which meant the continuance of old opinions, but the silence that covered a profound change of opinion :

‘We may have all been moles and bats not to read between the lines both of your abstentions and of your utterances. But, as a matter of fact, we were all absolutely blind; and though I thought you might propose something new on the lines of “local government,” not one of us outsiders had the slightest

conception that you would think of a separate Parliament. This is as much a fact as your interval of silence towards Parnell.

‘There is only one general consideration which I wish you to bear in mind, and that is that unavoidably the controversy must turn largely on your utterances, for the simple reason that you are almost the only moving force in the political changes of the day. . . .

‘This is a condition of things which distresses me extremely, because of the personality which it imports into politics. I hope you will recognise the fact of your own pre-eminence leaving us no choice whatever. When you fire red-hot shot into all who differ from you on this great constitutional contest, we must be free to reply with all the arms in our hands.’

The Duke did not allow his opposition to Mr. Gladstone’s Home Rule policy to interfere with his personal friendship for his old leader. In letters to Mr. Bright he expresses his feelings on this subject, knowing that they would be understood and shared by one who was also strongly attached to Mr. Gladstone.

*To Mr. John Bright (January 3rd, 1887).*

‘I have several times, during the last year, been on the point of writing to you, if only to tell you of the satisfaction it gave me to see the line you have taken in the great controversy which our common friend Gladstone has sprung upon us all.

‘I observe with entire sympathy the reluctance you have expressed to speak all your mind upon the subject, because of your old love and regard for him. I have felt this most deeply, perhaps all the more because in private life I have had more constant and intimate relations with him than with any other for the space now of nearly forty years.

‘ But I hold that both the nature of the question at issue, and the intemperate manner in which he has handled it, as well as the freedom he has taken himself in dealing with his old friends, set us all in a position of equal freedom to deal with both the question on its merits and with the tactics he has brought to bear upon it.

‘ With this feeling I wrote to him last spring a passage (in a letter) of which I enclose a copy.

‘ I confess to much anxiety about the result. He has the advantage of an alliance with a powerful disintegrating element in the heart of the House of Commons. People are much inclined to say, “*Anything* better than a continuance of *this*.” ’

*From Mr. Bright (January 9th, 1887).*

‘ MY DEAR DUKE OF ARGYLL,

‘ I must thank you for your friendly and interesting letter, and yet I know not what to say in reply.

‘ There seems to me in Mr. Gladstone’s conduct on this great question so much that is doubtful and blameable that I find myself unable to discuss it in public without saying what must be as painful to him to hear or to read as it would be to me to speak.

‘ I am anxious about the result. The weakness of the Government as a Government is apparent, and their weakness in the House of Commons on the Treasury Bench is deplorable. I wish Lord Salisbury were in our House instead of in yours. I am anxious, too, about the coming “conference.” Harcourt and Morley will speak and act for their chief, and may have positive instructions ; but I do not know for whom Chamberlain and Trevelyan will speak and act. It is not said that they have consulted Lord Hartington, and if the result of the conference is to bring Chamberlain and Trevelyan to support Mr. Gladstone as against the Government on questions apart from Irish affairs,



then we may not have a change of Government, but another dissolution of Parliament, and confusion worse confounded. Mr. Gladstone has broken up three Governments and brought about two dissolutions within twelve months. I know of no Minister or statesman in our history who has done so much and caused so much disorder. If the constituencies think Ireland only is in fault, they may, in disgust, give Ireland what her rebel party ask for; if they discover that their great statesman is in fault, they may in a more signal manner withdraw their confidence from him.

‘As to the Land question, I do not see what more can be done. The last Act—Trevelyan’s or Lord Ashbourne’s—is extravagant in its concessions to the tenants, and hardly less so to the landowners, and it makes progress; and but for the rebel conspirators it would do all that is necessary to enlarge the number of proprietors, which for thirty years past I have urged as the true policy in dealing with Ireland.

‘I have lately been reading the lives of Wolfe Tone, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and Robert Emmet. They were mad enough in pursuit of an impossible object, but I think they were better men than Parnell and his immediate followers. They did not seek to destroy all sense of honour and honesty, nor did they succeed so completely in demoralizing the people who trusted in them.

‘I thank you for your good wishes. Pray accept mine for yourself and yours.’

*To Mr. Bright (January 14th, 1887).*

‘I feel all the difficulty you feel as to speaking or writing quite freely, when, of necessity, much that has to be said *must* be directed against our old friend.

‘But I would very earnestly impress on you, as I try to do on myself, that the interests of truth and righteousness are very much concerned in all that is now at stake, and that even our best “partial affections” must not be allowed to stand in our way.

'Gladstone himself certainly sets an example of extreme freedom in dealing with all who refuse to follow him.'

From time to time the Duke delivered powerful speeches, both in Parliament and in the country, on the question occupying public attention. He also wrote occasional letters to the *Times*, dealing with controversial points. Two letters are here quoted on the subject of Home Rule :

*To the 'Times' (December 26th, 1885).*

'There is no more striking proof of the unpreparedness of the public mind on the whole of this subject than the innocence with which we see the question asked: "Why should we not let the Irish manage their own affairs?" *O sancta simplicitas!* The assumption that we can solve as easily as a child's puzzle one of the most difficult, intricate, and complicated problems that can arise in the science of human government is an assumption indicative of that profound ignorance which does not see even the first conditions of the problem. To perambulate the marches of local authority, to draw the line between that which is and that which is not of imperial interest in a society which is to be one Government over its own people, and in the face of the world—this is a work requiring the very highest skill and the very deepest insight. Hitherto none of us have been called to deal with it, or even to think of it. Is it possible that men's thoughts have become so loose and slovenly on the functions of government that foreign affairs are roughly assumed to be all that is of Imperial interest? Is it possible that our notions of Empire are so degenerate that we do not think it an essential part of it that all the subjects of the Crown should live under equal laws, and be assured of the primary conditions of human freedom? Do not let us be led astray by false analo-

gies. Our relations with our colonies have nothing to do with it. Those of them to whom self-government has been committed are virtually independent States. Nothing but bonds of sentiment unite us, together with some, I hope, growing feelings of a common interest. These in time may produce a Federal Constitution of some sort. But the inexorable conditions of physical geography, as well as social and economic differences of condition, forbid that in the strictest and fullest sense we can ever form with them one Government. The same inexorable conditions of physical geography are reversed in the case of Ireland, and absolutely demand there a kind and a measure of connection which is impossible farther off. The United States alone, of all the nations of the earth, must in this matter be our great exemplar. Let us consider for a moment some of the differences between that case and the case of Home Rule in Ireland.

‘The spirit in which all human institutions are conceived at first, and in which they are worked from inside, makes the whole difference between success and failure. If the spirit be one not of attraction but of repulsion, it is more than questionable whether any mere machinery will keep nations or States together. But, again, look at the sort of machinery which, so far as we know, has as yet been contemplated. Supposing the lines to be well and firmly drawn between affairs which are Irish only and affairs which concern the honour and interests of the Empire, who is to enforce respect to those lines? Who is to keep the marches? There is to be a veto, it is said, or assent is to be required to Irish Acts, given by an Imperial Cabinet or by an Imperial Parliament.

‘Does any man imagine that it will be possible to keep this question of assent or of veto out of the region of party politics at Westminster? And if not, then how much of the time of Parliament would continue to be occupied by Irish affairs? Would not one or other of two things inevitably happen: either that we

should wash our hands of all responsibility and give our assent as a matter of course to everything done, however unwise and however unjust, or else that we should keep our responsibility at the cost of continual strain and of increasing exasperation ?

'And, then, have we considered what sort of measures we should assuredly have either to assent to or resist ? Protective duties and a hostile tariff have been announced already. One eminent Liberal is said to have threatened retaliatory duties on our side as inevitable in such a case. This is a concession to fair trade which curiously illustrates the reaction on our own politics which will certainly arise.

'Then, again, there is the whole question of religion. For my own part, I think we have sinned in this matter. Both as regards the priesthood and as regards denominational education, we have forgotten that Ireland is what is called a "Catholic" people. Our voluntarism and our ultra-Protestantism have combined to force upon them what passes for Liberalism in these matters.

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'Again, on questions lying deeper still—on the fundamental principles of all civilized societies, questions affecting the freedom of industry, the security of property and of personal liberty in every form—are we prepared to take even that share of responsibility which is implied in a formal assent to all that may be done in Ireland ? Is there no share of our own honour involved ? Are we to confess that what the British Constitution has hitherto guaranteed to all its people we are henceforth unable or unwilling to maintain ? And then let us ask further, Are we to make this confession, not only with respect to Ireland, but with respect to Great Britain also ? Are Irish members, besides being supreme over their own affairs, to be allowed to hold the balance over ours too ? If not, then we must have a new Constitution, framed for the Parliament at Westminster, as well as for the Parliament in Dublin. The line of division between that

which is imperial and that which is not imperial must be drawn again, so as to exclude here that which is included across the water. Who is sufficient for these things? Is there any party to which we can, with the least confidence, commit a task so entirely novel, so absolutely without precedent or preparation in any part of our national history? Nay, it may well be asked whether in the very nature of things such a problem is not insoluble, and whether the only possible result of attempting such impossible combinations would not be an infinite preference on both sides in favour of total separation?

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‘Of one thing the Irish may be sure, and that is that the estrangement is all on their side. There is nobody of the least consequence on this side of the Channel who does not desire above all things in domestic politics to see them prosperous and contented, sharing in the glories and in the duties of an Empire which so many Irishmen have nobly served in Parliament, and in the field, and in the walks of literature and of science.’

*To the ‘Times’ (June 14th, 1886).*

‘If ever there was a work requiring more absolutely than another the very highest gifts of intellect and of reason, the widest historical knowledge, and the severest training in the observation of affairs, it is the work undertaken by the Ministry with a light heart and without time to prepare their own minds or the mind of the nation.

‘The result has corresponded with such levity and presumption. I will not say with Mr. Spurgeon that the scheme is one which might have emanated from the brain of a madman. This is an exaggeration of the pulpit or of the platform. But it may certainly be said with absolute truth that the scheme shows none of the great mental powers and gifts which are alone

adequate to deal with such a task. If it had been necessary to draw up a paper Constitution for some perfectly new community, good-natured, sweet-blooded, and willing to be subordinate to Great Britain, with no previous history, no passions, no animosities, and no special temptations to violent conduct or to anarchical opinions, the Constitution drawn up by the Ministry might have been about as good and about as bad as the most commonplace politician could have invented in a week. Such ingenuity as there is seems to be drawn from ecclesiastical organizations, whose objects, difficulties, and conditions are all absolutely different from those of a Parliamentary Assembly.

'I do not stop, however, to argue this matter. It has been settled by authority. If there be such a thing as authority in the political instincts and reason of an ancient and a glorious political society, it has pronounced in this case, by almost universal consent, against the whole of the confused machinery and the unworkable devices of the Ministry. Mr. Bright's declaration is literally true—that not twenty men in the House of Commons would have ever stopped to look at it if it had come from any other workman. . . .

'The very first thing which the Ministry set its prentice hand to do was to devise a new "fundamental law," a new written Constitution for Great Britain and Ireland. At some six weeks' notice this wonderful structure was elaborated within some room in Downing Street by a few selected Ministers, and with, I suppose, a draftsman. With this preparation and with this apparatus, the Constitution, which has been growing for a thousand years, is pulled about and meddled with in the very keystones of all its arches. The structure of Parliament, the powers of taxing, the principles of representation, the relations between executive and legislative functions, the power of local bodies to dispose of the liberty and property of the Queen's subjects on principles unknown to the civilized

laws of our ancient imperial realm, the exclusion of a whole kingdom from all concern in some of the highest functions of Government—all these deep things and foundation-stones of every political society are tossed about and tumbled with a light heart, and with as light a hand, until the result is presented to our astonished gaze in one great shambling and unsightly building, which we are to adopt and accept as a substitute for the ancient palaces of a Constitution known and loved for centuries. . . .

‘The intellectual qualities exhibited in these sayings and proposals do indeed excite our astonishment. But I venture to think they do not challenge our admiration, still less do they attract our confidence. And surely our misgivings must increase when we encounter another fact, which is this, that the master builder of this new erection tells us that he is unable to solve the one great problem which he took in hand. That problem is to provide for two great political bodies a place of common habitation, but of separate and adjusted work. For this purpose it is the first necessity of a successful organization that the scheme should indicate with some tolerable clearness that which is to be done by one of them and that which is to be left to the other. The distinction between what is local and what is imperial is of the essence of the whole scheme. Yet, strange to say, the Prime Minister declares: “I have thought much, reasoned much, and inquired much, with regard to that distinction. I had hoped it might be possible to draw a distinction, and I have arrived at the conclusion that it cannot be drawn. I believe it passes the wit of man; at any rate, it passes, not my wit alone, but the wit of many with whom I have communicated.” This would at least be modest if it were also consistent. But here, again, we are met by another wonder. The distinction which it is impossible to draw at Westminster is assumed to be easily drawn in Dublin.’

The first of these letters to the *Times* is referred to by the Duke of Bedford and Mr. Goschen as follows :

‘DEAR DUKE OF ARGYLL,

‘Let me thank you most gratefully for having spoken at a moment when action is becoming necessary and requires guidance. *Timemus populum! Plebs lapidabit nos!* appears to paralyze our politicians.

‘I was looking about for a leader when you wrote.

‘Yours very truly,

‘BEDFORD.’

*From Mr. Goschen (December 31st, 1885).*

‘I admire your letter to the *Times* immensely, and agree with every word of it. I think it cannot fail to make an impression. The point now is to awaken the country to what the Irish demands really mean, and to analyze what it means to allow the Irish to “manage their own affairs.” I saw some merchants, etc., from Dublin yesterday, who came over to see me, and expose the dangers of Home Rule from their point of view. I told them that nothing was more important than to convince the English public that the question is not one of landowning merely, that there are menaces, not only to unpopular landlords, but to property of every kind. . . .

‘It will be a curious thing if within a few weeks of the meeting of Parliament Gladstone should be speaking on one side and the rest of us on the other as to the Irish demands.’

These words indicate the increasing divergence of opinion which was separating Mr. Gladstone from many of his former supporters. The Duke always repudiated the idea that the Unionists were dissentients; he looked upon Mr. Gladstone and those



who adhered to him as having abandoned the old Liberal faith. This is the subject of a small volume which was published by the Duke in 1888, entitled 'The New British Constitution and its Master Builders,' from which the following passage is quoted :

' A few leaders of the Liberal party have fallen with him under this foreseen temptation. . . . They have carried with them—reluctant, helpless, struggling, distracted, protesting, and openly dissentient on points of primary importance—a large number of old adherents. The former leader has now to confess that his following is "a shattered and disunited party." It is so because they have been led against the impregnable batteries of truth and duty. Fortunately, not a few of our former leaders, and some of the very best, are our leaders still. Our former friends have left the great cause in which we fought together. From that cause they have been deserters. In so deserting, we think they have been untrue to the great traditions of public virtue, without which freedom and liberty are but empty names. We remain consentient with those traditions. We are consentient with all the great men and with all the great generations which have built up the polity of one great Empire out of three united kingdoms. We shall respond to any and to every appeal which may be made to us to consider this tremendous subject of Irish government in a reverent and a reasonable spirit. Nothing should be refused to Ireland which in itself is just. In education, for example, as one great subject of local government, I think we have failed, and Mr. Gladstone has failed, conspicuously. But we recognise no such reasonable spirit in the demand of any man or of any party to be allowed to dig down to the "very roots of our Constitution, both civil and political," upon a claim of purely personal confidence. Still less do we recognise any such spirit in a haughty refusal to tell us what they mean to do or to propose when they

have been hoisted into power. Our demand to know all this beforehand is a demand upon which it is our duty to insist. That it should be refused and resisted as a "trap" seems to us to be unjustifiable in the highest degree. If party leaders have rights, they have also duties. It is not one of those duties to start suddenly upon the people of this country a new paper Constitution, which its author admits to involve principles as absolutely novel to them as the differential calculus. We have now had time to look at that production, round and round; we see that it involves proposals which offend our reason, and which revolt our conscience.'

Speaking (July 15th, 1887) in the House of Lords, in support of the second reading of the Criminal Law (Ireland) Amendment Bill, the Duke said :

'No man can deny the state of things in Ireland, whether or not he may choose to call it terrorism. Terrorism has been rendered so perfect that crime has ceased to be necessary. Is there any remedy for this state of things? I listened carefully to the speech of my noble friend the leader of the Opposition, as I thought he might say what they say out of doors: "We have got a remedy in our pockets which will do everything." He did not say that he had a measure which would render this Bill unnecessary, but I wish to press this point upon your Lordships' attention, that on the part of the leader of the Opposition there is no alternative scheme for the redemption of the people from the thralldom of the system under which they are now suffering. It is most important that the public should understand that there was a scheme: that two Bills were produced, the production of which ended in the complete defeat of the Government in Parliament. The very first thing they did afterwards was to announce that both those Bills were gone. I say that they are not entitled to claim that

they have an alternative scheme. They have vague and empty phrases—ambiguous phrases which no human being can understand. But it is most important the public should understand there is no rival scheme before the country to put an end to the crime in Ireland. We had two most remarkable speeches last week—one by Mr. Gladstone and the other by Mr. John Morley, the two great apostles and prophets of the Parnellite party in this country. Both clearly show that the great principles on which the scheme of Mr. Gladstone was based have been abandoned. We do not know—can any human being tell us?—whether there is any scheme before us. But, on the other hand, we do know that the Irish members will be retained in this Parliament. That is at the root of the whole question. Most people will think that Mr. Gladstone was originally quite right, that if there was to be a separate Parliament in Ireland, we ought not to have the Irish members here to dictate to us. But Mr. Gladstone has now made an announcement on the subject, though in very ambiguous terms. Poor Mr. John Morley undertook to explain the other day what Mr. Gladstone said at Swansea, and the upshot of his explanation was that Mr. Gladstone's proposal was now the converse of that made by Mr. Whitbread. That is all we know of that part of the scheme which lies at the root of the whole business. But they resort a great deal to general phrases. A favourite stock phrase is "the management by the Irish people of exclusively Irish affairs." There are a great many people who open their eyes wide and believe that they have got something better than the east wind when they have swallowed that phrase. They offer no definition of Irish affairs, and we do not know what they mean by it. Is it purely an Irish affair that Irishmen should hold the property to which they are entitled? Is it purely an Irish affair that, under the Imperial Government of the Queen, every Irishman should be free to dispose of his property and

his liberty as he pleases, and not as a secret conspiracy pleases? Then we ask you to explain what is an exclusively Irish subject. When the Land Bill was before the House of Commons it was pointed out in a powerful speech by Sir Henry James that under Mr. Gladstone's scheme every part of the Land Act of 1881 might be put in question. I understand Mr. Gladstone to say that that was a mistake, and was not so intended. I believe the truth was that there is to be a clause prohibiting the Irish Parliament from dealing with the landlords. Surely these things ought to be made known. I should like to know whether it is a purely Irish question whether men who hold land under charters dating from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are to be deprived of their property. I certainly should regard that question as one of imperial and not of merely Irish interest. We have a state of things in Ireland that is terrible, and the leaders of the Opposition do not pretend that they have a scheme that will put an end to that state of things.

'I am not now talking of mere changes of opinion which must happen from time to time. There has been a complete forgetfulness of everything, a complete repudiation of those things which go down deep to the very foundation of society. We have seen during the last eighteen months four or five gentlemen sitting round a green table at Westminster and drawing up a new edition of the British Constitution. Such a thing has never been adopted before, go back as far in our history as you please. There have been no brand-new constitutions given to the foundation of society; and it was, therefore, unprecedented, unjustifiable, immeasurable presumption. The greatest of Mr. Gladstone's constructions was the famous Budget of 1853. I do not deny that the measure disestablishing the Irish Church showed immense constructive power, but in that case he had to deal with a Christian Church, and all he

had to do was to divide the spoil. In this case he has attempted to reconstitute a whole Constitution, to make a brand-new system of government for the three kingdoms. Not even he was adequate to these things. I shall vote for this Bill, because I wish to secure for every individual of the Irish people the liberties which have come down to them under the imperial system. I wish that every peasant in Donegal and every peasant in Kerry shall be free under an imperial system to dispose of his property and of his labour as he thinks fit.<sup>7</sup>

From another speech in the House of Lords (July 12th, 1888) :

‘ Great constitutional questions are now being agitated. It is now little more than two years since the leaders of the then Liberal party—or, rather, I should say, a few of the leaders of the Liberal party—announced their sudden conversion to the Parnellite doctrine with regard to the government of Ireland. My Lords, I am not going to deny the legitimacy of any sudden conversion of that kind ; I only wish to point out that there had been, so far as I know, no precedent whatever in our political history for so sudden and so violent a conversion. Many of us are old enough to recollect—perhaps too many of us, according to the hint given by my noble friend on this side of the House the other night—perhaps too many of us are old enough to remember two other occasions in which great conversions took place—one on Catholic emancipation and one on the repeal of the Corn Laws. Neither of these conversions could compare with this. On both those great questions there had been long preparation and discussion. Very bitter feelings, no doubt, were aroused by the conversion in both cases, but there was in them nothing so sudden, nothing so violent, nothing that affected such fundamental questions as this sudden conversion of

Mr. Gladstone and two or three of his friends to the Parnellite policy with respect to Ireland. Again, my Lords, I say I am not going to contest the perfect good faith in which that conversion was effected. We all know that in the history of the world there have been many sudden conversions. The Christian Church itself affords a notable instance of the sudden conversion of a man who was undoubtedly one of the greatest men that ever lived in the world, and who was suddenly converted to preach a doctrine which, during the preceding part of his life, he had always done his best to destroy. That man was converted by a light which shone upon him. The light which shone upon him was a light from heaven, and the course of eighteen hundred years has gone far to prove the truth of his conversion. The light which shone upon my right hon. friend and a few of his colleagues was a light which shone from the Irish members of the House of Commons, and we may be pardoned for doubting whether the localities from which the light shone in these two cases of sudden conversion were identical. The change proposed by Mr. Gladstone involved the disintegration of the Empire. That is disputed, but there is one thing which is not disputed, and that is that it did mean the breaking up of the Imperial Parliament. The breaking up of our Imperial Parliament is directly involved in the change which was so suddenly determined upon two years ago, and the breaking up of our Imperial Parliament involves the making of a new Constitution. My Lords, I ventured some time since, through one of the usual channels of information, to warn my countrymen of two things: the first was that such a change would involve the drawing up of a new Constitution, and nothing short of it; and the second was that there was no man and no group of men competent for such work. The Constitution of this country, my Lords, has not been made: it has grown. During eight hundred or nine hundred years, by additions here and

additions there, by developments here and developments there, from very small beginnings it has been built up into the glorious structure we now have. All our revolutions have been in the nature of developments; all our revolutions have been the assertions of a previous right. None of our statesmen are or have been accustomed to, or are capable of, thinking out and drawing up a new Constitution. I do not for a moment deny that the Constitution drawn up by Mr. Gladstone was exceedingly clever and exceedingly ingenious, and, what is more, I will venture to say that it is a great deal better than any of the other reforms which I have since seen indicated in the newspapers. But that has nothing to do with the question. It was an unworkable Constitution; it was a paper Constitution; it was a Constitution made of pasteboard, incapable of resisting the tremendous pressure of human passions which would have been brought to bear on it.

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‘One word more with reference to Mr. Gladstone’s Constitution and the events which followed it. I think that men who have committed such a tremendous political fiasco are not men who are entitled to appeal to the country on the ground of personal confidence. We cannot entrust the government of this country into the hands of men who have proved their own incompetency by producing a plan which they were at once obliged to abandon amid the derisive shouts of all parties. I must now touch upon a somewhat delicate matter—the question of comparative authority. Who were the men who adhered to Mr. Gladstone, and who were the men who revolted from him? In the first rank of political life none of his old colleagues adhered to him except Sir William Harcourt. With him also was Mr. John Morley, who had joined the Government recently, having come from literary circles, a man of great ability, and an eminent author in the region of philosophy. I may say that I attach great weight to his opinion, and if we are to have new

men devising new Constitutions for us, I should not be disinclined to take the opinion of the right hon. gentlemen. But who were against Mr. Gladstone? There was John Bright. Now, whatever differences of opinion any of us may have had with him, we must all acknowledge his vigorous, his masculine honesty, his perfect freedom from narrow party jealousy, his manly character, and his possession of that characteristic of common-sense which belongs pre-eminently to the highest class of English statesmen. Then I will take Lord Hartington. He also has a masculine honesty, and a singular sagacity in foreseeing the probable results of political changes. Then take Mr. Chamberlain, a man who has been brought up in the management of a great city, and who palpably and before our eyes has grown in political stature and wisdom. Then there is Mr. Goschen, about whose great abilities and knowledge of financial affairs I need not say a word; and I should mention also my learned friend Sir Henry James. I wish the English people to understand that it was a mere fraction of the Liberal leaders who adhered to Mr. Gladstone. By far the best men who adhered to him were my noble friends upon the bench below me; but in the House of Commons all the most distinguished, and certainly all the most independent, members of the Liberal party repudiated and opposed his scheme. I now come to another point of great importance in connection with the resolution which I shall venture to move. We have done with the Constitution to which I have been alluding. All the followers of Mr. Gladstone declare that it is dead and buried, although I, for my part, doubt it very much. I believe that we shall see the greatest part of it revived if we ever come to discuss the possibilities of a new Constitution for this realm. If two Parliaments should ever be set up, you will find it impossible not to retain some of the points of that scheme. But in the meantime, at any rate, it is spoken of as dead, and we have a new campaign—



the appeal to the masses as against the classes. I admit that there are some subjects as to which I would rather trust the instincts of the masses of the people than the instincts of the educated classes, and in the course of the last thirty years there have certainly been occasions when my sympathies were with the masses and not the classes. But when the framing of a new Constitution is at issue, is there a man in his senses who would appeal to the instincts of the masses rather than to the educated minds of the classes? To draw up a new Constitution for the government of a country is the most difficult of all tasks. It was not done by the masses in America, but by the most eminent of their public men, and not without great difficulty. I say it is unreasonable to appeal to the masses with regard to the form of our future Constitution. When Mr. Gladstone talks about the classes as opposed to the masses, he means, I suppose, that the higher classes have a certain bias against which they have a difficulty in struggling, and which interferes with their candid consideration of certain questions. But we must remember this—that political leaders are a class as much as any other, and that they are subject to the most tremendous temptations. . . .

‘I find that the present interim that we are enjoying between the abandonment of Mr. Gladstone’s last Constitution and the production of his next new Constitution is being given up by the Gladstone party to two things—grievous misrepresentation of the history of the past and of the acts of the Government of the present. Mr. Gladstone has charged us with being ignorant of history, and especially of Irish history. It so happens that when I was a boy, the first scene I witnessed in the House of Commons had reference to Irish affairs, and I remember seeing the gigantic form of Daniel O’Connell as he came out in a great state of excitement after a severe defeat obtained against him by one whom he always termed “that scorpion Stanley.” Ever since that time, at frequent

intervals we have all been compelled to study the history of Ireland, and turn our attention to the state of things in that country. I must confess that I have thought it odd that Mr. Gladstone, with whom I have been in close communion for a great part of that time, should now accuse us of being ignorant of the history of Ireland. The results of my own reading of Irish history have certainly not been agreeable to the doctrines of my right hon. friend. . . .

‘Nothing more mischievous could be done at the present time, I think, than to tell the Irish people that it was the power of England that forced upon them the land system under which until recently they lived. There is absolute proof against the proposition of my noble friend, and there can be no doubt whatever that the system under which the land was held in Ireland under native chiefs did infinitely more injustice than could be done under any feudal laws. Upon this point I do not wish to detain your Lordships by quoting authorities. I will merely refer to the authority of Hallam and the words of Prendergast, who may be said to have been quite a ferocious Irishman. “The Irish,” said Prendergast, “knew no such thing as tenure, nor forfeiture, nor fixed rent. At this they repined, though willing to offer such tribute of victual as was required, and to let their chieftains eat them almost out of house and home. Hence the saying, ‘Spend me, but defend me.’” Such was the condition of the Irish tenants, which my noble friend represents as having been made much worse by the measures of Henry VIII. What is the real truth about Henry VIII. ? Nothing is more strange than the great contrast between the personal characteristics of the great Tudor monarchs and the effect which their measures had on the history of the country. There are many passages in the life of Henry VIII. in which we can think of nothing but his tyranny ; but, still, in other things he displayed a political wisdom which enabled him to contribute to the noble structure of English history.

In a letter which he addressed to the Earl of Surrey in 1520 he said : " Show unto the Irish people that of necessity it is requisite that every reasonable creature should be governed by law. Show them that of necessity they must conform the order of their lives to the observance of some reasonable law, and not live as they have done heretofore." It was the absence of law that characterized Ireland in the reign of Henry VIII., and what he sought to impress upon them was that they must live according to some reasonable law.'

Speaking five years later (September 6th, 1893) on the Home Rule Bill, in the House of Lords, the Duke said :

' I venture to say that when this Bill passes—if it ever passes—nothing in our Constitution will stand as it stood before—certainly not the unity of the kingdom—and I agree with the Duke of Devonshire as to what was said about the distinction between that utterly vague and meaningless phrase about the unity of the Empire and the unity of the kingdom, certainly not the unity of the kingdom ; certainly not the dignity of the Crown ; certainly not the authority of Parliament ; certainly not the responsibility of our Ministerial system ; certainly not, by the confession of my noble friend opposite, the purity of public life ; and last, not least, certainly not the liberties of the people. Every one of these great interests must be profoundly affected, and profoundly affected for the worse. Are we all agreed upon this point as to the immense importance of the subject ? My noble friend, Lord Spencer, said last night, in that speech which was so full of that charm which belongs to his personal character, his moderation, courtesy, and good feeling, that " at least we are all agreed upon the importance of the subject." I do not think that we are agreed. Nothing in my noble

friend's speech gave us the least hint of the enormous effect which such a measure must have on the practical working of our Constitution. As I said before, that speech was full of kindness and of courtesy to us all—there was not a bitter word in it—but we cannot deal with this question with rose-water. It is too serious. I could not help being reminded, when I heard my noble friend's speech, of two celebrated lines addressed by his illustrious namesake, who wrote much about Ireland in the days of Queen Elizabeth. Courtesy and moderation of tone are not the weapons with which this subject has been fought outside the walls of this House. My noble friend may delight his hearers—and it is always very pleasing to hear what he says—but I could not help being reminded of the lines :

“A glow-worm lamp, it cheered mild Spenser,  
Called from Faeryland to struggle through dark ways.”

When we heard the excuses which he made as to the abandonment of conditions which only a few years ago he upheld on the subject of the land in Ireland, and of the retention of Irish members at Westminster, we had a measure of the dark way through which the Spencer of our day has been drifting. We are not agreed, therefore, upon the importance of this subject. Did your lordships hear the Duke of Devonshire last night reaffirm the pleas which Mr. Gladstone has lately denounced? The noble Duke quoted them one by one, showed that, though Mr. Gladstone had caricatured them all more or less, substantially he adhered to them. What did Mr. Gladstone say of those pleas as to the Union? The Duke of Devonshire did not refer to them, but, so far from admitting those pleas—which are the pleas which prove the importance of this measure—Mr. Gladstone said that those pleas were “hideous and monstrous falsehoods.” I hope none of us will be accused of using strong language after that illustrious example,

because after it we can use any language we like. I rejoice myself, because I do not in the least object to this language on the part of Mr. Gladstone. I know it to be perfectly sincere; he is absolutely sincere, and I am not quite sure whether he is not the only member of the Government who is sincere. I look upon the head of the Government as a sort of Mahdi among the dervishes of the Nile. He is a pure fanatic, who cannot look on this subject with moderation, or even with common temper. It proves to us what would be the state of mind of that man in whose hands the Parliament of this country would be if your Lordships do not perform your duty to the people. It is perfectly clear that Mr. Gladstone does not admit the enormous importance of this measure. He treats it, as all along he has treated it, as a comparatively light thing—that is to say, as if it were simply the setting up of a new municipality in the country. . . .

‘I stand here to say, speaking to the people of the United Kingdom and to the people of America and the Continent, that men have a right to refuse to agree to the transference of their allegiance from one authority to another. I repeat what I stated in this House upon a recent occasion, that the duty of allegiance and the extension of protection are correlatives in all civilized societies. If you give up protecting men—their lives, their liberties, and their property—you lose the right to their allegiance. The Liberal party ought to acquiesce in this doctrine. I am myself the descendant of men who resisted authority and suffered death in defence of the liberty of the subject. I therefore cannot hold the doctrine of passive obedience in all circumstances. If you throw over the people of Ulster and commit them to the authority of men who you confess have done constantly what my noble friend Lord Spencer calls discreditable acts—I say that if you treat the people of Ulster in that way, you will lose your right to their obedience. I have but little more to say. I must, however, tax

your Lordships' patience a little longer in order to refer to a favourite theme of the Prime Minister's. The Prime Minister says we must submit to the inevitable. He says it is quite inevitable that this separation should come—that this breaking down of the Imperial Parliament is inevitable. I have a great respect, my Lords, for men who submit to the inevitable—for men who bow their heads to Fate and receive the stab from the swords of their enemies—but I have no respect for men who make things inevitable, who make inevitable misfortunes which they could easily avoid by a little manliness and courage. I maintain that nothing like this Bill is inevitable. On the contrary. My Lords, do not let us think that to-night we are fighting for the last time in a losing battle. I believe we are winning in a great campaign. I believe that the future is on our side. Ours are not the times when great empires are being broken up into petty principalities. Ours is the era, ours is the century of union, of strength by union, and I believe that our strength will lie in the maintenance of this Union. Inevitable! Why, I have been spending the last few weeks in a part of Scotland whence we look down upon the hills of Antrim. We can see the colour of their fields, and in the sunset we can see the glancing of the light upon the windows of the cabins. This is the country, I thought the other day, when I looked on the scene—this is the country which the greatest English statesman tells us must be governed as we govern the Antipodes. Was there ever such folly? I agree with Thomas Carlyle when he said in his own picturesque style, that England, Scotland, and Ireland are one by the ground-plan of the world. By geographical propinquity, by common brotherhood, by common blood, we are one. We want nothing but equality—equal laws on both sides of the Channel. My Lords, if there is a single grievance remaining in Ireland at the present moment, it is entirely due to the present Prime Minister. That

grievance is this—that the Roman Catholics of Ireland have not been allowed any Universities. Why was that? It was because Mr. Gladstone introduced an absurd Bill a few years ago, which my noble friend opposite took a leading part in defeating, having, no doubt, the guidance of the professorial spirit. And since that day what has Mr. Gladstone done? Nothing. . . .

‘We wish, my Lords, for a union of hearts; we wish for a union of interests; we wish for nothing more and nothing less. We desire and are determined that this Union shall be maintained—not a nominal Union, not a Union under the Crown merely, but a Union of Parliaments, a Union of Executives, a Union of the judiciary, a Union of one system of just and equal laws.’

The following extracts from letters received at the time refer to this speech:

‘September 21st, 1893.

‘YOUR GRACE,

‘On behalf of myself and many co-religionists and Liberal Unionists in Ireland, I take the liberty of tendering to your Grace *warm and sincere thanks* for the splendid service which you rendered to the United Kingdom, and more particularly to Ulster, by the magnificent and crushing speech which you lately delivered in the House of Lords, in opposition to the nefarious and revolutionary Home Rule Bill. . . .

‘Among the historic utterances of the present crisis, your own speech, for hard hitting, dialectical skill, and oratorical finish and effect, must ever occupy a high and memorable place.

‘Your Grace will kindly pardon me for taking the liberty of writing you on this subject; but gratitude prompts me to express my sense of the obligations under which we have been laid. I have always been a constitutional Liberal, but never before have I

been so ready to adopt the old formula, "Thank God for a House of Lords!"

' I have the honour to be, your Grace,

' Most respectfully and gratefully yours,

' N. M. BROWN, D.D.,

' Ex-Moderator of the General Assembly of  
the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.'

*From Mr. Daniel O'Connell (September 9th, 1893).*

' MY LORD DUKE,

' As you considered it worth mentioning in your Grace's most able speech in the House of Lords on the 7th instant that "a son of O'Connell had signed a petition against Home Rule," I venture to forward the report of an interview I had with a representative of the *Kent Coast Times*, which shows that I am a sincere Unionist and gives some of my reasons for being one.

' I am happy to remember that my father always repudiated crime in his agitation. I fail to find that the present leaders of the misguided portion of my countrymen have ever, in their speeches or writings, discouraged it.

' I canvassed for Mr. Lowther at the last election here, and, to the best of my ability, worked for him.

' I beg to remain

' Your Grace's obedient servant,

' DANIEL O'CONNELL.'

On April 19th, 1886, the Duke wrote to Mr. Gladstone :

' It was very kind of you to call so soon to see one of those whom Herbert calls "Secessionists," and I trust we shall continue to keep our old relations, joining hands across the cracks which are now yawning into chasms.

' For, truth to say, it is not now so much on particular measures as on the whole methods of argu-



ment and treatment in politics that I differ from you.

‘I think it is Cardinal Newman who says, in regard to faith, that the human intellect, when applied under certain methods, is a “universal solvent.”’

‘This, as it seems to me, is what your intellect is becoming in all matters politic. It is a purely destructive force, lifting all old anchors and laying down no new ones in their place. I say this to explain, not to argue—to explain the root idea in my own mind in its antagonism to yours.

‘As all this difference is now not on speculative matters, but on practical proposals of enormous consequence, we must all speak out, and speak freely, as you are doing.

‘You will understand, therefore, that, whatever I may say, I am where I was as regards yourself personally. Fortunately, the two spheres are wide apart: that in which we are now divided, and that other in which we have shared together a good many of the joys and of the sorrows of life.’

*To Mr. Gladstone (September 10th, 1887).*

‘I have been away in the Islands, living at the foot of a volcano, which is fortunately extinct, the condition in which Dizzy once humorously described you and your then colleagues.

‘I return to the mainland to find the fiery cones of Hawarden in full activity, and one little jet of hot material running in my direction.

‘I write to send you a mild remonstrance against words which refer to certain counter-arguments to yours being described as “attacks” upon you. I hold to the principle I took up in a letter to you two years ago (nearly), that in the profound differences which separate you from your former associates, and not less from your former self, the two spheres of politics and of private friendship are absolutely

separate. I will illustrate this doctrine by an anecdote which I have never told you, but which I have often told to others, and which I repeat often now, when I hear political hostility degenerate into personal abuse.

‘You may perhaps recollect complaining once to me in your Cabinet of 1870 of your difficulties in personal dealings with “Bob Lowe.” I suppose there was no one of your then colleagues less sympathetic with you, less in tune with your opinions and enthusiasms. Nevertheless, this happened to me with him. After you had resigned, and when we were in office only till our successors came in, 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 would not have said this if he had not felt it, and, I will add, he would not have said it to me unless he had known that I could sympathize.

‘And I did. I don’t suppose that any man ever conciliated and commanded so much personal and political affection from colleagues as yourself, and this, moreover, was entirely separate from mere private friendship.

‘I hold that all this is perfectly consistent with the most vehement opposition to your new opinions, as well as to your methods of argument in support of them.

‘You have yourself been firing red-hot shot, in whole broadsides, against all who cannot follow you in a path which, to them at least, is entirely new. You have ascribed a “servile spirit” to those who supported the Crimes Bill; and very lately you have written of the “shallow, useless, and in many points utterly untrue statements put forward” on behalf of the Liberal Unionists.

‘I don’t object in the least; you have a perfect right so to speak.

‘True, you seldom name persons, whereas your own name is inseparable from the cause you advocate. You stand alone. . . .

‘Of course, it would be possible by circumlocutions to avoid naming you. But this would only transmute speaking of you into speaking at you, which is odious in my opinion, and is disrespectful, while the strongest direct quotation and reference need not have this character at all.

‘I say all this in explanation, not in argument. I am anxious that you should understand my point of view, even if you cannot take the same.

‘Retirement from public life, absolute abstention from the expression of convictions which are largely ethical as well as merely political, would be the only course compatible with not “attacking” you, if the combating of your opinions and of your teaching is to be so construed.

‘You may be right, and we may all be wrong. I sometimes ponder this possibility, and “gang over the fundamentals” again and again, always with one result, that your experiment cannot be safely tried. Unfortunately, neither you nor I can live to see the results. What we are each doing now will have effects “far on in summers which we shall not see.” We must speak and write according to our lights, and must reconcile personal friendship as best we may with the inevitable passions of all great political contests.’

*To Mr. Gladstone (Inveraray, April 26th, 1892).*

‘I quite feel with you, and probably for much the same reasons, that we ought not to enter upon personal controversy about politics. But this does not interfere with my desire to answer frankly any question as to my own views that you may put to me. I have

always thought that the Federal Constitution of America is the best model existing of federation under one supreme law or set of laws.

‘But, of course, such a system presupposes that existence of previously separate and independent Governments such as the Colonial Governments had been.

‘Pray do not conclude that I think the Federal Constitution of the U.S.A. is one to which it is easy or even possible to adapt the United Kingdom. But this would lead me into the thick of the controversy. And besides the indisposition to enter into this with you on the grounds alluded to by you, I have this additional feeling, that the position of a party leader makes it quite hopeless to argue with him, because on many points which are fundamental he is generally not open to argument at all. I am continually annoyed and vexed by the inevitable necessity in your case of founding almost all reasoning on what you have said, or have omitted to say—a necessity arising from the indubitable fact that you are not only the head and leader of the party, but you *are* the party, nobody else even approaching you either in the sincerity of your convictions or in the influence you exert. It is really ridiculous what nonentities all around you are. I only say this to explain how impossible I have found it to avoid combating your action and your speeches as the only ones which it is worth while even to consider.’

On November 1st, 1893, the Duke spoke at a great Unionist demonstration in the City Hall, Glasgow, on the Irish question. From this speech the following extract is taken :

‘I rejoice to know that you are thinking of the great wave, as I believe, of public opinion which is now ready to support the House of Lords in saying that this law for the misgovernment of Ireland, this Bill

for the sale of the liberties of our fellow-subjects, shall not receive your approbation, any more than it has received the approbation of the House of Lords. You will readily understand, therefore, that I have not come here to apologize. I have hardly come here even to explain, and if I do explain, I shall explain by telling you of an incident that has occurred to myself within the last few days. You know that in the Highlands of Scotland, where I live, behind the blue range of mountains which encircle the Firth of Clyde, we still retain what you Lowlanders are sometimes pleased to call our ancient superstitions—some of them, at least. We believe—some of us believe—in second sight. Some of us believe in visions of the day and of the night. Some of us believe in the remarkable words of the patriarch Job, that “in a dream, when deep sleep falleth upon men, then He openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction.”

‘Well, the other day, when I was thinking what fragment of this great subject—for it is an immense subject—I should address you upon to-night, I fell, if not into a deep sleep, at least into a deep reverie. I had a vision and a dream. Will you allow me to tell you what the dream was? I dreamed that I and a great number of my fellow-countrymen of all classes were about to set out on a long journey in an immense railway-train, through a country which I knew was wholly new, and along a line which no passenger-train had ever passed before, made over bogs, and sand, and quicksands, and forests, and precipices, and every kind of dangerous ground. And before entering the train I went up to some of the officers of the company, and I said: “Have you got a careful driver?” “Oh,” said the guard of the train, “we have the oldest hand in the employment of the company.” I said: “That does not satisfy me. Great age is of itself no guarantee for nerve, and therefore I am not satisfied with that.” “Oh,” he said, “we have a grand old engineering hand to

guide us." But he said also, to my great relief: "We have an additional precaution. We have made up what we call a brake compartment. We allow the passengers to have a few of their number in that brake compartment, and we give them the power, if anything very dangerous should appear, to apply the brake and to stop the train." "Oh, well," I said, "I should be very glad indeed of that," and he proposed that I should be one in that brake compartment. Well, we went on for some time very well and prosperously, but we saw it was a very dangerous country, and at last, towards dark, the train began to slow on a rapid turn in the line. We all looked out, and we saw we were stopping at a station, which I saw was invaded by a great crowd of wild-looking men, armed with blackthorns. They were cheering loudly and making an infernal row, waving handkerchiefs and sticks. As we drew up to the platform, I saw them waving a flag. I could not quite see the motto at first, but at last I made it out to be "Through plunder to disintegration." Then I saw them go up to the engine. At first our grand old engineer repelled them with much dignity and power, but a short time afterwards we were alarmed to see secret signs passing between our grand old engineer and this mob. We saw him allow a whole lot of them to take possession of his engine, and then we suddenly started again. Well, gentlemen, we had no sooner started under these inauspicious conditions than we felt the train sway most dreadfully from side to side, as if we were going to run off the line. We saw that we were rushing past stations at which we should have stopped. We looked out and saw that we were rushing against danger signals without taking the least notice. At last we looked at each other and said: "We must apply the brake." We all jumped together, and with a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether, we stopped the train. Then followed a scene which I shall never forget. I saw it as distinctly as I see this

vast assembly just now. The line was covered with passengers, who came to thank us for having saved their lives. In the middle of this came the grand old engineer, with a frown upon his face. He said this was not a time for violence, hardly even for vehemence; but he asked us, shaking his fist in our faces, "Why did you interfere with my driving in this way? I will smash you up next time." That is the position, I feel, in regard to the House of Lords. We were in the brake compartment, and we stopped the train for the best of all reasons.

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'I ask you now to look at the specimen we have of Gladstonian argument in the speech delivered in Edinburgh the other day. It is a perfect specimen—I choose it because it is a perfect specimen—of what I call Gladstonian tactics. It is a policy of red herrings to distract the attention of the people from the merits of his Bill. His proposal is to keep it out of sight; to draw a red herring across the track; to attack the House of Lords. That is the whole object and the whole gist of that speech. Complete silence on his own Bill—absolute silence; a violent attack on the House of Lords to distract attention. Now, that is the secret of all jugglery. I had a relative in early life who had paid a famous juggler to teach him his secrets, and he told me that he was often much struck with the philosophy that was in it. The whole secret of legerdemain is to misdirect the attention of the spectator either by words or by actions; to distract the attention of the audience to one spot while the trick is being performed in another. This is the whole secret of conjuring, and it is the secret Mr. Gladstone has been working now for eight years in order to keep the people of this country hoodwinked and bamboozled into the acceptance of his proposals.

'I am not going to be led off by Mr. Gladstone's tactics into any disquisition before you as to the constitution of the House of Lords. That question

can wait. But I will say a few words in passing about my own feelings concerning it. We Peers are supposed to have an immense privilege. Yes, we have a privilege in one sense of the word, but we have also an immense disability. We are unable to sit, even if we desired to do so, for a constituency of the people. During my fifty years of public life I have often been tempted to wish that I had had the higher privilege that, strange to say, belongs to Irish Peers—that of refusing to sit in the House of Lords and of appealing to a constituency of the House of Commons. The Irish Peers have that privilege. Lord Palmerston was one of them who took advantage of it, and you know with what splendid results. I feel that we are trustees for the people—for the nation as a whole. We do not represent one constituency alone, but what we think is the general impulse and impression of the people of the whole nation. I am told that it would be well to have the House of Peers remodelled, and its basis enlarged and broadened. I shall have no objection to the process, provided, of course, that it is done on lines which are consistent with the experience of other nations and with the first principles of human society. But I beg you to observe what is the language of many of our opponents. They have no objection to our constitution; their objection is to our exercising any discretion whatever. The assumption is that wherever a second Chamber differs from the first it must be in the wrong. And not only that. I can excuse men for saying, “We are always right; our opponents are always wrong.” That is very natural language; but the language of many of our opponents seems to be that a second Chamber should have no opinion of its own whatever, that it should be perfectly dumb, and follow exactly the votes of the first Chamber. Well, I say that if that is the doctrine, a second Chamber is of no use whatever. . . . All the countries in Europe that have invented a Constitution, as well as America, have desired to have a second



Chamber; and America, as you know, has a second Chamber much stronger than ours, and they set immense value upon it. I cannot help thinking that the recent transactions and Mr. Gladstone's conduct have thrown a new light on this very important subject, because I used always to feel that the great object of a second Chamber was to prevent hasty and impulsive legislation; but there has been no popular impulse in favour of this Irish Bill anywhere—none whatever. The danger that we are suffering from is not popular excitement in favour of any particular measure. That measure has never raised any excitement or any enthusiasm in any part of the country. What we are suffering from is a danger which no one of us foresaw, and that is the possibility of a very cunning party leader bribing and manipulating various factions by giving one this, the other that, giving hopes here, giving hopes there; and so, by mere cunning, by mere dexterity, by what he himself would call "old Parliamentary handism," manufacturing an artificial majority which shall thrust its proposals down the throats of Parliament. I thank Mr. Gladstone for having given us the great example of a danger which is new, or almost new, in the history of the world.

'There is one important truth in Mr. Gladstone's Edinburgh speech. He did say one thing which is deeply and profoundly true. He says that in our Constitution we trust entirely to the good sense and moderation of those who possess abstract rights and legal powers. Quite so. We have no written Constitution, as the United States have. Considering the great interests which are at stake in political affairs, the great interests which are at stake in the wise and the just government of mankind, it is no blasphemy to quote the words of Scripture, and say that, as "the kingdom of heaven is within you," so the British Constitution is within the breasts of the British people. Though you search all the libraries in Glasgow, and search all the dryasdust tomes that have been

gathered for centuries, you will not find the British Constitution. It has no written record—nothing which Mr. Gladstone admits to be even fundamental. No treaty of union with England; nothing, in his opinion, is a fundamental law. Everything depends upon the moderation, the temper, and good sense with which the legal powers are exercised by the various authorities. I turn this against himself, and I say you are now opposing Mr. Gladstone on account of a want of common-sense and even of decent moderation in his policy and in his method. He has abused the powers of party leadership. He has abused the doctrine of reserve, of secrecy from the people. He has abused, lastly, the wielding of party majorities. If party government is to be conducted in this country on honourable and public lines, surely some degree of openness is necessary between the followers and the chief. Surely it is due to such men as John Bright, and Lord Hartington, and Mr. Goschen, that they should have been told of the new secret which, to use his language, was hatching in his mind. None of these things was done, and I understand that the other day in the House of Commons he openly avowed that in 1882 he sent a private and confidential message to Mr. Parnell that he would not in future oppose his object. I say that was a betrayal on his part. Let me tell you this. Mr. Bright has gone from us. I was his colleague during a good many years. I was his personal friend for many more. We were divided on many subjects. I did not always agree with him, but I never knew a more thoroughly honest or more thoroughly masculine understanding. He came to me in the last year of his life, and he sat with me a long time in my garden in London, and I assure you he expressed an opinion to me about these Irish proposals which almost took my breath away, so vehement was he that they would be ruinous to England and ruinous to Ireland. He was the author of the best part of the Irish Land Bill, the only part which

is worth anything—the Purchase Clause. Yet to this great man, for such he was, the tribune of the people, the foremost man in the Liberal party, Mr. Gladstone gave no confidence, but opened secret negotiations with Mr. Parnell. Mr. Gladstone said that every Government must have reserve. Of course, they must have. On such matters as the Budget they must have secrets. Every man of you who is engaged in commercial proceedings knows that to reveal the Budget would disturb commerce and great interests. But I maintain that when great constitutional changes are in question the people ought to be taken into confidence—whole and open confidence. That is the only course which a statesman ought to pursue. He says: “Oh, the people take in great ideas; they do not take in details.” What does he call great ideas? Let us compare what he is doing now with the three questions which I am about to mention. Take Catholic Emancipation; take the Reform of Parliament; take Free Trade. All these great measures involved great and simple ideas, which the people were perfectly able to take in. There was no haste. Catholic Emancipation had been before the country something like thirty years; the Corn Laws had been longer, and so on with regard to Free Trade and the Reform of Parliament. All these were simple ideas, and the people were fully cognizant of the principles underlying them. But what were the great items of Mr. Gladstone’s Home Rule plan? The only idea I can give is this: that Irish affairs are to be dealt with by the Irish, and that means that Irishmen may muzzle each other, and cut each other’s throats, and boycott each other, and tear the eyes out of each other, in every way, and it is no concern of ours; it is an Irish affair. That is a great idea which I do hope the people of this country will never tolerate. Mr. Gladstone says we are foreigners to the Irish. I say we are flesh of their flesh and bone of their bone. We are responsible for their liberties, and we will not betray them.

‘Mr. Gladstone has used some very violent language lately of us Unionists. He said the other day, talking of our objections: “I believe them to be enormous, monstrous, and hideous falsehoods.” Now, that is pretty well. I hope you are satisfied with the mildness of the language. He goes on to say: “I am bound absolutely to believe in their sincerity.” He is very kind. Now, I want to say this to you, that, in my opinion, this language is full of an important truth, and the truth is this: the word “falsehood” is generally applied to falsehood in fact, but is not generally applied to fallacious arguments. We use the word “fallacy” for that, and not “falsehood.” But I agree with Mr. Gladstone that there are fallacious arguments which are in the nature of falsehoods, and as much to be condemned as a falsehood in matters of fact. I see that I am addressing a great many young men as well as elderly men, and I would impress upon them this truth—that the spirit to enlarge in yourselves, above all things, is the spirit of truth, and that you should hate a fallacy in argument almost as much as all honourable men hate a lie in fact. The world will be better off when it comes to this, and democratic government by the masses of the people will be consistent with the highest interests of mankind when public men address themselves in this spirit, and in this spirit alone.

‘Now, I have only further to say before you retire from this place, you may well be tired of Gladstonian speeches, but you have to deal with an immense subject, even the remodelling of our British Constitution. Go and look in your libraries to the great works which have been written by our American brethren in framing their Constitution. Compare the splendid logic which they used, the calm and dignified and foreseeing wisdom with which they laid the foundation of their great Republic; compare with that the loose language, the slovenly thinking, of the Gladstonian party—ambiguous words concealing, and

intended to conceal, mischievous and ambiguous proposals—and then you will see what a great study is before you. Above all, remember your duty to your fellow-countrymen across the Channel. Remember, it is literally true that Mr. Gladstone's proposals give less security for life and liberty and property to the people of Ireland than the laws of the United States give to her emancipated negroes. That is literally true. I should be glad to prove it to you if I could have a separate address at some future time. Remember your duty to your fellow-men across the Channel. Help us who have done our best to resist this invidious and iniquitous attempt. Without your help we can do but little, and I beg you to imitate Mr. Gladstone at least in one thing, and that is passion. Be as passionate, but more logical and more careful than he is. It is legitimate to be passionate when there are great interests at stake. There is the Constitution of your country at stake, that which secures the liberties of every man and woman and child under the Imperial Government. Remember, you are responsible; you have consciences and intellects of your own to discharge your duty to your God and to your country.'

The Duke received many letters congratulating him on this speech, from some of which the following extracts have been selected :

*From Lord Salisbury (November 9th, 1893).*

'I read with great satisfaction your proceedings at Glasgow, which seem to have been in every way most successful and encouraging. It is gratifying to see that you put Mr. Morley into a most unphilosophic passion.'

*From Mr. Thomas Hughes\* (November 4th, 1893).*

‘DEAR DUKE OF ARGYLL,

‘Thanks for yours. As to the speech, I was quite uplifted by it. Nothing that the Duke of Devonshire or our converted Joseph, or Balfour, or Goschen have said—good and staunch as they have all been—has *fetched* me so. . . .

‘I am glad that you threw down the gauntlet to the Radicals, Fabians, *and sich*, on the question of what party has done most for industrial and philanthropic reform and legislation. Probably there will be “wigs on the green” over this part of your speech, so if I can be of any further use you have only to let me know. I have been behind the scenes ever since 1848, so may be able to clear up mists for you in these, as you have for me in the region of the higher politics.

‘Pray don’t think of answering.

‘Ever most truly yours,

‘THOMAS HUGHES.

‘P.S.—My wife reminded me at breakfast that, when I was made Q.C. twenty-five years ago and had to go to Court, she advised that I should ask the leader on our then side with whom I most agreed to present me, and that accordingly I applied to you, and you kindly did the business. I had forgotten it, but was pleased to be reminded that at any rate some of one’s old political beliefs hold water still.’

*From Mr. Walter (November 3rd, 1893).*

‘Forgive me for writing a line to say how much I have enjoyed your speech at St. Mungo’s City. I wish you would some day give us your reminiscences of some of the other political heroes with whom you have lived, such as Brougham, Derby, and Lyndhurst, the cleverest of the lot.

‘Your dream, or second sight vision, was an excellent parable.’

\* Author of ‘Tom Brown’s School-days.’

*From Sir M. E. Grant Duff (November 4th, 1893).*

‘ You really must allow me to congratulate you on your Glasgow speech, which I have only read this morning.

‘ For many years I have been accustomed to think and to say that you, Bright, and Gladstone stood in a class by yourselves amongst the orators to whom I have listened ; but I very much doubt whether you ever pronounced a wiser or weightier speech than this one.’

*From Mr. Bosworth Smith (November 7th, 1893).*

‘ MY LORD DUKE,

‘ I must send you one line to tell you of the supreme pleasure which your splendid speech at Glasgow gave me. I read every word of it aloud to my wife and daughters, who, I think, were as sorry as your audience must have been when it came to the end. The personal reminiscences were intensely interesting. I happened to be going over the Natural History Museum with Sir William Flower on the afternoon on which it appeared in the *Times*. Of course, he was delighted at the use you made of your visit there with him. I don’t think Sir George Trevelyan will pay a private visit to those scattered vertebræ. The creature ought to be named after him on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle.

‘ How I would have liked to have heard you ! Apparently, we are not to hear of Home Rule again from Mr. Gladstone for a long time to come.

‘ Believe me,

‘ With much respect,

‘ Yours very sincerely,

‘ W. BOSWORTH SMITH.’

To this letter the Duke replied (November 9th, 1893) :

‘ DEAR MR. BOSWORTH SMITH,

‘ Many thanks for your kind note. We had a splendid meeting—4,000 people, all men, largely working classes. . . . The House of Lords cheered to the echo whenever named !

‘ Yours truly,

‘ ARGYLL.’