CHAPTER XXIV

1854–55

TROUBLES IN THE CRIMEA—RESIGNATION OF LORD JOHN RUSSELL—DEFEAT OF ABERDEEN GOVERNMENT—FORMATION OF MINISTRY BY LORD PALMERSTON—RESIGNATION OF MR. GLADSTONE, SIR JAMES GRAHAM, AND MR. SIDNEY HERBERT

THE period of thirty-eight days which elapsed between the end of the session and the date in the next session when the Aberdeen Ministry was overthrown was a period of pain and grief to us, such as I remember with horror, and find it impossible to describe. The splendid army of over 30,000 men which we had organized, and had sent out with brilliant success to the Crimea, was reported to us every week as dying by inches in the besieging lines. Yet we were kept in complete ignorance of the causes. What we did know was that reinforcements of great strength, and whole flotillas of supplies, had been poured into Balaclava. The silence of Lord Raglan was positively excruciating. Nothing came from him but the driest facts. But one of these seemed to me to be alarming in the highest degree—namely, this: that our effective force in the Crimea did not exceed 16,000 men, with about 9,000 in hospital. At a Cabinet on the 21st of December Lord John Russell spoke very gravely about the position of our army, but nothing he said at that time was free from the suspicion that he was still looking out for an occasion to resign on personal grounds, which were known to all of us. We broke up without coming to

any definite conclusion. Therefore, on the 22nd December, I addressed a letter to Aberdeen urging that a careful estimate should now be made with the French Government as to the number of men each of us could send; that this estimate ought to be sent to our respective Generals, with instructions that they should consider the adequacy or inadequacy of the force thus to be provided, and determine whether the siege should be prosecuted or abandoned. At the following Cabinet Palmerston strongly protested against allowing the Generals on the spot to exercise so large a discretion. He said that such a course would be disgraceful to France and England. I said that it would be less disgraceful than the loss of the army. He rejoined that that was out of the question. I said it was not out of the question, from the effects of climate and sickness. He then admitted that this did require to be looked to, and this led to a discussion as to what could be done. Newcastle assured us that all the best men in the military departments had been sent out with full powers, and he did not know what else could be done, unless we were to supersede everybody and send out some civilian as a dictator. Of course this was impossible. Newcastle, however, had consulted Lord Hardinge, who had recommended a good Quartermaster-General, and he had been sent out.

Meantime the War Office and the Admiralty were straining every nerve to send out reinforcements. Graham reported to us that he had supplied transport for 9,000 French troops, and a continuous stream of vessels was carrying comforts to the army. But in spite of all this, we felt that it was impossible to contend with cholera, and on the 13th of January, at a Cabinet, Newcastle told us seriously that the condition of our army was now such that a great disaster to our arms must be contemplated as at least a possible event. I do not know whether Palmerston remembered, as I did, the conversation we had together early in the month of July, when the Sebastopol expedition had

been ordered—how I had been full of anxiety, and he had been still more full of hopeful, confident expectations. I am bound to say that nobody was more vexed and angry than he was now. I recollect him one day listening to a very bad account of the army which had reached one of us—an account which was expressed in the sentence that we were losing a regiment a week. 'But why should this be?' said Palmerston, almost starting to his feet. This was the question we were all asking, and were all equally defeated in getting any guidance in reply. A general impression was gaining ground that in the faculty of organizing Raglan was deficient. But there was no General of whom we knew that would be better, whilst Raglan was incomparable and indispensable in our relations with the French army, on which depended any hope of getting some relief to our men by a fairer division of work in the trenches. Three measures we took during this dreadful month. We supplied the French army with transport for their reinforcements; we did the same for the Turkish army of Omar Pasha, which, to the extent of 40,000 men, was conveyed to the Crimea; and, lastly, we secured by diplomacy the alliance and active co-operation of the Sardinian kingdom.

We had three Cabinets, on the 18th, 19th, and 20th. At all of them Lord John Russell was not only present, but taking an active part in measures of his own, upon education and on Church rates, thus giving every indication of his continuous membership and fellowship with us. On the 23rd Parliament reassembled. Lord Grey gave notice of a motion on a reorganization of the War Office, and Roebuck gave notice of a motion for inquiring into the causes of the condition of our army in the Crimea. This last was, of course, a vote of want of confidence in the Government.

On the 24th January we had another Cabinet. I walked down to it alone and rather early. On entering the room, I found that Palmerston was there, and nobody else. As he was not generally more

than punctual, I was surprised. But the mystery was soon solved when he handed to me a note, saying, 'Read that.' It was a note from Lord John, telling Palmerston in three lines that he would hear a letter from himself read to the Cabinet, and that it was a painful but necessary step. When all the Cabinet had assembled, Aberdeen read the letter. Newcastle began the discussion by offering to resign, as he knew the run was against him, and the Cabinet could not go on unless he left the War Department. We all felt that it would be dishonourable to ourselves to make him our scapegoat for events for which we ought all to share the responsibility in our several degrees. Sir George Grey, with a high-mindedness which never failed him, declared he could not consent to such an unworthy sacrifice of a colleague. In some discussion of Lord John's act, it clearly appeared that it was universally condemned by all his colleagues. He had sent his resignation without consulting one of them, and late at night, after taking part in the business of the House. Aberdeen told us that he received it with very great surprise, as this was almost the only occasion on which he should have thought such a course impossible. To desert the friends with whom he had been acting just at the moment when they were about to be attacked would indeed seem a strange course. But whatever we thought, there was very little said on this part of the subject. After a long debate on our position, it was decided that, considering the evil of a weak and crippled Government, with a great war on hand, it was best for all of us to resign, and give as our reason what really decided us in this connection.

Accordingly, Lord Aberdeen went off to Windsor to inform the Queen of what had happened, and to place all our resignations in Her Majesty's hands. On the following day we repaired to Downing Street to hear the arrangements for giving up our various offices. Our astonishment was therefore great when Aberdeen came from Windsor to tell us that we were still Ministers

of the Crown, because the Queen had peremptorily refused to accept the resignation of Aberdeen or of any of his colleagues. Her Majesty told Aberdeen, and commanded him to tell us, that our resignation under such conditions was unjust towards herself, injurious to our own character, and indefensible as regards the country. Although, of course, I was aware that it was part of the prerogative of the Crown to accept or refuse Ministerial resignations, I had never realized it as a power likely to be brought into practical use, and therefore the position of affairs filled me with curiosity and interest.

Two or three of the Cabinet confessed that they had had serious misgivings on the previous day when our resignation had been decided upon. One of these was the Lord Chancellor Cranworth, a most excellent man with an admirable judgment. He had doubted, he said, whether it was right for a whole Cabinet to resign because one member of it had done so. He had doubted also whether we, in our position, ought to run away before an attack in the House of Commons. Aberdeen admitted that he had had the same doubts, and thus it was evident that the Queen had not merely effected a change in our course as an act of obedience to the Sovereign, but had recalled us to considerations of duty and of public policy which in our haste we had overlooked. None of us, indeed, doubted that Lord John Russell, who was our leader in the House of Commons, was far more than one individual member of the Government, and that his defection and desertion just at that moment must be fatal to the Government. But, none the less, the Lord Chancellor and Lord Aberdeen were right in recognising that the Queen had exercised her prerogative with wisdom, as well as with strength.

Our first duty under the new conditions was to consider who, in the coming debate, should take the place of the colleague who had so suddenly deserted us, and what line was to be taken on behalf of the Cabinet

as a body. One thing was certain—all the world around us was in a passion. The House and the public were determined to hang somebody. The War Minister was, of course, the obvious victim. It was true that under his Administration the British Army had won three of the most brilliant victories that had ever signalized its conduct on the field. It was true that later misfortunes pointed clearly to a kind of mismanagement with which the War Minister had little or no concern. It was true that at the very moment of the Parliamentary crisis, and under the same War Minister, the tide of misfortune in the Crimea had already begun to turn. But at that juncture nothing of all this had a chance of being listened to for a moment. Newcastle knew that he must resign, and he told us that he meant to do so the moment the division was announced, whatever it might be. But this did not solve our difficulty. Was the House of Commons to be allowed to know of this resolve of the War Minister? It was the only chance we had of weathering the storm. But would it be consistent with our honour to sacrifice our colleague in order to save ourselves? Had we not been his colleagues during all his days of success and victory? Had we not been proud of the splendid organization which in his hands and those of Graham had landed such an army with its siege-train 3,000 miles from home? Had we been able to make one single suggestion which he had rejected? Were we now to throw him over in the face of the House of Commons, when most of us, if not all of us, believed that the calamities were due to causes over which he had no control? Those questions, I rejoice to say, we answered unanimously in the negative. There is nothing I remember in my public life with greater satisfaction than the conduct of the Aberdeen Cabinet at this, the last moment of its existence. Some few of us really thought that Newcastle had been sometimes slow. But not one of us could put his finger on anything he had done, or

anything he had refrained from doing, to which, by even any plausibility, the mismanagement at Balaclava could be traced. An overpowering sense of personal honour told us that we must stand or fall with him, and that our spokesmen in the debate were to give no hint, however faint, that we would remain when Newcastle had been sacrificed.

Among the alternatives enumerated, there was indeed one which in itself would have been acceptable to some, and that was that Newcastle and Palmerston should change places, Palmerston taking the War Office. But I pointed out the inconsistency of at once proposing to defend the conduct of the war, and yet displacing the Minister whose defence we were prepared to undertake. The force of this was felt by all, and we agreed to meet the enemy *in statu quo*.

On the 26th of January, after another Cabinet, I went with my wife by command to Windsor. The Prince at once sent for me, and I told him what had been settled at the Cabinet. I found him in rather low spirits. We had a long conversation, and I told him my own impression that from a variety of causes I had been led to doubt for some time whether a change of Government would not be desirable. The Queen soon entered the room, when Her Majesty expressed freely, though without any bitterness, her surprise and astonishment at the course taken by Lord John Russell. On the 27th I returned to London to attend a Cabinet. There had been an adjourned debate in the Commons, and I heard that Palmerston had spoken feebly and ill. Newcastle complained of the great unfairness to him of Lord John's speech. He said his position was intolerable unless he could make his own statement speedily, and almost desired to resign, that he might make it in the Lords at once. We reminded him that this would just be doing what we had all agreed should not be done—that was, throwing him over to appease the Commons. Newcastle was much moved, and said he had not expected such ungenerous

conduct from anyone. A shipwreck, he said, was not a very pleasant thing, either physically or metaphorically; but he would rather be the man drowned in such a storm than the man who saved himself by putting his feet on the shoulder of a friend. Aberdeen, with that determined love of the exact truth and of perfect justice which was characteristic of him, was the only man who said anything in defence of Lord John. He said that Lord John, it was true, had not stated the case on Newcastle's side, but, on the other hand, he did not think that Lord John's speech was very ungenerous towards him, or that such was his intention. Gladstone asked me my opinion on this point, to which I replied that Lord John had suppressed or omitted what ought to have been stated by him, considering the hardship of Newcastle's position.

On my return to Windsor, I saw the Queen and the Prince before dinner. The Prince was unhappy about the debate. There was no statesman's speech. But the country needed to be told that it was a great nation waging a great war and a great enterprise against a great Power, and that it must not fret and fume at any mere want of success, without discriminating between the evils due to the magnitude of the enterprise, or those due to climate, and those due to mismanagement. The present run against Newcastle was an unjust one. But he clearly admitted the want of management on the part of Raglan. The Prince thought that Lord Hardinge would have done it better. The Queen joined in our conversation, and I could see that Her Majesty clung to the hope that the Government would be reconstructed, if we should be beaten on the pending division. Lord Aberdeen came to Windsor on Sunday to dinner, and in the evening Her Majesty renewed her conversation with both of us on the crisis.

On Monday, the 29th, my wife and I left Windsor with Aberdeen, and we again discussed the probable issue of the crisis. Aberdeen said he was determined

to part friends with Lord John Russell, and spoke with characteristic justice, moderation, and candour of everybody and everything. I never admired him more.

Next morning, January 30th, 1855, we were defeated in the Commons by the enormous majority of 157, only 148 members voting with us. The truth is that Parliament and the country were frantic—not to be wondered at, indeed, considering what all popular assemblies are, yet, nevertheless, not justified by the facts of the case. The great feature of the debate was a fine speech by Gladstone, exposing Lord John's conduct with skill, and ridiculing the attempt of the House of Commons to inquire into the conduct of the war by means of a Select Committee.

We had a meeting of the Cabinet at once, to arrange about our resignation, at which Clarendon announced the signature of the Treaty with Sardinia, by which an auxiliary force of 15,000 men was secured for our troops before Sebastopol. That was our last act, and a very important one, in the conduct of the war. It was one of the many steps we had taken before we resigned, which contributed much to that turning of the tide which soon led to the final success of our great enterprise.

Gladstone expressed his thanks to the Cabinet, and especially to that portion of it whose connection with himself was new, for the support and cordiality with which they had acted towards him in all his measures and proposals. He said that the Cabinet of Lord Aberdeen would ever be remarkable for the manner in which it had brought together the two great parties formerly opposed.

Thus fell the Ministry of Lord Aberdeen, after a duration of a little more than two years, from January, 1853, to January, 1855.

The immediate cause of its fall was the action of Lord John Russell in deserting his colleagues, because he would not hold himself responsible for what he

had himself done along with them in the Crimean War.

It is possible, of course, that, even if Lord John Russell had not deserted his colours, we might have been equally defeated, because the tide of impatience and anger against us was at that moment rising high. But certain it is that his virtual confession that we had no defensible case made the division hopeless, and rendered our defeat certain.

In looking back upon the work of the Aberdeen Administration, it is impossible not to see that it was a great one. In the first place, it set the example of that reconstruction of parties which had become essential to the conduct of political affairs. And this was permanent. In the second place, it carried an immense reform in the fiscal system of the country—a reform so large and so fertile that it marks an epoch in our domestic history. In the third place, it established a friendly alliance with France, amounting to active co-operation in a common foreign policy. In the fourth place, it established as a principle, in our dealings with the Turkish Empire, that the affairs of that Empire were a matter of concern to the whole of Europe, and ought not to be left to the selfish action of a single Power. In the fifth place, it took a step which went a long way towards recognising the rising Italy, then represented by Sardinia, as one of the Great Powers of Europe. All of these were achievements in both home and foreign politics of the highest order of importance. All of them have had lasting effects upon the future, and it is one of the strange ignorances which Parliamentary contests produce, that our work as a Government is in most minds identified with nothing but six weeks or two months of bad weather and local mismanagement in the Crimea. Despite that mismanagement, the military reputation of the country suffered no disparagement. On the contrary, both by the victories won and by the vast display of maritime resources

in the transport of the army, both for ourselves and France, and by the very calamities which proved the spirit and endurance of the British soldier, our reputation as a military Power was in many respects much enhanced.

But the greatest homage to the Aberdeen Ministry was yet to come. It was speedily found that no Government was possible except a reproduction of that Ministry as nearly as could be attained. Lord Aberdeen, indeed, retired finally from public life. He had done the great service to his country which no other man could then have rendered—that of making possible a fusion essential for the public welfare. There was also another member of the Cabinet whose return to office could not be then in question, and that was Newcastle. A natural public prejudice ascribed to him the misfortunes by which we had all been distressed. But as regards the rest of the Aberdeen Cabinet, it is a curious comment on the popular verdict of the moment that we were all again installed in office within the space of a few days, and that, with the addition of a few new colleagues, we with our allies carried on the Crimean War to a triumphant conclusion, precisely as we had carried it on before.

The transactions through which this curious result was arrived at were a signal illustration of the disintegrated condition of political parties at the time, and as I was personally conversant with most of them, and behind the scenes as regards them all, I think it may be worth while to tell the story in some detail.

The Queen, following, as she always does, the constitutional usage, sent first for the leader of the largest Parliamentary party in the majority which had defeated us. This was Lord Derby. But he knew and felt that he could not form a stable Government in such stormy waters, with nothing but his old crew of Protectionist Conservatives. He therefore at once applied to Palmerston for his co-operation. That is to say, he applied

to the man who was one of the foremost in urging the Crimean enterprise, and, as I personally knew, was the very foremost in ignoring the magnitude of it and the dangers it involved. Palmerston declined to take office under Lord Derby. I know nothing of his reasons. He may have felt that his own time was coming, and near at hand. He may have felt, too, that his late association with the Peelites could not be so rudely broken and so quickly reversed as his engagement with the Tories would imply.

Derby did not confine his attempts at another fusion to catching Palmerston. He also invited Gladstone and Sidney Herbert, who declined. The Queen next sent (as I believe) for Lord Lansdowne, rather as her oldest and wisest Privy Councillor than as the head of any party. Lansdowne consulted Gladstone, who told him that if there was to be any reconstruction, he did not see that a new form of the late Cabinet would offer any advantages. At that moment he seemed to consider a simple return of the Aberdeen Cabinet as not impossible.

On the 3rd of February I went to see Lord Grey. I found him of opinion that the best solution of the difficulty would be a Palmerston Government. But he admitted that, if Palmerston was inclined to enlarge the area of the war, it would be a fatal objection. He thought the Peelites ought to reinforce Derby, if again invited, as he saw no public principle to divide them. I asked him if he thought Gladstone would ever sit in the same Cabinet with Disraeli. He said: 'No; but they must get rid of Dizzy.' I said that was not so easy. In the afternoon of the same day I went to see Gladstone, and found that Lord John Russell had just called upon him. The Queen had been compelled to send for Lord John, by the failure of others. Gladstone told him what he had told Lansdowne—that, if there was to be any form of coalition, he preferred the last. Lord John was very nervous. Just at that moment a note was handed to me from Lord John, saying that he

wished very much to see me, and hoped I would come to him that evening. After going to Aberdeen and telling him that I could never take office under Lord John under existing circumstances, I wrote a note to Lord John intimating that, as regarded office, my feelings and opinions left me no room for choice, and begging that he would not consider me for one moment in any arrangement he might be making.

Next day, the 4th February, 1855, I went to Aberdeen, and found that Lord John had failed, and had abandoned the attempt. So far as I could hear, no man worth getting would serve under him. This was a striking result of his own conduct. With great abilities, many fine points of character, and near the end of a life of great service to the progress of our political system, he had nevertheless become impossible as a Prime Minister.

Palmerston was now the only resource left to the Queen, and he had accordingly been sent for, and was trying to form a Government. Clarendon and Lansdowne had both been with Aberdeen trying to get his support. On the morning of the 5th I received a note from Palmerston asking for my assistance. On going to town, I found that a sort of Peelite Cabinet was being held at the Admiralty, where Graham was confined to bed by some illness. We spent two hours there. There were assembled Aberdeen, Gladstone, and Sidney Herbert. Herbert was as decided as it was his nature to be in favour of joining Palmerston. I was in favour of the same course. But Gladstone and Graham were both strongly opposed to it. Gladstone said that the mob of a Cabinet could not control its course. That depended on its working heads, and the one in whom he had most trusted would be away in a Palmerston administration. Graham amused us by conjuring up all sorts of terrors—for instance, that Palmerston would subject the policy of England to that of the French Emperor, who had declared that he wished to see Palmerston Prime Minister.

Aberdeen at last told us that on the whole he advised us to join. Gladstone then tested him with the question whether he would be able to get up in the House of Lords and say that he had confidence in the foreign policy of Lord Palmerston. Aberdeen replied that he certainly would be able to hope the best. Gladstone pounced on this as a test, and intimated that it could not satisfy him. We then asked Aberdeen whether he could not himself join the new Cabinet without office. Aberdeen replied that this alternative was clearly impossible. To be Prime Minister one day and a Minister without any functions the next day—this, he said, would be a confession of incompetence to which he could not submit; and we all felt the truth of what he said. Gladstone remained firm, and the idea of a reconstructed Cabinet seemed impossible.

On leaving the Admiralty, I had now to consider the comparatively very small question of my own reply to the letter I had received from Palmerston in the morning. I had conceived, during our late Ministry, a real feeling of respect for his public character. I thought him manly and straightforward in his opinions and in his expression of them. Of course, I had no sympathy with the absurd popular superstition that he was the only man who could conduct the war, or that he could have prevented it. I knew that he had been quite as unforeseeing as any of us as regards all the unexpected contingencies which had led to our difficulties; I knew that he had proposed nothing which could have had any effect either in meeting them or in preventing them. But anyhow, as the Duke of Wellington used to say, 'the Queen's Government must be carried on,' and the popular impression of Palmerston's powers as a War Minister, even although it was largely a delusion, was in itself a qualification for the moment. I was therefore clearly and strongly in favour of his forming a Cabinet. But there was one consideration which I could not get over as regarded myself. That consideration

arose out of my relations with, and my feelings towards, Lord Aberdeen. I could disregard the prevalent nonsense about Lord Palmerston, but I could not stoop to any, even seeming, acquiescence in the prevalent nonsense about Aberdeen. If I joined Palmerston in company with all the other Peelites, I could do so without any such implications. But if I were to join him alone, I felt that my position would be open to a kind of misunderstanding which I could not for a moment bear. I therefore wrote to Palmerston quite frankly that, as the vote of the House of Commons was pointed partly at Aberdeen, it must be presumed to point also at views in which all his friends heartily shared, and that they could hardly join a Government framed on the special basis of his exclusion. Palmerston instantly replied by asking me to come to see him, as he thought I was in error on a point of fact. I at once complied, and walked off to see him. He told me that since he had written to me he had received the answers to his invitation of Gladstone and of Sidney Herbert, and he saw that we were acting together. However, he added, what he had wished to say to me was that, though he admitted the vote of the House of Commons to be pointed partly at Aberdeen, it was because views which Aberdeen did not hold were erroneously ascribed to him. It was, therefore, not pointed at his views, but at views which were not his. This was ingenious, and partly true. He then said: 'You (the Peelites) will be much blamed. It will be said that Aberdeen is keeping his party together in the idea that the Government will again fall into his hands.' I told him that this was not the motive, and that I felt that a Government under Aberdeen would be impossible at present. I added that I could not act separately from others, as I was personally much connected with Aberdeen. He then said he would have to form his Government out of pure Whig elements—an alternative which he did not seem to contemplate with pleasure.

I took care to explain to Palmerston that my difficulty arose solely from the personal relations in which I stood towards Aberdeen, and that upon any other grounds whatever I had not the slightest objection to serve under him. He was most kind and cordial in all he said, and expressed great regret, as well as perhaps some censure, regarding the apparent determination of the Peelites to keep up a separate party in the State.

On the evening of the 5th it had got abroad that the Peelites had refused to join Palmerston in forming a Government, and the political world was full of astonishment, and quite as full of anger. I found Aberdeen at the House of Lords looking distressed and perplexed. I went again to Gladstone, and found him playing with a baby—an occupation to which he was much addicted. I asked him if he had no doubt of the rightness of his decision. He replied that he never was buffeted by the waves of public feeling without being sensible of their effect. But the mental process was clear, and he remained as firm as a rock. Granville, whom I met, was loud and angry, and said that our decision was fatal to the public interests—that Palmerston would dissolve and come in with a most undesirable strength and power, and that it was hard on those Whigs who agreed with us most.

On the following morning, the 6th February, 1855, I went to see Lansdowne, to express my sorrow for the break-up. Near his house I was hailed from a cab, and a messenger gave me a note from Gladstone, telling me that Aberdeen had begged his friends to join, and they had agreed that, if he (Aberdeen) could get assurances from Palmerston enabling *him* to declare his confidence in the foreign policy of the Government, they would join. I proceeded to see Lansdowne, and he told me of the strength of Aberdeen's remonstrances with his friends. I then went to Graham, and heard the same story, and then to Aberdeen, where I found Gladstone, having just sent off a note to Palmerston agreeing to join him, since Aberdeen had received the most

satisfactory assurances from both Palmerston and Clarendon.

Palmerston had addressed to Gladstone an excellent letter, denying that he was aiming at any wild schemes; if he could alter the map of Europe by a magic wand, he admitted that he thought he could reconstruct it in a way to add to the happiness of mankind, but he would measure his end by his means, and would not commit the blood and treasure of England to theoretical schemes. I then at once sat down and wrote a letter to Palmerston offering my services. I agreed in the general conclusion that no other Government was possible at the time. This alone made it a duty to support it. Yet it was only by the energetic exertions of Aberdeen, in influencing his friends, that the formation of it was accomplished.

It was a great wrench to me to find myself thus separated from Aberdeen, and member of a Government which seemed as if it were founded on no principle whatever but his exclusion, together with that of Newcastle. There literally was no other change. With these exceptions, we all returned to office exactly as we had been before—all of us equally responsible with our retiring colleagues, not only for the general policy that had been pursued, but also for the supposed administrative mistakes that had been so severely blamed. In some respects it was a ridiculous result, but the ridicule lay not with us, but with the workings of party government under very peculiar conditions, and with the wayward and passionate impulses of popular opinion swaying a popular assembly.

As soon as I found myself thus placed, I wrote to Aberdeen the following letter, which is the best record of my feelings at the time:

'ARGYLL LODGE,
'*February* 7, 1855.

'MY DEAR LORD ABERDEEN,

'I have heard from Palmerston this morning, and thus find myself, with others of your friends, members of a Government from which you retire.

'I cannot tell you how repugnant to my feelings this position is when regarded merely from this point of view. I am only reconciled to it by the fact that you approve of it on the whole, and I only accord to it my own approval under the hope that we may be able to give some effect to your principles and views, even though deprived of the support of your presence.

'But I cannot allow the first hour of this new position to pass without begging you to accept from me an expression of my most grateful and affectionate admiration. I feel keenly anything that gives even the semblance of this appearance of separation from you; but this we must, and will, prevent. I can only say that, should I continue in public life, I shall seek as the highest object of ambition to imitate the virtues of your public character, and especially that scrupulous regard to moderation, truth, and justice which most of us are daily sacrificing to opinions of others or prejudices of our own.

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'I am, my dear Lord Aberdeen,
'Ever most sincerely yours,
'ARGYLL.' *

I must here say a few words about Newcastle, who, as War Minister, bore the brunt of the popular dissatisfaction, which also, from different causes, was

* The following extract from Lord Aberdeen's reply is added by the Editor:

'ARGYLL HOUSE,
'*February* 8, 1855.

'MY DEAR DUKE,

'It will always be a source of real satisfaction to me that I have been the means of introducing you into official life. Your talent, your industry, and the uprightness of your character, quite independently of your high station, will render your future success certain; and I shall watch your progress with an affectionate interest.

'I am very sensible of your kind feelings towards me, which I beg you to believe I shall always highly value.

* * * * *

'Ever, my dear Duke, most sincerely yours,
'ABERDEEN.'

shared by Aberdeen. Newcastle was the member of the Aberdeen Cabinet with whom I had the fewest personal relations. He was one of the regular Peelite group, and more intimate, I think, with Gladstone than with any other member of his party. But he never seemed to me to be very intimate with anybody. He had a somewhat stiff manner, with much reserve. He was rather a ponderous speaker, somewhat hesitating in utterance, and without life or animation in his delivery. But, on the other hand, he had admirable abilities, indefatigable industry, and excellent sense. His mind was dispassionate in council, but he intervened little in discussion, and seemed shy of doing so. When the danger of war began to loom out of the darkness upon us, he found himself, besides being Colonial Minister, at the head of a War Department which had nothing like an army to rely on.

Nearly forty years of confirmed peace, without any attention paid to military organization, had left us with a certain number of regiments, but with no system of combination, and no highly educated staff. It is immensely to Newcastle's credit that, without any fuss or ostentation, he, within a few months, collected and sent out from the shores of England to the Black Sea, first, an army of about 30,000 men, with all their accoutrements, and two trains of heavy siege-guns, and, secondly, reinforcements to the amount of about 11,000 more. We none of us had originally contemplated an operation so immense, and, in so far as the calamities in the Crimea were the result of lines overextended and of soldiers overworked, it is quite certain in my mind that the fault did not lie with Newcastle, but with the vast unforeseen conditions of the enterprise as a whole. Moreover, we must recollect that it was Newcastle who did the work which brought matters right after all.

When our new Palmerston Government was formed, all things in the Crimea had already begun to mend. Newcastle's reinforcements of men, and his

overflowing supplies of all kinds, including warm clothing, had not only been sent, but had begun to arrive, before we were driven from office by the House of Commons; and at the very moment when we were retiring we had the satisfaction of hearing those more cheering accounts from the seat of war which were the presage of final success. Newcastle's name, therefore, is not to be connected only with the first collecting, organizing, and sending out of a larger British army than Wellington ever had under his command upon the Continent, but also with the later efforts which redeemed local mistakes and rehabilitated an exhausted army for its final triumph. On the 7th of February, before as yet the new Cabinet had been even formed, a despatch was published from Raglan to tell us that warm clothing had been distributed to the army in abundance; and so it was with numberless other remedial measures which the Aberdeen Government had undertaken, and which were just coming into full play when it was turned out.

The reconstituted Cabinet met for the first time on the 9th of February. I could not help feeling that it was rather ridiculous. It seemed to be the same identical ship, with the same crew, excepting only a new captain and a new mate. We were resuming, too, the same identical course, and shaping it exactly as it had been shaped before. The illusion was increased by the fact that Palmerston at the Cabinet meetings was very silent and quiet, just as Aberdeen had always been. Our substitute for poor Newcastle was Lord Panmure. He was a rough, strong-headed Scotsman, a cousin of the Marquis of Dalhousie, then Governor-General of India, and he ultimately succeeded to the title. He was a man of excellent common-sense, but of no brilliant abilities, and had been one of the corps of Scottish Whigs who had always stuck by Lord John Russell, and were generally most aggrieved by that exclusion from office which was a consequence of the fusion with the Peelites. I had known him person-

in the transport of the army, both for ourselves and France, and by the very calamities which proved the spirit and endurance of the British soldier, our reputation as a military Power was in many respects much enhanced.

But the greatest homage to the Aberdeen Ministry was yet to come. It was speedily found that no Government was possible except a reproduction of that Ministry as nearly as could be attained. Lord Aberdeen, indeed, retired finally from public life. He had done the great service to his country which no other man could then have rendered—that of making possible a fusion essential for the public welfare. There was also another member of the Cabinet whose return to office could not be then in question, and that was Newcastle. A natural public prejudice ascribed to him the misfortunes by which we had all been distressed. But as regards the rest of the Aberdeen Cabinet, it is a curious comment on the popular verdict of the moment that we were all again installed in office within the space of a few days, and that, with the addition of a few new colleagues, we with our allies carried on the Crimean War to a triumphant conclusion, precisely as we had carried it on before.

The transactions through which this curious result was arrived at were a signal illustration of the disintegrated condition of political parties at the time, and as I was personally conversant with most of them, and behind the scenes as regards them all, I think it may be worth while to tell the story in some detail.

The Queen, following, as she always does, the constitutional usage, sent first for the leader of the largest Parliamentary party in the majority which had defeated us. This was Lord Derby. But he knew and felt that he could not form a stable Government in such stormy waters, with nothing but his old crew of Protectionist Conservatives. He therefore at once applied to Palmerston for his co-operation. That is to say, he applied

to the man who was one of the foremost in urging the Crimean enterprise, and, as I personally knew, was the very foremost in ignoring the magnitude of it and the dangers it involved. Palmerston declined to take office under Lord Derby. I know nothing of his reasons. He may have felt that his own time was coming, and near at hand. He may have felt, too, that his late association with the Peelites could not be so rudely broken and so quickly reversed as his engagement with the Tories would imply.

Derby did not confine his attempts at another fusion to catching Palmerston. He also invited Gladstone and Sidney Herbert, who declined. The Queen next sent (as I believe) for Lord Lansdowne, rather as her oldest and wisest Privy Councillor than as the head of any party. Lansdowne consulted Gladstone, who told him that if there was to be any reconstruction, he did not see that a new form of the late Cabinet would offer any advantages. At that moment he seemed to consider a simple return of the Aberdeen Cabinet as not impossible.

On the 3rd of February I went to see Lord Grey. I found him of opinion that the best solution of the difficulty would be a Palmerston Government. But he admitted that, if Palmerston was inclined to enlarge the area of the war, it would be a fatal objection. He thought the Peelites ought to reinforce Derby, if again invited, as he saw no public principle to divide them. I asked him if he thought Gladstone would ever sit in the same Cabinet with Disraeli. He said: 'No; but they must get rid of Dizzy.' I said that was not so easy. In the afternoon of the same day I went to see Gladstone, and found that Lord John Russell had just called upon him. The Queen had been compelled to send for Lord John, by the failure of others. Gladstone told him what he had told Lansdowne—that, if there was to be any form of coalition, he preferred the last. Lord John was very nervous. Just at that moment a note was handed to me from Lord John, saying that he

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cared comparatively little for separation from Graham or from Sidney Herbert, and neither my admiration for Gladstone, nor my increasing personal intimacy with him, could supply motives strong enough to overcome my own clear sense of what was due to the public interests in a great crisis. I was determined not to let myself be led, as I saw Sidney Herbert was, by the mere preponderating weight of a will stronger than his own. I saw the tendency to exaggeration in Gladstone's intellect—the tendency to assign overweening importance to lines of reasoning which, however true up to a certain point, had to be balanced more equably than he was disposed to allow against other arguments charged with a modifying force.

As regards the policy of the Government and the conduct of the war, I had no alarm on account of losing three men who had never taken an individual line different from the colleagues who still remained. We still had Clarendon for our Foreign Secretary, in whom I knew that Aberdeen had the greatest confidence; for he had expressly told his old colleagues, in inducing them to join Palmerston, that he looked to Clarendon as faithful to the cause of a reasonable peace. Besides, I never had felt that dread of Palmerston which had been expressed by the Peelite members, and which he had such difficulty in overcoming. Especially at that moment, when both we and France had discovered to our cost what a tough job we had on hand in trying to take Sebastopol, I thought it absurd to suppose that any Minister of Palmerston's common-sense could seek to extend or to prolong the war, if any satisfactory peace could possibly be attained.

But now the question arose, How and to what extent was the Cabinet to be reconstituted? Palmerston had told me not many days before that if the Peelites would not join him, he would have to fall back on a Whig Cabinet pure and simple. But no one knew better than Palmerston how little desirable such a result would be.

Aberdeen at last told us that on the whole he advised us to join. Gladstone then tested him with the question whether he would be able to get up in the House of Lords and say that he had confidence in the foreign policy of Lord Palmerston. Aberdeen replied that he certainly would be able to hope the best. Gladstone pounced on this as a test, and intimated that it could not satisfy him. We then asked Aberdeen whether he could not himself join the new Cabinet without office. Aberdeen replied that this alternative was clearly impossible. To be Prime Minister one day and a Minister without any functions the next day—this, he said, would be a confession of incompetence to which he could not submit; and we all felt the truth of what he said. Gladstone remained firm, and the idea of a reconstructed Cabinet seemed impossible.

On leaving the Admiralty, I had now to consider the comparatively very small question of my own reply to the letter I had received from Palmerston in the morning. I had conceived, during our late Ministry, a real feeling of respect for his public character. I thought him manly and straightforward in his opinions and in his expression of them. Of course, I had no sympathy with the absurd popular superstition that he was the only man who could conduct the war, or that he could have prevented it. I knew that he had been quite as unforeseeing as any of us as regards all the unexpected contingencies which had led to our difficulties; I knew that he had proposed nothing which could have had any effect either in meeting them or in preventing them. But anyhow, as the Duke of Wellington used to say, 'the Queen's Government must be carried on,' and the popular impression of Palmerston's powers as a War Minister, even although it was largely a delusion, was in itself a qualification for the moment. I was therefore clearly and strongly in favour of his forming a Cabinet. But there was one consideration which I could not get over as regarded myself. That consideration

offering the Exchequer to Sir George Cornewall Lewis, whose wife was a sister of Clarendon, and who, although he had never been prominent as a party politician, had a great and just reputation, not only for learning and literary ability, but for judgment and wisdom. On the same day we heard that he had accepted. Lewis became one of the most valuable of all our members, not so much in finance, as in all the questions of international law which a great war and prolonged negotiations were bringing to the front. His calm, judicial mind, and the utter absence in him of political passion of any kind, made him an invaluable counsellor. I have never seen in any man, except in Lord Aberdeen, a mind so singularly dispassionate, combined with such wide knowledge and perfect integrity of character. He was one of the very few men I have ever met in the world whose formed opinion on any difficult question would be to me in itself a very strong presumption in favour of any course which he approved. He was a real authority on a whole range of subjects, equally helpful both in thought and action. He had a quiet and very grave manner, with a demeanour so staid and thoughtful that the saying ascribed to him that 'life would be very pleasant if it were not for its amusements' is a perfect translation of the impression made by his intercourse with the world. He was a great addition to the Cabinet.

There were two other additions made by Palmerston at this time, both of which gave me great pleasure, though of a very different character. One was Lord Carlisle, and the other was Lord Canning. Carlisle was one of the old Whigs, for whom no room had been found in the Aberdeen Cabinet, but who was personally most acceptable to all. The first vote he gave was in favour of agreeing to the House of Commons Committee, and I was sure that he would always be in favour of the earliest possible peace. Lord Canning was a Peelite, and a close personal friend and follower of Aberdeen. I did not know him at all intimately, but

I had felt much for Aberdeen in his inability to give him a seat in his Cabinet, and I think that Aberdeen must have told him of the offer I had made to him on the subject, because Canning treated me at once in the most friendly spirit. He used to report to me what had passed at any Cabinets I had missed, and to urge me to come up for any Cabinets which he thought would be important. We became, in short, rather intimate friends, although, outside the sphere of politics, I do not think we had many interests or habits of thought in common. The higher qualities of mind and character which he undoubtedly possessed would probably have never been known, had he not soon been removed to that nobler field of action which was opened to him when he was appointed to the Government of India.

Palmerston, I think, was rather pleased than otherwise with the work of Cabinet-making. He went on patching for some time, and one day he astonished us all by proposing that Lord Shaftesbury should be added to our number. I was far too fond of Shaftesbury, and had much too great a respect for him, to say one word in opposition, but I saw that it rather took away the breath from a good many of my colleagues. His fervid nature, his uncompromising temperament, and his somewhat individual opinions, were evidently not considered as promising well for united counsels. My opinion, which, however, I kept to myself, was that he was a far more valuable man out of office than in it. Palmerston evidently saw that the proposal was not very well received, and we heard nothing more of it. Shaftesbury must have had as large a share of wisdom as he had of indomitable zeal, else he never could have carried through his factory legislation; and as he had a great respect for Palmerston, he might have done well under him, but hardly under any other man. On the whole, he was certainly better left to his own grand career in the cause of humanity.

During the remainder of February and during all the month of March we were a good deal cheered by the accounts of the improved condition of the army, of its reinforced numbers, and of its rising health and spirits. Instead of barely 15,000, we had now above 20,000 men, with abundant resources and equipment. But so far as the Siege of Sebastopol was concerned, there seemed to be little or no progress. Ineffectual bombardments and bloody repulses could give us no confidence in even ultimate success, and indicated only too plainly that the calculation of the Engineer Department had been terribly mistaken from the first. But the prolonged success of Russia in the defence of Sebastopol was producing more dangerous results than any mere disappointment to us. The sentiments of military honour were more highly strung in France than with us. More depended on the issue there than here, and the Emperor was getting nervous and excited. He suddenly formed a resolution to go in person to the Crimea. We all thought this course most inconvenient, and even dangerous. His own Ministers were against it. Clarendon crossed the Channel to meet the Emperor and try to dissuade him. There was another scheme of the Emperor to which we were equally opposed, and that was to put the whole force, including the British Army, under the supreme command of the French General. This we all considered was out of the question, and we argued with the Emperor that nothing could be more dangerous in its practical working to the interests of our alliance. With these and other schemes of the French Emperor or his Ministers we were kept in perpetual hot water. Clarendon, however, managed very skilfully to checkmate them all.

Another difficult and painful subject which weighed upon us about this time, and which personally I felt almost as a distress, was the command of our army in the Crimea. The Aberdeen Cabinet, through Newcastle, in its later days, and the Palmerston Cabinet,

through Panmure, had written fully to Lord Raglan on all that puzzled and pained us in the sufferings of the army, and had called for such explanations as could be given. In April, 1855, all his replies had come, and he energetically defended both his staff and himself. The question arose, Did the replies satisfy us? I do not think there was one of us who would have given an affirmative answer. The conviction had been growing in my mind, and in the minds of most of my colleagues, that, with many great qualities, Lord Raglan was deficient in those administrative and organizing powers which were needed in the very peculiar conditions affecting our army in the Crimea. If we thought so, were we justified in leaving its fate in his hands? I hated the idea of taking part against a man of such a noble character, and whom we had sent on an expedition which we knew was beset with dangers; but, on the other hand, it was our duty to do the best we could for our army, and to shut our eyes on none of the lights which experience had thrown on the conduct of the expedition as a whole. I found that my colleagues generally had a like conviction, and yet a like repugnance to face the consequence of Raglan's recall.

Palmerston and Panmure, and all who were concerned, had two great difficulties in the way, which it was very hard to overcome. First, as regarded one requisite for the Crimean command—a power of standing on high terms with the Generals of an army superior in number to our own—there was no man to be compared with Lord Raglan. Secondly, as regarded the other qualifications needed in the camp and in the field, there was not one of our own Generals whom we could designate with any confidence as certainly possessing them. Panmure had just sent out to be Chief of the Staff a General whose reputation was a blank, and of whom we never heard that he showed any talent at all. To displace Lord Raglan without really knowing whom we should appoint in his stead

would have been a dangerous and ridiculous operation.

Among my papers of the time, I have found a very able Memorandum by Lord Ellenborough on the causes of our great losses in the Crimea. Party spirit ran so high that it was very difficult to get anything like an unbiassed opinion from men of competent knowledge and ability. All who were hostile to the Government defended Lord Raglan through thick and thin, laying the whole blame on us. It is of interest, therefore, to see the careful, written opinion of a man who was one of our fiercest assailants in the House of Lords, when he came to sit down and gravely to argue with himself on the blots of the campaign. I have no recollection how I came by the document, except that it must have been given to me by Ellenborough himself. I was on a very friendly footing with him. He had taken much kindly notice of me when, as a lad, in 1841-1842 I had regularly attended the debates in the Lords, and I recollect his taking me home one evening in his carriage, his house being near my father's. I was a great admirer of his oratory, especially in respect to his elocution. I continued frequently to converse with him, and doubtless it was in consequence of some conversation with him at this time that he gave me the paper referred to. The remarkable thing about it is that it traced the misfortunes of our army entirely to local mismanagement in the Crimea itself, or, in other words, to Lord Raglan. It is written, as he always wrote, with great ability, and without committing myself to entire agreement, I must say that it seems to me to carry conviction on its face.

We were not, however, as it turned out, obliged to undertake any campaign inland. We did at last succeed by 'pegging away,' as we had done before, and we did not therefore need any new military genius to take up Lord Raglan's work. We thus escaped inflicting a terrible affront in the face of the world upon a gallant and devoted man. But more than this, we

escaped the ridicule of inflicting this affront on a venerable soldier for the sake of replacing him by some officer in all ways inferior and thoroughly commonplace. I did not know the full amount of this danger then. But I soon found it out.

Lord Raglan did not long survive. He sank on June 28th, 1855, under the weight of his work, the vexation and anxiety it involved, and at last the mortification of another severe repulse of one of those bombardments and assaults on which our attack had alone depended. Then, when Raglan was gone, whom did we find in possession, specially sent out by those two popular saviours of the army, Palmerston and Panmure? General Simpson! He may have been in many ways a good officer, and a favourite at the War Office. But his name was utterly unknown to the nation, and is now completely forgotten. He left no mark behind him on the great siege.

Towards the end of March there had been a short interlude in my political life, due to an engagement in Scotland. It is well known that the students in the Scottish Universities have the privilege of electing their own Lord Rectors. These elections turn a good deal on politics, and are conducted with all the machinery and all the excitement of the political contests of later life. On the other hand, they are often determined by personal or literary considerations, sometimes by the ties of neighbourhood. The students of Glasgow University had been kind enough to elect me as their Lord Rector, and I went down to Glasgow to deliver the usual inaugural address, on the 28th March, 1855. Struck as I had been by the splendid character and rare gifts of Lord Aberdeen, I did not think he was duly known to, or appreciated by, his countrymen generally. His natural silence and reserve accounted a great deal for this, and I determined to tell my fellow-countrymen something of my own feeling on the subject. By a good many it was received with applause, but by a good many also with

disapproval. It must be remembered, however, that in Scotland Lord Aberdeen's name was far more closely connected, in the popular mind, with the Church controversy which had ended in the Disruption than with any thought of foreign affairs or of the principles of imperial policy which were associated with his name as a Minister of the Crown. I could not expect his name to be favourably received by that large portion of the Scottish people who were connected with the Free Church. So far as I could judge, however, there was no strong political feeling on either side as regarded the politics of the moment.

It was soon after my return from Scotland on this occasion that I had my first and only opportunity of seeing the new Emperor of the French. He, with his Empress, reached Windsor on the 16th April, 1855. On the 19th, the Lord Mayor of London gave a great luncheon to the Emperor and Empress, at which an address from the Corporation was to be presented. I went with my friend and colleague, Sir George Grey. I was placed next the Emperor at the luncheon, and, of course, I had an excellent opportunity of studying his face. There was not a trace of the Napoleonic type—a type capable, indeed, of conveying very unpleasant expressions, but a type, nevertheless, rarely separated from great beauty of proportion and of form. There was neither here, as it appeared to me, and his expression was watchful and suspicious; but, on the other hand, I thought his speaking excellent. He spoke in good English, and with great tact and judgment. His allusion to the time of his exile here was conceived in the best taste, and was very warmly applauded. In referring to our political freedom, he contrived to throw in just a little implied excuse for himself, in establishing so very different a system in his own country. This was most adroitly done. On the whole, the speech gave me the idea of a man of very considerable ability, though I could not feel any confidence in a character which looked through such

a countenance. His whole object at that time was to consolidate the alliance with us, and we were quite as anxious for this result. We could not have prosecuted the war alone. On the whole, his reception was excellent. There was no pretence to an enthusiasm which could not exist, but there was complete cordiality towards the exile whom we had so long sheltered, and who had suddenly become the Sovereign of our nearest neighbour, and our active ally in a tremendous contest. The grace and beauty of the Empress did much to compensate for her husband's personal appearance, whilst the Queen and Prince Albert did their part admirably in crowning the national reception.

But I have run into some arrears as regards my record of by far the most serious subject of preoccupation which engrossed us during those months of the spring of 1855. That subject was the interminable, tiresome negotiations about a future peace, which in one form or another had been dragging their slow length along ever since the war began. I have already explained the reasons why I had wished them to continue. In the first place, as we professed to be fighting for European objects, it was right that the other Powers of Europe should know what we were driving at. In the second place, it was good for ourselves to define our own objects, and not to indulge in vague speculative projects, involving prolonged war and more widely extended operations. We had now reached the stage at which it was thought best to concentrate those long palavers into the form of a regular Conference of the Powers, and to start it with a protocol, expressing in general terms the basis of a preliminary agreement to be signed by us all. As already mentioned, Lord John Russell was to act as our representative at the Conference, and he went off to Vienna in the middle of February, 1855. The very first thing he did when he arrived at Vienna was to advise us to give up the preliminary protocol, so far as signing it was concerned, because the Powers were

unwilling to be bound by it. This did not look well for any better agreement when further details were to be entered upon; but the truth was that we had long foreseen that one of our 'Four Points' would present insuperable difficulties, so long as the fate of Sebastopol remained undecided. On all the other 'Three Points' it did not seem improbable that a peaceful settlement might be reached. But when we laid down, as an essential basis of any satisfactory peace, that something effectual must be done to limit the preponderating power of Russia in the Black Sea, we were making a demand on Russia which she would certainly resist with all her strength.

On the other hand, we had committed ourselves on this point, not in words only, but in deeds of great self-sacrifice, and by directing our attack on the grand naval arsenal of Russia on the Euxine. What could be the use of such an expenditure of blood and treasure if, having taken Sebastopol, we were to allow it to be again rebuilt, refitted, and re-armed with fleets as powerful as before? Austria was as half-hearted, timid, and shuffling as usual. She would gladly secure at our expense all the 'points' which affected herself. She was heartily with us, therefore, on all the Danubian stipulations, and perhaps even on a Christian protectorate in Turkey. But she shrank with instinctive timidity from any obligation which had the slightest chance of involving herself in war with Russia. She would go with us as far as possible short of that, and she used language now and then which lured us on with the hope that she might be brought to join in presenting an ultimatum to Russia. One of her manœuvres was to cut down the dangerous 'Third Point' to some scanty residue which Russia might accept, and to which we might submit—so long, at least, as we were still kept at bay in the Crimea. The alternative into which Austria tried to inveigle us, as a fulfilment of the 'Third Point,' was to give up any idea of limiting Russian fleets in the Black Sea, and to

substitute some plan of 'counterpoise,' by opening, on various conditions, the Black Sea to the Western Powers. I was strongly opposed to any such concession. I saw how unworkable it must be—how rarely it might be possible to get the Western Powers to take the same view on all occasions, or perhaps on any occasion, involving naval co-operation; whereas Russia, with a great fleet always present and always impending, would be practically as much mistress of the situation as she had been at Sinope. This Austrian substitute for positive stipulations, limiting the armed forces of Russia in the Euxine, seemed to me to be quite illusory. In this I agreed with Palmerston and the Cabinet generally.

Lord John Russell did not turn out to be a good Plenipotentiary. He had two dangerous qualities in a diplomatist: he was very impressionable, and he was very impulsive. He allowed himself to be seduced by the Austrian proposals, and he was incautious enough to express a favourable opinion to the Austrian Minister. We continued to oppose them, and so did the French Emperor. When Lord John found this, he came home, not, of course, in the best of humours. He, however, had the sense to acquiesce ultimately in the united decision of the French Government and of his own colleagues. As a member of the Cabinet, when he spoke in Parliament, he spoke in this sense, as he was, of course, obliged to do. Then Austria complained of him, and published what he had said in Vienna, whereupon all the hound-element in the House of Commons fell upon Lord John with a savage bay. Had he really said this at Vienna? If so, how could he come home and speak so differently? No allowance was made for the great difficulties of a negotiation conducted between four or five different Governments, and in which, even on the merits, there was a good deal to be said for more than one conclusion. No allowance was made for changes of mind and of language due to the influence of allies from whom we could not separate.

The dogs of political animosity had caught a new scent, and ran hot upon it, all eager to be in at the death of Lord John Russell. There were elements in his case which shut his mouth. He could not betray what the French Emperor said about his own army. Finding, therefore, the storm against him too strong to be faced, he determined to retire, and Palmerston agreed that resignation was the only course he could adopt, under the very peculiar circumstances of the case. And thus we were landed in what would have been another Ministerial crisis, had it not been for the position of almost complete isolation in which Lord John Russell was then placed.