

CHAPTER XXVIII

1855-56

CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. GLADSTONE ON THE CRIMEAN WAR

IN the account which I have given of the origin and progress of the Crimean War I have said nothing of the Turks as a people or as a Government fitted to rule with decency over the empire we were defending. This is no omission on my part. I do not recollect in all the debates of the Cabinet, from the beginning to the end of the Crimean War, one single discussion on this question. This was not due to shortsightedness or neglect, but because that question was to us irrelevant. We had nothing to do with the merits or demerits of the Turkish Government, but only with the fate and disposal of its territories, whenever that Government should come to an end. What we were insisting upon, at the risk of a costly and a bloody war, was that the fate and disposal of Turkey was not to be settled by Russia, but by the co-operation and consent of Europe. We started with this principle, as laid down and sanctioned in the treaty of 1840, and we were all satisfied of its soundness and importance. The new treaty of 1856 rested entirely on the same principle, and all its provisions were directed towards giving effect to it. It did not deal, and it did not profess to deal, with internal reforms in the Turkish Empire, except quite incidentally. Its whole aim was to secure that empire from being disposed of by Russia, by the use of her great preponderance of power and her geographical position of insuperable advantage.

The chief remedial provisions were these: In the first place, the common acknowledgment of all the Powers that Turkey was to be recognised as one of the European Powers, in the fate of which all the rest had an equal interest and concern. In the second place, the Black Sea was to be neutralized—that is to say, it was to be closed to all the guns and open to all the commerce of the world. The special treaties which, as the result of previous wars, had given to Russia opportunities and excuses for perpetual interference with the internal affairs of Turkey, were all abolished. The Sultan agreed to communicate to all the Powers his new promises to his Christian subjects; this promise, however, was not to be considered as an admission by him of a right of interference on their part. We did not repudiate any right of interference resting on other grounds, but we agreed not to rest it on the fact that the Sultan's promises were communicated and formally recorded in the new treaty. The Danubian Principalities and the Danubian fortresses of Turkey, as also pledges for the free navigation of the Danube, were placed under new securities and the guarantee of Europe. All of these were provisions which added to the safety of Turkey against invasion on the side of Russia.

We were not foolish enough to think that this treaty of 1856 was a settlement of the East of Europe. But there was no political party—not even any school of thought—in the country which had any better solution to recommend. If there had been any such party which took up the cause of the Christian subjects of the Porte, then the old Memorandum of the Czar Nicholas, which was still sleeping in the pigeon-holes of the War Office, would have been the plan upon which reasonable men might well have fallen back. We might have called on Russia and the other Powers of Europe to unite with us in bringing the baleful rule of Turkey to an end, and in a rational partition of its territory; but this heroic remedy was not then within the region

of practical politics. No agreement of the Powers on the principle of partition could possibly have been obtained. Moreover, the whole difficulty had arisen in a form which did not connect itself at all with any fault on the part of Turkey. The Sultan was the aggrieved party. Besides, in defending herself against a very insidious aggression on the part of Russia, Turkey was defending the European Treaty of 1840, in which we had been the principal negotiator, and which had been specially directed against such secret engagements with any one Power as those we were now resisting.

Under those conditions, any final settlement of the Eastern Question was at that time impossible for us. Neither at home nor abroad should we have had any support in any scheme of such a scope. There was, indeed, a party—but a very small one—which may be said to have had an alternative scheme to ours—the party, namely, of Cobden and Bright, otherwise called the Manchester School. Their view was that the old doctrine of a balance of power in Europe was a mere antiquated superstition, and in particular that Russia was a Power which we could ‘crumple up’ whenever we liked—that we should not interfere at all, but allow Russia to impose on Turkey any engagements she liked by force of arms, and thereby to serve herself heir to that rich inheritance of the East. I do not stop to discuss this doctrine here. Suffice it to say that not one member of the Cabinet agreed in it, and that a policy founded on it would have met with a passionate condemnation from the British people. It would, however, have been in itself a rational and a consistent policy if announced from the beginning and persevered in to the end.

But there was another policy which was not rational or consistent, and that was, to be responsible, not only for beginning the war, but for giving it the significant direction of a great attack upon the naval arsenal and fleets of Sebastopol; to continue that attack till it led

to great loss and almost to disaster; and then suddenly to desert the cause, and to denounce both the feelings and the arguments on which that cause depended. This was the course taken by Gladstone, which it must be confessed was most trying to his friends. As my relations with him, however, have been always some part of my life, and sometimes a great part, I wish to give in this chapter some examples of our correspondence during the continuance of the Crimean War.

It must be remembered that, when Gladstone left us, no question had been raised as to the policy of the war, or as to the destination and purpose of our attack. The terrible Siege of Sebastopol had then run a considerable part of its course, and no thought had arisen in the minds of any of us of abandoning that great military enterprise, or the great political object which was its aim. I did not, indeed, for a moment expect that Gladstone would remain friendly when he had ceased to belong to us. It is a difficult thing for any man to continue friendly, or even impartial, towards a Cabinet from which he has withdrawn, but with Gladstone it was an impossibility. The heat and impetus of his mind were quite sure to deflect it at the least touch of difference, and its tangential flight could never be calculated. Accordingly, though I felt sure of his speedy alienation, I did not foresee that the whole special aim and object of our attack upon Sebastopol—namely, the destruction of Russian preponderance in the Black Sea—would become the chosen object of his most furious denunciation. The opportunity came to him for the first time when the feeble negotiations at Vienna under Lord John Russell presented for a moment an appearance of difference between us and our Plenipotentiary. Gladstone then took with passion the side, as he thought, of Lord John, and of the ambiguous and deceptive phrases in which he was disposed to recommend a peace. But when Lord John came home, we have seen how he accepted new lights from Paris and from us, how he turned completely round,

and how he finally joined us heartily in speech and vote. This, however, had no effect on Gladstone. He had been with us up to the Vienna negotiations. He was vehemently against us from the moment of their failure. His ingenious mind invented for itself the fable that our policy was completely changed when we did not accept the Austrian terms, and that it was now perfectly consistent in him to oppose and condemn the war into which he had helped to plunge us, and in particular the great military enterprise which was the most significant indication of its aims, and which he was one of the loudest to applaud.

The correspondence which follows refers to this state of matters. In a letter which I have lost I had referred to the 'Four Points' on which we had all been agreed, and I had referred also to the importance we had all attached to securing the support and co-operation of Austria. On the 12th of May I received from Gladstone the following reply :

'29, B. SQUARE,

'May 12, 1855.

'MY DEAR ARGYLL,

'I will not refer to the general topics of your letter further than to say that, in speaking of our having adopted, not the "Four Points," as you suppose, but a particular construction of the "Third Point," with great levity, I used words which I meant to apply not so much to others as to myself in particular, but not so much to the inadequate consideration of that particular subject as to the inadequacy of the consideration which I generally find on retrospect that I have given to any weighty public question when compared with its importance. But my main object in writing is to say how strongly I differ from you on the point with regard to Austria. In my opinion, if Austria has informed England that she will not go to war for the limitation of fleets, the Government will incur a frightful responsibility by withholding that fact—if they do withhold it—from the knowledge of Parliament; and upon this opinion I must *act*.

'Believe me, most sincerely yours,

'W. E. GLADSTONE.'

As this letter seemed to imply that I had told him that Austria had categorically informed us that she would not act with us in enforcing the principles of limitation (of fleets in the Euxine), and as I had not intended to convey this meaning, I wrote the following reply :

‘*Confidential.*

‘ ARGYLL LODGE, KENSINGTON,

‘ MY DEAR GLADSTONE,

‘ *May 14, 1855.*

‘ It is not true that Austria has announced to us that she will never go to war for limitation. If we said so to Parliament, it would give an entirely false impression. I find Lord John does not consider that any such intimation has been made, and on looking back to the papers, I find that the very same despatch which reports some private speech of Buol to such effect in course of an argument adds that, after hearing the argument out, he appeared to change his tone and language, and subsequently declared formally to Russia that Austria reserved perfect freedom on this matter. I don't know what you mean by saying that “you will act” on this point in a certain way. I can only say that you have not derived from me any such information as that which you seem to assume you are in possession of in regard to it.

‘ You speak of a “fearful responsibility.” There is indeed plenty of this *on all sides*. I am not sure that I should feel *that* responsibility to sit the heaviest which would arise from refusing to communicate to the enemy information, even if it had been true, which would be of great use to him and of great disadvantage to ourselves.

‘ I hope you will remember that negotiations are not, strictly speaking, closed. You, the peace party, may do much good in Parliament; but it will be nice steering which can alone prevent you doing more harm than good by public debate *at this moment*. Arguments to the effect that we have demanded *too much* already *may* assume so pro-Russian an aspect as to create nothing but a violent reaction. Arguments pointing out the dangerous consequences of demanding *more* as committing us to an almost interminable war will certainly do good—at least, I think so—for this is the popular tendency, and the public have had little serious thought yet on what they do want, and what they will be committed to, if they don't hold hard.

‘ I am sure you will like my writing to you without reserve what

occurs to me. I am sincerely desirous of seeing peace well advocated by an independent party in Parliament; I mean a peace *consistent with the original objects of the war.*

‘I am, my dear Gladstone, yours very sincerely,
‘ ARGYLL.’

To this, again, Gladstone replied as follows :

‘29, B. SQUARE,

‘MY DEAR ARGYLL,

‘May 14, 1855.

‘Beyond all doubt, it is a matter of the greatest gravity, even for persons like myself, without authority to separate themselves in the face of the world from the policy of their Government, who act for, and commit, the country in regard to the war. Avowed differences in Parliament upon questions where every difference is vital must more or less weaken your hands, and may inspire the enemy with exaggerated hopes.

‘But at this moment, as it appears to me, he is reasonable and you are unreasonable. When you tell me, as a ground for silence—so I understand you—that negotiations are not closed, I reply that it is a good ground for silence *if* the Government are disposed to make an effort to recover an opportunity they have thrown away. But it is no reason for silence if the continued negotiations are to be conducted in the spirit which met the second Russian proposal by the declaration on the part of the English Minister that his instructions were exhausted.

‘I am sorry to say all that I see and hear tends to the conclusion that the English Government, and the English Government alone, is the cause which has prevented peace from being, in substance, made within the last three weeks. I have no doubt whatever that if it had done otherwise it would have been abused, assailed, perhaps overthrown. On the other hand, it is, I suppose, most probable that your warlike counsels will be for the present highly approved.

‘In the way of caution, all I could do I have done, namely, to take care that some member, at least, of the Government should know my apprehensions, and now my intentions, before I am committed to anyone else.

‘Believe me, most sincerely yours,

‘W. E. GLADSTONE.’

As it seemed to me that Gladstone did not understand the objections we had to the Austro-Russian proposals which we had rejected at Vienna, and as I thought the futility of them demonstrable, I addressed him again in another letter :

‘ *Private.*

‘ ARGYLL LODGE, KENSINGTON,
‘ *May 17, 1855.*

‘ MY DEAR GLADSTONE,

‘ It increases, of course, the painful sense I have had for the last month of the difficult and responsible position in which we have been placed, to know that you have so decidedly made up your mind that the continuation of the war is due to our fault, and that an honourable and satisfactory peace might have been attained.

‘ The weight, however, which should naturally attach to your opinion is, on this question, somewhat modified by the conviction I entertain that you have receded, and are receding, from the common ground on which we stood when members of the same Government.

‘ This is indicated by the language in which you refer to the “Four Points.” You seem to feel that you did not sufficiently consider their scope and bearing when they were originally laid down, and that a new light has been thrown upon the third by the discussions at Vienna, or, at least, by the proposals of Russia. But I will assume that you still agree that one very essential object of the war is to “put an end to Russian preponderance in the Black Sea.” The question, then, is whether the Russian proposal really does effect this object. I cannot conscientiously say that it does; it certainly was a pity that we ever laid down the “Third Point” as a basis of agreement *with Russia* at all, because her proposal is one which offers nothing which she has any power of withholding. It merely amounts to an acknowledgment on her part of the right of Turkey to hold absolutely the keys of her own straits. We might make a treaty with Turkey now, without any dealing with Russia, securing our own right of entry through those straits on any condition which Turkey may choose to agree to.

‘ This, however, is an argument against our own mode of proceeding rather than against the proposal itself. But as to that

proposal itself, how far can you say that it would put an end to "Russian preponderance"? Your own argument against our proposal is that it involves the possible entry into the Black Sea of a force unjustly superior to that which Russia would be able to maintain for purposes of defence. You admit that the same argument would apply even to allowing Turkey to give unrestricted access to our fleets added to her own; and your only rejoinder is—*Volenti non fit injuria*—if Russia chooses to submit to the danger and offers it, you don't desire to suggest to her how great is the concession she is making. Well, but what does all this point to? Why, that Russia will be under the temptation, and even necessity for purposes of *defence*, to augment rather than decrease her force in the Euxine. She will plead your argument for doing so. She will say: "I have agreed to allow Turkey to send in whenever she pleases a great combined fleet to ravage my shores and bombard my towns; I must keep up a large standing navy to meet such a contingency."

'This would appear to be the natural, if not necessary, course of events. What, then, is the result which the Russian proposal tends to? That she shall keep up a larger navy than ever in the Black Sea, that her *preponderance as against Turkey* will be strengthened and confirmed, and that the possibility of that *preponderance*, even as against the Western Powers, being at all affected will depend on the contingencies of France and England having large fleets ready at a moment's notice, and those two Powers being in such permanent alliance as to be disposed to *use* those fleets in combination and for the same purpose.

'Can any man say with truth that this is "putting an end to Russian preponderance in the Black Sea"? I quite admit that it may be represented as such a nominal fulfilment of the condition that we may *retreat from our former position* under cover of it. But is it anything more?

'If the evils of war are so great that we dare not bear them, it may be a good reason for such a retreat; or, if you think we have been so beaten that we have little hope of success, that would be a still better reason for retreating. But don't let us disguise that it *would be a retreat*, involving all the great moral and political consequences which could not be separated from the retreat of the two greatest nations of Europe.

‘ However, what I chiefly wish to say to you is this : that you, the peace party, ought to consider very carefully how you can so guide the debate as to promote really and effectually the cause of peace.

‘ I dread as much as you do our getting committed to conditions the attainment of which would involve us in wars of which no man can foresee the end. Already it has been argued that “ limitation ” of fleets is useless. That means that we must go on to *dismemberment*, to occupation or alienation of Russian territory. I think it *most useful* that the consequences of committing the honour and blood of England to such a war should be pointed out, resolutely and clearly traced.

‘ It was in reply to such an argument from Cobden that, if I recollect rightly, Lord John was induced to declare that he sought no Russian territory. That declaration was a landmark, and other similar declarations may be deduced by arguments pointed in the same direction.

‘ But I rather dread the tendency of arguments going the length of those you have been using lately. They will certainly tend to reduce the strong objections entertained to anything *short* of limitation ; and I confess that, although I think *those objections as strong as possible*, I should prefer to see this question left open to consideration as long as it can be.

‘ I am, my dear Gladstone,

‘ Yours most sincerely,

‘ ARGYLL.’

Between the date of the close of the Vienna Conferences in May, 1855, and the fall of Sebastopol in September, 1855, our political letters ceased. It is always a fine thing to see a public man breasting the waves of popular condemnation, running high against him. Agreement in his opinions is not required. On the other hand, our admiration must be affected by his personal consistency, and by the circumstances under which those opinions have been adopted. In this case both those criteria of judgment seemed to me to tell against my friend’s course. Gladstone had shared with us the responsibility of the attack upon Sebastopol,

which could have no other sense or meaning except some such stipulation for the future as that which we were now demanding, and this stipulation Gladstone was advising the enemy to resist with his last man and his last rouble. Fortunately, we could be at our ease as regards the country, which was supporting us with almost an excess of zeal. But in proportion as they were passionate, Gladstone was contemptuous. On the 21st August he wrote to me: 'Your (!) cannon are roaring before Sebastopol, and the music certainly pleases the ear of the middle class, which calls itself the country.'

There was not the slightest ground for this distinction. The general tone of all classes was the same.

When the fall of Sebastopol came at last, early in September, 1855, Gladstone was, very naturally, in a hurry to hear of peace. So was I. But arguments such as those he had been using were among the impediments in our way. They had stimulated the passion that asked for more. Amid the excitement and shouts of victory we were urged, not only to prolong, but to extend the war. It was under these conditions that Gladstone wrote to me the following letter:

'HAWARDEN, CHESTER,
'October 3, 1855.

'I will only say I wait with great anxiety and great eagerness to know at the proper time what steps are being taken for peace now that the grand consummation, the fall of Sebastopol, has been achieved with so much glory in triumphing over so brave, obstinate, and skilful a resistance; and my belief that you execrate with me the abominable doctrine now preached right and left by those who in May last assured us the most loudly that Sebastopol was the great object of the war and the one obstacle to peace, but who now coolly describe it as the first act of the great tragedy, and quietly bid us prepare for the other four.

'W. E. GLADSTONE.'

Having replied to this in a letter reminding him of the difficulties to be overcome, and especially of his having once expressed to me his sense of the debt we owed to Palmerston for having concentrated the attention of the Cabinet upon the expedition to Sebastopol, I received the following reply :

‘ HAWARDEN,

‘ October 18, 1855.

‘ MY DEAR ARGYLL,

‘ You have conferred a great obligation on me in one part of your letter of the 9th by putting me into the witness-box and asking me why I thought last year that we were under an obligation to Lord Palmerston for “concentrating the attention of the Cabinet on the expedition to the Crimea.”

‘ Such was *then* my feeling, entertained so strongly that I even wrote to him for the purpose of giving to it the most direct expression, and such is my feeling *still*. I think the fall of Sebastopol, viewed in itself and apart from the mode in which it has been brought about, a great benefit to Europe. The same might perhaps be said of some other fortified places not Russian, and even of the camp at Boulogne which our “great ally,” the sincerity of whose attachment to us is so much beyond question, has created, of course, for purposes purely defensive. This benefit I should have contemplated with high and, so to speak, unmixed satisfaction, were I well assured as to the means by which we had achieved it. But, of course, there is a great difference between a war which I felt, however grievous it was, yet to be just and needful, and a war carried on without any adequate justification and, so far as I can to this hour tell, without even any well-defined practicable object.

‘ I hope that my answer to your very fair question is intelligible, whether it has your concurrence or not.

‘ Next, I quite agree that the destruction of Sebastopol and of the fleet does not of itself dispose of the question of stipulations for the future distribution of power in the Black Sea. It, however, considerably alleviates that question; and as to stipulations, I am much disposed to think, though subject to correction, that in its bearing upon the future peace of the world the Russian plan No. 2 of May last was really wiser and safer than the demand we

made, less entangling and less fraught with the elements of future dispute, but I could thankfully have taken either.

‘ You say, with great truth, that I am not justified in charging upon the man who thinks higher terms than I would take necessary for a staple peace that he holds an abominable doctrine. My intention was to apply that charge only to those who before the conquest of Sebastopol said that we might make peace after it upon terms that could not previously be accepted, but whose appetite has grown with what it fed upon and has exhibited itself *since* the capture of Sebastopol in the abandonment of all definite language as to peace, and in flying to vague generalities about humbling Russia, securing Europe, promoting civilization, and the like.

‘ Your letter—if I must now pass from the defensive—seems to involve assumptions as to our right to rectify the distribution of political power by bloodshed which carry it far beyond just bounds.

‘ In the hour of success doctrines and policy are applauded or pass unquestioned even under misgiving which are very differently handled at a period of disaster or when a nation comes to feel the embarrassments it has accumulated.

‘ The Government are certainly giving effect to the public opinion of the day. If that be a justification, they have it, as all Governments of England have had in all wars at eighteen months from their commencement.

‘ Apart from the commanding consideration of our duty as men and Christians, I am not less an objector to the post-April policy on the ground of its certain or probable consequences in respect, first and foremost, to Turkey; in respect to the proper place and power of France; in respect to the interest which Europe has in keeping her and us all within such place and power; in respect to the permanence of our friendly relations with her; and, lastly, in respect to the effects of continued war upon the condition of our own people and the stability of our institutions. But each of these requires an octavo volume. I must add another head: I view with alarm the future use against England of the argument and accusations we use against Russia.

‘ You have shown no cause against coming here on your way south, so I hope you will appear and let me answer, *vivâ voce*, your question about Homer.

‘ Most sincerely yours,

‘ W. E. GLADSTONE.’

To this letter I replied as follows :

‘ *Private.*

‘ ROSNEATH,
‘ *October 24, 1855.*

‘ MY DEAR GLADSTONE,

‘ I must thank you for your last letter. I think I can gather from it very clearly what are the predominant feelings in your mind which have determined your recent course in respect to the war. I find myself in the somewhat strange position of often sympathizing much more with you than with most of those who speak and talk about the war, even when I agree in their general conclusion. I mean that I feel very strongly all the dangers and inconveniences arising out of this war, to which you specifically allude. For example, I agree with you in wishing ourselves well out of—not an alliance with France, but that close copartnery which has been established. Secondly, I agree in the danger which exists to our internal institutions in the long continuance of war. Thirdly, I agree with you in respect to the exhausting effect of the contest upon Turkey ; and, lastly, I am jealous of the extent to which the war may be pushed if an extreme interpretation is to be given to the “balance of power,” and we are to fight on till Russia has been reduced to some theoretical standard of due influence and power.

‘ Where, then, do we differ ? I have no difficulty in putting my finger on the point. You express very moderately and guardedly your opinion on that very question on which the whole argument as regards the justice of this present war depends. Was the Russian proposal, or was it not, a sufficiently satisfactory solution of the Eastern Question, for which you agreed *to go* to war, and for which we are now *continuing* to wage it ?

‘ I dispute your right to speak of a “post-April policy” as distinguished from the “pre-February policy.” I consider it identical. You may argue that the terms offered at Vienna would have fulfilled *sufficiently* the purposes for which the war was begun. But you surely will not argue that, for example, the neutralization of the Euxine would not fulfil those purposes *still better*.

‘ You may contend very fairly that the abolition of all the Russo-Turkish treaties was a *sufficient* abdication of her former preponderance in those regions ; but I really must call upon you to admit

that the abolition of her navies is at least an *additional* guarantee against that preponderance being revived.

‘I don’t object to your maintaining that this would be an addition to our demands not worth the cost and bloodshed of a prolonged war. That is a matter of opinion, and fairly open to argument. It is a point upon which I have never had a doubt. But if I had, I should not feel myself entitled to establish the smallest difference of *principle* between the war to which I was a party in February and the war which is being waged *now*.

‘I don’t know what you mean when you say that you would consider the destruction of Sebastopol an unmixed good to Europe, if you were well assured of the *means* by which it has been effected. The *means* are those identical means which you and I were jointly responsible for resorting to. And if by “means” you refer rather to the *objects* for which the destruction of Sebastopol was sought, *then* I contend that they have undergone no change whatever since you left the Government. I don’t mean that you or I might not consistently have raised the Siege of Sebastopol the moment Russia offered to give up her treaties. But I do mean to say that this was never *understood* by us to be an ultimate object, or one which would have satisfied the whole intentions of the Crimean Expedition.

‘You tell me that when I indicate still further objects as legitimate, I imply “assumptions as to our right to rectify the distribution of political power by bloodshed which carry it far beyond *just bounds*.” Yes; but you admit the “right of rectifying the distribution of political power by bloodshed within *certain bounds*,” for you went to war upon that right and in the exercise of it. The only question is, how do you define “just bounds”? Can you draw a sharp line between the conditions which you agreed to demand and those which we now demand, supposing, *e.g.*, “neutralization” to be a main item, and say, “so far it has been just and right, but beyond it all your bloodshed is unjust and wrong”? Let us recollect that Louis Napoleon is no blacker a sheep now than he was when we began this very intimate alliance. Whatever danger there was in it of raising an undue military preponderance on the part of France existed in February as well as in October; so of the danger to our internal institutions; so of the danger to Turkey—all excellent reasons for stopping the war

when its original objects have been attained, but of no value whatever as arguments in respect to what those objects were or ought to be.

‘I am shocked by poor Molesworth’s death. We expect the Duke of S., etc.,

‘ARGYLL.’

‘*Private.*

‘ROSNEATH,

‘November 1, 1855.

‘MY DEAR GLADSTONE,

‘I fully agree with you in desiring to see peace founded on conditions which so far as possible may have the elements of durability, and may not depend *only* on the continued joint action of France and England, or, at least, may depend on that action only as part of the general and admitted policy of Europe.

‘But I don’t see that the prohibition of fleets in the Euxine would answer this description less well than the mere abolition of Russo-Turkish treaties. Do you? It seems to me, on the contrary, that the prohibition of fleets, if once assented to, is the most self-acting condition that could be devised.

‘It is true that gunboats or even larger craft might be secretly or quietly “got up” at a time when the rest of Europe might be otherwise engaged, and especially when France and England should be in antagonism. I don’t deny that. But surely the same line of argument is, to say the least, quite as good as against the effectiveness of a mere re-signation of old treaties. You know how we used to argue, and with truth, that the strength of the Russian position for aggression against Turkey lay, not in the treaties, but in the *facts* and conditions of which those treaties were but the faint expression. I used to maintain this argument, I recollect, when I was resisting being driven to demand as a *sine quâ non* the abolition of all the old treaties, and I maintain it now when that condition had been secured, or, at least, after it has been offered. No condition depends *more entirely* for its effectiveness on the continued and watchful attention of the Powers to whose demand Russia professes to yield it.

‘I have no hesitation in saying that the *objects* of the war have in my mind undergone *no change at all*. Of those objects I regard

the "Four Points" as still an adequate expression, but not on the popular understanding of what the "Four Points" are.

'In the course of last winter I sent a Memorandum to Lord Aberdeen, pointing out how completely the "Four Points" comprehended all the *objects* of the war, and especially how wide was the margin which they leave as regards the *means* by which those objects may be attained. And so completely does this Memorandum embody my opinion on this matter that I sent it afterwards to Lord Palmerston when *the Vienna Conferences were closed*.

'I am not prepared to say, for example, whether the free navigation of the Danube can ever be secured, so long as Russia has fortifications at its mouth. That is a question as to the *means* by which that "point" or "basis" is to be secured. It is no question as to the enlargement of, or departure from, the original *object*.

'I admit the truth of what you say as to the "Aye" and "No" question of peace or war. It is a matter of judgment, on the balance of public policy, between the one course and the other. And very slight circumstances may affect the judgment either way. *But then*, I think our language respecting our own conclusion ought to have a corresponding character. I thoroughly understand any man having come to the conclusion last April *that on the whole* it was wiser to accept peace on the terms offered than to refuse them. Probabilities of success, hopes of alliances, prospects of assistance—all may have contributed to such a conclusion according as each mind might be influenced. But then, a conclusion come to upon such balances must not be defended on arguments which have reference to very different elements of decision. I am sure I feel as hostile as you do to much of the war language that I see in the press and hear elsewhere. But I have always felt since you parted from us that your language and arguments were directed quite as logically against the war in *all* its stages.

'However, I hold with you that we ought to *have definite objects*, and not fight for the sake merely of what *may turn up*. You, on the other hand, will agree that the means by which those objects are to be secured can never be really settled until the time of treaty comes. As Lord Aberdeen himself said, "They will be different if the allies get to St. Petersburg from what they would be if the Russians get to Constantinople." How you might have

denounced from this text if these words had fallen from Palmerston ! I recollect the foolish newspapers at the time saying: "Here we have a Minister confessing that he has no fixed conditions or objects, and that he will allow the just demands of Europe, etc., to be determined by events."

'But I must stop. I hope to be able to pay you a visit before this month closes; but you know I must take care not to have it said—if I am in any degree peaceful—"Oh, you come fresh from Hawarden," for even on such a disputatious and contradictory Scot as I am, you are supposed to have the most dangerous influences.

'Ever yours most truly,
'ARGYLL.'

'HAWARDEN,

'December 1, 1855.

'MY DEAR ARGYLL,

'As I do not know how long I may be in London after Windsor, or what chance I may have of seeing you there, I write to say that I hope to arrive at Windsor from Chester by a train which, starting hence at 9.5, gets to London at 3.30, and therefore should be in Windsor about 3. I know not whether you will by that time have disappeared.

'One word only on your "safe conscience." What I find press hardest among the reproaches upon me is this: "You went to war for limited objects. Why did you not take into account the high probability that those objects would be lost sight of in the excitement which war engenders, and that this war, if once begun, would receive an extension far beyond your views or wishes?"

'Now let us shift the ground and take the present moment for starting-point instead of, say, December 1, 1853. *You* have, now, limited objects. It is not only in their first stage that wars are apt to extend. When you say, "These are my objects, and I can with a safe conscience fight indefinitely long till I attain them," I ask myself whether you ought not now to take into view probabilities analogous to those which I, for one, certainly had not sufficiently in my mind two years ago.

'When we meet I shall tell you how Post Office Sunday restriction practically has worked and still works *here*.

'Most sincerely yours,

'W. E. GLADSTONE.'

‘WINDSOR CASTLE,

‘December 3, 1855.

‘MY DEAR ARGYLL,

‘I stay until Wednesday, and I can come to you at Stafford House, if bidden, about two o’clock or at any later hour, or at any hour on Thursday.

‘I *do* mean that the reproach I named is the one most nearly just. What the weight due to it is I forbear finally to judge until I see the conclusion of this tremendous drama; but I see quite enough to be aware that the particular hazard in question ought to have been more sensibly and clearly before me. It *may* be good logic and good sense, I think, to say, “I will forego ends that are just for fear of being driven upon the pursuit of others that are not so”; whether it *is* so in a particular case depends very much upon the probable amount of the driving-power and of the resisting force which may be at our command.

‘Ever most sincerely yours,

‘W. E. GLADSTONE.’

‘HAWARDEN,

‘January 18, 1856.

‘MY DEAR ARGYLL,

‘It was most kind in you to back the telegraph by a note of your own, which, although perhaps it had no other foundation, yet was *subjectively* worth a great deal more.

‘You know my fears about neutralization, and can well judge that I have misgivings as to the meaning of the Russian acceptance on that point. The future Foreign Secretary, however, must take care of himself. I should hope that now we may begin to feel sanguine as to your getting us out, and if you do, an immense good upon the whole will have been achieved.

‘I like, as far as I understand it, the stipulation about the Aland Isles, and especially the removal of the Russian frontier from the Danube. At the same time, I should have been sorry to see the war carried on for those objects alone.

‘We have had the measles in the house, and have been detained here accordingly. To-morrow evening, however, we hope to be in London for good, as the saying is.

‘Believe me always, most sincerely yours,

‘W. E. GLADSTONE.’