

## CHAPTER XLI

1876-80

### THE EASTERN QUESTION—ORNITHOLOGY

THE early period of Mr. Disraeli's Administration was mainly occupied with questions referring to home politics. The Duke did not take any very prominent part in the debates, except when the Church of Scotland Patronage Bill was before the House, until his interest was aroused on the subject of the Eastern Question. He was strongly opposed to the Turkish policy of the Government, as he considered the attitude adopted towards Turkey and towards the European Concert a deliberate reversal of the policy, the abstract wisdom of which he always upheld, which led to the Crimean War, and was enunciated in the Treaty of Paris. The Duke entered fully into the history of the Eastern Question in a book\* which he published a few years later. The following paragraph, quoted from this book, describes the origin of the difficulties in the East :

‘The Eastern Question was raised by native insurrections in the provinces of Turkey, excited and justified by the gross misgovernment of the Porte. The whole Eastern Question, therefore, as it was then raised, resolved itself into this : how the abuses and

\* ‘The Eastern Question,’ by the Duke of Argyll ; published in 1879.

vices of Turkish administration were to be dealt with by the Powers which had supported Turkey in the Crimean War, and by those other Powers, embracing all the principal Governments of Europe, which had ultimately signed the treaties of 1856.'

On the 19th of September, 1876, the Duke spoke at a great meeting in Glasgow, called by the Lord Provost, and moved the first resolution, which was to the following effect :

'That this meeting of citizens of Glasgow regards with horror and indignation the atrocities perpetrated by the Turks on the inhabitants of Bulgaria and of the other provinces, and denounces the Ottoman Government for allowing such outrages on humanity, and for not punishing the responsible agents.'

After the meeting, the Duke wrote to Lord Granville (September 20, 1876) :

'The meeting was the most formidable I ever addressed. More than 3,300 people, all *men* — I don't think there were ten women in the whole hall—largely working men. The row was tremendous from the pressure and discomfort, the crowd swaying to and fro in a frightful way under the distant gallery.

'After a few sentences I caught the ear of the meeting, and spoke for *one hour and a half*, having to curtail in several points what I intended. They listened attentively to the last.'

This speech produced a great effect, not merely on the audience, but throughout the country, and the Duke received numerous appreciative letters, both from friends and strangers. From these, the following extracts are quoted :

*From Lord Granville (Walmer Castle, September 24th, 1876).*

‘ I am very glad you are going to publish your magnificent speech.

‘ Great as is my admiration for the hostile sex, men are, after all, the best audience. They cheer, which women and Peers do not.

‘ What is to be the upshot ? I presume not an autumn session. The fact of Hartington and Gladstone having proposed it makes it more unlikely, and I do not see on what grounds the Government would summon Parliament. . . . We must propose a vote of censure of some sort or other, which would be defeated in both Houses by large majorities.’

*From Lord Playfair (September 22nd, 1876).*

‘ Since the Eastern Question rose in prominence I have been travelling in Brittany, and have read with much interest all the speeches in regard to it ; but none have gone to my heart and understanding so much as your Grace’s speech at Glasgow, and I am sure you will allow me to say so to yourself.

‘ Your speech was not declamation, but an admirable succinct review of the situation, and must do great good.’

*From the Workmen’s Demonstration Committee  
(September 30, 1876).*

‘ Your Grace’s speech at Glasgow on the Eastern Question has been the subject of consideration at a special meeting of this committee, and they are of opinion that it is by far the ablest and most effective exposition of the subject that has yet appeared.

‘ The committee think it most desirable, in order to promote the full understanding of this question, that your speech should be reprinted for circulation amongst the working classes, and they have resolved,

if your Grace will permit, to issue it in a penny pamphlet.'

In 1896, after the Armenian massacres of 1894 and 1895 had excited indignation in the Christian world, the Duke published another book entitled 'Our Responsibilities for Turkey,' in which he reviewed the 'Facts and Memories of Forty Years.' As this book contains the Duke's matured views of the policy pursued by our Government, a few quotations dealing with the earlier stages of the Eastern difficulty are given here, to explain his attitude with regard to the situation in the East at this period :

'The Treaty of Paris, which terminated the war in 1856, was a concentrated expression of the whole policy on which the war had been undertaken. It made us foremost as a nation in a joint responsibility—by irrevocable deeds and by definite transactions—for the very existence of the Turkish Government as a Power even pretending to independence. Not only did we save Turkey for the moment from entangling engagements with Russia, which would have left her in a position of vassalage and practical subjection, but we determined largely and effectually to disarm her hereditary foe in the whole region of Turkish territory most open to Russian attack. We had exhausted the resources of Russia by a long and bloody campaign, carried on at one extremity of her Empire. We had destroyed her fleet. We had ruined her one great arsenal in the Euxine. But not content with this, we imposed on her a treaty stipulating that this arsenal should not be restored, and that no Russian Black Sea fleet was to be formed again, so that Turkey might dwell in peace. . . . In return for these great services, all that we asked from Turkey was an engagement that she would afford to her own people some tolerable government corresponding to her new

position, some administrative system recognising the fundamental principles of European civilization, and extending to all classes of her subjects some security for life, religion, property and honour.

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‘ The Treaty of 1856 gave Turkey a secure and undisturbed opportunity for putting her house in order. The reforms which she had promised could have been not only well begun, but well established, during the tranquil course of so long a period. . . . She had no less than twenty years for this purpose ; and how did she employ them ?

‘ No great draft on space or time is needed to answer this question. One word sums up the whole result of Turkish promises : Nothing.

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‘ With this year (1875) we enter the rapids, and are very near the cataract. Causes long in operation were now to produce their inevitable effects, and events were precipitated with a crash. The stereotyped abuses of Turkish government at last roused insurrections in its European provinces. The not less stereotyped brutalities of Turkish Governors and troops were employed to crush all resistance to them. . . . What I wish to do now is simply to point out what, as a nation, we actually did in the crisis which began in 1875 and ended in the Treaty of Berlin in 1878. . . . Although we knew that the insurgents had frightful grievances, and that they demanded nothing more than the most elementary benefits of a civilized government ; although we knew that the Turks were, as usual, committing against them acts of perfidy and deeds of butchery, we actually implored the Porte to hasten to put down the insurrection with their own forces, so as to prevent it from being made the subject of foreign intervention.

‘ In addressing such an exhortation to the Porte, we did not remember—but we ought to have remembered

—that the Turks have only one way of dealing with all revolts against their own misgovernment, and that is by raising irregular troops, the greatest ruffians in their dominions, and by allowing and encouraging them to butcher men, women, and children as the sign and pledge of victory. Of course, we did not mean this ourselves; but this is what did actually happen, what does always happen, and what we ought to have known would inevitably happen. Accordingly, the horrible massacres in Bulgaria were perpetrated in May, 1876, at the very time when we were again urging on Turkey the necessity of energetic action to suppress the revolt.

‘The Turkish massacres in Bulgaria began in May, but were not authentically known till August, 1876. Mr. Gladstone’s celebrated pamphlet denouncing them was published early in September.

‘The effect of the massacres in Bulgaria on the public mind is one of the events of history. We were all horrified, with the rest of Europe. But not even then would we join the rest of Europe in active intervention. We simply told the Turks that if they were attacked by Russia it had now become practically impossible, owing to the state of public feeling, for us to intervene to save them. . . . Russia behaved with perfect frankness. She told us that if we held back she would act alone. But again she begged us, backed by all the other Powers, to act together and in concert. . . . We absolutely refused. But we proposed a European Congress of special Envoys at Constantinople. This was accepted by all the Powers. At that Congress . . . we asserted strongly our right, and the right of Europe, to insist on substantial guarantees for the fulfilment of Turkish promises. . . . The Turk resolutely refused to yield. He would consent, indeed, to renew certain promises, but he would allow no practical guarantees. . . .

‘Our declared policy was peace at any price, and at any price, be it noted, not to ourselves—for we

incurred no risk—but to the helpless millions over whom we had so long upheld a “profoundly vicious Government.” Fortunately, Russia stood firm, and in a series of replies, each more temperate and yet more conclusive than the last, she told us that she could not and would not any longer tolerate the complete abandonment by Europe of its duty towards the subjects of the Porte.

‘Then followed the war, which proved more than ever, if there was need of any proof, that Turkey could not stand before Russia.

‘After a few transient successes, Turkey was beaten both in Asia and in Europe. In a brilliant campaign in the depth of winter, Russia poured her armies over the Balkans, took Adrianople without a struggle, and stopped only when the defensive lines of Constantinople itself were surrendered at discretion. . . .

‘Russia might undoubtedly have occupied Constantinople, and announced her resolve to keep it. It would have been very difficult for us to turn her out, and the struggle to do so must have involved a tremendous war. But it is a memorable fact that in the Treaty of San Stefano, which she dictated before the open and undefended capital of the East, Russia belied the suspicions with which we had been so long inflamed. . . .

‘The Treaty of San Stefano was nothing short of a new dismemberment of Turkey. It inflicted on her physically a tremendous loss when it deprived her of the geographical defences of the Balkans and the Danube ; but it inflicted on her morally and politically a still deeper and more fatal loss when it proclaimed her in the face of the world to be a Power which could not be trusted with the fulfilment of her own most solemn promises, and when it demanded for her subject populations the elementary securities of civilized life as rights which could only rest on positive stipulations with a foreign Power. . . .

‘We insisted that every part of the San Stefano

Treaty must be submitted to a European Congress. Russia did not object to a Congress.'

This Congress resulted in the Treaty of Berlin, the provisions of which are described by the Duke as follows :

'The Treaty of Berlin is substantially the Treaty of San Stefano in all its essential features. . . . But we insisted on a change in the Treaty of Berlin, a change which altered immensely for the worse the Treaty of San Stefano. We insisted on reverting to the principle of the Treaty of Paris, which substituted a European for a Russian protectorate. . . . This, obviously, was taking upon ourselves, in conjunction with the other Powers of Europe, a function which we had never been able to discharge even in Europe, and it was still more impossible we could discharge in Asia. . . . What was everybody's business was nobody's business, and twenty-two years' experience had proved that this miscellaneous protectorate was quite useless for its professed purpose.'

The war with Afghanistan, which broke out in 1879, was, in the opinion of the Duke, the result of the policy of the Government on the Eastern Question. In the spring of 1878, with the view of keeping in check the advances of Russia in Europe, Lord Beaconsfield arranged for the despatch of a force of Indian troops to Malta. Russia's counter-move was to send a Mission to Afghanistan, which was reluctantly received by the Amir. The Duke's view of this action on the part of Russia is given in the following words :\*

'I must at once express my opinion that, under whatever circumstances, or from whatever motives, the Russian Mission was sent and was received, it was

\* 'The Eastern Question,' vol. ii., p. 499.



impossible for the British Government to acquiesce in that reception as the close of our transactions with the Amir upon the subject of Missions to his Court. We cannot allow Russia to acquire predominant, or even co-equal, influence with ourselves in Afghanistan. The Cabinet was, therefore, not only justified in taking, but it was imperatively called upon to take, measures to ascertain the real object of that Mission, and if it had any political character, to secure that no similar Mission should be sent again.'

In a letter to Mr. Gladstone (November 4, 1878) the Duke wrote :

'The *Times* correspondent from Darjeeling to-day says the Amir has deliberately preferred a Russian alliance. Now, I have seen the official account sent to Lytton of the circumstances under which the Amir received the Russian Mission, and it shows that he did not "deliberately" receive it. On the contrary, he was very reluctant to receive it, and was only bullied into it.'

In these circumstances, it was evident that negotiations with the Amir would require careful diplomacy. The Duke treated of this point as follows :\*

'Considering that, under the circumstances which have been narrated, the sending of the Mission could only be considered a war measure on the part of Russia, and had arisen entirely out of circumstances which threatened hostilities between the two countries ; considering, farther, that, as regarded the reception of the Mission, we had ourselves placed the Amir in a position of extreme difficulty, and had reason to believe and to know that he was not in any way party to the Russian policy in sending it, justice absolutely demanded, and our own self-respect demanded,

\* 'The Eastern Question,' vol. ii., p. 500.

that we should proceed towards the Amir with all the dignity of conscious strength and of conscious responsibility for the natural results of our own previous conduct and policy.'

The course adopted by the Viceroy, unfortunately, was not distinguished by the tact requisite to lead to an amicable settlement of the diplomatic difficulties of the situation. Lord Lytton wrote to the Amir, announcing the despatch of a Mission from the British Government to his Court, and requesting him to make the necessary arrangements. The Amir, apparently, was not altogether opposed to the idea of receiving a British Mission, but he was offended by the uncourteous wording of the Viceroy's letter, and asked for time for consideration, especially as he was then in great grief, on account of the death of his favourite son. The Duke considered that more sympathy might have been shown with the Amir, as his own account indicates :

' Her Majesty's Ministers were bound to remember that they had themselves brought the Russian Mission upon the Amir and upon ourselves ; and they were equally bound to consider that Shere Ali was not refusing to accept a Mission from the Viceroy, but was, on the contrary, expressing his opinion that " a personal interview with a British Mission would adjust misunderstandings." All that the Amir desired was that this Mission should not be forced upon him by open violence in the sight of all his officers and of all his people. They knew that he did not complain of the determination of the Indian Government to send an Envoy, but only of the " blustering " messages to himself and to his officers by which he had been incessantly plied even during his days of grief. They knew that if ever there had been real

mourning in the world, it must have been the mourning of Shere Ali for Abdoolah Jan. For this boy he had sacrificed whatever of affection and of fidelity is possible among the children of a harem. With this boy at his side, he had sat enthroned, as an equal, beside the Queen's Viceroy at Umballa. For this boy he had spent his years in endeavouring to procure a dynastic guarantee from the Government of India. Now all these memories and all these ambitions had vanished like a dream. No prospect remained to him but the hated succession of a rebellious son.'

Lord Lytton, however, declined to hear of delay, and the Mission left for Kabul on the 19th of September. At an Afghan outpost in the Khyber Pass, the officer in command was informed that the Afghans were prepared to use force to prevent the advance of the Mission, which was therefore obliged to retire.

The Viceroy then issued an ultimatum, demanding an ample apology from the Amir, who was also informed that he would be required to accept the presence of a resident British Embassy permanently within his territory. It afterwards transpired that the reply of the Amir had been delayed in transmission. The Duke alludes to the contents of this reply in the following words :\*

'Well might Shere Ali say, as he did say, in his letter of October 6th ("Afghan Correspondence," ii., 1878, p. 18): "In consequence of the attack of grief and affliction which has befallen me by the decree of God, great distraction has seized the mind of this supplicant at God's threshold. The trusted officers of the British Government, therefore, ought to have observed patience and stayed at such a time."

\* 'The Eastern Question,' vol. ii., p. 515.

Unless the Government desired to force a quarrel, and were glad of an opportunity to rectify a "hazardous frontier" by means of war, there is nothing to be said in defence of the unjust and indecent haste with which they pushed up the Mission to Ali Musjid, even before the forty days of mourning were expired. It cannot be pretended that there was any danger from Russia then. In the meantime, our own position had not long before been described by Lord Lytton himself as a position in which we were "able to pour an overwhelming force into Afghanistan for the vindication of our own interests, long before a single Russian soldier could reach Kabul." The haste with which the extreme measure of war was hurried has crowned and consummated the injustice of the previous transactions, and even if the war had been ultimately inevitable—which it was not—the Government cannot escape censure for the conduct from which the supposed necessity arose.'

In the meantime, no reply from the Amir having reached the Viceroy by November 30th, war was declared by the Indian Government, and the main posts in Afghanistan were soon in the possession of the British forces. Shere Ali fled, and, his death occurring early in 1879, a treaty was signed at Gandamak with his son Yakub, who agreed to the terms imposed by the Government. Sir Louis Cavagnari was placed at Kabul as British Resident in July, 1879; but three months later the Residency was attacked by a body of Afghans, and, in spite of a brave defence, the little garrison was completely annihilated. This outrage was promptly avenged; Yakub was made prisoner, and his cousin, Abdurrahman, was acknowledged by the Government as Amir.

In the spring of 1879, the Duke made an important speech in the House of Lords, condemning the foreign

policy of the Government, in the course of which he said :

‘ It appears to me that we have arrived at a time when it is possible to look back over nearly four years of negotiations and of war, and to estimate what has been lost and gained during that eventful time in the political history of this country. My Lords, in commercial life we all know there are times when men take stock of their proceedings. If noble Lords opposite should object to an illustration taken from commercial life, and should say—as perhaps they will—that we are no longer, under their rule, a nation of shopkeepers, but a nation of warriors, then I will say that even warriors, at the end of a campaign, look to the roll-call of the living and the dead, and that it is worth while to look to the history of those four years, and to see what are the political ideas which have perished in the conflict, and what are the political opinions which still survive.’

After reviewing the Eastern policy of the Government, the Duke, in allusion to a taunt of Lord Beaconsfield, who had characterized the Opposition as a ‘ Peace at any price party,’ continued :

‘ I am not one of those who are in favour of peace at any price, and I hope I shall not say anything that will be shocking to the House when I say something about my own feeling with regard to war. It seems to me that on all sides there is a certain amount of insincerity in the language too often used on this subject. When we speak of a war which we approve, we talk of its glories. When we speak of a war of which we disapprove, we talk of its horrors. Can we not be honest with ourselves on this matter ? Can we not admit that war is—not seldom, but very often—by far the lesser of two evils ? I see no signs of the millennium. Europe is ringing with the tramp of

armed men. Men of science are devoting all their time to the invention of some new weapon of destruction. I see no dawning of the day when nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks. War—dear as are all the lives it sacrifices, many as are the hearts it breaks—war is a necessary evil. I do not blame the Government for having armed the country. What I do blame it for is for having armed it at the wrong time and in a wrong cause.'

In concluding the speech, the Duke summed up his arraignment of the Government in the following words :

'It is not we, the members of the Opposition, who are accusing you. Time is your great accuser; the course of events is summing up the case against you. What have you to say—I shall wait to hear—what have you to say why you should not receive an adverse verdict at the hands of your country, as you certainly will be called up for judgment at the bar of history?'

Among a number of letters received by the Duke, on the subject of his book on the 'Eastern Question,' was one from Lord Lawrence, who shared the Duke's views on the Afghan question, of which he was so well qualified to judge.

*From Lord Lawrence (17th February, 1879).*

'Many thanks for your letter of the 4th and the copy of your work on the "Eastern Question," which I duly received. I delayed replying until I had had read to me that part of the work which related to our dealings with Afghanistan. I think you have completely disposed of all the special pleadings and misrepresentations and crooked policy. . . .

'I have seen no criticisms of your book worthy of

notice. If you have not given your opponents an absolute quietus, you have, at any rate, given them something difficult to digest.'

Lord Dufferin, who had recently been appointed Ambassador at St. Petersburg, wrote as follows (March 16th, 1879) :

'I cannot tell you how glad I was to receive your book. It is a tremendous performance, and I cannot say how struck I have been by its vigour. I have made it my vade-mecum.'

In his 'Autobiography' the Duke speaks of the refreshment it afforded him to turn from important matters affecting the welfare of the nation, which required strenuous and engrossing thought, to the restfulness of Nature; and some quotations from his diary at this time show the pleasure and interest he felt in the close observation of that natural world which he described as 'a world of love, of reason, and of law':\*

'*Argyll Lodge, April 26th, 1876.*—This spring has been a very severe one, from the frequent recurrence of snow and great cold, with warm weather between. In the middle of March there was a great snowstorm in Argyllshire, and in London sleet and rain. On the 22nd there was a heavy fall of snow in London, and on the 13th April another very severe one all over the middle and North of England, as well as in Scotland. Yet the summer birds of passage, except the swallows, have come as soon as usual. I saw a willow-wren in the garden here on the 4th April, and heard the note of the wryneck in Holland Park on the same day. On the same day I also saw and heard the blackcap at Richmond. On the other hand, the

\* 'Lines to Lord Lilford,' by the Duke of Argyll.

swallows are very late. I saw the first on the 18th, and even now, near the end of the month, there are very few; and I have seen not one martin or sand martin. The first cuckoo was heard at Clieveden on the 21st.

‘The little spotted woodpecker has made his appearance in the garden here, and one day I saw him in the act of producing his peculiar rattle. I could see nothing but the action of one “peck”; but since that I have seen the great green woodpecker making the same noise, only far louder, at Clieveden. In this case I could see the vibratory motion of the head, corresponding with the vibratory character of the sound. The bird sat on a short, dead, stumpy branch of an oak, near its junction with the bole, and struck the branch with its bill, sitting on the top of the branch and not clinging to it. I do not think the action has any regard to the capture of food. It seems to be simply the pleasure of producing a noise which is grateful or amusing. It is probably, however, connected with making love, as I think it is only produced at this season. I had never before heard it produced by the green woodpecker. I have this week had an opportunity at Clieveden of studying the notes of the nightingale, not in full song, but in the short, conversational sort of song that is carried on in the daytime. The variety of notes is very curious; sometimes the long, piercing notes, “twee-twee-twee,” are repeated slowly, ending in the characteristic “jubble-jubble”; at other times very peculiar double notes of extreme gentleness and liquidity are repeated in the same way; again, notes very like those of the common thrush, but always with a peculiar character which is unmistakable when one has got accustomed to the voice. But what interested me most was the discovery of the alarm note—a warning note of the nightingale which I never heard before. It is a harsh, *craking* note, somewhat like the corresponding note of the whitethroat, but very much louder—so much



louder, indeed, that it almost suggests a sort of suppressed corncrake's note. The power of the nightingale to conceal itself is curious. I could not detect the bird, though I knew it was sitting close to me, till it flitted down from a naked beech, on which it had been uttering this craking note. Both cock and hen then flew out of the copse, almost in my face. The fine colour of the tail feathers was beautifully seen in the sun.

'I have seen the wryneck also, uttering its very peculiar note, which it does sitting on a bough like any other bird, and not clinging to a stem. It lifts its head, with the bill pointing to the sky, and the feathers of the throat are much agitated during the emission of the sound.

'A blackcap's nest was found with the hen sitting very close two days ago. It was built on a very exposed bough of a laurel-bush, about four feet from the ground. This seems very early.'

'*May 1st.*—Wolf, the German bird-painter, confirms my impression as to the woodpecker's rapping sound. He says it is "making lof," and is never heard except in spring at the breeding season.'

'*May 16th.*—I saw to-day a good example of the instinctive knowledge possessed by birds that the slightest movement attracts the eyes, and that, consequently, perfect stillness is the only chance where concealment is desired in the presence of danger. A chaffinch has built in a thorn in the garden. On approaching it to-day, I saw the hen bird alight near it, bringing food in her mouth, apparently a caterpillar or two. The moment she saw me, instead of proceeding to the nest to deliver the food, she sat absolutely motionless, and then very slowly and imperceptibly put herself into the attitude which made her least visible from my point of view. This was effected by pointing her head and bill directly down towards me, in which position she was so foreshortened that she appeared a mere ball or knot upon the branch.

This stillness and constraint of attitude she maintained for a long time, and would not for a moment relax it until I was fairly out of sight. To suppose that the lower animals know the *rationale* of such instinctive expedients is evidently absurd. But it is not the less true that there is *a rationale* in them, somewhat that cannot be explained, except in the terms of reason and of knowledge.

‘Sir Kenneth Mackenzie tells me that his brother has identified the gossander as breeding on an island in a secluded lake to the north of Loch Maree; and I am sorry to say that in order to make sure he shot the old bird and secured the eggs. This may possibly be the only breeding-place in Scotland, though I should hope that several of the more remote lochs in Sutherland may harbour them.

‘Persistent and very cold east and north-easterly winds have much checked vegetation, so that hawthorns are not yet out, though the flower has long been in bud. The fly-catcher has not come, and, so far as I have seen, the swallow tribe is unusually scarce.

‘Soon after writing this paragraph I observed the first fly-catcher in the garden, hawking for gnats from the tops of trees, the larger flies near the ground not yet affording, probably, sufficient numbers to supply food.’

‘*June 14th.*—When at Brighton a few days ago, I had an opportunity of seeing, on the west pier, among a collection of birds there, a specimen of the long-eared owl and of the carrion crow. The man who keeps the birds seems to have a considerable knowledge of British birds, and told me that the carrion crow always makes its nest close to the trunk of a tree, where a large branch joins it, and not, like the rook, among the upper branches. He pointed out, also, as a distinction, that the colour of the eyes is quite blue. But I think I recollect that the eyes of young rooks are also very blue. The bird, however, struck me as longer and narrower in form than the rook. The man

farther told me that his father, who was a dealer in birds, recollects the buzzard as by no means uncommon in Sussex, where it is now very rarely seen, and that he recollected having found its nest and taken its eggs from whin, or gorse, bushes on the Downs. This is certainly a singular place for such a large and conspicuous bird to have built in, within so recent times.

‘The long-eared owl is a very beautiful little bird, much smaller than the ivy owl. The man says it is not very rare in Sussex. The eyes are of a beautiful golden yellow.’

‘*June 22nd.*—For many years a pair or two of reed wrens have built in the garden of Argyll Lodge, and towards midsummer the continuous song of this little bird is very pleasant. On one occasion the nest was built in a lilac-bush, which was then enough in foliage to allow a window into the leafy shade in which the nest was placed; and I was surprised to see that the cock bird, after the young were hatched, and in the process of feeding them, used to sit on the edge of the nest, with his head downward among the young, and pour out his song, as it were, in their ears. Generally singing-birds cease singing altogether after the hen has hatched the young, and they hardly ever sing in close proximity to the nest, probably from an instinctive fear lest its whereabouts should be thus betrayed.

‘Last night I heard and saw the reed wren singing beautifully about nine o’clock at night, and beating time to his own music with a fluttering motion of his wings. The action was very pretty, and the song was modulated into a low and pleasant warble, in harmony with the faint light of a warm midsummer night.’

‘*Inveraray, July 2nd.*—On arriving here, I find that a young gull which we took in July, 1874, from the nests near Lismore is only now assuming enough of the mature plumage to make it certain that it is the herring-gull, and not the smaller black-backed gull. The grey feathers on the back have not yet

entirely replaced the spotted feathers of the immature plumage. The bill is still horn-coloured, with no appearance of yellow or red. It thus appears that gulls do not assume the adult plumage until after they are fully two years old.'

On the 12th of October, 1877, a fire broke out at Inveraray Castle at five o'clock in the morning. The previous night had been stormy, and a yachtsman who was attending to the moorings of the Duke's yacht saw that the central tower of the castle was on fire, and roused the inmates. The Duke was at Inveraray at the time, with his family and several friends, but everyone in the castle was saved. The fire was confined to the central part of the building, which was entirely destroyed, but, with the exception of one or two valuable pictures, no loss of importance was incurred. The Duke described the accident in a letter to Professor Tyndall :

' MY DEAR PROFESSOR TYNDALL,

' The late fire at Inveraray was attended with circumstances which are curious, and I wish to consult your opinion on the explanation which suggests itself to me.

' The house had a great central hall, 80 feet high, with two side halls, opening into the central one by doors, and arches perforated in the solid dividing walls. . . . From the centre of each roof (three in number) there was a long perpendicular brass tube, ending in large gaseliers for the lighting of the halls. Now, the fire, when first seen from the floor of the hall, seemed to be in a ring round the point of insertion of the great gas-pipe in the centre of the roof. . . .

' The night was stormy, and the atmosphere had been all evening highly electric. Brilliant flashes of lightning were seen about 7 p.m., and some thunder was heard.

‘The operating clerk at the telegraph-office received a considerable shock during the evening. At 11.30 my medical man had passed through the hall, when all was right, so far as visible.

‘Some time after I had fallen asleep (how long I can’t tell, for one can never be sure how long one has been asleep) I was awoken by some very loud crash, so loud and startling that I sat up and exclaimed, “What on earth is that noise?” When fully awake, I heard that the crash was followed by a loud rattling, as if the shutters had been violently and persistently shaken. But the noise soon passed away, and as I knew it blew hard and was very gusty, I, unfortunately, concluded that the noise was due only to a violent squall. My impression was, and still is, that this happened about an hour or an hour and a half after I had first fallen asleep. That would make it about 1.30 a.m.

‘Now, the fire was seen blazing at the top of the castle at 5 a.m. I was roused about 5.15, and in another ten minutes the great gas-pipe and gaselier had fallen in with a perfect avalanche of fire upon the floor of the hall, and the flames were rising high above the roof.

‘My opinion is that lightning had struck the gas-pipe at the top of the hall, that at the same moment it injured the pipe and lit the gas, and that the main body of the electric discharge was carried off by the external gas-pipe as a conductor to the ground. . . .

‘The crash did awake several people, but they attributed it, as I did, to an unusual gust of wind. My impression, therefore, is that the electric discharge was not of a powerful kind, but that it was something of the nature of those fire-balls and other electric appearances which were noticed the same night near London.

‘Do the facts above described enable you to form any opinion as to the probability of my theory? Does lightning ever behave or produce the effects I have supposed?’



INVERARAY CASTLE IN WINTER.

[*To face p. 342, vol. ii.*]



In his reply Professor Tyndall stated that the Duke was in all probability right in attributing the cause of the fire to a discharge of electricity, which might have proceeded from a cloud hovering over the central part of the castle.

The Duke wrote to Mr. Gladstone a little later as follows :

‘ The fire sometimes comes back upon me as a horrid nightmare, because there is a wonderful chasm between the actual result and that which might have been the result. We were all sleeping soundly, with a raging fire in the midst of us, going on for hours ; and if the alarm had come twenty minutes later, the lives of many must have been lost. Not many minutes after the girls escaped, the galleries of the hall fell in, and if that had happened before they left their rooms all escape would have been cut off except by the windows, and, [alluding to several people in the castle at the time who were ‘ very helpless ’] ‘ I don’t see how they could have been got out by ladders. So that really the escape of all was a very merciful providence.’

After the fire, the Duke removed with his family to Rosneath, Dumbartonshire, while Inveraray Castle was being restored. Early the following year, he went to London to attend the meeting of Parliament, and, with the exception of a few brief visits to the country, he remained in town until the end of May.

For some years the Duke’s life had been overshadowed by anxiety regarding the health of the Duchess, which had become very precarious since the serious attack of illness from which she had suffered in 1869. But the blow fell at last with overwhelming suddenness, on the 25th May, 1878, when the Duchess passed away, while with the Duke at the house of Lord Frederick Cavendish.



In November of this year the Duke went with his family to Cannes, where he had taken a villa for some months. He remained there until the month of April, when he returned to London, and on the 23rd of May he crossed the Atlantic to visit the Marquis of Lorne, who had been appointed Governor-General of Canada the previous year. The Duke also made a short tour in the United States. On his return, after an absence of some weeks, he wrote to Mr. Gladstone (August 27th, 1879) :

‘ I was very glad to get your letter. I had intended to write to you long ago, but I hardly know where to begin. I was delighted with all I saw in the New World, differing as it did in many ways from any expectation I had formed of it. Of course, I speak only of the aspects of the country, with all that can be gathered from them, for I had little time to see people, and none at all to see the working of institutions. The face of Nature is the only face I could study, but that was enough to engross all my attention.

‘ I did see Longfellow, and had a delightful dinner with him. He lives in an old wooden house, which was Washington’s headquarters for nine months at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, and it is wholly unaltered. Longfellow was very well, and as charming as ever. I have always thought his countenance such a beautiful one.

\* \* \* \* \*

‘ I was made ill by the fearful heat of New York, where the thermometer was 100 in the shade during the two days I was in it. . . .

‘ As to home politics, I have missed a great deal. But what I did see and hear has not put me in good spirits. I do not think the Liberal party has been showing to advantage. I am glad to hear you say

that Disestablishment is in abeyance. But I confess I think leaders should lead, and not say, "We shall steer according to the wind." For my own part, I will follow nobody on this, or on many other subjects, on which I am not disposed to the new Radical schools.

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'If we are at Inveraray in November, as probably we may be, and if you don't dread our damp climate, I hope you will come. . . . I return to Rosneath on the 2nd September to move the family to Inveraray, which hitherto has not been ready for us. I think the outside immensely improved.'