

CHAPTER XIV

1847-48

DEATH OF MY FATHER—VISIT OF THE QUEEN AND
PRINCE CONSORT TO INVERARAY—BANQUET TO
LORD DALHOUSIE—LITERARY WORK

IT was in the middle of this time of economic difficulties and anxieties that I succeeded to the dukedom and estates, by my father's death in April, 1847. A man of sweeter nature than my father never breathed. I have already indicated some elements in my own mind and education which I have derived from him. They did not belong to the sphere of either literature or politics, but they did belong to a sphere much more important. He indoctrinated me deeply with the love of science, in the highest acceptation of that word. The lesson he taught of a supreme regard for accuracy in all observation and in all work was a lesson inseparably connected with that supreme love of truth for its own sake which I have at least desired to cultivate, and which I regard as an inheritance from him.

Soon after my succession to the family estates, a friend of mine, who was a great agricultural improver, and an excellent judge of the value of land, offered to buy the island of Tiree, at a price which represented an income of £1,400 a year. As my returns from the estate were then nil, this offer was pecuniarily a great temptation. But I declined the transaction, influenced largely by my reluctance to diminish still further the family estates, and also by my liking

for the island, ever since I had seen its charms in the summer of 1840, when I was enchanted with its wealth of sky and sea, its long, beautiful bays of pure white sand, its rich pastures, its air ringing with the song of skylarks, its multitude of corn-crakes, whose curious cry I have always loved, and its rocks full of shining crystals of felspar and horn-blende.

Besides all this, I felt sure that the new proprietor would deal rather too summarily with the excessive population. I considered that although in a sense that overpopulation was the fault of the people, it was also in a sense the fault of my predecessors. If they had kept watch, and had fully enforced the rules of the estate against subdivision, the evil would not have arisen. On the whole, therefore, I considered it my duty to continue my connection of ownership with the estate and people, and to deal with the problem of overpopulation by such voluntary emigration as I could persuade the people to adopt, and by such permanent rules of management as would compel the idle or incompetent to make way for others. For this purpose I instructed my local agents to turn out no tenant who continued to pay those reasonable rents which had been determined a good deal by custom, founded on the stock which each possession could support, and in all cases to add any holdings vacated to the nearest neighbour who could manage an enlarged holding. I instructed them never to put up vacated crofts to competition. I thus sacrificed the higher rents which men might be tempted to offer, but I laid the foundation for larger and more comfortable farms and an improved class of tenants. This system was steadily pursued for forty years, when it was arrested, if not wholly stopped, by the Crofter Act. Fortunately, however, it had been in operation so long that it had already secured such an improved condition of the people that no distress has ever since afflicted that island, whilst other islands of the Hebrides have had

seasons of sore distress when public subscriptions were required to relieve them.

On my father's death, we broke up the establishment at Inveraray, and retired to our own quiet house at Rosneath, where we remained until the autumn, when we were anxious to have a change, and arranged with the Sutherlands to visit them at Dunrobin. Our plan was to join the Duke, who then had a yacht, at Portree in Skye, and to go with him by sea to Lochinver, on the west coast of his county. From that point we were to post by land across the county to Dunrobin. Some time before we started, we heard a vague report that the Queen might possibly visit the west coast of Scotland, and that, if so, Her Majesty might wish to see Inveraray. It was, however, a mere rumour, which we did not think very probable. We therefore carried out our plan, by taking the public steamer from Oban to Portree. As far as the Point of Ardnamurchan, this passage was well known to me, but beyond that point it was all new. We were delighted with the scenery, and at one spot, between Skye and the mainland, near the mouth of Loch Hourn, we saw an effect of light and shadow on the sea and on some boats which has remained in my memory ever since as the most beautiful thing of the kind I have ever seen. We reached Portree late at night, but were soon on board the *Ondine* schooner yacht, where we found the Duke of Sutherland. Next morning we were off at day-break, and on coming on deck I found we were sailing fast before a fair wind past the beautiful and very peculiar mountains of Western Ross and Sutherland. We reached Lochinver early in the day, and I was delighted with a form and structure of Highland scenery the like of which I had never seen before. But hardly had we been settled for more than a day in Assynt, when the post brought us letters from the Duchess of Sutherland to say that the rumour about the Queen was no longer doubtful, but that it had been settled that Her Majesty was

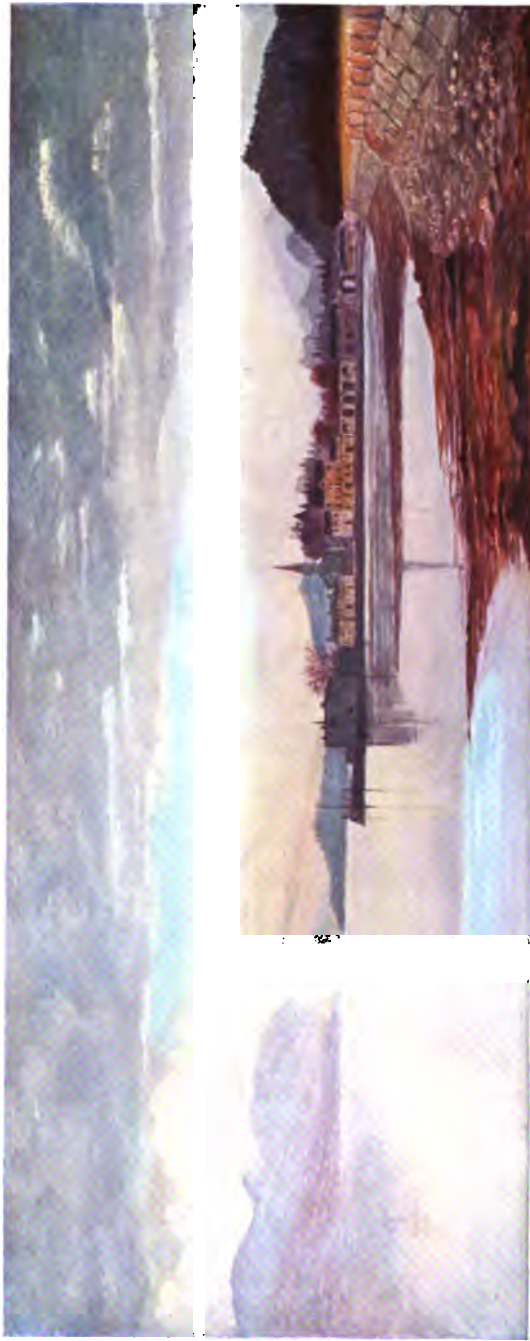
to visit the West of Scotland, and wished to see Inveraray.

There was nothing for us to do but to retrace our steps as fast as we could. We embarked again in the *Ondine*, and were wafted back to Portree, where we caught the steamer for Oban, and drove post-haste to Inveraray. We heard that the Queen's time could not afford more than a mere call, rather than a visit, and that Her Majesty could only spend some two or three hours at Inveraray. This, of course, limited our reception duties to a luncheon and a drive. But we had no establishment at all at that moment, and hardly knew how we could meet the occasion. From all difficulties on this head, however, we were speedily relieved by the unfailing affection and kindness of my dear mother-in-law, who wrote to us that she would come herself with as many servants as could be needed. I gave notice at once to a large number of the county gentlemen, who responded to our invitation to meet the Sovereign with a heartiness which I remember and record with gratitude. They came in large numbers in Highland dress, and made a gallant show. On the 18th of August the Queen's squadron of five warships and the royal yacht came steaming up the reaches of Loch Fyne, and, with the royal standard flying at the main of the leading vessel, afforded a beautiful sight. The quay was lined by Highland gentlemen, who also stood as a guard round the table at which Her Majesty and the Prince Consort, with the suite, were seated. After luncheon we drove the Queen and Prince, with the Duchess of Sutherland, up Glenshira, thus showing Her Majesty some of our finest trees and avenues and the vistas of a very peculiar and beautiful valley. German Princes know fine woods when they see them. Prince Albert was much struck with our silver firs, which are, indeed, among the very finest in Scotland, many of them exceeding 120 feet in height, with a girth of from 13 to 20 feet. The drive ended at the pier, and there we again



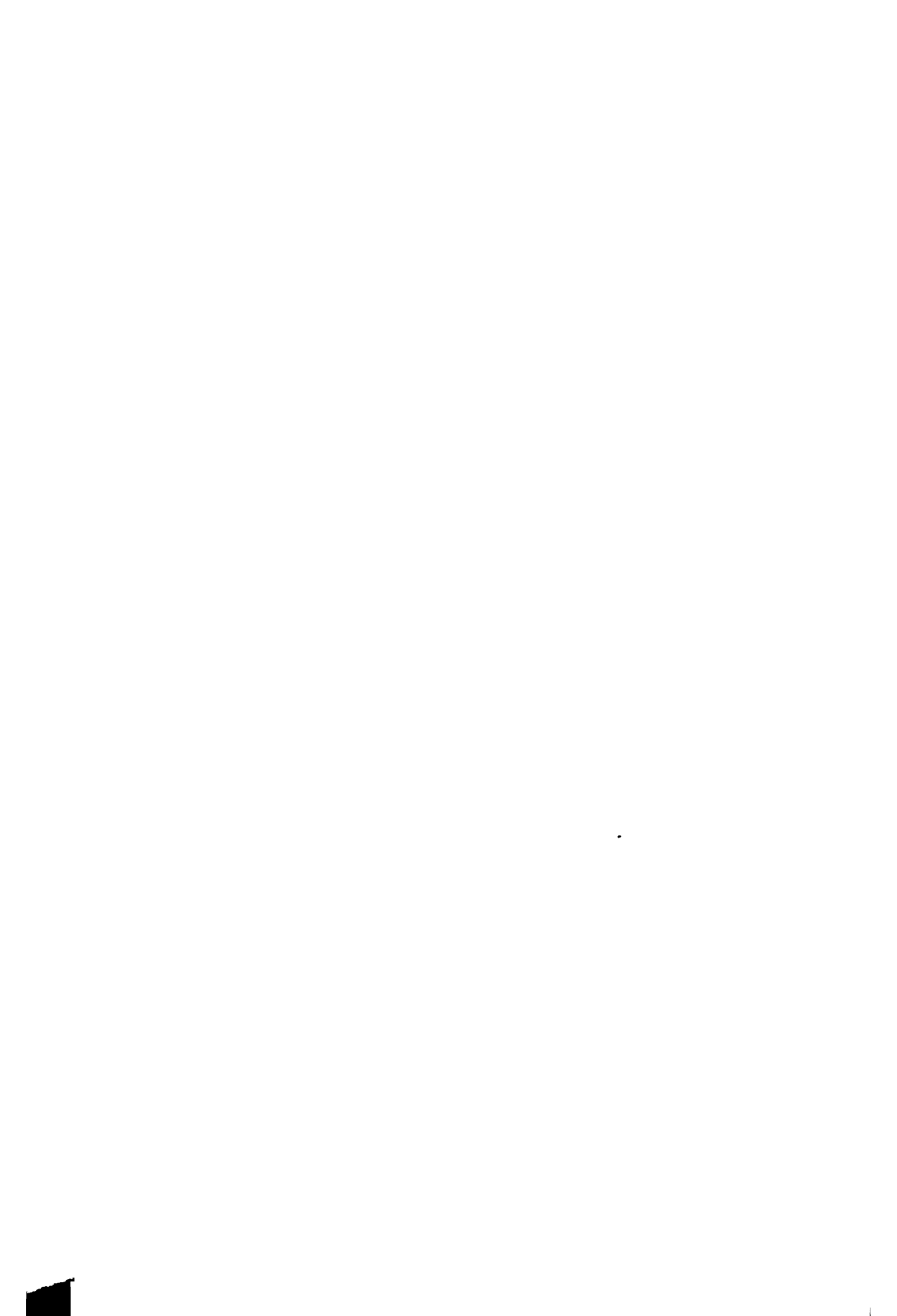
to visit the West of Scotland, and wished to see Inveraray.

There was nothing for us to do but to retrace our steps, and as we could not embark again in the *Lochinvar*, and were waited back to Portree, where we caught the steamer for Oban, and drove post haste to Inveraray. We heard that the Queen's time could not afford more than a half-hour's sojourn than a visit, and that Her Majesty could only spend some two or three hours at Inveraray. Time, of course, limited our reception duties to a half-hour's address. But we had no establishment at all at that moment, and hardly knew how we could manage the occasion. From all dangers, in this respect, however, we were speedily relieved by the attention, attention and kindness of my dear partner, who, in order to us that she would accompany us with us, and that as could be needed. Inveraray, and the county of Argyll, were invited to the occasion to meet the Queen, with a number of which I remember and I was well with gratitude. They came in large numbers in Highland dress, and made a gallant show. On the 18th of August the Queen's squadron of five warships and the royal yacht came steaming up the banks of Loch Fyne, and, with the royal standard flying from the mast of the leading vessel, afforded a magnificent sight. The vessel was lined by Highland regiments, and a grand round the table was given by the Queen and the Prince Consort, with the Duke of Argyll and the Duke of Devonshire. When we drove the Queen and the Prince Consort to the town of Sutherland, up the coast, and the Queen and the Prince Consort some of our finest scenery, and the Queen and the Prince Consort a very peculiar view of the coast. The Queen and the Prince Consort know five or six of the finest scenery, and it was much to be seen. The Queen and the Prince Consort indeed, among the finest scenery, and the Queen and the Prince Consort exceeding the Queen and the Prince Consort on 13 to 20 feet. The Queen and the Prince Consort on the pier, and there we again



THE TOWN OF INVERARAY, JAN., 1882.

From a picture by The Duke of Argyll.



attended Her Majesty on her re-embarkation, and, with the assembled gentlemen of the county and of the place, wished Her Majesty a prosperous prolongation of her cruise round the western coasts.

We had no idea, however, of giving up our visit to Sutherland. We should naturally have taken the route by the Caledonian Canal to Inverness, but the Duchess intended, as usual, to post all the way to Dunrobin, and invited us to travel with her in the same carriage—an offer we joyfully accepted, since to both of us every pleasure in life was made more pleasant by her society. Her abounding vitality, her intense enjoyment in, and quick eye for, beauty of every kind, and, last not least, her affectionate nature, made companionship with her a perpetual delight. To travel in an open carriage through a beautiful country was always a great enjoyment to me, but the enjoyment was doubled under such conditions. We had a very pleasant journey, going to Taymouth the first night, and there renewing the memories of our first meeting five years before. By beautiful Killiecrankie we took the great road to Inverness, and thence to Sutherland, by Dingwall and the shores of the Cromarty Firth. The east coast of Sutherland is another world from the western coast, of which I had only a glimpse at Lochinver. It is hardly Highland in character. The hills are low and rounded, whilst great stretches of level land intervene between them and the sea. But I was delighted with the situation of Dunrobin—perched on the top of an old coast-line, overlooking the open sea, and having below the windows some good trees, with a lovely old-fashioned garden. At night the column of light cast by the moon on such a sea, seen from such an elevation, was really glorious. It is one of the peculiarities of the place, of which my wife had often told me, and I was not disappointed.

After a most happy visit in Sutherland for a few weeks, we returned South and rejoined our children

at Rosneath. Very soon thereafter I was called upon to discharge a duty which was my first introduction to the public in a new capacity. The occasion was a remarkable one. Among the members of both Houses of Parliament who used to take notice of me when I was a constant attendant at debates in 1841-1843, there was one young man of growing distinction—my cousin, the Earl of Dalhousie. He had always been most kind to me, and we used to have frequent talks for a few minutes at the steps of the throne in the House of Lords when he was Lord Ramsay. He was a valued member of Sir Robert Peel's Administration, in which he held the important post of President of the Board of Trade, at a time when the great rush of railway enterprise cast upon that department the solution of many difficult problems. In this work he earned a great reputation as a man of business of remarkable ability. When in 1847 the Governor-Generalship of India fell vacant, the Whig Government was antecedently disposed to conciliate the Peelite party, which was then standing by them in defence of Free Trade. They therefore offered this great office to Lord Dalhousie, and he was advised to accept it by all his political friends. Before leaving England it was proposed to give him a banquet in Edinburgh, which men of all parties were to attend. An invitation came to me to be present at this banquet on September 14th, 1847. At first I was disposed to decline the invitation, being then on a visit to my father's widow at Ardencaple, where I was enjoying the pleasures of memory in the haunts of my boyhood. My wife, however, with a true woman's instinct, strongly urged me to go, and I went. When I repaired to an office where the tickets were issued, my extremely youthful appearance led to some questions being put to me, and on giving my name I saw the surprise excited. I was, however, assigned a place at the banquet next to Lord Dalhousie, and at his right hand. The chairman was the Duke of Buccleuch.

It was an immense assemblage. It included men of all parties in the State, although, perhaps, the Conservative element predominated, since Lord Dalhousie had, as Lord Ramsay, been well known in Edinburgh during his contests for the seat. The dining-tables stretched across a great hall from one platform to another, and faces at either end were barely recognisable from the other. The duty assigned to me was to respond to the toast of 'The House of Lords.' Ordinarily this is a formal toast, and my very recent succession to the peerage would have made it natural for me to treat it formally and as shortly as possible. Yet I felt this to be impossible. I liked Lord Dalhousie, and I was really somewhat excited by the success of the only relation of my mother's who had come across my observation in the paths of public life. On the other hand, if I diverged from the task assigned to me, I was in danger of trespassing on the 'toast of the evening' and forestalling the duty of the chairman. Great audiences, expecting important speeches as the main business of the day, are apt to be impatient of preliminary formalities. I felt that nothing would save me from a position of some awkwardness except success. What I did say I must say well, so that the execution should cover what might be open to criticism in the design. I was therefore very nervous before rising, but when I sat down I was greatly encouraged by the kind applause with which my short speech*

* [NOTE BY EDITOR.—The conclusion of the speech alluded to is here inserted.

After replying to the toast of 'The House of Lords,' the Duke, addressing the chairman, said :

'And now, my Lord Duke, having discharged, however imperfectly, the duty which has been imposed upon me by the position I have the honour to hold, I trust I may be allowed to take up another task more grateful to my own feelings. I trust I may be allowed to add my humble voice of sincere and hearty congratulation to one whom I am proud to call my noble friend

was received, but still more so when Lord Dalhousie, turning to me, said :

‘ Well, Argyll, you see you have won a great success. Allow me to give you one word of advice. Don’t be in a hurry to speak when you go to the House, and don’t speak too often. But when any question comes up which you feel you really understand, and on which you have something really to say, step out into the debate and join in it, and then by the time I come back from India I’ll find you high enough.’

and kinsman, on the occasion which we are met to celebrate to-night. To be deemed capable of the government of British India by a man’s own political party is an honour and a distinction of no mean kind. But to be judged, not by his own party, but by all parties, by the universal acclamations of all his countrymen—this is the honour enjoyed by my noble friend to-night. Nor would I omit to congratulate my noble friend on the nature of that appointment in itself. Of all the offices connected with the government of this great Empire and of its vast dependencies, there is none, in my opinion, to be compared with this. My noble friend does not go out, as another eminent Scotsman has lately done (Lord Elgin as Governor-General of Canada), to preside over a people instinct with the energies of the Saxon race, whose progress nothing can impede and no individual exertions can well accelerate. He does not go out to the task—more difficult, as it seems to me, than pleasing—of endeavouring to reconcile the forms and principles of monarchical government with the democratic tendencies of a great rising colony. In India we rule over a people inferior to ourselves, indeed, in knowledge, civilization and religion, but equal to ourselves, I do believe, in all the capabilities of human improvement—moral, political, social, and religious—a people full of the splendid germs of Eastern genius and intellect. It is with them that the influence of the great and good among us may bear glorious fruit. My noble friend leaves his own country with the blessings and the prayers of all who know him. We trust he will return to it again with the blessings and the prayers of those millions over whom he is now called to rule.’]

After the banquet I returned to Rosneath, where I spent the rest of the autumn and all the winter at our happy and beautiful home. This seems the fitting place to mention a subject to which I need not recur. I succeeded to the estates under conditions of considerable difficulty. My uncle had left a large debt, which my father had not been able to diminish. Under these circumstances, I had to live at a very moderate rate of expenditure, especially as I determined to carry on all improvements out of revenue, and not out of loans chargeable on the estate. In this rather difficult struggle I was heartily seconded by my wife, to whom in this matter I owe a tribute of gratitude.

At the opening of the session of 1848 we went up to town, and I took my seat in the House of Lords as Baron Sundridge, an English barony which had been conferred on my grandfather, the name being that of a village in Kent near a place—Coombe Bank—which had belonged to his brother, Lord Frederick Campbell. This was my formal title in the House of Lords, and under this name, during thirty years, I was always called to speak by the Clerk at the Table.

On taking my seat, I was somewhat puzzled where to sit. Parties are less rigidly separated in the Lords than in the Commons; but, still, I did not wish to sit on the Whig side of the House. Although a Peelite, I had a great respect and admiration for Lord Derby, and, rather for the sake of being sufficiently near to hear him well, I took my first seat immediately behind him. The cordiality of his reception when he saw me convinced me that he put an interpretation upon my doing this which I by no means intended. Thereafter I drew off, and tried the cross-benches. But I felt at once that it would be impossible to speak with any comfort from that position, which is the worst in the House. I therefore settled on what is called the 'Duke's bench,' next the Woolsack, on the left of the Throne. That is the bench on which I have sat all my life, except, of course, when in office. There I

found, an invariable occupant of it, the Earl of Aberdeen, and thus, from sitting constantly beside him, I formed an intimate friendship, which till his death was one of the happinesses of my life. There was no man in the House against whom I had originally a greater prejudice. I had attributed to him more than to any other the catastrophe of the disruption of the Church of Scotland. I had a general notion that he was what the Scots call a 'dour' man—obstinate and narrow-minded. This impression melted away like snow in a thaw when I came to know him personally. He was, indeed, silent and reserved, but his voice, when he did speak, was unmistakably the voice of sincerity and truth. With an immense knowledge of men and of affairs, he possessed penetrating observation, with the calmest and most measured judgment. There was an indefinable charm in him which stole upon me, gradually at first, but which took entire possession of me at last. Absolute sincerity and truthfulness of character was the fundamental note in a perfect harmony. I became strongly attached to him, and I was gratified to find that he liked me.

Mindful of Dalhousie's advice, I did not speak at all for several months. My first speech was on the Bill for the admission of Jews to Parliament, by exempting them from that part of the Parliamentary oath which invoked 'the true faith of a Christian.' This Bill had been repeatedly passed by the Commons, and always thrown out by the Lords. It was a very unfavourable opportunity for me, because I could not be enthusiastic either way. I had some difficulty in making up my mind how to vote. There were several arguments on both sides which I rejected altogether. Arnold's opinions had not been without influence upon me. Although a Liberal—almost a Radical—on most questions, he had been an eager opponent of this concession. I had never, indeed, accepted Arnold's doctrine of the identity of Church and State. But, on the other hand, I had not submitted to the

axiom that, under no circumstances, had the State a right to make religious faith a condition of the highest rights of citizenship. Neither could I admit Macaulay's dictum that Christianity had no more to do with legislation than with 'cobbling.' I felt and saw that our noble system of laws was founded on the teachings of Christianity. So far, therefore, I was in favour of Arnold's pleas for exclusion. On the other hand, I felt that, practically, theological arguments had become alien to the work of legislation, and that the banishment of these from debates was due mainly to the divisions of Christians between themselves, so that a small element of Jewish members would practically make no difference in the matter. I was therefore in favour of leaving constituencies free to exercise their own judgment as to the religion of their members. It is needless to say that this was a position unfavourable to effective speaking, because unfavourable to the energy of strong convictions. My speech was therefore short, but it was real as far as it went; it was fairly well delivered, and it made, on the whole, a favourable impression on the House.

The year 1848 was the year of the fall of the French monarchy and of an epidemic of revolutionary violence over almost the whole of Europe. Every throne was shaken except our own and those of Russia and Belgium. The Chartists thought they could imitate the Continental mobs, and had the folly to announce a mass meeting on Kennington Common for the 10th of April. The Duke of Wellington knew how to take advantage of the tactical mistake which placed the Thames and its bridges between the mob and their objective, the Houses of Parliament and offices of Government. He had troops concealed everywhere where they could possibly be required; but the vapouring fool who led the mob—Fergus O'Connor—flinched from any contest. The whole thing turned out a ridiculous fiasco. The alarm had been so great that an immense number of the well-to-do classes had offered their

services to the Government as special constables, and were drilled in squads in various convenient places. One incident occurred which was very comical to me. My old travelling friend, the doctor, was in London, and was one of those who volunteered. He was tall and thin, with weak legs, which could hardly have stood in a scrimmage with the mob. On the drill-ground he found himself alongside of a very short man with an immense nose, and small, cunning-looking eyes. On inquiry, he found to his surprise that this ugly little man was Prince Louis Napoleon, at that time only known by his grotesque invasion of France with a captive eagle, but who was destined, before the year was ended, to be the elected President of the new French Republic, with his foot evidently planted on the steps of an imperial throne.

We did not leave our quiet home at Rosneath during the earlier months of the year, and it was difficult in the peacefulness of its woods and waters, and in sight of the calm outlines of its 'everlasting hills,' to realize the noise of the voices outside and the tumults of the people. But when we went to town there were two figures which, owing to the Revolutions, passed across my stage of vision, and which remain impressed upon my memory. One was the old exiled King, Louis Philippe; the other was the young Prince Frederick, eldest son of the Crown Prince of Prussia. The first of these I saw when we went with the Duchess of Sutherland to pay our respects to him at Claremont. It is curious what an atmosphere of sorrow envelops certain places which have been the scene of some peculiarly mournful death. The Princess Charlotte had died at Claremont in 1817—six years before I was born, and ten years before I could well have really understood the universal mourning which that tragic death had caused. And yet it is a fact that I did remember the bated breath with which, in my childhood, I had heard my father and other relatives speak of that cruel blow to a nation's love and to a

nation's hopes. A splendid and most pathetic sermon of Dr. Chalmers—read in somewhat later years—had no doubt left its effect upon me. And so it was that, when I went to Claremont, I was a great deal more curious to see the house and place than to see the old exile to whom the still living husband of the Princess Charlotte, King Leopold, had assigned it as a refuge. The ex-King received us very courteously. But he was a most unimpressive old man. His personal history had indeed been an honourable one. He had supported himself through many years of poverty and exile, and as King he had at least committed no conspicuous fault. But I confess I could not help looking at him as the son and representative of that *Égalité* of the Revolution who had had the baseness to vote for the death of his cousin, King Louis XVI. I could not wish success to a dynasty with such a terrible blot on its escutcheon. His Queen was as full of dignity and distinction in her manners and in her face as he was deficient in both.

The other figure I have referred to as one which I encountered at this time was of a very different type. Nowhere had lawless mobs been more violent than in Berlin. The reigning King was a well-meaning but a weak and impulsive man, bending before every wind that blew. In moments of revolution, when authority is at an end and anarchy reigns supreme, every constituted Government must depend on its armed force. And the military were marched into Berlin. But just when they were called upon to act, the King gave way, and they were ordered to retire before an armed mob. Of course the whole army felt it bitterly. Young Prince Frederick, the second heir to the throne, full of the spirit of his profession—nowhere more proud and sensitive than in Prussia—was one of the officers who thought themselves exposed to a dishonour. He came to England, and I was presented to him at a large party at Stafford House. He was then a beautiful youth, with a charming countenance and the most

noble aspect. Of course I spoke to him sympathetically, because all the world was wondering at and deploring the weakness of his uncle. I found that the young Prince could hardly speak of it. He told me—and a soldier could say no more—that he felt inclined to break his sword. This is the last symbol of a military humiliation.

Among our first guests after we established ourselves at Inveraray were the Earl of Ellesmere, with his wife and daughters. His society was one of my greatest pleasures, partly from the strong affection between him and my wife, but not less on account of my own appreciation of his many charming qualities. Full of poetry and of art, with an intense love of Nature and of the natural sciences, he had that pleasant element of wonder which, if it sometimes tends a little to credulity, is not only natural, but legitimate in creatures such as we are, 'moving about in worlds not realized'—creatures that must be perpetually stupid if they do not habitually wonder. At that time he was much excited about the unabated chaos of the Continental Revolutions. The enlightened course he took in supporting Sir Robert Peel, when so many deserted him, showed that he was no old-fashioned Tory. But he hated mob rule, as every man ought to hate it, and I well recollect his first observation to me after entering our door: 'It seems to me that the devil has got a lease of the world.'

However, we soon escaped from the odious spectacle then presented by politics on the Continent. It happened to be a glorious autumn in the Highlands. Ellesmere was enchanted by our woods and waters. By a happy circumstance, too, the upper reaches of Loch Fyne were then, as often in those days, visited by an immense shoal of herring, which brought a large fleet—almost 100 boats—to catch them. The sails of this large fleet, as they unmoored from the creeks and stole out to set their nets in the sunset lights, were really a vision of glory, and it was a great pleasure to me to see the

intense enjoyment of it in the large, dark, contemplative eyes of 'Uncle Francis.' I could not help observing in him one curious example of the power of association. The scenery of Argyllshire is widely different from that of the northern counties. It is much greener, more wooded, less predominantly heathery or rocky. Ellesmere had an eye too highly cultivated not to appreciate the more fertile but less familiar aspect of our south-western coasts. But there was one drive near Inveraray which for several miles was almost destitute of trees, whilst the pastoral surfaces were comparatively poor. He saw at once the greater likeness to his native Sutherland, and one gnarled oak-stem, twisting its crooked way from out of the splintered fragments of a huge rock, seemed to give him more lively pleasure than all the splendid beeches and chestnuts of which we were specially proud.

But the years 1847 and 1848 produced other fruits in my life than those hitherto mentioned. It then became a habit with me, which has never been wholly abandoned, to have some literary work on hand, lying behind, as it were, all other avocations, and occupying very often a large portion of my thoughts, even in the midst of pleasures and amusements. Then, also, I acquired a power and habit of abstraction which enabled me during my whole life to dispense entirely with any separate room for my own study, even when actually writing. I always wrote in the same room in which my wife sat with her children. My work of composition, so far as thinking is concerned, was carried on at all times and all seasons, and the actual writing was accomplished with ease in the quiet evenings which we generally enjoyed in a retired country life. I never could set myself down alone, to work at anything for a definite time. My mind had the habit of being steeped in some one subject of recurring contemplation, and very often while fishing or shooting, or simply enjoying beautiful scenery, I have found myself busy thinking how best to express

some unobserved distinction or to convey some important argument. I was never disturbed by hearing family conversation, but I would have been disturbed, on the contrary, if I had been left alone. I mention this feature in my intellectual and literary work because I rather think it is peculiar. It accounts for my having repeatedly written on subjects which seemed remote from my better-known pursuits. I have no boast to make of it as a method, because it was never deliberately adopted as such. On the contrary, I have often wondered at and envied the power possessed by many men of sitting down at a given hour and spending a given time upon some definite literary work, and then dismissing it from their minds till the hour returns. But I see that my own looser habit had at least some great advantages. I was never under any temptation to write for writing's sake—to fill up a given time and a given number of pages—which is known as 'padding.' I am not conscious of having written a single line merely to fill up space, or to serve any other purpose than the expression of some definite idea, contributing to the understanding of the subject in hand. This is an invaluable result, especially in all writings of a controversial kind, because it tends to keep up the impression of truthfulness and sincerity, upon which all persuasiveness absolutely depends.

I have introduced this subject here, not only because of its importance as a biographical detail, but because I have now to explain my first appearance as an author in any form more serious than a pamphlet. Ever since my reading and reflections on the questions raised by the Reformation in Scotland—that is, for more than seven years—I had realized that those questions were far wider than the mere local controversy in which I had felt called upon to engage. Those questions cut deep into the largest of all subjects—namely, the nature and constitution of the Church of Christ. The air of those years was full of movement,

and even of excitement, upon questions which all ultimately turned on that fundamental problem. I have already mentioned the interest I felt in the peculiar views of Arnold. When Gladstone published his book on Church and State, I began reading it with eagerness, and then dropped it with something very like disgust. Its narrow Anglicanism was what struck me most. High-sounding general principles tied down to purely provincial applications; those principles pleaded just in so far as they might cover the particular Church to which the writer belonged, and then abandoned when they would cover the case of any community other than his own—this was all I saw in that celebrated book. In 1845 I had seen the author of it resigning his seat in Peel's Government because he could not by his vote support his own principles. Then I had watched from the beginning the progress of the Oxford Movement, noting especially that its central idea was a theory on the nature and authority of the Church which differed from that of Rome in nothing except in the absence of a central authority or head. I had watched the secessions to Rome which carried off so many leaders of the Movement, and I had wondered why this was wondered at. It was a book by a certain Bishop Sage, written in this sense, which fired the train that had long been laid in my mind, ready to catch when some spark should fall upon it. I had an inborn tendency to write, and throughout life I have found it to be a most powerful instrument of self-education. We cannot explain our ideas to other men without a strong and continuous effort to make them clear and definite to ourselves. I felt much dissatisfaction with many current impressions of the doctrines and the nature of the Christian Church which were really fundamental in the results of the Scottish Reformation. The views I took of them did not coincide with those of any party, and yet I saw that they were securely founded on the unquestionable facts of history, whilst they threw an important light

on the difficulties of our own time. Therefore, seizing on an appropriate title—'Presbytery Examined'—which was supplied to me by the controversial essay of Bishop Sage, I began in 1847 to embody my thoughts in an article, intended for the *Edinburgh Review*. After my usual manner of working, it occupied all the moments of my time not otherwise engaged during 1847 and part of 1848. On sending it to the then editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, Mr. Macvey Napier, I received a very kind reply, expressing the greatest interest in my paper, and paying high compliments to its literary merits, but explaining that it was not quite suitable for his *Review*, and strongly advising me not to cut it down, but to expand it and publish it in a separate form. This advice entirely harmonized with my own views, and I accordingly set to work to complete the essay and to widen its scope. It was published in 1848, under the title 'Presbytery Examined: An Essay, Critical and Historical, on the Ecclesiastical History of Scotland since the Reformation.'

The main propositions which I think I established in this essay were these: that partly out of the historical circumstances under which the Reformation took place in Scotland, and partly out of a careful and deliberate interpretation of the New Testament narratives and teaching, the Scottish Reformers evolved and established a system which is unique in Europe.

It was the publication of this book in 1848 that first brought me into personal relations with Gladstone. As his book on a kindred theme had been reviewed by Macaulay in the *Edinburgh Review*, so Gladstone determined to review my very different opinions in the *Quarterly*. This he did in an anonymous article, which, however, was known to be by him. Of course such a review in that great organ of literary opinion, and by such a distinguished writer, was in itself a tribute to the book having at least some relative importance; but Gladstone's paper went beyond this.

It was not only most courteous to me personally, but it was highly complimentary to the literary merits of my essay. It was not wonderful that on some points he misunderstood my position. I therefore ventured to address him by letter, with some explanations. To this letter I received a most characteristic reply—not fully admitting, yet not denying, the authorship, and asserting the right of anonymous authorship to defend its own incognito. It was probable, he said, that neither a full admission nor a complete denial might represent the truth. I understood this mysterious language to refer to cases in which the editor of a review cuts out, or even inserts, passages in a way to alter the character of a paper. But I knew that no such tricks could possibly be played by the editor of the *Quarterly* in dealing with the writings of a man like Gladstone. The article was obviously and notoriously his, and the rest of his reply practically owned it. I have no recollection now of the points in question between us, but the rather gratuitous introduction of such an ambiguous suggestion has remained vividly impressed upon my memory.

On my return to London in the spring of 1849, I called upon Gladstone for the first time. He was most kind and courteous, and I liked him personally from that moment. But I may as well explain here at once that on Church questions I never felt it worth while to talk with him. That was the one subject on which I always realized that there was a fundamental indelibility in his opinions, and an equally fundamental indelibility in mine. He instinctively disliked the Church of Scotland far more keenly than he disliked the Presbyterian system when not recognised by the State. On the other hand, although I never was a Presbyterian in the same sense in which he was an Episcopalian—that is to say, although I never could regard our local ecclesiastical system as one of Divine and universal obligation—I revolted against the Anglican pretensions which made a corresponding claim in their own favour,

and which even made the whole system of the Christian Church dependent on one method of appointing one rank or order in its ministry.

It was said of me by a critic in later years that I was 'a born controversialist,' and it is true that I have been engaged in many controversies during my life; but I never was a controversialist in personal discussion. On the contrary, I habitually avoided it, and during the many years in which I was on the most intimate footing with Gladstone I never felt the least temptation to enter with him on 'Church Principles.' When I published my book in 1848, I felt that on this subject I had had my say. From that date I turned my literary attention to other subjects—to the advance of the physical sciences, and to the bearing of the new philosophy, to which they were giving birth, upon the older problems of the world and upon the fundamental principles of Christian belief. I left the field of mere ecclesiastical controversy with delight. I felt how unreasoning and unreasonable the disputants generally were—how dominated by personal associations, by clap-trap words and phrases, and by party antagonisms. I have lived to see a good many of the opinions expressed in my essay of 1848 receive the sanction of events and of high authority. In Scotland I have seen the Established Church attain a great revival, because it has been found to have retained all the freedom needed in the independent exercise of its spiritual discipline and jurisdiction. I have seen a marked disposition to enter upon those temperate reforms of its worship which I then ventured to recommend. I have seen probably the most learned man who has worn a mitre in the Church of England since the Reformation publish a paper on the nature of the Christian ministry which corresponds closely with the view to which I had been then led, and which emphatically denies to the Christian Church the possession of any sacrificing priesthood. I have also lived to see a recrudescence

of the Romanizing tendency which followed the Oxford Movement. I resume, therefore, with satisfaction, the narrative of my life, at a time when it took a somewhat new direction, and when I left behind me a class of controversy which is only too apt to narrow the mind and to end in no valuable result.