

CHAPTER XXIX

1856-57

SYMPATHY WITH THE ANTI-SLAVERY MOVEMENT—VISIT
OF MRS. STOWE TO ENGLAND AND TO INVERARAY—
DIFFICULTY WITH CHINA—GENERAL ELECTION

HORIZONS wholly new of political thought and action were now about to open on Europe and the world. And it is a curious circumstance that the curtain which as yet concealed them had its fringe first lifted by the same small group of men whose official duty it was to wind up the transactions of the epoch that had gone before.

The Plenipotentiaries of the European Powers who had met in Paris had signed the treaty of peace on the 30th March, 1856, but the formal exchange of ratifications did not take place for nearly a month later—till the 27th of April. This period of a month spent in Paris they put to a very singular use—namely, that of discussing various questions of difficulty in the foreign politics of Europe, which had nothing to do with the Crimean War or with the Eastern Question, and with which, so far as was known, they had received no instructions from their Governments to meddle at all. The initiative in this, apparently gratuitous, undertaking was assumed by the French Plenipotentiary Walewski, on the 8th of April, in a well-considered and judicious speech, suggesting that, as it so happened that Europe was assembled in a Congress on a particular subject, it might be wise to take the opportunity of trying whether on some other subjects something might

not be done for the future peace of Europe, seeing that the horizon was by no means free from clouds.

I have no recollection that any such enlargement of his powers was ever given to Clarendon by consent of the Cabinet, but I have little doubt that it was agreed to by Palmerston in private communication with the French Emperor, through Clarendon. There was only one of the subjects named by Walewski on which differences would be liable to arise, and that was some changes in the laws of maritime capture. The other subjects concerned those military occupations by France and Austria of different parts of Italy, which were the still standing results of that great reaction of authority against the revolutionary insurrections of 1848.

The result of this supplementary Congress was remarkable for our agreeing to abandon privateering, and also to abandon our claim to seize enemy's goods on board of neutral vessels. For the future we consented to admit the principle that 'The flag covers the goods,' or 'Free ships make free goods'—a great change in our traditional contention, but one which the changed and still rapidly changing conditions of the maritime world rendered it every year increasingly dangerous to resist. On the other subjects brought under the notice of this supplementary Congress, nothing was or could be done, except to record the expressed or implied admission of all the great military Powers that the occupation of Italy and of Greece ought to be brought to an end as soon as possible. The bad internal government of Naples was alluded to with reserve.

This was only a glimpse—but it was a glimpse—into the new horizon on which we were about to enter, and into the new cycle of events which was very soon to bring about great wars, and end in the largest changes in the map of Europe.

About this time I took some part in avoiding a dangerous antagonism with the United States upon

one of those questions connected with the South American wars which were continually recurring. What happened affords a curious illustration of the peculiarities of Palmerston's character. In a Cabinet held on June 7th, Palmerston had told us that he thought we ought to send out a powerful fleet to Greytown, on the coast of Nicaragua, to maintain certain rights of protectorate there which we had long claimed. The President of the United States had suddenly recognised a Government there which was supported by an American filibuster. We held that Greytown belonged to Mosquito, and not to Nicaragua. Palmerston added that the only way we could act effectually would be by blockade. The Americans had sent a powerful frigate. The Cabinet seemed to be disposed to agree that we should strengthen our fleet.

I suggested any difficulty and objection I could, and especially urged that though the public would support us in any war into which we might be driven by British interests, we should not be supported in a war engaged in for such a pure fiction as the Mosquito Protectorate. To my great surprise, Clarendon acquiesced in this opinion, but fell back on the repeated declarations of all former Governments in this country, committing Great Britain as a point of honour to maintain the nominal sovereignty of Mosquito over Greytown. He said that he did not see his way out of them; but so fully did he agree with me that a sentence in his prepared instructions to our Admiral, which laid down the protectorate as the basis on which he was to found his action, was a sentence which he told us he would like to modify as much as possible. After a long discussion, I declared my opinion to be that we ought to limit our instructions to the defence of British life and property, and especially that we ought not to blockade, thereby seriously obstructing American commerce. I urged that the execution of the blockade would infallibly bring us into collision with the United States, who would complain of the practical inconveni-

ence to which their citizens would be subjected in one of the great highways of the Western States. Just as the Cabinet was breaking up my arguments seemed to have some effect, and Clarendon suggested that we should at least delay till the American reply to our Enlistment Despatch had been received.

I utilized the time gained by going over all the papers on the subject, and I was agreeably surprised to find that several of them—especially one from Lord John in 1853—had fully admitted the great changes which had taken place since we had assumed and asserted the Mosquito dominion over Greytown; that this dominion had now become a pure fiction; and that we were perfectly willing to make some new arrangement which might square theories with the facts. I also found that the American Government had quite agreed with us in 1852 on the basis of an arrangement for settling the whole question, and that the failure of this scheme was not due to them, but to the wretched little Governments with which we both had to deal. It was less pleasant to find that Clarendon's own recent despatches had rather tended to go back on the old ground, in consequence of the less reasonable temper of the American Government under President Buchanan. I therefore wrote to Clarendon on the morning of our next Cabinet, bringing forward all these and other points, and urging that we should fall back as much as possible on the tone of Lord John's despatch, and do all we could to swing loose from the old high doctrine of protectorate.

At the next meeting of the Cabinet I was greatly relieved to find that both Palmerston and Clarendon had very much altered their minds. Our Admiral was now only instructed to protect British life and property, and to forbid the filibustering General from actually occupying Greytown. Not very consistently, there was a preliminary passage laying down strongly our old doctrine of a Protectorate, but on my urging its incongruity, the Cabinet agreed to strike it out, and Palmerston expressed his ready assent.



*George Douglas, 8th Duke of Argyll, K.G.
from a drawing by James Swinton*

Emery Walker Fr. Sc.

The whole of this passage is typical of what I have often observed in Palmerston. His first impulse was always to move fleets and to threaten our opponents, sometimes on trivial occasions, on the details of which he had not fully informed himself by careful reading. Then, on finding his proposals combated, he was candid in listening and in inquiring, and if he found the objections reasonable, he could give way to them with the most perfect good-humour. This was a great quality in a man so impulsive and so strong-headed as he was, and so prone to violent action. It made him a much less dangerous man than he was supposed to be. But it made it an all-important matter that he should have colleagues who understood him, and were not afraid of him. Only a few days before, he had amused us all immensely by his explanation of another retreat which he told us he thought it expedient to make. The matter was one of those small ones which sometimes give great trouble. Palmerston had put at the head of the Board of Works one of his own special supporters, Sir Benjamin Hall—a strong, rather obstinate man, not over-courteous in his dealings with men, and correspondingly unpopular. One of his novelties was the introduction of bands of music in the parks on Sundays. It raised a very considerable agitation, and Palmerston was besieged to check the vagaries of a Minister who seemed to take pleasure in affronting the religious world. So far did it go that Palmerston was warned that an adverse vote in the House of Commons would not improbably be carried. Palmerston therefore told us in Cabinet that, though he himself highly approved of the bands on Sunday, he thought it would be prudent to give way, adding: ‘The clergy, who were on the whole well-intentioned people, were committing a pious fraud in making the working classes believe that those measures would end in their being called upon to work on Sundays, which was not at all true,’ etc. This is a perfect specimen of the easy good-humour with which Palmerston treated all sorts and conditions of men when

he came into contact with them, even when such contact was one of antagonism. It was a characteristic to which his growing popularity at this time was greatly due. His older popularity was entirely founded on foreign affairs, in which the British public are rather fond of games of bluff. But now, when in the multifarious transactions of his office as Prime Minister his moderation and good temper came to be often felt, he was becoming more and more a universal favourite. His very opponents played into his hands—no one more conspicuously than Lord Derby, who at this time chose to attack us in the House of Lords upon the changes to which we had consented in the laws of maritime capture (at the Conference in Paris). We had already triumphed in the Commons on another item in our peace, and at a private meeting of the party on the 28th of April, Palmerston was received with enthusiasm, whilst in the House of Commons on the 2nd May we triumphed with the extraordinary majority of 127.

Nothing, therefore, could be more futile than Derby's attack on us about maritime law. Lord Colchester was chosen by Derby to lead off on his side. Clarendon spoke excellently. I spoke later in the debate, and delivered a speech of strict reasoning on the facts of the maritime world in our time, and rather taunted the Opposition with not venturing to try the vote in the other House, where the maritime interests of the country were more specially represented. This, and the knowledge of what was to follow, seemed to exasperate Derby, and he delivered a speech of great petulance and of personal attack on me, which was not very worthy of the occasion. On a division, we beat him by a majority of fifty. This was rather a noticeable result, because it reassured us of the disposition of the House of Lords to support Palmerston's Government. It had been one of the features of the Aberdeen Cabinet that it had always been steadily supported by the Upper House, although it was the stronghold of what remained of the Pro-

tectionist party, and that party had the powerful leadership of Lord Derby. Palmerston's Cabinet was nothing but a prolongation of Aberdeen's, with a few personal changes; but quite latterly we had felt less confidence in the support of the Peers. This vote, therefore, on a ticklish question of maritime law, and in the teeth of a very violent speech from Derby, made us feel tolerably secure of our position in the House of Peers. In truth, the Opposition was completely broken up. It had no name to conjure with. Lord John Russell was entirely discredited. So was Gladstone, because of his violent pro-Russian speeches, during a war of which he had been one of the leading authors. His continued animosity to Palmerston after the peace, on every question on which opposition could possibly be raised, did not tend to rehabilitate him in the public estimation. His best friends were well aware of this, of which I find a curious example in my journal.

An Irish member of the name of Moore had long threatened a motion in the Commons censuring us on the enlistment trouble with America. At last this motion was to be brought forward upon the 1st July. On that evening I find in my journal the following entry: 'Aberdeen spoke to me in great anxiety as to Gladstone's vote to-night. He had been with him to-day, quite undecided how he should vote, since Graham had told him that he (Graham) would not vote with Moore. I told Aberdeen that I had no anxiety as regarded the result, since Gladstone would only drive men away from voting as he voted rather than attract them to it. Aberdeen then said there was no question of any danger to the Government, but there was of danger to Gladstone himself. He added, with his characteristic directness: "I don't care about the Government; I care for Gladstone." He had strongly advised him against voting with Moore, telling him that "he was only just escaping from the odium he had incurred

about his peace speeches for Russia last year, and that he was now throwing himself back for no good object.” ’

Gladstone solved the problem in a characteristic manner. He spoke for Moore, and then voted against him, discovering a ground on which he could do both with perfect consistency—viz., the ground that no man should move a vote of want of confidence unless he was prepared to form a Government, even although his argument was sound and deserving of the support of others. How far this solution of the difficulty helped him in that recovery of public confidence for which Aberdeen was so anxious may well be doubted.

Palmerston and Clarendon had great trouble with Russia about the final settlement of the new Bessarabian frontier at the mouth of the Danube, but they succeeded at last.

There was, however, another subject which came before us at this time, and in which I felt the greatest interest. It was a subject which the French Government had brought before the supplementary Congress in Paris, and on which the greatest difficulty was felt by all of us. I refer to the condition of the subjects of the King of Naples as the result of his gross and cruel misgovernment. Austria was, or pretended to be, much shocked by the very idea of international interference with the purely internal affairs of any Sovereign. On the other hand, the ground taken by France and by us was that the misgovernment was so gross as to be a perpetual danger to the peace of Europe, and was the occasion of the insurrectionary movements which were the main cause of the foreign military occupations, which it was a most desirable object to terminate. When this subject came before the Cabinet, Palmerston, as usual, showed a disposition to send our fleet to the Bay of Naples. The ground I took was that we must either do more, or else do nothing; sending a fleet alone would very probably excite an insurrection; then we could not honourably

leave the insurgents to their fate, but must be prepared to support and defend them. Even Palmerston felt and acknowledged the difficulty, with the result that nothing was done, beyond some diplomatic remonstrances.

It was in connection with this subject that Gladstone had done himself great credit, if in a way which his friend Aberdeen did not approve of. On a visit to Naples he had seen and heard of the exceptional brutality of the Government of Naples. It was the only capital in Europe in which a stranger might find himself one night dining with men of high education and refinement, and might hear next morning that every one of them had been consigned to the most loathsome prisons—chained, perhaps, to villains of the deepest dye. Some actual instances in the experience of personal friends of his own set the heather in his mind on fire. He found access to the most authentic documents, and he fired off a letter to Lord Aberdeen, which scattered over the whole of Europe the breathings of a just and righteous indignation. The days had now well begun when the public opinion of the world, if concentrated, well founded, and powerfully expressed, was destined to have an effect such as it never had had before on the conduct and on the fate of Governments. The appeals made to this public opinion were no longer confined to a revolutionary press, or to the harangues of professional demagogues. The new feature about it was that appeals to the power of public opinion were made by some of the Governments most decidedly representing the principles of authority, and by individual statesmen whose very names were identified with the most Conservative opinions.

On the 28th April, 1856, the venerable Lord Lyndhurst was to have addressed the House on the state of Italy, and although at the personal request of Clarendon he consented to postpone his speech, he took care, in doing so, to denounce the 'intolerable

misgovernment under which the people of Italy have been so long suffering.' But where was this interference with the internal affairs of other States to stop? That was the question which Austria asked, and to which there was not, and could not then be, any definite reply. Only this was clear—that other cases of suffering humanity might equally attract the sympathies of the world, and might, perhaps, be equally assisted by the upgrowth of a great body of popular opinion.

I should not be giving a true picture of my life at this time if I did not confess that for some years my thoughts and feelings had been drawn more and more to the great contest in America between negro slavery and abolitionism, which was becoming constantly more and more bitter, and which was soon to break out in one of the most terrible wars which history records. I must explain, however, the current of influences which had carried me in this direction, and which gave me for a long time an almost engrossing interest, as well as some of the saddest and also some of the happiest moments of my life.

My home in boyhood was not one in sympathy with the abolition of negro slavery. My father's few commercial friends were generally more or less connected with West Indian property, and my father had not personally a favourable opinion of the negroes. One of his most intimate friends was that Mr. Lewis who was the author of a novel called 'The Monk,' from which its author came to be generally known as 'Monk Lewis.' He owned a West Indian estate, and he had promised his negroes that at his death they should be free. Not very long after this intimation, he died rather suddenly, and my father always suspected that he had been poisoned by his own slaves. Vague and indefinite as my prepossessions were, arising out of such stories and ideas, they were more or less strengthened by my early prejudices against the Whigs and all their works. The result was that, although not denying the

injustice of slavery, I was cold and indifferent on the subject. I had, indeed, read the great speech of Mr. Pitt, in support of his friend Wilberforce, and for the abolition of the slave-trade ; but I was disposed to refine and distinguish between slavery and the slave-trade, as involving different considerations, and to look upon slavery as no worse than the old feudal or military servitudes. Later in life I found myself in contact with a society which reflected the purest and noblest elements that had given dignity and elevation to the Whig party at its best, and among these elements was an enlightened understanding, and a thorough destestation, of negro slavery.

Up to the year 1850 no event happened which brought American slavery very prominently before me, but in that year an event did happen which turned out to be the beginning of the end. This was the passing of the Fugitive Slave Law, which virtually turned every free State into slave territory, and brought home to the very doors of all the people of the free States the most tragic and horrible scenes of the slave-hunter's cursed work. I do not recollect that in the busy and unsettled state of home politics in those years, my attention was specially drawn to the great change which this step on the part of the slave party was calculated to produce, and I have no recollection of ever having spoken or written a line in public on the subject. As a member of the Government after 1852, I should not have thought it judicious to do so, in view of the extreme sensitiveness of the Government of the United States as regards foreign interference.

Such was the state of matters, when suddenly there burst upon the world a book, written by a woman, which at once preyed on all hearts, and commanded attention in every country, and in every class and rank. It was 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'—a picture of negro slavery in the Southern States of the American Union. Exhibiting the utmost grace and facility of style and power of literary composition, in ex-

pressing the most powerful emotions of the mind and heart, that wonderful book had run through numerous editions in the Old and New World. I confess that I was entirely engrossed by it. It was exactly what was wanted. It made men see and feel what before they had only heard of at a distance. It was the occasion of a compliment to me which I greatly valued. When Mrs. Stowe, the illustrious author of this wonderful book, received the first copies to be sent to Europe, she selected a few men in England, to each of whom she sent a copy, with a short dedicatory note. One was sent to Prince Albert, another to Lord Shaftesbury, a third to Lord Carlisle, and the fourth was sent to me.

When the unparalleled circulation of the book in England involved pecuniary transactions of corresponding magnitude, it became necessary for Mrs. Stowe to visit Europe, and she arrived in London in the spring of 1853. I was invited by Lord Carlisle to meet her at dinner soon after her arrival. The expectation so common with us all, that extraordinary gifts of genius will have a home in outward form of corresponding beauty or of power, is an experience more often disappointed than fulfilled. In my own long experience of life, I have never seen that expectation fully satisfied, except in the solitary case of my dear friend the poet Tennyson. His was indeed an ideal head and an ideal countenance, expressing all he was. But never have I encountered such a contrast between a spirit and its shrine as in the case of Mrs. Stowe. Here, in the one, was a voice ringing through both the New and the Old World, with a call so powerful that every ear was open and every heart was moved; and there, on the other side, was a small and most inconspicuous woman, without a feature to attract, still less to command attention.

I found that no one was more astonished than herself by the effect which her tale had produced. That effect was measured by nothing except the travail of her own soul in conceiving incidents of the story, and in giving to

them that intense reality in which its power lay. But this physical and mental contrast did not tend to diminish—on the contrary, it all tended to increase—the wonder and the reverence with which I looked at Mrs. Stowe. I saw in her the chosen instrument of a Divine purpose—a living example of inspiration. I did not then know what all know now—that Mrs. Stowe had felt herself for the time so possessed that she became the conscious agent of a Power other than her own. It was no mere outburst of a tender woman's heart against the wrongs and miseries of her sex under the conditions of slavery, although this, of course, was an item in it. But the aim of Mrs. Stowe's book was far higher than this. Her mind was inflamed for the honour of Christianity itself. It was on fire to denounce the terrible complicity of the Churches, and to show how that complicity must stand in the light of the Divine morality of the Gospel. To bring this home to the hearts of men, to shake them with horror and with shame—this was the sublime endeavour which filled her soul, from an impulse which she could not resist. I confess I looked at Mrs. Stowe with a good deal of the feeling of veneration and curiosity with which I should have regarded a prophet of the Jews or one of the Apostles of our Lord. The contrast of her outward appearance made the spiritual element all the more conspicuous. An idea of that appearance cannot be better given than in her own humorous description: 'I am a little bit of a woman—somewhere more than forty, about as thin and dry as a pinch of snuff—never very much to look at in my best days, and looking like a used-up article now.'*

I cannot, however, allow this comic frame to be left without some filling up with a pen-and-ink sketch of the features of this remarkable woman. Her head and face as a whole were somewhat narrow and dark-complexioned. The forehead was not high. The eyes

* 'Life of Mrs. B. Stowe,' pp. 197, 198.

were rather small, with no open gaze, but with a very merry twinkle when anything roused her abundant humour. The salient feature of her face was the nose, which usurped an undue predominance. It was not, however, aggressive like an eagle's, but straight, like that of a contemplative stork. Her mouth was always a little puckered laterally, but became more so when she smiled, especially when the idea presented to her was full of fun. Her voice was low, sweet, and gentle—'that most excellent thing in woman.' Her manner was very quiet, almost demure, unassuming to the last degree. Of course, this was a great charm, in one with whose extraordinary powers the world was at that moment literally surging.

A few days after this quiet dinner, we met Mrs. Stowe in a scene very different, where the contrasts of her appearance and her position were still more remarkable. A number of her leading admirers in England, headed by Lord Shaftesbury and the Duchess of Sutherland, had got up an address of thanks to her from the women of England; the presentation took place in the picture-gallery of Stafford House. The Duchess had invited a goodly company of all the most prominent men and women of London who were sympathizers in the anti-slavery cause. Such men as Milman, Whately, and Macaulay represented the literary element, whilst Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell represented the old political school, which had been always adverse to slavery. The Duchess placed Mrs. Stowe on a rather high-backed sofa, and brought up to her the various guests who desired to be personally introduced. The tiny personality of the great writer was almost lost in the gilded and lofty surroundings of that beautiful room, whilst the magnificent figure of the hostess looked like some splendid bird of paradise mothering under her wings a little black chick, which had somehow fallen to her care. The address, read by Lord Shaftesbury, was a tribute to genius, and to genius devoted to a holy

cause. The scene was most striking, and the contrast it presented between her unmitigated homeliness and the high culture and position of those who were crowding round her, could hardly have been imagined in the boldest fiction.

For myself, I felt that day more than ever astonished by her powers, for the best of all reasons—that I had just read another of her productions, a book called 'A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin.' It was written to disprove the accusations of untruth which had been brought against her by the slave power. It was a masterly summary of the evidence on the strength of which her story had been constructed, and it proved to demonstration that her picture had been drawn to the very life. Some portions of the book I had read to the Duchess of Sutherland on the previous evening, and she was much impressed and horrified by its revelations.

I have told this story of the reception of Mrs. Stowe at Stafford House a little out of perspective as to time, with reference to the general narrative of this memoir. But the reception of 1853 had a sequel which belongs strictly to the later year of 1856, and in my memory the reception and the sequel are inseparably blended. Mrs. Stowe's first visit to England was a short one, and she returned home to renew her gallant fight against the slave power. This fight she maintained with all her splendid literary power, whilst we were soon engaged in our great fight with Russia, which, with all my convictions of its necessity in the circumstances in which we were placed, could never have those sure elements of a wide beneficence for humanity which were the glory of her campaign. We were glad to hear that she contemplated a return to England in 1856, and both the Duchess of Sutherland and I took measures to secure a visit from her in our country homes—the best way in which a great character can be understood and a great nature can be enjoyed. Mrs. Stowe accepted our invitations cordially. Accordingly,

in September, 1856, we received at Inveraray Mrs. Stowe and all her family who accompanied her to Europe, namely, her husband, her sister, two daughters, and one son. They remained with us for five days. We did not find in Mrs. Stowe—and we were glad not to find—what is called a brilliant conversationalist; but never did any woman appear more exactly what she was as authoress. Gentle and serious and earnest on all the grave subjects of her thought, there was yet a ripple of humour and of fun where it was at all admissible with the subject. It was impossible not to observe in her books a close observation of nature, and it was my special delight to see this gift applied to new surroundings, such as she never could have seen before in her small New England homes. I soon saw how quick her eye was, and how well she could describe the differences between the vegetation of our old planted woods and that of the native woods of the North American continent. Nothing escaped her, and I felt that I gained more knowledge from her remarks during a short drive than from any books I had ever read.

Mrs. Stowe, like all educated Americans, took a special interest in places connected with that literature which has become theirs as much as ours, and especially in all places which have been touched by the immortal fictions of Sir Walter Scott. It happens that one of the most striking and picturesque of these, the novel of 'Rob Roy,' has a good deal of its scene laid at Inveraray, and I was able to take Mrs. Stowe to a spot which was a signal proof of the extraordinary truth of Sir Walter's touches, even the most incidental, in the picture he presented of the times. I do not know how Scott derived his information that there was any local connection between the great freebooter and the Argyll family, but it is well known at Inveraray that Rob Roy lived for many years in a very secluded nook among the mountains there, which has ever since been pointed out as his cottage. It lies at the head

of a long and narrow glen, called Glen Shira, which has several great peculiarities. Its floor is so low that the greater part of it is only little above the level of the sea, the consequence of which is that the river coming down its bed is a gently-running stream, which is noiseless, unlike most streams in the Highlands. The name Glen Shira comes from this, meaning 'the valley of the silent stream.' Another peculiarity of the glen is that its walls are hung with remains of the ancient native forest—oak, ash, and alder, with thickets of birch and hazel. About five miles up the glen, the foundation rocks are exposed, and for the next two miles the river has cut its way through those rocks, which are of mica slates. It makes this cut through a succession of waterfalls, only separated by rapid pools and dashing currents. At last, in following this river upwards, we come to a place where it divides into two branches, both the same in character, and filling the whole air with the various tunes of falling and of rushing water. These two branches completely isolate a steep and high mountain, one of them trenching it on its eastern and the other on its western base. And these trenches are so deeply cut that no man could cross them in the face of any opposition.

Behind these battlements of Nature, Rob Roy had chosen to make his home, adding the artifice of concealment to the advantage of a strong natural fortification; for his cottage was built upon a site invisible from almost every direction. It stood behind a high knoll, which could not be seen at all until those ascending the glen were close upon it; and when it became visible, it gave no symptom of being near any human habitation. Yet hidden and sheltered behind this knoll was the cottage of the famous rover. One of the deep-cut torrents rushed behind it, and masses of natural wood hung their tangled foliage down the western side of the ravine. About the whole place there was an extraordinary sense of remoteness and of concealment and of rest. Leading Mrs. Stowe round the knoll, I could

place her at the cottage door, which was very low. The walls were built of loose stones, absolutely without mortar, like the stone walls usually called dikes in Scotland. The roof was of sticks, covered with thatch. The door was scarcely 6 feet high, which was the height of the whole wall, and the windows were narrow embrasures in the thickness of the wall. Mrs. Stowe looked with much astonishment at this primitive form of human habitation. But she was still more astonished when I explained to her that it was a considerable advance upon a still ruder kind of structure.

At the beginning of the last century most of the inhabitants of the Highlands lived in cabins made of wattles, and plastered on the outside with clay or peat. There were no internal divisions, and the whole floor was occupied jointly by the family and the cattle. Towards the middle of the century, they began to build such cottages of stone as the one we had then before us, and the interior was divided into two apartments by a partition or screen of wattles, one side being occupied by the family, the other by the cattle. This was the stage at which domestic architecture of this class had arrived in the days of Rob Roy, and at which it had remained, in the case of this particular cottage, to the date of Mrs. Stowe's visit.

There was, indeed, one inference from Rob Roy's cottage which Mrs. Stowe must have been disposed to draw, and that was the curious accuracy of Walter Scott in the reproaches which he makes some of his characters throw against my ancestor, John, Duke of Argyll and Greenwich, for affording protection and shelter to the famous outlaw. It was impossible that Rob Roy should have lived so long within about six miles of Inveraray Castle, without the fact being known to that Duke, and for some reason or another the famous Rob must have been allowed to remain unmolested in his safe and picturesque retreat. I felt under no need of solving this curious problem for my American friend. As herself a great writer of

fiction, she knew the incidental liberties consistent with substantial truth, and she probably thought little of the problem why men like Rob Roy were more than tolerated 150 years ago. Her whole heart and soul were at that time agonized by the thought, not of cattle-stealers, but of man-stealers being openly protected and encouraged by a civilized legislature and by Christian Churches in her own country. She could feel, therefore, nothing but amusement, and the sense of a strange historical continuity, when she was brought into the hut of Rob Roy, and in touch with the actual surroundings of one of the most picturesque and brilliant tales of the immortal Wizard of the North.

When Mrs. Stowe and I left the hut, I took her back to a place where the rest of our party were waiting for us. This was a spot to which I have been accustomed to take those of our guests whose daily work is hardest, and whose spirits, as well as bodies, give some evident token of needing rest. There are some places where the aspects of Nature seem to carry into the tired heart and brain a sense of unspeakable refreshment. The long perspective of the narrow glen, opening to the south and to the sea, with its hanging woods and precipices; the absence of any visible human habitation; the rocky ravines all round us, and the air full of the sound of falling waters, each pool looking as if it were held in a little basin of silver, from the universal mica of the rocks—all these were elements in a very peculiar scene, which seemed to give Mrs. Stowe a sense of tranquil enjoyment. To me her presence haunts that scene still, and as often as I have taken there in later years some distinguished guest, it always recalls to me the sunny afternoon in September, 1856, when it attracted the steady gaze of that most remarkable woman, at a time when she was in the thick of her great fight, and could not as yet see the speedy triumph of the blows she was raining down upon the manacles of the slave.

I am not a Boswell. With the single exception of

Macaulay, whose stores of knowledge seemed inexhaustible, and whose memory was almost miraculous, I have never even had any very great enjoyment in what is called brilliant conversation. Still less have I ever tried to record it. I have no memory of that kind, and sometimes I have wished that others were in this respect as wanting as myself, for I know few things more wearisome than the faded flowers of vanished conversations, when the petals are all dried and dusty, and the very stalks have ceased to hold them together in any true connection. I have a lively impression of the curious mixture of the great seriousness and the great humour of Mrs. Stowe's conversation—the union of the strength of a masculine understanding with the tenderness of a woman's heart, which is a characteristic of her books. It does so happen, however, that she wrote a letter from Inveraray, giving an account of her visit, which has since been published by her family, and in that letter she gives an indication of some of the subjects of our conversation at the time. Mrs. Stowe had deeply at heart the honour of Christianity, and she mourned over the failure of the Churches in America to see and to uphold the cause of an everlasting righteousness, when it was presented to their recognition and committed to their care. But no one ever saw more clearly the hollowness of conventional theology and the shams of orthodoxy, which were often the objects of her wit and the subjects of her humour. There are many illustrations of these in her books, and I well recollect being immensely entertained by them in her conversation.

It is the only disadvantage I know, as attaching to warm and intimate friendships with cultivated Americans, that in a great majority of cases they are severed by distance before they can be lost by death. But I have enjoyed too many of these friendships not to be grateful for their memory.

We continued to hear of and from Mrs. Stowe for many years, and rejoiced with her in the results of

that terrible Civil War, of which abolition was not the confessed or ostensible aim, but of which, none the less, slavery was the real and efficient cause.

It often seems strange to me that, although from a very early age I was keenly occupied with politics, I was yet never so happy as when I got away from them, and even now in retrospect I am never so bored as when I am compelled to return to them. The unspeakable relief afforded by the close of the Crimean War, and by the conclusion of a general peace, made all other pending questions seem so comparatively unimportant, that for some time neither in the House nor in the Cabinet did I work as I had worked. I was satisfied that Palmerston and Clarendon would deal on the whole well and wisely with such embarrassments as remained. And this they did. Palmerston showed all his strength in resisting Russia with respect to the treaty securities for the Danube navigation. We settled the Central American dispute. We renewed our friendly relations with the United States, and, altogether, foreign affairs looked more peaceful than they had done for some time when we met Parliament in 1857.

We were now involved in a little war with Persia. A violent personal quarrel had arisen between our Minister there, Charles Murray, and the Shah, in which we did not think that Murray showed much temper or discretion. He broke off diplomatic relations with the Persian Government, and the Shah proceeded to besiege Herat. Palmerston sent an expedition to Bushire, at the head of the Persian Gulf, and we took possession of the island of Karah. The ground of objection to these little wars was jealousy of the Executive Government being free to handle armies without the usual recourse to Parliament. My feeling was that in an Empire such as ours, especially in the East, the executive power ought to have a strong weapon always in hand, and ought not to be hampered with the Parliamentary forms which are necessary in European hostilities. I was glad, therefore, when I saw the

assaults on Palmerston fail when they took this form, and especially when the Lords refused to have anything to do with them.

The storm, however, was destined to burst out of another cloud—one which rose still farther away than Persia or even India. The Benthamite Radical, Sir John Bowring, whom Palmerston had appointed to be our Commissioner in China, had got into a quarrel with the Chinese authorities at Canton about the nationality of a local vessel of a class called *lorcha*. He claimed one of these vessels as British, and denied the right of the Chinese Government to treat her as it did. When the Chinese refused to acknowledge her British character, Bowring, after the manner of his master, sent British ships and British guns, and blew the Chinese forts out of the water. The malcontents in the House of Commons were numerous and various, and this was just such an occasion as was favourable to a joint attack on their part upon Palmerston.

In connection with this case, a comical incident occurred to me. In the preceding autumn, my wife and I had paid one of our usual visits to Dunrobin, and had gone there by the route of the Caledonian Canal. On the steamer upon the lake we met an elderly man, who attracted a good deal of our attention. He was what is called a dapper little man—very round in his contours, like a partridge or a quail. He had a round face with good features, and cheeks of the roundness characteristic of all his figure. On the removal of his hat, we saw that he was bald, with the exception of a fringe of gray hair round his neck. His head was a fine one, large and well domed, with ample room for brains. But what attracted our attention most was his extraordinary mode of speaking. I cannot say there was any local brogue or accent. He spoke very pure English, but with a deliberation and slowness of articulation which was most peculiar. Each syllable was separately pronounced, as if it were a separate word, and with the utmost and apparently the most careful

precision, so that each letter made itself distinctly heard. When we came to the Falls of Foyers, there was but one carriage, and our new acquaintance and ourselves shared it to the falls and back to the steamer. Nothing came out in his conversation that gave the slightest indication of his business or occupation, and yet our curiosity was considerable. My conclusion was that he was a Londoner—a pure Cockney—and that he was engaged in some City business.

At one of the early meetings of the Cabinet after the opening of Parliament, Palmerston told us that he understood that the naval proceedings in the Canton River were attracting more and more attention, and that an attack upon the Government was being prepared by the usual combination of malcontents. He added that it was to be founded on an accusation of having violated the principles of international law, and that the legal members of the House were shaking their heads very much about it. In case, therefore, of the Cabinet desiring to hear their opinion, he had asked the Attorney-General to be within reach, and suggested that he should be called in. I had never seen this course taken before; the opinion of the law officers had always in my previous experience been given in writing, and circulated in a paper to the Cabinet. It would be more interesting, however, to hear that opinion given verbally, and elucidated by question and answer. We all, therefore, readily agreed. Palmerston rang the bell for our attendant, and said: 'Will you tell the Attorney-General, who is in the next room, that we shall be glad if he will be good enough to come to us.' It happened that I was near the end of the Cabinet table next the door of entrance, and, being interested in the whole proceeding, I had my eyes fixed upon it. Suddenly it opened wide, and, to my intense surprise, I saw my dapper little friend of the Falls of Foyers ushered into our Cabinet room, under the title of Her Majesty's Attorney-General. He rolled, rather than walked, into the room, with a slow and very

deliberate motion, which corresponded well with the rotundities of his form, and with a slight poisoning and re-poising of the head, which kept time with the motion of the feet, not unlike that which marks the walking gait of some kinds of bird. He sat down with the same deliberation, and then looked round at us all with a calm and intrepid, but, I thought, a slightly irritable, gaze. Palmerston set him a-going by some appropriate questions. Then I heard again that most singular voice and enunciation which had amused me so much in the Highlands, but with this difference—that there it had been associated with nothing but the most ordinary, trivial topics, which made its curious emphasis seem comical and almost ridiculous. Here, on the contrary, it was spent on a most careful and accurate statement of the facts of a complicated case—on an equally careful definition of the principles applicable to them, and on a clear indication of the conclusions to which he thought they pointed. With all these matters, the voice and the precise utterance accorded well. There were occasional passages in his statement which seemed to me to indicate a very strong feeling against the over-zealous civilian in China who had got us into a most serious difficulty. Before closing what he had to say, I recollect that he shook his head ominously, and indicated his opinion that a very serious case against us on the points of international law could be, and probably would be, made out in the House of Commons. Before he had spoken ten minutes, my attention had been, first thoroughly aroused, and then irresistibly attracted. I felt at once that my little friend of the Falls of Foyers was not only a very able, but a very powerful man. Such were my first and second introductions to Richard Bethell, afterwards my colleague as Lord Westbury, Lord Chancellor of England, and whom I soon learned to estimate very highly for the rarest intellectual powers.

When the mellifluousness of the Attorney-General's voice and his precise syllabic utterances had come to

an end, Palmerston thanked him for the assistance he had given to us, and he rolled gently out of the room, as he had rolled into it. We all thought it very evident that, were it not for his office, it would give him immense pleasure to take the part of leading counsel against us. But however struck I may have been by the obvious great abilities of our new law officer of the Crown, I was not equally impressed by the relevance of his argument. The whole of it was founded on the assumption that our representative officers on the Canton River were bound by the same highly complex rules of so-called international law which govern the relations of the civilized nations of the Christian world, and that assumption appeared to me to be absurd. Our relations with the Chinese at Canton were exclusively commercial, largely determined by local habits and usages, and liable to suffer the most serious injury from the local functionaries of a barbarous Government, whose conduct was apt to be arbitrary and violent.

I did not care to ask whether the conduct of Sir John Bowring had or had not been somewhat more high-handed than was absolutely necessary. It was enough for me to see that the disavowal of our Commissioner, when such serious action had been taken, would inflict a severe blow on all our officers who might succeed him, and throw into confusion the whole system on which our commerce rested in that part of the world. I was convinced that this common-sense view would be taken by the country and by the House of Commons. I was therefore disposed, despite the ominous shakes of Bethell's head, to disbelieve in there being any danger in the assaults, of which notices had now been given in both Houses of Parliament.

My prevision of the opinion of Parliament was fully justified by the event, so far as the House of Lords was concerned. The discussion came on upon February 23rd, 1857, and we had against us some of the most powerful speakers in the House, amongst whom were Derby and Lyndhurst. I spoke on the second

night, in the sense indicated above, and on a division we beat Lord Derby by the very considerable majority of thirty-six.

Next came the assault in the Commons, led by Cobden. The debate lasted several days, and the result was matter of varying conjecture from day to day. At last, when the House divided, we found ourselves beaten by a majority of sixteen. Palmerston called us together, and explained the reasons which induced him to think that we ought to dissolve that Parliament, and appeal to the constituencies against its decision. I was keenly in favour of that course, and was delighted with the determination of Palmerston to take it. There was no other political leader at that time in a position to form a Government, on any intelligible principle, and the vote had been determined by a combination among all the scraps and débris of parties which had resulted from many fractures, and which had nothing in common except an unreasoning antipathy to Palmerston. Everybody knew this as regarded the Manchester school, represented by Bright and Cobden; and as regarded the old Peelite contingent, nobody knew their animus better than myself. I had seen them in all the windings of their course, and through my intercourse with Aberdeen I knew the latest phases of their antipathy to the chief under whom they had at one time actually accepted office, along with me, and had then renounced it for reasons which certainly had no just connection with their new hostility. Never, as it seemed to me, was a 'penal dissolution' more thoroughly deserved, and I was quite excited by the confident expectation that Palmerston would be supported by the country.

On leaving the Cabinet, where the matter was formally settled, I saw two friends of very different calibre, and was much interested by the several ways in which they took the decision. The first was Cardwell, a personal friend of my own, for whom I had a great regard. He came up to me in the club, having heard the universal

rumour, and his face was almost as full of alarm as it had been when he heard of Gladstone's great Budget proposals of 1853. The only words he said to me were: 'You have not given us a chance.' What that meant I could not conceive, and could only reply: 'You have left us no other course to pursue.'

The second friend I met was a very different man — Macaulay. Very recently he had changed his residence, and was now our neighbour in Kensington. At one of his breakfasts, I heard him giving not a good account of his health, and saying he doubted whether the air of the Albany in Piccadilly was altogether good for him. On my reporting this to my wife, it occurred to her that a charming villa next door to us on Campden Hill would be just such a residence as would suit Macaulay. She wrote to him to this effect, and telling him how we should rejoice in having him as our nearest neighbour. He acted on her suggestion, bought the villa, and spent there the remainder of his life. In passing his door on the day of which I am now speaking, I stopped to speak to him and tell him the news. I do not mean to quote Macaulay as giving his opinion on the details of Bowring's conduct towards the Chinese, but on the broad question between us and the House of Commons. I was glad to find him heartily with us, and wishing us all success. Macaulay had by this time become much more of a literary man than of a politician. Still, he inherited all the very best traditions of the Whig party, and would not sympathize with any great departure from them.

It was satisfactory to remember that the quarrel of the House of Commons with us was strictly confined to the trumpery affair between Bowring and the Chinese of Canton. On all other subjects we had been supported by that same House, and especially on one of cardinal importance. As before mentioned, the Exchequer had been placed by Palmerston in the hands of Sir George Lewis. No two men could be more

different than Lewis and Gladstone. Lewis was calm, philosophical, and destitute of passion. He had been more of a literary man than of a politician. But his knowledge was almost equal to Macaulay's, and in discussion, the sense he gave one of perfect truthfulness and accuracy in every statement was singularly agreeable and persuasive. So long as the Crimean War lasted, George Lewis had an easy time of it. Men will put up with any amount of taxation under the excitement of a great war. But now that the war had ended, and peace had been concluded, it was certain that the war taxes would have to be abated. Strange to say, this did not at once strike those members of the Cabinet who were at the head of the army and the navy. They always hate reductions; but it was surely a signal case of blindness that they had actually prepared estimates so enormous that the whole war expenditure would have been maintained, and no alleviation of the public burdens would have been possible.

In February, George Lewis informed us in the Cabinet that the two War Departments had produced estimates amounting together to about twenty-four millions, and with his calm, grave face explained that this would render it impossible for him even to diminish the income-tax at all, far less to allow it to fall, as the public expected it to do. Both Panmure and Wood defended their estimates, to which Lewis rejoined by telling us that he must then keep up the income-tax to sixteen pence in the pound, and stop all reductions on tea. He added with gravity and calmness that he was certain that neither the House nor the country would agree to this. An agitation had been already started for the repeal of the income-tax, and he was certain that most of the members for popular constituencies would come up pledged against such propositions. We agreed, therefore, to send the two extravagant Ministers back to their shops, with a general instruction to reduce the army and navy to twenty millions, as near as possible. On the 27th they came back with a reduction

to twenty-one millions. Lewis then said that with this reduction, and giving up remissions of indirect taxation, which were most desirable, he could just 'pull through,' abating the income-tax to one-half of its then amount, or eightpence in the pound. We all knew that the federated factions would not be content with this. They had already indicated that they would take advantage of the unpopularity of the income-tax to make an assault on retaining it at all, whilst we knew that Gladstone would do the same, resting on the prowess of his famous Budget of 1853.

We were not mistaken. When George Lewis brought on his Budget on the 13th of February, 1857, it was, on the whole, well received by the House. Nobody seemed to care about anything except the abandonment of the war augmentation of ninepence. Gladstone kept his counsel, waiting for whatever action Disraeli might take. But I heard that he was going about town abusing the Budget vehemently. At last, on the 21st, the debate came on, upon an abstract resolution by Disraeli, when Gladstone made a very long and furiously excited speech, in which he fiercely attacked Lewis, who was a personal friend and a correspondent. It was thought very overstrained, and unfair in argument in the highest degree. Lewis himself, one of the most passionless and amiable of men, spoke of it as so personally bitter that he was quite amazed. Wood told me that Gladstone seemed in the highest excitement.

On the morning of the 24th, Disraeli's motion on the Budget was negatived by the large majority of eighty—unexpectedly large. But I find that in my journal at the time this formidable result is ascribed to our having had the benefit of a junction between the haters of Gladstone and the haters of Disraeli. Whether this was the cause or not, I felt it to be impossible to have much respect for a House of Commons whose votes were so inconsistent and uncertain, one day giving us a sweeping majority on a vote which determined the

largest issues of our policy, and a few days afterwards condemning us on an accidental squabble with the Chinese on the river Canton. I, who had listened to Bethell's argument in our own Cabinet and to Lyndhurst's speech in the Lords, knew very well that a good case could be made out against Bowring on the technical grounds of international law, but common-sense condemned a vote which must carry such consequences, on grounds so trivial.

We had not long to wait before we saw how the wind was blowing in the constituencies. All the great commercial centres—London, Manchester, Liverpool, and others—sent up resolutions in our favour. And when the election came on, our foes were scattered like chaff before the wind, and the peace party and the Manchester party were wiped out of the House of Commons. Bright and Cobden and Milner Gibson all lost their seats. So did Cardwell at Oxford. The look of alarm I had seen on his face in the club was more than justified. Since Lord Grey's Reform Bill there had been no such triumph for any Minister as the national vote for Palmerston in April, 1857.

Some incidents in the course of the General Election were of special interest. One was the contest for the City of London, one of the seats for which had been long held by Lord John Russell. No part of the kingdom was more Palmerstonian than London at this juncture. Lord John's political conduct had rendered him unpopular, and he was told by all his friends in the City that he had no chance whatever of re-election in the penal dissolution, and it was useless to try. This was impressed upon him so universally, by those who knew the constituency best, and who had worked for him in it, that he had made up his mind to accept their advice. But quite suddenly, at the last moment, he changed his resolution, and, without consulting anyone, published an address to the constituency, and determined to speak on the hustings.

This he did, beginning with parable. It happened

that that generation of the Russell family had a peculiarity of pronunciation as regarded the word John. The Duke of Bedford, who was much attached to his brother, always called him 'Jahn,' and Lord John himself pronounced it 'Jahn' when he used the name. On this occasion his parable turned upon the plea that an old servant ought not to be dismissed without giving him an opportunity of explanation and defence. In presenting this view, it was his plan to refer to the constituency as his master, and to put into their mouth some familiar words to the old servant, asking for explanation before they could think of a dismissal. 'I say, Jahn,' were the opening words. The moment they were uttered, with his peculiar voice and accent, they were received with a storm of laughter, which ended in a storm of cheering. By sheer pluck and courage, together with a happy appeal to a generous feeling, he had already won his election, and when it came, Lord John Russell was at the head of the poll. This was a specimen of the great qualities of courage which were inherent in the man.

A very different kind of courage was exhibited by Gladstone during this same General Election. He entered upon one of those campaigns of speaking to the electors with which we all became familiar in later years, and which Disraeli cleverly called 'pilgrimages of passion.' I rather think they were novel in our Parliamentary habits. Prominent men, of course, have always made speeches to their own constituents, or elsewhere; but I rather think that Gladstone initiated the practice of setting out on a campaign of oratory, all over the country, for the purpose of influencing its decision. It struck me as very strange, and on the 5th of April I find myself writing to Aberdeen: 'Gladstone has been making a speech in every town—every village—every cottage—everywhere where he had room to stand, and at Liverpool it was an avowed canvass for Derby.' If, even in the House of Commons, in the presence of his opponent, Gladstone was so excited as to accuse one of

the most accurate and truthful men in England—Sir George Lewis—of manipulating his Budget figures enormously for the purposes of his argument, what chance could there be of such a man as Gladstone being just or temperate when he was raging about the country, addressing mobs entirely ignorant of the subject? Fortunately, at that moment the public mind was fixed on one man—Palmerston—whom the vast majority was determined to support.

There was rather a curious, but also a significant, scene at one of the Cabinets, which sat before the dissolution had actually taken place. It will be remembered that when the Aberdeen Cabinet was formed, it was understood that it would entertain and deal with the subject of Parliamentary Reform, but not during the first year of its work, 1853. But the next year the Crimean War came also, whereupon Lord John Russell, after a struggle and with tears, was obliged to admit the necessity of delay. Palmerston then, working on the Cabinet's unusual pressure with the Budget, continued to get it postponed *sine die*. But now that the war was ended and peace secured there was a general expectation that the subject must be dealt with. A good number of the Cabinet sat for popular constituencies, and were naturally anxious to know what Palmerston intended. They felt that the name of Palmerston, and the Crimean War, might do very well for the passing moment, but would not do to live upon for the whole duration of a Government. Some of them, therefore, asked Palmerston what he intended to say in his address to his own constituents, that they might take their cue from him. Did he intend to mention reform? and if so, what did he mean to say about it? Palmerston did not seem very willing to be pressed by this inquiry. Some of my colleagues urged that the total omission of the subject would lead to inferences and embarrassment. Palmerston said he was unwilling to use ambiguous words, which would be capable of opposite interpretations. The dissatis-

fied members then repaired to Lord Lansdowne, the Father of the Cabinet, always calm, wise, and absolutely straight. They begged him to impress on Palmerston the extreme inconvenience of giving no sound whatever on the subject of reform at a General Election. The result was that Palmerston did introduce into his address the word 'reform.' But he used it in a context which seemed to apply it rather to administrative improvements than to any reform of Parliament. The truth, however, was that it mattered little what Palmerston might say at that moment, because the people were determined to have him at his own price, whatever that might be. There are such moments probably in the history of every people, when some one man engrosses all their attention, and they care for nothing except that he should be in power. Such was Palmerston's position at this juncture.

There was, however, one other question with which we were compelled to deal in those Cabinets which were held just before the dissolution, and on which our decision and our action were fortunate beyond all that we could then contemplate or conceive. Palmerston was quite aware that, although he supported Sir J. Bowring in his quarrel with the Chinese, we could not safely continue that official in the same position. He had therefore told the House of Commons that we should send out some new man as Plenipotentiary, to communicate with the Chinese Government on the sources of disagreement. Palmerston now brought this subject before us.

I have already had occasion to speak of Palmerston's great loyalty to his colleagues in such matters. Even in the selection of new Cabinet Ministers he used always to consult them. Prime Ministers generally take these arrangements very much into their own hands, communicating only with some special department. But Palmerston on this, as on other occasions, told us the whole story, and that three names occurred to him, each having some different but peculiar qualifications.

First, there was Sir Bartle Frere, one of the most distinguished of the corps of administrators who had qualified in the great school of our Indian Empire. Second, there was our old colleague the Duke of Newcastle, the ban against whom had now died out, and whom we all felt had been ill-used. Lastly, there was Lord Elgin, one of those younger members of the peerage who, after a distinguished Oxford career, gave much promise of ability in political life. We discussed them all carefully, and we decided on the Duke of Newcastle. But he declined. We then took Elgin, who accepted, and we determined that he should be sent to China, not with ships only, but with a force of 4,000 men.

These were the men who, a few weeks later, in passing by the gates of India, heard suddenly of the terrible mutiny of the native army of Bengal, and by the public spirit of Lord Elgin were at once deflected from their Chinese destination, and sent to help Lord Canning in his desperate struggle for the salvation of the Indian Empire. Without a thought of the calamity which was impending, and without a notion of the value attaching to our action in sending troops which would be within hail of India, we all scattered over the kingdom, watching or taking part in the elections.

As usual, my wife and I went down to our home on the Clyde, and thence I sent a letter to Palmerston on the subject of Reform. I deprecated any attempt to deal with it in the first session of the new Parliament; but, on the other hand, I urged him to announce it for next session, and that it should be a substantial measure, as the only means of making it a safe one. This was exactly the course which he actually pursued. On the debate on the Address, he was even more distinct than I at all expected him to be in pledging his Government to Reform, although details were carefully withheld. But all opposition was cowed by our success at the polls, and even the most waspish of our enemies—Mr. Roebuck—was obliged to accept as

satisfactory the vague intimations of the triumphant Minister.

Palmerston at this moment was eager on the subject of a new law of divorce. The Episcopate was divided, but the High Church party hated it beyond measure. Gladstone in particular was a violent opponent. I was in favour of Palmerston's measure, and spoke several times in its support.