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# Lord Rosebery

His Life and Speeches

BY

THOMAS F. G. COATES

WITH TWO PHOTOGRAVURES AND . . .  
SIXTEEN PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

*IN TWO VOLS.*

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# LORD ROSEBERY

## His Life and Speeches



### CHAPTER XVIII.

THE NEW GLADSTONE GOVERNMENT—LORD ROSEBERY AS FOREIGN MINISTER—A FIRM DISPATCH TO RUSSIA—THE EASTERN QUESTION—TURKEY AND GREECE—THE EUROPEAN CONCERT AND THE HELLENIC KINGDOM—THE SPANISH COMMERCIAL CONVENTION—THE HOME RULE BILL—DEFEAT AND RESIGNATION OF THE GOVERNMENT—LORD AND LADY ROSEBERY'S RECEPTIONS—NOTES BY DR. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

MR. GLADSTONE took very little time to form his Government. It was complete by February 3, and was constituted as follows :

*In the Cabinet.*

Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury, and Lord Privy Seal	. Mr. Gladstone.
Lord Chancellor	. Lord Herschell.
Foreign Secretary	. Lord Rosebery.
Chancellor of the Exchequer	. Sir W. Harcourt.
Secretary for War	. Mr. Campbell-Bannerman.
Lord President of the Council.	. Lord Spencer.

Secretary for the Colonies . . . .	Lord Granville.
Home Secretary . . . . .	Mr. Childers.
Secretary for India . . . . .	Lord Kimberley.
First Lord of the Admiralty . . . .	The Marquis of Ripon.
Secretary for Scotland . . . . .	Mr. George Trevelyan.
Chief Secretary for Ireland . . . .	Mr. John Morley.
President of the Local Government Board . . . . .	Mr. Chamberlain.
President of the Board of Trade . . .	Mr. Mundella.

*Outside the Cabinet.*

Viceroy of Ireland . . . . .	The Earl of Aberdeen.
Postmaster-General . . . . .	Lord Wolverton.
Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education . . . . .	Sir Lyon Playfair.
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	Mr. Heneage.
Judge Advocate General . . . . .	Mr. John Mellor.
Attorney-General . . . . .	Sir Charles Russell.
Solicitor-General . . . . .	Sir Horace Davey.

The Under Secretaries of State were Mr. Broadhurst at the Home Office, Mr. Bryce at the Foreign Office, Mr. Osborne Morgan at the Colonial Office, Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth at the India Office, Lord Sandhurst at the War Office, Mr. C. T. Acland at the Board of Trade, and Mr. Jesse Collings at the Local Government Board.

During the re-elections due to the appointment of the new Ministers, the Trafalgar Square riots took place, and London for several days was in a state of terror equalled only by what had been experienced during the Chartist disturbances. When the new Ministers met Parliament they asked for time for the production of their proposals with regard to Ireland. That time was given them, but the Session was, pure and

simple, a Home Rule Session, and but little interest was taken in any other question, however important.

Of the appointments which Mr. Gladstone made none attracted more interest, and none met with such approval, as that of Lord Rosebery at the Foreign Office. And here it may be mentioned that when the appointment was made there were many who expressed satisfaction at the fact that only a few months before Lord Rosebery, whose interest in the turf had been continuous, decided to sell his horses and retire from the turf—a decision which, coming at the time the Prince of Wales commenced racing, led to an amusing cartoon in *The Times*.

It was known that he had recognised the necessity of "the continuity of the moral policy of England," and a perusal of the newspapers at the time the constitution of the new Gladstone Government was announced shows that the appointment met with universal and generous approbation. "It is nerve," said the *Spectator*, "which is most needed in the Foreign Secretary, and all men say that Lord Rosebery possesses nerve." That was the prevailing feeling—that with Lord Rosebery at the Foreign Office a firm and safe policy would be pursued. Lord Rosebery went into the Foreign Office a novice. He came out less than six months afterwards a master of the position. He explained in a speech delivered

afterwards how much he had had to learn; but he set about learning it with determination, and, aided by the permanent officials, whose advice he freely sought, he was soon thoroughly acquainted with the general work of the department.

Five months' experience at the Foreign Office was not much opportunity for a man to show his mettle; yet in that brief period of the life of the Gladstone Government Lord Rosebery succeeded in accomplishing some important work. There was a difficulty with Russia, which had denounced an article in the Berlin Treaty declaring Batoum to be a free port. It was found, after considerable discussion, that the article in question was a spontaneous concession on the part of the late Czar. Russia, consequently, was the last country in the world which could be justified in taking exception to it, and Lord Rosebery in plain words showed that that was the view which he took of the situation. He informed Russia that the doctrine that the spontaneous declaration of His Majesty was not to be considered as binding because it was spontaneous, was a novel one, and that the embodiment of a declaration, spontaneous or otherwise, in the treaty "placed it on the same footing as any other part of that instrument." A direct, supreme and perpetual interest was at stake in this transaction—"that of the binding force and sanctity of international engagements. Great Britain is ready at

all times and in all seasons to uphold that principle, and she cannot palter with it in the present instance. Her Majesty's Government cannot therefore consent to recognise or associate themselves, in any shape or form, with this proceeding of the Russian Government. They are compelled to place on record their view that it constitutes a violation of the Treaty of Berlin, unsanctioned by the Signatory Powers, that it tends to make future conventions of the kind difficult, if not impossible, and to cast doubt at least on those already concluded." This was a tone and spirit which was at any rate a revelation to some foreign powers as to the nature of the foreign policy of the Gladstone Government; and although Lord Rosebery did not, as the result of this negotiation, succeed in obtaining the freedom of the port of Batoum, for there were other and important influences at work, still the firmness of his attitude on this occasion made his path easier than it otherwise would have been with regard to subsequent diplomatic work.

The Eastern Question, of course, came in for treatment. The difficulty with regard to Eastern Roumelia had been satisfactorily arranged, and the Afghan boundary question had been settled amicably with Russia. Greece, however, had put an army into the field, and was threatening Turkey, and for months it appeared certain that war between the two countries would come, and

war would probably have meant the extinction of Greece. The matter was explained, and the lines of Lord Rosebery's policy made clear, by a statement which he made in the House of Lords on May 11. He then said :

“ My Lords,—I desire to lay upon your lordships' table a circular despatch<sup>1</sup> recapitulating the action of Her Majesty's Government with regard to Greece, which I have addressed to Her Majesty's representatives abroad, and copies of the two Collective Notes to the Greek Government and the replies to these Notes, as well as to the notice of blockade which was presented to the Greek Government on Saturday. The first of these Collective Notes we presented on April 26. It demanded that the Greek army should be placed on a peace footing with the least possible delay, and that assurances should be given to the representatives of the Powers in the course of a week from the date of the presentation of the Note that orders had been given accordingly. In reply to that Note the Greek Prime Minister sent an answer, which will also be laid before your lordships' House, in which he refers to some communication that had taken place between himself and the French Minister at Athens. That communication, however, your lordships will see, when you have it in your hands, did not offer any guarantee of

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A.

that immediate disarmament which<sup>1</sup> we could offer Turkey, and which would induce Turkey to disarm in her turn. During the week that followed no further communication was received from M. Delyannis. On Monday evening the delay proposed by the Powers expired. It was, however, the desire of the Powers to show all possible consideration towards the Greek nation; and Wednesday being the King's *fête* day, their final answer to M. Delyannis' reply was not declared till Thursday morning, saying that the reply was wholly unsatisfactory unless supplemented by further declarations. The communication from M. Delyannis was to the effect that he had no further explanations to offer. On Friday morning the representatives of Germany, Austria, Italy, and Great Britain quitted Athens, leaving their legations in charge of the secretaries. The Russian minister could not be withdrawn, as he was not at Athens at the time. On Saturday the notice of blockade was presented, and a blockade as against Greek ships of all kinds is at this moment in existence along the east coast of Greece and the Gulf of Corinth. That is a bare record of facts; but before I sit down I will ask the indulgence of the House while I make one or two further remarks as to the sufficiency of M. Delyannis' reply to the communication of the Great Powers. Your lordships will be able to form your own judgment,



but that judgment will be materially assisted by the speeches and circulars of the Greek Prime Minister since he made those pacific declarations. On the same day he made a speech announcing that he and his Government would never sign a decree of disarmament, a speech which absolutely justifies the contention of Her Majesty's Government and of the other Powers that while he had announced his intention not to attack Turkey he had offered no guarantee that the menacing attitude of the Greek army and the consequent strain both on that country and on Turkey might not be indefinitely prolonged. Moreover, the Greek and the Turkish armies would have been left face to face, with the constant probability of provocation of conflict. That state of things would have been the very danger to the peace of Europe which it has been the endeavour of the Powers by their action to avoid. In the next place I have to point out that the interests of Great Britain in this matter are various and important. First, there is that great interest which is always a paramount interest in the policy of this country—the maintenance of peace; next we have to remember the vast—importance of upholding the decision of Europe that is, of the Great Powers of Europe—in a case in which that decision can be usefully enforced; and, thirdly, we have had the interests of Greece and of Turkey to consider. The

interests of Greece are sufficiently obvious. No sane friend of Greece could wish that she should embark in war with one of the great military Powers of the world, even if she had a good cause to fight for.

“But, my lords, that is not her present position. I cannot now take up your time with pointing out how unfortunate is the ground on which the Greek Government meditated this aggressive war. On some future occasion I may hope to have the opportunity of doing so. The interest of Turkey in this matter is no less obvious. It is just five years since Turkey, on the strenuous intercession of the Powers, ceded the rich province of Thessaly to Greece. It is hardly conceivable that the Turkish Government now should do otherwise than resist the proposal for another such cession. But while it is almost bound to resist this aggression, the strain upon it is no less severe. The Turkish Government has an army of three hundred thousand in its European dominions, largely drawn from the reserves; and the taking of the reserves sufficiently indicates to your lordships how great is the strain to which the agriculture of that country is subjected. I put aside the money required to maintain so vast an army, but I do not put aside the injury to the peaceful inhabitants of the Turkish Empire, the men of which are torn from sowing and ploughing, and those agricultural

operations upon which their subsistence depends. Wide districts have therefore the prospect of famine staring them in the face. Her Majesty's advisers have thus strong grounds to proceed upon in using pressure at this juncture. This is probably not the moment to make a long statement, and I will only say one word more. I have alluded to the importance of upholding what is popularly called the European concert in matters of this kind. On this occasion the European concert has been very happily maintained. It is quite true that separate action has been taken by France; but I cannot doubt that that action has been taken with the same desire for a peaceful settlement of this question which is entertained by all the other Powers. As regards the other Powers, Austria, Italy, Germany and Russia maintain a close and harmonious concert with us. That fact is of great importance, and in view of it I cannot doubt but that, coupled with the independent but parallel action of France, the exertions of the Powers will be crowned with success."

Lord Salisbury's comment upon the speech was: "I should not like this statement to pass without saying on my own behalf that, as far as I am able to judge, the policy which this country is pursuing is not that of one party or one Government, but of all parties in the State." The effect of Lord Rosebery's speech was considerable.

Within ten days M. Delyannis was to see in the Greek Chamber a great victory of the peace party. M. Delyannis, the late Premier, had been proposed as a candidate for the Speakership, but was defeated by a majority of nearly two to one. The successful deputy was a supporter of M. Tricoupis, who was at once invited by the King to form a new Ministry, and accepted an invitation which he had shortly before refused. Hopes of a peaceful solution of the troubles immediately arose. Some fighting broke out on the frontier, which was not surprising owing to the situation of the troops. On May 23 it was announced that an armistice had been arranged and that the Greek troops were to be disbanded. The blockade was shortly afterwards raised, and when the Gladstone Government was defeated on the Home Rule Bill, the Eastern horizon, at any rate, was, owing to Lord Rosebery's work, rapidly clearing. Not willingly, but in the best interest of Greece, Parliament acquiesced in the practical coercion of Greece by the European concert.

The Earl of Rosebery was also able to inform the House that negotiations had been satisfactorily conducted with the Spanish Government, through Sir Clare Ford, our Minister at Madrid, which had resulted in the signature of an important commercial convention, which the Government trusted would place the commercial relations between Great Britain and Spain on a greatly

improved footing. Spain granted to British produce and manufactures through all her dominions complete most-favoured-nation treatment in all that related to trade and navigation. On the other hand, we granted special favours in regard to wine duties and other matters. The convention proved to be of very great value indeed to both countries.<sup>1</sup>

While Lord Rosebery was pursuing his interesting but most difficult work at the Foreign Office, Parliament and the country were being torn by the discussion of the Home Rule Bill which Mr. Gladstone introduced, and which, described by critics as a measure for the dismemberment of the Empire, most certainly led to the dismemberment of the Liberal party. There were already ominous signs of what was to come. Lord Hartington had not joined the Ministry. At the Eighty Club dinner, on March 5th, his position was defined. He spoke of himself as "an independent member of the Liberal party," and expressed the great regret with which he found himself "for a time separated from, or at any rate not in complete harmony with, those with whom I have for so many years found my chief pride and pleasure in acting." After discussing the General Election, and admitting that the return of eighty-five Parnellites was "a proof of the existence in Ireland, amongst a large portion of the population, of a desire for

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B.

some change in the Parliamentary relations between this country and Ireland," but not sufficiently decisive to act upon, he proceeded to speak of the Tory policy. "The late Attorney-General for Ireland told us last night," said Lord Hartington, "that the Conservative Government never had any intention of giving up repressive legislation permanently, but they thought that the interval between the accession of the Conservative Government and the reassembling of the new Parliament—an interval, by the way, in which the General Election took place—might be safely tided over by the abandonment of the Crimes Act. Well, I say, if that is the true account of the motives which prompted the Conservative policy, a more rash or more reckless policy was never adopted by any responsible statesman in a most critical moment." Lord Salisbury had told them that it was a question between the possibility of the formation of a Conservative Government and the re-enactment of the Crimes Act. "Deliberately they chose the former alternative." Passing on to what he described as "a novel aspect of the Irish question," in "the new attitude which has been assumed by Mr. Gladstone and by the Government which he has formed," Lord Hartington said he was not going to say one word of complaint or charge against Mr. Gladstone for the attitude he had taken. "I think no one," he continued, "who has read or heard, during a long series of years, the declarations

of Mr. Gladstone on the question of self-government in Ireland can be surprised at the tone of his present declaration. Lord Randolph Churchill, himself an attentive student of Mr. Gladstone's speeches, can find no later date than 1871 in which Mr. Gladstone has spoken strongly against the demands of the Irish people for greater self-government. Well, when I look back to those declarations which Mr. Gladstone made in his place in Parliament, which have not been infrequent, when I look to the increased definiteness which was given to those declarations in his address to the electors of Midlothian, and in his Midlothian speeches; when I look to the announcements which—however unauthorised and inaccurate—have never been asserted to be, and could not have been, mere figments of the imagination, but expressed more or less accurately not the conclusions which Mr. Gladstone had formed, but the ideas which he was considering in his own mind,—I say, when I consider all these things, I feel that I have not, and that no one else has, any right whatever to complain of the tone of the declarations which Mr. Gladstone has recently made on this subject."

Sir Henry James, who had declined the Lord Chancellorship, had told his constituents, only three days before Lord Hartington spoke, that he was still a sincere Liberal—never more so. "I am going to take up my abode in no cave," he said. "The climate of a cave would not suit me." Like

Lord Hartington, his desire was to support the Liberal Government whenever he could. It was not, however, from Liberals outside the Ministerial ranks, but from within the Cabinet, that the chief difficulty came. The second week in March brought rumours of difference of opinion among the Ministers, and of pending resignations. Mr. Trevelyan was first said to be dissatisfied, and then Mr. Chamberlain. Mr. John Morley, speaking at a conference of the London and Counties Liberal Union on March 2, remarked of the calm that then prevailed: "I am not sure that it is not like the calm of the glassy waters that are on the edge of the bend of Niagara. It may be that we are on the eve of events which may divide our party and present issues which the country is not prepared to face in our sense." By the middle of March it was known that Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Trevelyan, and Mr. Heneage differed from their colleagues on the Land Question, and Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Trevelyan as members of the Cabinet put their views before Mr. Gladstone in writing. The time for bringing forward the Ministerial measures was postponed from March 22 to April 8. On March 29 it was announced that Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Trevelyan had resigned, and that Mr. Stansfeld had returned to his old post at the head of the Local Government Board, which he had himself established under Mr. Gladstone's first Administration. Lord Dalhousie,



without a seat in the Cabinet, took Mr. Trevelyan's place as Secretary for Scotland. On the same day Mr. Gladstone announced in the House of Commons that on April 8 he would ask for leave to bring in a Bill "to amend the provision for the future Government of Ireland"; and that on the 15th he would ask leave to bring in a measure "to make amended provision for the Sale and Purchase of Land in Ireland."

It was on April 8, 1886, that the Home Rule Bill was introduced. Mr. Gladstone explained his proposals in a speech which lasted for more than three hours. The Bill provided for the establishment in Dublin of a separate Executive Government dependent upon a separate Legislature sitting in Dublin. Something, he insisted, was imperatively demanded, something must be done. The problem the Government had to face was, "How to reconcile Imperial unity with diversity of Legislatures." Grattan had demanded the continued severance of the Parliaments with a view to the everlasting unity of the Empire. Was that, he asked, an audacious paradox? "No." Norway-Sweden, Austria-Hungary, and our own Colonies provided the answer. It was admitted, even by the Opposition, that a reconstruction of the Irish Government was necessary. How was it to be done, he asked, without giving to Ireland a "domestic Parliament"? The Government's proposal was to establish "a legislative body, sitting

in Dublin, for the conduct, both legislative and administrative, of Irish as distinct from Imperial affairs." "There," he added, "is the head and front of our offending;" and the Irishmen expressed their delight. The unity of the Empire must not be placed in jeopardy—and at this declaration some Ulster members broke into scornful laughter. There would be an equitable distribution of Imperial burdens and "reasonable safeguards for the protection of the Protestant minority."

In the first place, could a distinction be drawn between Imperial and domestic affairs? Mr. Gladstone said that this had been found impossible, and announced, amid great sensation, that Irish peers and Irish members would no longer sit in the Imperial Parliament. Secondly, was the fiscal unity of the Empire to be surrendered? Mr. Gladstone laid much anxiety to rest by giving a negative answer. The Irish Parliament, however, would have a "general power of taxation," and the entire proceeds of the Customs and Excise would be handed over for the discharge of Irish obligations.

Next came the question of the powers and constitution of the new legislative body. It would have no power to interfere with the prerogatives of the Crown, and no control over the Army and Navy, the defence of the country, foreign policy, trade, navigation, the currency, the endowment of religious bodies. It would be a body of two

orders—a popular order and a less numerous order—which would sit and deliberate together. The twenty-eight Irish Peers now sitting in the House of Lords would “have the option” to form part of the smaller body, with the addition of seventy-five other members, elected by the £25 occupiers for ten years. “It might be thought,” said the Prime Minister, “that the Irish peers would decline the honour. I am not of that opinion,” he added, amid the laughter of the House and of the peers in the gallery. The 103 Irish members in this House of Commons would form the second order of the new legislative body. To them would be added 101 other members also elected by household suffrage, thus leaving one order of 103 members and another of 204 members. In the event of disagreement, the two orders were to vote apart, and the measure voted upon, if not accepted by both, would be suspended for three years, or until after a dissolution.

Mr. Gladstone concluded by saying: “Our choice has been made. It has not been made without thought and care. It has been made in the full knowledge that trial and difficulty may confront us upon our path. It may be I have no right to say that Ireland, through her constitutionally chosen representatives, will accept the plan we offer her. I hope it; I do not know it; I have no title to assume it. If Ireland does not cheerfully accept it, it is impossible for us to attempt to force upon

her what is intended as a boon, nor can we possibly press England and Scotland to accord to her what she does not heartily welcome and embrace. There may be difficulties, but, Sir, I rely upon the patriotism and sagacity of this House; I rely upon the effect of free and full discussion; I rely, more than all, upon the just and generous sentiments of the two British nations; and, looking forward, I ask the House to assist us in the work that we have undertaken, to believe that no trivial motives would have driven us on; to assist us in this work which we believe will restore Parliament to its dignity and legislation to its free and unimpeded course. I ask them to stay that waste of the public treasure, under the present system of government and administration in Ireland, which is not a waste only, but which demoralises while it exhausts. I ask them to show to Europe and to America that we too can face the political problems which America twenty years ago, and which many countries in Europe, have been called upon to face and have not feared to deal with. I ask that we should practise—as we very often preach—in our own case, with firm and fearless hand, the doctrine that we have so often inculcated upon others, namely, that the concession of local self-government is not the way to sap or to impair, but the way to strengthen and to consolidate unity. I ask that we should learn to rely less on merely written stipulations, and more upon those better

stipulations which are written on the heart and on the mind of man. I ask that we should apply to Ireland the happy experience which we have gained in England and Scotland, where a course of generations has now taught us, not as dream or theory but as practice and as life, that the best and surest foundation we can find to build on is the foundation afforded by the affections, the convictions and the will of men; and it is thus, by the decree of the Almighty, that, far more than by any other endeavour, we may be able to secure at once social peace, and the fame, the power and the permanence of the Empire."

Into the details of the debate it is unnecessary here to enter. The Bill was defeated in the second week of June by a majority of thirty votes, two hundred and twenty-nine Liberals voting with Mr. Gladstone, and ninety-three—the new Liberal Unionist party—against.

Lord Rosebery, whose faith in the advantages of local government had always been strong, stood steadfastly by his chief, whilst others were breaking from him daily. Lord Rosebery's attitude on the question was explained to a meeting at Glasgow on June 17th, called for the purpose of establishing a new association to further the Gladstone policy. He said he had been tied to an office, a noble office, and perhaps in its departmental details, and in its relations with the various communities of the world, the most responsible

and arduous that could be committed to a subject of the Queen. The debate on the Home Rule question had been carried on in the House in which he was not privileged to sit. They were met under circumstances rare in the history of the Liberal party. They were about to appeal to the constituencies with a distracted and divided Liberal party, distracted and divided as amongst the leaders of the Liberal party, distracted and divided as amongst the representatives of the Liberal party in the House of Commons; but he did not believe they were appealing to a Liberal party amongst the mass of the country in any degree distracted or divided. The Government who were about to ask their suffrages appealed to them in two watchwords familiar enough to the Liberal party, though forgotten by some of them at this moment. They appealed to them for union and liberty as against centralisation and coercion. Their association that night had been formed because of the distraction of the Liberal party in the House of Commons. It seemed to them good, in this supreme issue—the greatest issue, in his opinion, that had been presented to Parliament since the Reform Bill of 1832—that there should be some absolutely unanimous phalanx of Liberal opinion upon which they should proceed to the country. They did not profess to supersede other associations. They would be delighted to act with other associations, and when their

purposes were achieved they should be delighted to retire and allow the Liberal party to re-amalgamate itself. But in the meantime they had thought it necessary and expedient, in view of the great issue that was now before the country, that there should be this separate association for the purpose of ventilating their particular views. Now they came to the inquiry, How was it they appealed to the country with a divided Liberal party in the House of Commons? They were told that they had changed their opinions. They were told that this (Home Rule for Ireland) was a new and sudden cry inspired by the rapacity of a man, no doubt well on in years, to retain power and place for himself. That was the charge. Those who made the charge forgot the circumstances entirely. What had been the policy of the Conservatives, and what did their immortal Mr. Smith do when he went over to make inquiry into the state of Ireland? He ascertained that coercive measures were necessary for the country. He returned with that message of peace; and, indeed, the dove sent forth from the Conservative ark returned with that leaf in his mouth, and when they announced their measure of coercion they announced the termination of their Government. The Liberal Government came to this conclusion: they asked the House of Commons to vote that a separate legislative body for Irish as distinct from Imperial concerns was desirable in the interests of

Great Britain and Ireland. He asked them to remember that in the struggle which was before them they should not forget that they were not voting on the details of the Government scheme, however good that scheme might be, but they were voting on the simple proposition that he had mentioned. Those who voted against the Government voted on either one of two issues: either they were opposed to affirming the principle of the establishment in Ireland of a legislative body for the conducting of Irish affairs as distinct from Imperial affairs, or else they voted that they could not put trust in the good faith and the promises of Mr. Gladstone and his Government. He cast aside those who put no faith in Mr. Gladstone or his Government. To his mind they went away to the bottomless space or into the ranks of the Conservative party. He implored them as good Liberals not to let any vague rhetoric obscure the real issue from their eyes. It was said by their opponents that the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament would be injured if the Bill became law. Why, if a new legislative body was to be created by the mere statutory action of the Imperial Parliament, revocable at will by the Imperial Parliament, that in itself preserved the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. The question of Ulster was one which required to be looked frankly in the face. They had promised deliberately and carefully to



take into consideration any advice that might be offered for protecting the minority in Ulster. He did not believe in the cry of the Orangemen: "By heavens, if you leave us alone with these miscreants we will fire off the revolver in the name of the Shorter Catechism." As to Mr. Gladstone's Bill, they might kill it, but they could not kill its policy. Whenever any one turned aside from that landmark and looked to find any other on the landscape, he would only see the chained skeleton of coercion clanking dismally on a rusty gibbet on the roadside. He believed when this trouble had passed away a reunited Liberal party would look back not without gratitude to the Government of Mr. Gladstone, which had the discernment to see and the courage to pursue the path of honesty, of conciliation, and of safety.

Mr. Gladstone, evidently believing that the country was with him, dissolved Parliament, and a general election followed. Its result was remarkable in more ways than one; but, before dealing with them it will be interesting to give a few notes about Lord Rosebery's work apart from the official duties. During Lord Rosebery's tenure of office the Liberal party had a new political salon—made up of the Foreign Office itself and of Lansdowne House, where magnificent receptions were given by Lady Rosebery. Every one was welcomed at the receptions, which were

the most notable social and political gatherings of the season. A bright picture of such a meeting was given by Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, who visited London in the summer of 1886, and afterwards wrote his book "One Hundred Days in Europe." He says: "We went to a luncheon at Lansdowne House, Lord Rosebery's residence, not far from our hotel. My companion tells a little incident which may please an American six-year-old. The eldest of the four children, Sibyl, a pretty, bright child of six, told me that she wrote a letter to the Queen. I said, 'Did you begin "Dear Queen"?' 'No,' she answered; 'I began "Your Majesty," and signed myself "Your little humble servant, Sibyl."' A very cordial and home-like reception at this great house."

Dr. Holmes, who had previously met Lord Rosebery at the house of Mr. Winthrop, was asked to go to the Derby. He records: "I had the pleasure of making his (Lord Rosebery's) further acquaintance. Lord Rosebery suggested that I should go to the Derby by the Prince of Wales's special train." And to Epsom the Doctor went, and enjoyed himself. Later he recorded: "On the anniversary of the Queen's birthday Sir W. Harcourt gave a great dinner party to the officials of his department, and later in the evening Lady Rosebery held a reception at the Foreign Office. On both these occasions everybody is

expected to be in court dress, but my host told me I might present myself in ordinary evening dress. I thought that I might feel awkwardly among so many guests all in the wedding garments, knee breeches and the rest with which I ventured among them, and never passed an easier evening in any company.

“At half-past eleven we walked over to the Foreign Office to Lady Rosebery’s reception. There Mr. Gladstone was of course the centre of a group, to which I was glad to add myself. His features were almost as familiar to me as my own. But I looked upon him with astonishment. For he stood before me with epaulets on his shoulders and a rapier at his side, as military in his aspect as if he had been Lord Wolseley, to whom I was introduced a short time afterwards. A great number of invitations had been given out for the reception at Lady Rosebery’s—over two thousand, my companion heard it said. Whatever the number was, the crowd was very great—so great that one might well feel alarmed for the safety of any delicate person who was in the pack which formed itself at one place in the course of the evening. Some obstruction must have existed *a fronte*, and the *vis a tergo* became fearful in its pressure on those who were caught in the jam. But there was always a *deus ex machinâ* for us when we were in trouble. Afterwards we moved freely about the noble

apartments. Lady Rosebery, who was kindness itself, would have had us stay and sit down in comfort at the supper table, after the crowd and thinned, but we were tired with all we had been through, and ordered our carriage. The most formidable thing about a London party is getting away from it. *C'est le dernier pas qui coûte*. A crowd of anxious persons in retreat is hanging about the windy door and the breezy stairway and the airy hall. A stentorian voice, hard as that of Rhadamanthus, exclaims :

“ ‘Lady Vere de Vere’s carriage stops the way!’

“If my Lady Vere de Vere is not on hand, and that pretty quickly, off goes her carriage, and the stern voice bawls again :

“ ‘Mrs. Smith’s carriage stops the way.’

“Mrs. Smith’s particular Smith may be worth his millions and live in his marble palace ; but if Mrs. Smith thinks her coachman is going to stand with his horses at that door until she appears, she is mistaken, for she is a minute late, and now the coach moves on and Rhadamanthus calls aloud :

“ ‘Mrs. Brown’s carriage stops the way.’ . . .

“Half the lung fevers that carry off the great people,” adds the Doctor, “are got waiting for their carriages.”

## CHAPTER XIX

MR. GLADSTONE'S APPEAL TO THE COUNTRY—HIS 'DEFEAT—LORD ROSEBERY ON HOME RULE—ADDRESS TO THE GLASGOW JUNIOR LIBERAL ASSOCIATION—SATISFYING THE HOPES OF IRELAND—DISCOURSES ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS—THE DUTIES OF THE OFFICE.

MR. GLADSTONE'S appeal to the country was a severe disappointment to him, although it was almost impossible to believe that, if the Home Rule Bill was so objectionable to so many of his chief lieutenants, it was likely to be so pleasing to the rank and file as to make the election a victory for the Home Rule policy. Men like Lord Rosebery and Mr. John Morley, whose earliest convictions had been in the direction of local government as a panacea for many evils, remained staunch. And as to Lord Rosebery, the feelings of Mr. Gladstone were thus expressed at a meeting which he addressed in Manchester in June. On the 26th of that month Mr. Gladstone left Hawarden Castle, and in the afternoon addressed a great meeting in the Free Trade Hall. In his introductory remarks he spoke of the prominent men who were supporting his Home Rule proposals, and said: "I pass

now to the youngest member of the Cabinet, Lord Rosebery, of whom I will say to the Liberal Party of this country—and I say it not without reflection, for if I said it lightly I should be doing injustice not less to him than to them—in whom I say to the Liberal Party of this country that they see the man of the future. I say to you what I said to the House of Commons in introducing this Bill, that my main reliance is on the nation, and all the signs which crowd upon me from day to day tend more and more to convince me that we shall not rely upon it in vain.”

The defections from the Liberal Party were, however, serious, and one of the most influential was Mr. John Bright. Many hesitating men had waited for his words before making up their minds. When he had spoken they voted with the Conservatives, or kept away from the polling booths. When Mr. Bright spoke—it was to his constituents at Birmingham on July 1—he said: “I am against anything in any shape which shall be called a Parliament in Dublin, and I am against what I consider a most monstrous proposition, that is, the Bill for the purchase of the estates of Ireland. It is the political question which makes the economical question necessary. If it were not for a Bill like this, to alter the government of Ireland and to revolutionise it, no one would dream of this extravagant and monstrous

proposition with regard to Irish land. But if the political makes the economical necessary, the economical or Land Purchase proposition condemns the political proposition." Deducing from the Land Bill that the Government dared not leave the land and taxation in the hands of a Dublin Parliament, Mr. Bright went on to say: "Therefore the Land Bill invites us to risk a hundred and fifty millions of money to guarantee the land-owners from a conspiracy which the Prime Minister has described as 'marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire.' Well, I am very sorry to be compelled to believe—I am sure that Mr. Gladstone honestly believes the contrary—but I am compelled to believe the legislation which he proposes is only another step forward in that march through rapine to the break-up of the United Kingdom, and the astounding proposition is that they are to dignify this conspiracy by the name, and the form, and the power of a Parliament." Mr. Bright then discussed the Land Bill, criticised severely the details of the Home Rule Bill, and repeated his own suggestion of making the Irish members a Grand Committee on Irish Bills. He concluded by an appeal "to try every one of the unexhausted resources of civilisation, before we capitulate to one of the worst conspiracies that ever afflicted any country."

Mr. Gladstone worked unceasingly during the election, undertaking another Midlothian campaign,

in the course of which Lord Rosebery, as already mentioned, expressed his views on the Home Rule Bill. As the result of the contest there was a majority against Home Rule not of 30, as with the last Parliament, but of 114. The Cabinet determined upon resignation on July 20. Lord Salisbury, having offered Lord Hartington to serve under him if he chose to become Premier, ultimately accepted office, and Lord Randolph Churchill became Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons. Mr. Henry Matthews became Home Secretary and Lord Iddesleigh Foreign Secretary. Mr. Stanhope became Secretary for the Colonies, Lord Cross Secretary for India, and Mr. Balfour Secretary for Scotland; Sir Michael Hicks Beach took the Irish Secretaryship. Other members of the Government were: Lord Halsbury, Lord Cranbrook, Mr. W. H. Smith, Lord George Hamilton, Lord Ashbourne, Lord Stanley of Preston, Lord John Manners, Mr. Raikes, Mr. Ritchie, Mr. Plunkett, Sir Henry Holland, Sir Richard Webster, Sir Edward Clarke, and Sir John Gorst. The Dissident Liberals, or Liberal Unionists, formally constituted themselves a separate party, and appointed whips.

Soon after the election Lord and Lady Rosebery, glad of a further opportunity to pursue their love for travel, paid a visit to India, where their reception was of the most cordial character. The tour was continued well into the next year. On



their return they reached this country in March, and much interest was evinced in the first public meeting to be addressed by Lord Rosebery, because rumours had been freely circulated that he had changed his views on the subject of Home Rule since the general election. That he remained a steadfast supporter of Mr. Gladstone's policy was soon proved, however.

The Earl of Rosebery delivered his Presidential address to the members of the Glasgow Junior Liberal Association in the St. Andrew's Hall—the largest in the city—on April 27, 1887. For fully an hour before the proceedings commenced the hall was crowded; and in order to while away the time popular airs were discoursed on the grand organ. When he ascended the platform he was received with quite an ovation. Sir Charles Tennant occupied the chair at first, but afterwards Lord Rosebery was installed in the chair as the Honorary President of the Association.

Lord Rosebery said he was extremely grateful that they had afforded him an opportunity of explaining to a Scotch audience his views on present politics. He had been abroad six months, and on his return he found matters were still where they were. There could and would be one question before the country until it was settled. He had seen it stated that if Mr. Gladstone would only postpone the Irish question for this Parliament, it might be the means of

reuniting the Liberal party ; but he was one of those few remaining people in Scotland who clung to that effete prejudice which it was said would soon die out—it was called Gladstonian Liberalism. Indeed, he was one of those who had almost unlimited belief in Mr. Gladstone. As to the Irish question, even if Mr. Gladstone were more superhuman than he is, it appeared to him it was not now in Mr. Gladstone's power to postpone the Irish question. No, even if Mr. Gladstone wished to postpone the Irish question, it would, nevertheless, be in the foreground. It was not Mr. Gladstone nor themselves who were pushing forward most Home Rule, it was the Government who were pushing it most forward by their wanton Coercion Bill. Well, he found on his return from India that one great Liberal Unionist was the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Tory Government. He found Radical Unionists stumping the country on behalf of coercion. He found Lord Hartington—well, how was he to define the position of Lord Hartington? This friend and late colleague, for whom he had the greatest respect, was in a difficult position at that moment ; he did not know how to illustrate it except by alluding to that fact which was familiar to them all in walking through the public streets. They would doubtless have seen in Edinburgh and Glasgow the practice that when a household left a house they took everything away with them,

and they put up a placard stating that letters were to be addressed elsewhere, and that the keys were to be found somewhere round the corner. It occurred to him that that was the position of the present Government and his friend Lord Hartington, and he would be inclined to say that the Government might without any alarm put up a placard saying, "This House is Empty, or nearly so; for Keys, look to Devonshire House, and Address all Communications there." Then Lord Randolph Churchill had resigned his position in the Government while he was away, and his leaving the Government was as great a surprise to everybody as it was to Lord Randolph Churchill himself. The Duke of Argyll had been giving the Liberals a piece of advice, and the Liberal Unionists were told to forget their party. There was one thing certain—that this agitation would end in a general election; and, that if that were so, there would be a broad line drawn. On one side there would be the Tories, and on the other the Liberals. But in the meantime there was only one course to take, and it was to pursue a conciliatory policy. What that policy was to be he would try to point out. He had respected their opponents' conscientious scruples, and he understood their scruples to a certain extent; but when he did that, the other side should pay a similar respect to the Gladstonians' ideas. He had been shocked

by the language of the platform, the press, and Parliament with regard to the Irish question, and he maintained that it involved a great danger to the public life of the country.

Lord Rosebery added :

“ Well, then, I say, we came to three conclusions. The first was this, that coercion could never again be reckoned upon as a consistent policy after the Tory declaration. The second was this, that if this great national demand for Home Rule was to be resisted, it must be resisted by a power of coercion such as had never been entrusted to a Government before; and, in the third place, that this Irish demand for Home Rule, for a Parliament only recently stolen from them, sanctified by the authority of great names, and affirmed by the voice of the nation, must be examined with a view to concession. These are the three principles on which I think I may say that our policy was based. In a party point of view, we were returning to the old traditional policy of our party. In a moral point of view—and let me tell you, gentlemen, that good morality is not such bad policy as is generally supposed—in a moral point of view, we were doing to others as we would be done by.

“ In a patriotic point of view, we were substituting a solid and a real union for a sinister, a sham, and a hollow association. Guided by these

principles, and moved by these facts, we produced our measures. These measures were defeated, as you know, on the principle of Home Rule. They were not defeated on any detail—remember that; they were defeated on the principle of Home Rule. The late Government made repeated declarations that they were accessible to every suggestion made to them in Committee, and they wound up a series of declarations—the most conciliatory ever made by a Government in my opinion; and I have no scruple in saying that in my opinion they were rather too conciliatory—they wound up by that letter to Mr. Moulton which Mr. Gladstone wrote, and in which he affirmed it as an elementary proposition, that no one who voted for the second reading was voting for more than the principle of a domestic Legislature for Ireland. Now, gentlemen, I din that into you again, because you will hear it contradicted. But you can examine the facts and the documents for yourselves. We were defeated on that second reading. If everybody believed our declarations—I do not know whether they did or not, but they did not say they did not believe them—we were defeated on that second reading on the question of principle, and not of any detail of the Bill. Very well; we went to the country, and the country dismissed us and our Bills. We accepted our defeat—we had, in fact, no other choice. And, moreover, we believed that time

was with us. We believed time would show that there was no alternative policy between our policy and the policy of coercion. We were told that we were mistaken. Were we? We disappeared in summer; and the first gentle breezes of an English spring brought a Coercion Bill.

“What is our present policy? Our present policy is exactly where we left it when you sent us about our business. That is not our policy as it has been represented by people who are not the mouthpieces of our party. That is not our policy as represented by our open enemies and our hollow friends. Our policy is one of absolute determination to carry out the principle that Ireland should be allowed to manage her own affairs in the way of domestic legislation. But, subject to that principle, we offer, as we always have offered, to consider in the fullest and most conciliatory spirit any and whatever proposition which is a *bonâ fide* offer to construct a plan acceptable to the Liberal party and to the people of Ireland. We have no rooted—I believe I speak for every colleague of mine—we have no rooted love of our plan. We have none of the pride of authorship. We only desire that some plan may be found which shall enable us to carry out our object; and by whomsoever that plan is proposed, whether publicly or privately, whether from the Tory benches or from the Liberal benches, or from the Liberal Unionist benches,

we, I venture to say, will always be glad to consider and, if possible, support it.

“ Last year the Liberal party, headed by a great statesman, produced a scheme which satisfied the hopes and expectations of Ireland. For a moment it seemed as if all would be well, and as if the distressful country would know the end of its long sorrows and its long travail. But it was not to be. The House of Commons and the general election put an end to that, and the clock was put back once more, and Ireland knew that she would have to wait a little, and that she would have to look forward once more to the handcuffs of coercion, and to the precious boons of a Government seeking for a remedy, but always deliberately avoiding the right one. I confess that when I think of these blighted hopes and of the agony of disappointment, I am not surprised that the condition of Ireland should call, in the opinion of the Tory Government, for a Coercion Bill. Our duty is plain. We have to fight the battle—strenuously as I trust, earnestly as I believe—the battle of a policy of conciliation against a policy of coercion. The policy of conciliation is not strained; it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven. If you adopt it and it succeeds, you will reap a rich and an abundant harvest—an hundred-fold; but if it fail, you will at any rate have tried an experiment that you will never regret, and you

will have placed for all time England in a better position to deal with our unhappy fellow-countrymen in Ireland.”

Lord Rosebery delivered several more speeches during the year, and references were constantly made to him in the newspapers and reviews as the coming leader of the Liberal party, and the certain successor of Mr. Gladstone. The *Spectator* in December of that year devoted a leading article to a consideration of his claims to become and his qualifications for fulfilling the position of Prime Minister. The political atmosphere was for a long while of peculiar character. The rift amongst the Liberals became more and more marked, and notwithstanding excellent words of advice given by Lord Rosebery and other leaders, it became generally recognised that “reunion was impossible.” The Government pursued its coercive policy towards Ireland, having to deal with the “Plan of Campaign.” It also had the spasmodic resignation of Lord Randolph Churchill to deal with, and a re-shuffling of the Cabinet cards. Later came the “Parnellism and Crime” articles, the action *O'Donnell v. The Times*, and the Parnell Commission, chiefly notable for the great speech of the late Lord Chief Justice (then Sir Charles Russell), and for the exposure of the Pigott forgeries, on which the “Parnellism and Crime” articles and the slanders on Mr. Parnell were based.



For Lord Rosebery the year was a busy and anxious one. His daughter, Margaret—"Lady Peggy"—had been seriously ill, and there had been the removal from Lansdowne House to the new London home which his lordship still occupies, 38, Berkeley Square. He found time to present a swimming bath to the People's Palace, and to visit the institution in the Mile End Road with Lady Rosebery, when he delivered a speech expressing his appreciation of the value of gymnastic exercises for the young. Amongst other engagements of the year was an address in the autumn, in which he spoke specially of foreign affairs, and of Imperial Federation, in which question he was taking a particularly keen interest.

Speaking at Leeds on October 11, 1888, Lord Rosebery said:

"You allude to the time when I held the appointment of Secretary of Foreign Affairs, and I think that that reference, coming as it does from a non-political body, is one of some importance; for I believe this, that the more the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs is considered as a non-political officer, the better for the country. I have always held, and I hope I have proved by action and also by want of action, that my belief is that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should speak whenever possible, and as often as possible, with the united voice of the English nation without distinction

of party. I cannot help feeling the want that so many of us in public life feel who have been educated as I have—the want of a practical commercial education which is so useful in the training of a public man. I think that the Chambers of Commerce in this country, that ought to represent the commercial feelings of this country, are not aware of the political power they exercise—I do not mean in a party sense—and, not knowing it, they are not apt to exercise it as much as they ought to do. We should remember, after all, this great Empire, which is so great and legitimate a source of pride to us, and which, I think, offers great guarantees for the peace and the prosperity of the world at large, is mainly founded on commerce and character.

“ Let us pass to the region of foreign policy ; and when we come to the region of foreign policy we come at once to a question which is more or less one of detail. I mean the question of the commercial reports of Her Majesty’s consuls, to which allusion has been made in the Address. I am glad to hear that these reports, which have been issued in the last two or three years, and which have shown a marked advance both in the exactness and copiousness of their information and the promptitude with which they have been issued, have met with your approval to a very large extent ; but I confess I have been a

little disappointed in one important matter connected with these reports. I see on high and adequate authority that these reports are of much more use to our competitors in trade than to ourselves. I see that what we are doing in furnishing with the utmost expedition the most accurate reports from the best possible sources of information is not so much to develop our own trade as to give hints to our competitors as to how they may compete with us. I must say that is not a satisfactory state of things to our communities here.

“I do not think it is satisfactory that we should be told that any Continental nation makes use of our information with more speed than we do ourselves; but does it not raise a further question with regard to these reports? If it be true that we are not so speedy in availing ourselves of them as we ought to be, it does raise the point whether it might not be well for the Secretary of State to furnish early copies of those reports confidentially to Chambers of Commerce before they are generally issued to the public. This would give information to our commercial community which, as I think, they are fairly entitled to possess, and I think it is worthy of the attention of your Chamber whether some such course as this should not be urged upon the Government.

“There is another point with regard to our diplomatic service in its commercial relations, as

to which many representations have been made to various Governments, and that is that our consuls abroad ought to aim at promoting the British commercial firms of the towns in which they live. I know it is said that in the East and elsewhere the consuls of other nations take a very ardent and personal part in pushing the interests of the firms belonging to their respective countries, and it is said that our consuls ought to take a similar attitude with regard to our commercial firms in this country. I am not at all sure of the wisdom, of the validity, of this contention. I admit that at certain Courts where foreign and commercial policy are inseparably entwined it may be well for our representatives to put forward the claim of our commerce as a national whole, but I am very doubtful as to the expediency of their making representations on behalf of particular firms. If our consular or diplomatic agents were instructed to take such a course as that, they would be placed in a very invidious position. Suppose that three firms, competing in the same trade, all asked the consul to use his particular influence on their behalf. His position would at once become impossible; and you must remember, besides, that it is very difficult for the consul, under such circumstances, when he is serving the interests of a particular firm, not to be liable to charges which, I trust, would be unfounded, of some commercial interest of his own being for-

warded by the firm in question. I think you would find it very difficult, when you come to practice, to maintain our consuls and diplomatic agents in the high, independent, and unsullied position which they possess, if you once gave them instructions to push the interests of a particular firm or trade.

“ There are, however, larger questions of foreign policy to which I wish the attention of Chambers of Commerce could be more particularly directed. A very great change has come over the whole of our foreign policy in the last twenty years, and I think you will see a much greater change in it in the next twenty years. Our foreign policy has become more of a Colonial policy, and is becoming every day more entwined with our Colonial interests than has ever been the case before. Formerly our foreign policy was mainly an Indian policy ; it was mainly guided by considerations of what was best for our Indian Empire. That brought us into many complications which we might otherwise have avoided, but which we felt were rightly undertaken to save so splendid a possession ; but, owing to causes which I will point out to you, the Colonial influence must necessarily overshadow our foreign policy.

“ In the first place, our Colonial communities are rising to a pitch of power and influence which makes it natural for us to listen to them whenever they make representations on their own behalf—and they do make constant representations on their

own behalf. In the next place, we find that the other Powers are beginning a career of Colonial aggrandisement. We formerly should not have in our foreign affairs to trouble ourselves with Colonial questions, because we had a monopoly of colonies. That monopoly has ceased; but consider for a moment, as matters stand now, how largely our foreign policy is a Colonial policy. In America our principal question of foreign policy at this moment may be said to be the fisheries dispute between Canada and the United States. It is difficult for some of us—it is difficult at any rate for myself—to consider the United States as a foreign Power, and the United States in these Colonial questions have interests totally different from ours or those of Canada, and in dealing with Canadian questions it is quite clear that the voice of Canada must sound very loud in the counsels of the Foreign Office. If you look a little farther you find a constant source of irritation in Newfoundland in regard to the fishery question, which rendered it impossible to ratify a convention made on the subject with the United States, and that showed them the extent to which the Colonial policy had become foreign policy. When you look at Africa you find the same condition of things, and if you look at the map you will find the country is practically apportioned to one Power or another, and this means that, instead of your policy there being an insular foreign policy, you

are now a Power with boundaries adjoining those of three or four European States in the continent of Africa. We pass now to Asia, we pass to Thibet, to the trade with which you have alluded. I confess I am in favour of a peaceful solution of that question, of the extension of commerce by carrying it forward peacefully and not by force of arms. But in Asia, again, we do not find ourselves free from this Colonial trouble elsewhere. France has got a great territory there. We are almost adjacent to French territory in Asia, which again makes us a coterminous power with France, where we did not expect to be. Pass on to Australia. In the Pacific you have two spheres of influence, of England and Germany, as accurately marked out as the division between Yorkshire and Lancashire. You are a coterminous Power with Germany in the Pacific. In questions relating to the Pacific the voice of your Colonial community in Australia must be loudly heard, and the voice of Australia indeed must be given effect to, and it must be paramount in the counsels of the Foreign Office with regard to those questions.

“Take another instance of what I mean. The two questions which we had to regulate with Germany in 1886, at any rate, were questions relating to Zanzibar and Samoa. The question relating to the colonial development of Germany is quite outside European diplomacy. When you come to approach almost every foreign question

at this moment you find the Colonial interest inseparable, and in future your Colonial policy must be a preponderating factor in your foreign policy as well.

“I have said that foreign policy in the future will be very largely concerned, and is very largely concerned, with questions of Colonial policy, but that raises the question of whether you wish to have a Colonial policy at all. There was at one time in this country a very great demand, founded on the belief that our Colonies were not trading as well with us as they do now, to be free from the responsibility of a Colonial Empire. I think that demand has, to a great extent, ceased; but the people of this country will, in a not too distant time, have to make up their minds what footing they wish their Colonies to occupy with respect to them, or whether they desire their Colonies to leave them altogether. It is, as I believe, absolutely impossible for you to maintain in the long run your present loose and indefinable relations to your Colonies, and preserve those Colonies as parts of the Empire.

“That is a question as to which Chambers of Commerce ought to be able to make up their minds very definitely, because, in the first place, it is a commercial question. I do not believe that if our Colonies left us in that amicable spirit in which they tell us they might leave us—I do not believe that if they left us in however



amicable a spirit, you would find them as good customers as they are now. We have an opportunity of comparing our relations between a colony that has left us and the colonies that remain with us—when I speak of a colony that has left us, I mean, of course, the United States. The United States have taken from us during the last ten years an average of £24,350,000 of home produce. Their population is nearly sixty millions, and therefore they have taken off our home produce at the rate of about eight shillings per head. Now Canada, which, as you all know, is coterminous with the United States, and which remains to us, has taken from us on an average £7,300,000 during the last ten years. Take their population at five millions, and that gives nearly thirty shillings per head, or nearly three times and a half what the United States take from us.

“You may say that the United States have a more hostile tariff against us than Canada has; but if you think for a moment, you will remember that if Canada were to leave us she would be pretty certain to adopt the tariff of the United States, and we should not be materially benefited by that proceeding. But let us take our other great colony abroad. Let us take the case of Australia. Australia takes from us on an average  $24\frac{1}{4}$  millions, or about the same as the whole of the United States, though its population



*Photo. by C. F. Hopkins.]*

**THE DURDANS, EPSON.**



is only about  $3\frac{1}{4}$  millions ; or at the rate of £7 a head, being more than seventeen times more than the United States with its population of sixty millions. I wish to say that, on that ground of commercial interest alone, the question is worthy of the consideration of our great commercial communities. I do not think it receives the consideration it deserves, for this reason : the question of the retention of our Colonies may be opened upon us at any moment by some unforeseen incident. I think I know enough of public opinion in this country to know that it matures slowly, and I believe the Chambers of Commerce in this country would be performing a useful task if they made up their minds to mature public opinion on this question. They might come to a conclusion different from that at which I have arrived ; but at any rate, whatever it is, it is well that the Chambers of Commerce of this country should know what their mind is, and should make that mind known.

“ You must remember what it involves. It is not merely commercial interests that are involved ; it is a narrowing down of this country to its European possessions. Do not flatter yourselves that if Canada and Australia were to leave you, you would retain your smaller Colonies. The West Indies would go with Canada ; Australia would take in Australasia. As to the Cape, I think you might make up your minds for the secession

of the Cape under circumstances such as those. Well, if you wish to remain alone in the world with Ireland you can do so. I do not see that you can obtain the great boon of a peaceful Empire, encircling the globe with a bond of commercial unity and peace, without some sacrifice on your part. No great benefit—no such benefit as that can be obtained without a sacrifice.

“You will have, as I think, to admit the Colonies to a much larger share in your affairs than you do at present. You will have to give them a right to prompt the voice of England when it speaks abroad to a much greater extent than you do at present. You must be prepared for demands, sometimes unreasonable, such as spoiled children sometimes make. You must be prepared in some respects to diminish your own insular freedom of action on behalf of your giant offspring abroad. But to my mind the sacrifice is worth it. The cause which we call Imperial Federation, for want of a better name, is worthy not merely of the attention of Chambers of Commerce, but of the devotion of the individual rights of the people of this country. For my part, if you will forgive me this little bit of egotism, I can say from the bottom of my heart that it is the dominant passion of my public life. Ever since I traversed those great regions which own the sway of the British Crown outside these islands, I have felt that there was a cause which merited all the enthusiasm and

energy that man could give to it. It is a cause for which any one might be content to live; it is a cause for which, if needs be, any one might be content to die."

Five years afterwards, when he was again Foreign Secretary, Lord Rosebery, speaking at the Royal Academy Banquet of 1893, remarked of his office :

" I think that you are too much accustomed to view her Majesty's Ministers merely on their practical, and not on their imaginative side. I for my own part consider that, rightly viewed, each office of the Crown is not merely a place for the transaction of business, but a realm of imagination. I will illustrate what I mean. As regards the First Lord of the Treasury I know nothing; but I suspect that it depends very much upon the occupant of the post as to whether he would illustrate my thesis or not. As regards the Lord Chancellor I will say nothing, because his office is above imagination, and it would be indiscreet for one who holds the highest of judicial offices to indulge in anything like a flight of fancy. Nor can I say anything for my right hon. friend the Home Secretary.

'Two massy keys he bears, of metals twain ;  
The golden opes, the iron shuts amain.'

" And as he opens and shuts the prison doors of the country with an impartial hand, it would

not do for him to indulge in any flights of fancy. But when I come to the other Secretaries of State my mind enlarges. My noble friend, the Secretary for the Colonies, rules over an Empire on which the sun never sets, and it is impossible to say at any given moment on what particular part of the globe his mind may be reposing. My noble friend Lord Kimberley's mind reposes on 'India's coral strand.' His talk is of Oriental splendour, his dream is of Oriental luxury, only marred by the awful spectre of the constantly depreciating rupee. When we come to the next Secretary of State, Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, I do not doubt, if he be a man of the boundless and virile imagination I believe him to be, sometimes, in dreams, he pictures to himself a British army taking the field in adequate numbers and with adequate equipment.

"But when I come to my own office, I transcend them all. I have only to open a red box to be possessed of that magic carpet which took its possessor wherever he would go. Perhaps sometimes it carries me a little farther than that. I open it, and find myself at once in those regions where a travelled monarch and an intellectual Minister are endeavouring to reconcile the realms of Xerxes and Darius with the needs of nineteenth-century civilisation—I smell the scent of the roses, and hear the song of the bulbul. I open another box, which enables me to share the sports of the fur-seal—his island loves, his boundless swims in

the Pacific; I can even follow him to Paris and see him—the *corpus delicti*—laid on the table of the Court of Arbitration. I can go still farther. I can transfer myself to the Southern Pacific, where three of the greatest States in the world are endeavouring, not always with apparent success, to administer one of the smallest of islands—the island of Samoa—in close conjunction and alliance with one of our most brilliant men of letters. I will say this in virtue of my office—I follow every Court. Not a monarch leaves his capital on a journey, but I am on the platform in the spirit if not in the body. I am in spirit in the gallery of every Parliament. I am ready and anxious—but not always successful—to be present at the signing of every treaty. I think I have laid a sufficient claim before you to insist that, in future, when you consider her Majesty’s Ministers you may not consider them merely as political creatures, but as persons who have also their imaginative side, as official Ariels roaming through time and space, not on broomsticks, but on boxes.”



## CHAPTER XX

LORD ROSEBERY AND THE HOUSE OF LORDS—THE NEED OF REFORM—  
PITT AND THE PEERS—LORDS AND COMMONS—THE HEREDITARY  
PRINCIPLE—LIFE PEERS—WHAT MIGHT BE DONE—"A MOCKERY"—  
THE GAUNTLET FLUNG DOWN

LORD ROSEBERY during the Parliamentary Session of 1888 delivered one of his greatest orations on the subject of the House of Lords. In the House of Lords, on March 19, he moved: "To call attention to the constitution of this House, and to move that a Committee be appointed to inquire thereon." He said:

"My Lords,—In rising to put before you the motion of which I have given notice, my first duty is to render my acknowledgment to my noble friend opposite (Lord Dunraven), who, having given notice of a motion practically of the same character in ignorance of the notice I had given publicly last session, kindly withdrew it on being acquainted with that fact. My lords, it was my fate nearly four years ago to introduce a motion to your lordships of a character very similar to this, and I think that the one which I submit to you to-day is in a measure con-

sequential upon that one. I should have renewed that motion before now had it not been for circumstances beyond my control. The year after I had brought it forward I descended from that eminence of freedom, the benches behind the front bench, and took part as a member of the Government in the Session of 1885; in the Session of 1886 I was in the same position, and I think your lordships will acknowledge that in the Session of 1887, when I was no longer in that position, the time was by no means favourable to the renewal of that motion. In 1886 I should have had to ask for the attention of my colleagues when they were absorbed in another and more pressing matter; and in 1887 it would have been difficult to attract the attention of the public to this subject. So I come to this year, which appears to me to offer an admirable opportunity for the discussion of this question. I shall endeavour to bring it before your lordships in a manner as free as possible from all party bias, though it is absolutely impossible to avoid all party questions in a matter of this character. On a former occasion I urged that all other institutions in this country had undergone renewal of form, and that it was not premature to urge upon your lordships' House the need of some such measure. In the second place, I recapitulated what had been said by various illustrious members of your lordships' House to the effect that this

House had the material to form the best Second Chamber in the world. Thirdly, I indicated, further, details of our procedure which seemed to me to require reconsideration and revision. Fourthly, I detailed some of the deficiencies of our constitution, and pointed out various elements which were defective; and, fifthly, I pointed out generally the dangers to which our composition made us liable. To-night I shall not require to go over any part of the same ground. It is necessary to strike deeper, because the question has taken a larger and a newer phase since then, and there is so much ground to go over that it would be difficult to accomplish such a discussion in the time.

“ Much has occurred since that occasion. Immediately afterwards there was a debate on the Franchise Bill, which was rejected by your lordships’ House. That was followed by a great agitation throughout the country—an agitation which, owing to that, to my mind, unfortunate circumstance, took a direction not so much in favour of the Franchise Bill as towards the reform, or the mending or the ending of your lordships’ House. I remember that two of my colleagues in the Government of 1885 expressed themselves strongly in favour of ending this House; one in the Government of 1886 expressed himself to the same effect, and I was left almost alone on that side of the question, pleading to a some-

what listless country the advantages of a Second Chamber.

“That agitation died away, but left serious results, because I think it left on the minds of most thinking men the impression that something must be done, and that this House could not remain as it was, more especially after the Franchise Bill had placed it side by side with a strong, powerful, and democratic Assembly. Now I pass from that incident to another. In 1885, the year succeeding our debate upon this question, there was a great reform made in the Upper House of Hungary, a House constructed substantially on the same principles as our own, but a mere infant in age as compared with it, dating, I think, only from the beginning of the seventeenth century. That showed that the question of reform of Second Chambers was in the air. The Hungarian House consisted of some seven hundred and fifty members, with some two hundred and six families hereditarily represented in it. These families are now reduced to ninety-one by a property qualification, but twenty-one of these families command no less than one hundred and fifteen votes in that Assembly, two alone having thirty representatives between them. The number of that House is about four hundred; there are fifty life peers, in the first place elected by the Chamber itself and subsequently nominated by the Crown. That shows that the Hungarian

House were alive to the question of reform and the unwieldiness of their numbers. Now we also, since 1884, have had some experience bearing upon the latter of these two questions.

“It is always taken for granted in works of history and in speeches on this question that Mr. Pitt was a great sinner in respect to adding to the number of this House. It was usually supposed that Pitt in his tenure of office recommended the addition of no fewer than one hundred and forty peers, but I have gone over these figures somewhat carefully, and I think that Mr. Pitt in this case—as in some other instances—is unjustly maligned. Mr. Pitt, as far as I can make out, was the means of creating or further elevating some one hundred and twenty-two peers, exclusive of peers of the blood royal, who are on a totally different footing, and peeresses in their own right. But I do not think that this is a fair statement of the case with respect to Mr. Pitt, because of this number forty were persons elevated to other ranks of the peerage, already being peers at the time, and were therefore no addition to the House; thirty-six were Scotch or Irish peers,—and I venture to think that this principle will recommend itself to your lordships, that Irish and Scotch peers are not in the same position as commoners when raised to peerages of the United Kingdom, but are rather in the nature of an amalgamation

than of any addition to this House. Therefore we are left with the clear addition to your lordships' House of forty-six peers in seventeen years of office. I do not take his second Administration, because it, like the Hundred Days of Napoleon, was very unlike his first tenure of power. He left, then, no substantial addition to the House of Lords. I then compare Mr. Pitt with more modern Ministers. I take the period from April, 1880, to June, 1887, because I should like to think that Her Majesty's Jubilee was an epoch. In that time sixty-five peers were recommended by the Minister of the day. Taking from these, as I have done from Mr. Pitt's peerages, the Scotch and Irish peers, we have a total of fifty-three, so that in seven years there have been created considerably more peers than Mr. Pitt created in his seventeen years of office. But I admit that one peerage, that conferred on the late lamented Sir Thomas Erskine May, was extinct almost as soon as created, while three were in the nature of life peerages. However, I will not confine myself to the last seven years; I will take a period from June 26, 1885, to June 21, 1887, a period of less than two years. In that time there were thirty-eight peers created. Deduct six for the Scotch and Irish peers on the same principle as I have done before, and you have thirty-two peers created in two years, as against forty-six created in seventeen years

by the great sinner, Mr. Pitt. I think that Mr. Pitt was hardly dealt with in this case. I am not blaming any Minister, but it is probably due to the irresistible tendencies of a democratic age that this House should be largely recruited by gentlemen who are willing to form part of it.

“It is not merely an absolute disadvantage in the sense of swelling our numbers, but it is a growing and increasing disadvantage for the future. Merit in this country is not likely to decrease, and, therefore, the number of admissions to the peerage is likely to increase as time goes on, and will gradually swell it to unmanageable proportions. But what is worse is this,—that that increase raises a great constitutional question. The sole method by which the two Houses can be brought into harmony upon any great constitutional question, when they differ upon measures which may be repugnant to your lordships’ House, but which are desired by the majority of the electoral body, is the creation of peerages. But your lordships’ House will soon become, or rather has become, so large with reference to the small numerical minority which sits behind the bench I occupy, that hardly a squadron or a regiment will be able to redress the balance in a certain contingency.

“Now, we have had, as I have said, the advantage of precept with reference to this question. I will read a remarkable passage which

calls upon your lordships to reform yourselves without further delay :

“ Take another question of great national importance. We put in the forefront of our political creed the maintenance of the House of Lords as an independent and co-ordinate branch of the Legislature. We praise the eloquence of its debates, the business-like character of its proceedings, the ability and knowledge of many of its members. We look to it not merely to smooth down the rough excrescences of the legislation which is passed through the popular Assembly, but also, if the necessity should arise, to resist any attempt at grave changes in our Constitution by that popular Assembly until the will of the people is distinctly declared.

“ But can any Conservative say that he is absolutely contented at present with the composition and working of the House of Lords? Can we not conceive it might be possible, by wise and careful change, to give that House greater popular authority and weight than it at present possesses? Cannot we learn something from the evident reluctance of the Radicals to reform that ancient institution, and their jeers when they remark on the increasing rarity of its debates, on the small proportionate attendance of its members, and on anything in which they think they can find a proof of its declining power? And looking at that, can we, as Conservatives,



say that it is quite consistent with the safety of our Constitution that Parliamentary reforms should be confined to one branch of the Legislature alone? I am as anxious as any one to maintain the hereditary principle in our Legislature. I would do nothing to impair the independence of the House of Lords; but something surely it would not be impossible for the House of Lords itself to do—something to purify itself from those black sheep who can now disgrace it with impunity.

“ ‘And surely it is worth consideration whether the entrance to that House of able laymen of moderate means might not be made easier by the extension of the life peerages which are now held by our bishops and lawyers, and whether the principle of selection, which has existed ever since the Union, in the Scotch and Irish Peerages, might not be extended to the Peerage of Great Britain.’

“Those are not the words of any rash or headlong innovator, or any member of the party to which I belong; they are the words of a man who once led the House of Commons for the Government, though he was not in office when he spoke them; they are the words of Sir M. Hicks-Beach, who made the speech from which I have taken them in February, and who, I am glad to say, is able to resume his seat in the House of Commons

as a member of Her Majesty's Government. But it is not from Sir M. Hicks-Beach alone that we had an expression of opinion on the subject.

“ We had, the week before last, the question raised in the House of Commons of the reform of this House, and there were two remarkable incidents in connection with that debate. One was, that no member of the House of Commons, on whatever side he sat, had one word to say for the existing constitution of this House. That is a remarkable circumstance, considering that the House of Commons, as at present constituted, gives an unbroken majority to Her Majesty's present advisers. The second noteworthy incident to which I would refer is this. The House of Commons is now led by a man of great weight, but of few words. Mr. W. H. Smith delivered on that occasion the longest speech, I think, which he has made since he has led that House, and I venture to call your lordships' attention to some of his remarks. He said: ‘ No Second Chamber can long remain deaf to the public opinion of the country, but must advance towards it if that public opinion is consistent with the interests of the country. The remark made by the hon. member for Southport, that the reform of the House of Lords must come from the Conservative party and the House of Lords, I accept. The assertion has great value, and

I earnestly trust will meet with a full consideration.' I earnestly support that remark.

“ But we have further food for reflection in what occurred since 1884. The Franchise Bill of 1884 enormously strengthened the House of Commons. What I may call its propelling power, which had been greatly increased in 1867, was immeasurably multiplied by the Act of 1884, which thus brought more glaringly into light the anomaly of two Houses, nominally co-extensive and co-equal, but one representing the great mass of the democracy, the other representing interests important indeed, but still considered by the public at large as the interests mainly of a class. I cannot help fearing, on behalf of this House, that as time goes on that disproportion will be still more largely increased, and that the new piece of democracy sewn on this old garment must make the rent and the chasm appear larger.

“ There is another point on which I must touch, but in no party spirit. Your lordships will remember the Home Rule policy which was inaugurated by Mr. Gladstone in 1886. At the dissolution that measure received the support of some one million one hundred thousand or one million two hundred thousand electors—very nearly half the number that went to the poll. They only fell short by eighty-six thousand of the opposing force. That minority is represented in

the House of Commons by some two hundred members who follow my right hon. friend, and they are assisted by eighty-six Irish members who follow Mr. Parnell, but who concur in this policy. That represents a minority on a question of great and vital importance of two hundred and eighty-six, and how is that minority represented in this House? I have had no opportunity of computing, and I do not wish now to have an opportunity of testing it by a vote; but I believe there are some thirty members out of five hundred and fifty-six, or about 5 per cent. of the entire number, and there is not a single Irish peer in this House that I know of who is a supporter of that policy. Noble lords may rejoice at that, but to those who endeavour to look further ahead it must afford matter for painful reflection. I say, then, that what lawyers call incompatibility of temper between the two yoke-fellows, the House of Lords and the House of Commons, is daily increasing and not unlikely to increase. It is quite true that at this moment the majority in both Houses belongs to the same party, but you have this disadvantage, that the minority in one House is almost absolutely unrepresented in the other, and if the minority in the House of Commons, by any strange or sinister chance, as you might say, were to become a majority, the fraction in this House that represents the minority in the other House would still remain a fraction.

That anomaly is daily and hourly increasing, and threatens to become a gulf yawning and impassable. One party in power enjoys a practical omnipotence ; the other party is never absolutely in power. Whether in or out of office, it is galled by a perpetual barrier, a constant stumbling-block, an endless disability. So the divisions in this House represent rather the passions of a party or a class than the deliberate reasoning of a Senate. When we come to reckon up the forces of both Houses, which may at any moment, by a general election, change sides, we are still more struck. The House of Commons rests on the votes of some six millions. What we represent is not so easy to divine. But if there were to be a general election which gave the majority of the six millions of electors to the present minority in the House of Commons, the disproportion would be of some gravity. It is quite true that the present majority would have a very large section of the electors.

“ But in these great constitutional questions, where the House of Lords is pitted against the House of Commons, the question very soon ceases to be the original question placed before the country, and the country takes up not the question placed before it, but the problem of the reform of this House, and even those electors who approve the general policy of this House do not like to see the action of their representatives set at naught. Is it not wise, then, at a moment of

comparative calmness, to reckon up our strength and our weakness? Our strength lies in illustrious members, in ancient tradition, in persons who represent in the country some of the wealth, some of the ancient blood of the kingdom, and some even of that genius that is in the country. But no Legislature in these days, placed as it is relatively to the other House, can rest either on tradition, descent, or even genius. There is another thing required—popular interest and popular support. In those things which I have mentioned is our strength.

“What are our weaknesses? They can be summed up in one comprehensive phrase. They lie, I think, in the indiscriminate and intemperate application of the hereditary principle. There is no trace in this House of discrimination or selection, except in the case of the Scotch and Irish peers. Every man in this House, it has been said, can sit in this House who has given himself the trouble to be born; and I venture to think that that indiscriminate principle, even if it worked well, would still be indefensible in the abstract. Your lordships will remember what Franklin said about hereditary legislators. He said of them that there would be more propriety, because less hazard of mischief, in hereditary professors of mathematics. I venture to think that a House based solely or even mainly on the hereditary principle is a House based upon the sand. It is by no means

essential to your lordships' House; it is not a modern innovation, but it is by no means an ancient incident. It was not until the time of the dissolution of the monasteries that hereditary members obtained even a bare majority in this House. It was not until 1539 that the hereditary element in this House obtained a bare majority. We can well understand why that occurred. We trace the hereditary principle to the feudal system, which required a totally different test of fitness to that of legislative fitness. The feudal system required in the great vassals of the Crown only a test of military fitness; and now, when we have abolished the feudal system, we still maintain the hereditary principle, which was established with a totally different object, to keep up the legislative functions of this House. If the indiscriminate hereditary principle is not, as I think, defensible in theory, does it work well in practice? I know it is said that the House of Lords works well, and that you could not easily find a better; but I venture to think that that does not represent the state of the case. In the first place, the hereditary principle as applied in this House makes legislators of men who do not wish to be legislators, and peers of men who do not wish to be peers. I venture to say that many of your lordships know other peers who have no wish to be legislators, who are unwillingly legislators, and would gladly be relieved of those

functions ; and I venture to say that others of your lordships know peers who were not willing to be peers, who were anxious to escape being peers, and who would gladly cease to be peers.

“It may be said that that is the misfortune of the ordinary British citizen when he is called to serve upon a jury. But the ordinary British citizen when called to serve upon a jury views that as one of the rare and inevitable misfortunes of his life ; but with the peer it is a fortune or a misfortune which ceases only with death. It does not merely take in unwilling legislators, it also takes in unfit legislators. I have quoted to you what Sir M. Hicks-Beach has said on the subject. It is not a particularly agreeable one to dwell upon, but I think we may say generally that five or six hundred not unprolific families must always be accompanied by a proportion of black sheep. I do not think the percentage in this House is greater than in any other five hundred or six hundred families—I should rather be inclined to say less ; but a percentage in an hereditary legislative Chamber, be it large or small, is a thing you cannot admit. What you require in an hereditary legislative Chamber, by the mere fact and principle of its existence, is an unblemished succession of hereditary virtue, hereditary wisdom, and hereditary discretion. It is quite true that the other House of Parliament is also capable of accommodating



black sheep, and does accommodate them. But the case of the House of Commons is very widely different. In the case of the House of Commons the responsibility does not lie upon the House. It lies even less upon the individual himself. The wind of the electorate bloweth where it listeth. The electors choose whom they wish; and if they choose a knave or a fool, the responsibility is not so much on that knave or that fool, by no means on the House which accepts him, but it seems to me it falls mainly or entirely on the people who sent him to that House.

“But the responsibility in our case falls on the very principle of our existence, and places that principle of existence at the mercy of any unhappy accident. If a peer should happen to be a knave or a fool, people outside do not greatly blame him, but at once begin to talk of the constitution of the hereditary Chamber in which he sits, and they say that ‘This man, whom we consider unworthy, is able at this moment to go down and give a vote equal to that of any noble lord on the Ministerial bench.’ The strength of your anchorage in this House is only as great as that of the weakest link in the chain, and some day a series of unfortunate accidents may bring about a condition of things with regard to this House which not ten, or twenty, or one hundred just persons may avail to counteract. There are cases of hereditary vice

and virtue, but you can predicate nothing. Lord Chatham left an illustrious son, but it was the wrong son he left to this House. All the three Earls of Harrowby have sat in the Cabinets of this country, and I think the noble marquis opposite is the third of his family who has been Prime Minister. But these prodigies make no sort of rule; and if they do, the House cannot rest upon prodigies alone.

“As there is no rule, you have to imagine one, and then you assume too much. When you are creating an hereditary peer, you are attempting far more than is possible. You are creating a man not merely for his fitness as a legislator, but you are laying down as a certainty a generation of which he may be the ancestor, and, outstepping all human faculty and human possibility, you usurp the position of Providence and create legislators of the unborn. But there is another argument with regard to the application of the hereditary principle which, if it had any validity at all, is one which would have a great deal of weight. They say the Crown is hereditary, and therefore when you attack the hereditary principle you attack the Crown. As to that I should venture to say that I do not attack the hereditary principle, and I do not think any man would be wise to attack it. But that which gives dignity and stability to the Throne may not give dignity and stability to

the Legislature. I would remark, with regard to the Crown, that in that case it is not a case of pure and indiscriminating heredity. The Crown, as is well known, did not descend to the present family by mere hereditary descent; it rested on a more popular basis.

“In the next place, the principle of heredity in the Crown is guarded and fenced by every sort of precaution. The Crown has no legislative responsibility, the Crown has no executive responsibility, and in respect of the former, at any rate, it differs largely from this House. There is a further difference, which perhaps involves the argument which has most weight with those who seek for the reform of this House. Both the Crown and the House of Lords have what, for the purposes of this argument, I may properly call a veto. The Crown since the accession of the House of Hanover has never exercised its veto. This House is always doing so. The last time the Crown exercised its veto was in 1707, in the reign of Queen Anne. This House has exercised its veto against Roman Catholics, against Dissenters, against Jews. If it had been able to maintain this veto the premier peer of England would not now have been sitting in this House. It has gone on interposing its veto in a manner which cannot but be called invidious, and which cannot but raise hostility against it among great bodies of the people.

“ You will say that the veto of the Crown is an individual veto, and that the veto of this House is the veto of a legislative body. As regards that I may make this demur. The veto of the Crown is not an individual veto, inasmuch as it is protected by the responsibility of the advisers of the Crown. But I will not fence myself behind that. I will admit it is an individual veto ; but I would further say that the veto of this House is also an individual veto—the veto of this House is at present the veto of the noble marquis opposite. This House, which strains at a Liberal gnat, will swallow a Conservative camel. It accepted the Catholic Emancipation Bill at the hands of the Duke of Wellington, which it had always refused to accept at any Liberal hand. It accepted the repeal of the Corn Laws at the hands of Sir Robert Peel, when it refused to move in that direction at all at the bidding of the Liberal party. But I will take a much simpler illustration of the individual nature of that veto. There have been three great Reform Bills during the present century, in 1832, 1867, and 1884. Two of these Reform Bills were offered to this House by Liberal Governments ; one, which was infinitely the most democratic of the three, was offered to this House by a Conservative Government. It was infinitely the most democratic of the three, because it laid down for the first time the principle of household suffrage for the towns, and it thus contained within

it the germ of the Reform Bill of 1884. How did this House treat those Reform Bills? It threw out the Reform Bill of 1832 and the Reform Bill of 1884, which were passed through the House of Commons by Liberal Governments; but the Reform Bill of 1867, which was the most democratic of the three, it allowed to pass without a division. Therefore I may repeat that this House is willing, while straining at a Liberal gnat, to swallow a Conservative camel.

“This tremendous legislative power of life and death, if it is intrusted to an individual, should, at any rate, be intrusted to an individual of extraordinary discretion. The Duke of Wellington led this House for a number of years. He led it with extraordinary prudence and caution, and we read in the pages of Greville that many of his followers were most dissatisfied with his extreme reticence and caution. I hope that the noble marquis opposite will excuse me if I say that he is a little impetuous in the exercise of the weapon committed to his charge. He never likes to keep his sword in its sheath. He is always trying its temper,—if he is not hacking about and dealing destruction and death with it, he is always brandishing it and threatening with it. He is like a king of Hungary on his coronation, who rides to an eminence and brandishes his sword to the four corners of the globe.

“I may refer in proof of this to the speech delivered by the noble marquis at Oxford on November 23 last, which has often been quoted. The noble marquis said: ‘I have no doubt that one effect of the amendment of the rules of procedure in the House of Commons will be to send from time to time, when there are bad Houses of Commons,’—every one knows what the noble marquis means by a ‘bad House of Commons,’—‘a considerable number of objectionable measures to the House of Lords,’—every one also knows what he means by ‘objectionable measures.’—‘I hope the House of Lords will not shrink from action upon its conscientious convictions.’ Far am I from wishing the House of Lords not to act on its conscientious convictions; but if the House of Lords had acted on its conscientious convictions in 1832, we should have had revolution instead of reform.

“The conversion of this House to some extent into a party instrument has to a great degree weakened its influence and power. Up to 1832 the House of Lords was hardly a party assembly. It usually supported the Government of the day. It was Whig with Walpole, Tory with Pitt, and Tory again with Lord Liverpool; and as a result of this, and partly due to the great and indirect influence which peers possessed in the other House, the House of Lords exercised great power and influence. They formed by far the majority of

each Cabinet. Mr. Pitt when he formed his first Cabinet was the only commoner in the Cabinet. In his second Cabinet there was only one other commoner. Such was the power of the House of Lords in those days that by its own independent action, though in concert with the Sovereign, it overthrew the Coalition Government, which promised to be the strongest Government of the century. That was before the Reform Bill; but since then its power and influence have continually decreased. On May 7, 1832, Lord Lyndhurst brought forward a motion in this House which caused the resignation of the Government of the day. That was the last occasion on which a motion passed in this House has had any such effect. It is easy to trace the gradual decline of the power which this House possessed. On June 3, 1833, the Duke of Wellington brought forward a vote of censure against the Government in regard to Portugal, and there was a great talk of the Government resigning, though they had a vast majority in the House of Commons, but they did not. Again, in 1839, Lord Roden carried by a small majority in this House a motion for a Committee of Inquiry into the administration of Ireland, but this was counteracted by a vote of confidence in the Government passed in the House of Commons. So again, in 1850, when a motion in regard to the Don Pacifico case was carried against the Government in this House,

there was great talk of resignation, but it ended in a vote of confidence being brought forward in the House of Commons by Mr. Roebuck, and carried. Since that time all question of this House turning out the Government has departed. The control of this House over the measures of the Government still subsists, but the control of this House over the Government of the day has ceased to exist.

“You can easily test that. For twelve of the twenty years during which I have sat in this House, this House would gladly have turned out the Ministry of the day, but it took no steps to do so, knowing that it could not do so if it tried. The fact must be admitted, then, though the reasons may not be those that I have stated, that virtue has gone out from this House. On the other hand, we cannot help seeing that the other House has greatly increased in power. It has lost no opportunity of strengthening itself, while we have sat with folded hands and watched the result.

“You may think that the arguments that I have brought forward, if they lead to anything, lead to a single Chamber. But I do not think so. It is not necessary for me to attempt to convince this House of the necessity of a Second Chamber. There are three arguments which I have always thought conclusive as showing the necessity of a Second Chamber. When the ablest men that



America ever knew, a century ago, framed their Constitution, though fettered by no rules and no traditions, and having a clean slate before them, they thought it necessary to construct the strongest Second Chamber the world has ever known. Then let us call to mind the opinion of one who was certainly not an aristocrat by party or profession. Cromwell abolished the House of Lords."

The Marquis of Salisbury,—“And the House of Commons.”

The Earl of Rosebery,—“But he found it necessary to restore the House of Commons, and as a consequence he also found it necessary to restore the House of Lords. The last words he addressed to Parliament were these: ‘I did tell you that I would not undertake such a Government as this unless there might be some other persons that might interpose between me and the House of Commons who had the power to prevent tumultuary and popular spirits.’ Cromwell was not an aristocrat, and his Executive was not distinguished by weakness; and the fact that he found it necessary to restore a Second Chamber speaks volumes as to the necessity of a Second Chamber. The third of these reasons in favour of a Second Chamber is the opinion of a great philosopher, whom some of us remember among us,—John Stuart Mill,—who sums up in one sentence the argument for a Second Chamber. He says: ‘The same reasons that induced the

Romans to have two Consuls make it desirable that there should be two Chambers, so that neither of them may be exposed to the corrupting influence of undisputed power even for a single year.'

"The recent changes in the procedure of the House of Commons also, I think, immeasurably strengthen the arguments for a Second Chamber. I come now to the amendment of my noble friend on the cross benches (Lord Wemyss), which contains two propositions, with one of which I cordially agree. I agree entirely with the noble earl that the proper way in which to introduce a measure for the reform of this House is by a measure introduced by Her Majesty's responsible advisers, but I entirely disagree with the noble earl when he says that it is not consistent with the dignity of this House to place the question of its constitution in the power of a Committee of your lordships. There are only two Committees to which this House can with dignity intrust the question of its own constitution, the one being the Committee of this House which I propose, and the other being that Committee of the Privy Council which is commonly known as the Cabinet. I should prefer greatly the latter of these two Committees, but no choice being given to me, I am obliged to propose the former. If you cannot have the Cabinet as a Committee, to whom can you so suitably intrust the subject of

the constitution of this House as to a Committee selected from your lordships? Who can know the interior economy of this House as well as the peers themselves? Who can so well discuss the desirability of changes? I am rather an advanced reformer, but I do not share the distrust of your lordships expressed by the noble earl on the cross benches.

“I turn from this proposal, and I come to the proposal of the noble lord behind me (Lord Stratheden). The noble lord, who is generally independent of parties in this House, has of late been working, in view of this motion, with singular zeal at the question of the reform of this House, but, if I may say so, with a somewhat limited scope. I hope my noble friend will not think me disrespectful if I say that his recent effort has reminded me of a distressed mariner bailing out a water-logged ship with a thimble or a spoon. But if my noble friend on the cross benches rejects altogether the idea of a Committee as an inadequate and revolutionary proposal, what does he say to my noble friend behind who recommends a Royal Commission? I do not know why my noble friend behind me dislikes a Committee and prefers a Royal Commission—whether it is that he fears that a Committee would not consist of the mystical number of three, or that it might perhaps attain to the obnoxious number of five. But the noble

earl, who looks with distrust on a Committee of your lordships, must view with actual horror the idea of a Royal Commission, not composed entirely or even mainly of peers, but composed of all sorts and conditions of men, unaccustomed to the refined and rarefied atmosphere of this House, unversed in our exquisite traditions, who with rude and incautious hands might probe for tender and susceptible places in the body politic of this House.

“I must leave the two noble lords to settle their differences between themselves. I do not share in the distrust and suspicion of your lordships’ House in which they unite, and that is why I propose a Committee on this occasion. I have proposed a Committee as a sort of compromise between what I wish and what I do not wish. What I wish is that the Government should take up the matter, but what I deprecate, failing that, is that an individual should undertake the task, because I firmly believe that there is no individual in this House, out of an official position, of sufficient weight and authority to carry the matter to any satisfactory conclusion.

“We must also remember another circumstance. We are constantly reminded by members of the House of Commons, when they express wishes for the reform of this House, that any project of reform which does not partake of the character of a mere resolution must be cast in the form of a Bill passed through both Chambers. Now I

venture to think that no Bill brought in by an individual would go down to the other House with the weight and authority required to insure its success, but that a Bill based on the report of a Committee of your lordships—by which, by the way, you would not be bound—that a measure founded upon such a report could not fail to have value both in the eyes of this House and in the eyes of the House of Commons, and must, in any case, have valuable results.

“ Now let me say a word about the plans that are now before the House. There is the plan of my noble friend opposite (Lord Dunraven), which we fancied at one moment had been communicated to a news agency, a rumour which he has disclaimed almost with passion. Then there is the project laid before the other House by a highly respected member, Mr. Rathbone. There is much to be said for his project, but it is open to some almost fatal criticism. He recommends that one hundred and fourteen chairmen of county boards should be admitted to sit in this House. Now I do not object to the number, but I say that the chairmen of county boards would be much better employed in the chairs of their boards than here. The county boards—which, by the way, are not yet in existence, but of which, I believe, Her Majesty's Government are in parturition in another place—the county boards would choose their chairmen on

one of two principles. They would either choose them for their local knowledge and administrative capacity—in which case they would wish to have them in their chairs; or they would choose them as delegates or representatives in this House—in which case they had much better not be chairmen.

“Passing from that, I would call attention to a plan, or rather speech, attributed to a noble friend of mine, Lord Pembroke. The plan attributed to him is that a sufficient number of life peers should be created and added to this House. Now I venture to think that such a measure of reform as that would rather increase the evil than diminish it. If the number of the new life peers were small, they would not suffice to leaven this House; if, on the other hand, they were extremely numerous, they would increase what is already a very great evil—namely, the unwieldy bulk of the House. Then I should not like to put the temptation of a very large increase of peers within reach of the noble marquis opposite. He already reads his history in the smiles of a considerable number of supporters; and if he had the power to recommend to the Crown the immediate creation of a large number of life peerages, I am afraid that the result might be that we should have to adjourn for our deliberations to Westminster Hall or Trafalgar Square.

“If these life peers are to be persons eminent in literature, science, and art, I think that the addition would not be adequate. The mere zoological collection of abstract celebrities would not be sufficient for the reformers of this House. We admire greatly the wonders of science, art, and literature, but I venture to think that the men of genius who produce them would not suffice for the purpose of strengthening this House in the manner in which it ought to be strengthened. Nor would the mere addition of life peers, whatever the number, have the effect of accomplishing what is one of the principal objects of all reforms—namely, the exclusion of unworthy members from your House. Therefore I think you may summarise the results of this proposal thus: it might have been sufficient in 1856 or 1869, but it will not be sufficient in 1888. It will not content those who desire a large reform of your lordships’ House, nor will it please those other two sections—those who desire no reform at all, and those who desire the abolition of the House—two sections which, although starting from different points of view, seem to me to arrive at substantially the same goal. The mere addition of life peers will not be adequate for your purpose. I go even further, and say that it will do you injury rather than good.

“We must try to lay broader and deeper foundations; and I now come to the main point

for our consideration—namely, what are the real principles on which the reform of this House should proceed? I may make one remark at once with regard to those principles, and say that we possess at this moment an ideal Second Chamber. We make no use of it, but we possess it. It is one of the splendid halls of the palace Constitution. I refer to the Privy Council, which has many of the attributes of the ancient Roman Senate, and which comprises in its lists every eminent politician in the country. Were you to take the Privy Council for your Second Chamber, you would have in it an enormous delegation from this House, for out of two hundred and eleven members no less than one hundred and nine are peers. There is something curious about these figures. The attendance at the House of Lords during an average session has been supplied to me. During the Session of 1885 the average attendance at this House was exactly one hundred and ten. So if you took the Privy Council for a Second Chamber you would have the members of the two Houses within it, but you would have almost exactly the same average attendance that you have of peers now. But I discard all idea of such a Second Chamber for two reasons. First, there is nothing to prevent the Privy Council being flooded to any extent; there is just the same objection to the Privy Council that there is to an unlimited



addition of life peers. A Privy Councillor would be a life peer, neither more nor less; and the Privy Council would be in no degree guarded against incursions. There is the further objection that it would involve the abolition of this House. I discard any idea of utilising the Privy Council in that way, because of these two reasons; and the second of the two conducts me to the first principle which should guide any great reform of this House. This is that it is a cardinal principle of English politics that you should respect old names and old traditions. The whole course of the legislation of this country consists in pouring the newest wine into the oldest bottles. Although that has been said to be impossible, it has been attended in this country with excellent results. An illustration will show how wise and necessary it is to respect ancient names. In 1873 Lord Chancellor Selborne abolished the appellate jurisdiction of this House, and transferred it to another tribunal. In 1874 and 1875 there were such marked proofs of discontent both in Scotland and Ireland, the countries mainly affected, that it was found necessary in 1876 to restore to this House, at least in name, its appellate jurisdiction. Was it done by simple restoration? Nothing of the kind. It was done by adding to the House three judges—three life peers—possibly the three judges whose addition would have been involved by the former appellate jurisdiction. The three

judges were to sit in this House, and were to assist the ex-Lord Chancellors in acting as an appellate tribunal. It was really little more than saying that a new Court should sit inside these walls; and in order to attain this result we accepted a principle we had hitherto rejected—the principle of life peers; and, in order to obtain a substantial reconstruction of the appellate jurisdiction, the country was entirely satisfied with what was done. That guides me to the conclusion that any reform of the House of Lords should respect the name of the House of Lords, and that any reconstructed House of Lords should comprise, as at present, peers and lords of Parliament.

“The next principles I come to are those of delegation and of election. I believe that these principles are necessary, first, in order to keep the House of a manageable size, and to give a sense of personal responsibility to its members; next, they are necessary to exclude peers who prove themselves to be unfit or unworthy to be legislators; next, they are necessary to obtain a popular basis; and, fourthly, they are necessary to prevent stagnation by keeping free and unimpeded a constant succession of new members, or of members having received new mandates. How are we to apply these principles? First, it is perfectly clear that if they were thoroughly applied, in future none but peers of the blood royal, who are occupying

a different position, would sit in this House by the mere title of hereditary descent. Next, I venture to think that the less than seventy Irish peers, and the less than twenty Scottish peers, who have no seats in this House, although in other respects they have the privilege of the peerage, should be added to the great body of the peers of this House, which they would not largely swell; and that body so constituted should delegate a certain number of members to sit as representative peers in this House. Of course, in such a system we should need the minority vote, or else I and my noble friends behind me would entirely disappear—a result I should greatly deplore.

“ But this would not give the House the external strength, the outward buttress, which, if I am right in my apprehensions, this House so greatly needs. To do that you must have a mandate from the nation, a representative element elected by the nation itself. Your lordships may say now you represent the nation to a large extent; but I should wish a reformed House to have some clearer certificate of the fact. I think you would require to have in your reconstructed House a large infusion of elected peers—elected either by the future county boards or by the larger municipalities, or even by the House of Commons, or by all three. I go into no details; but in that way you would have the elective principle introduced as gradually and as safely as you may choose, in what degree

you desire, in what measure you may select ; you would have a large basis for compromise and arrangement ; you could control the number as you pleased ; you could obtain by election an infusion as large or as small as you please of the popular external element. In the last place, you would exclude without invidiousness and without difficulty unfit and unworthy peers. It is not now a question of how much or how little, how many or how few. If it were the noble marquis opposite who was addressing you, it might be a question of how few or how many ; but at this moment it is a question merely of framework ; and I venture to think that on that framework you can raise as large or as small a superstructure as you please. Then there is the obvious principle of life peerages, which I think in themselves alone are insufficient and objectionable, which would naturally form a valuable element in a reformed House.

“ The fifth principle I should lay down is, that the proportions of these various elements should be fixed, or their numbers should be fixed, because, otherwise, you would not achieve an important part of the object of your reform. One further element I should like to see included. I know the dislike of all practical politicians for what are termed fancy franchises ; but I feel there would be great and important advantages in allowing the Agents-General of the great self-governing Colonies to sit, for a certain time, in your lord-

ships' House. That would involve the necessity of the Government of the day being able to nominate, for the term of their existence, representatives of Colonies, if representatives were not otherwise elected.

“ These are the sound principles on which reconstruction should be based. But there are two general principles of a more negative character which seem to me of equally vital importance. One is connected with an argument which the noble marquis opposite brought forward with great force in a speech at Oxford. It was the argument that any increase of the power of the House of Lords must be at the expense of the power of the House of Commons, and that the House of Commons naturally would not be friendly to such an arrangement. That line of argument seems to me to imply two fallacies. It seems to me to lay down a principle, which I cannot admit, that there is only a limited amount of legislative and political strength in the country; and next, to make a certain confusion between power and efficiency.

“ It is perfectly true to this extent, that if this House acquired great powers, and at the same time acquired limited members and a tenure of fixed duration, it would become a much more difficult House to deal with than at present; it would, indeed, disturb the balance of the Constitution, and from being an almost unalterable Chamber, would become a hard calculus in the body politic. And

we must further remember this—that in the words ‘unalterable’ and ‘fixed’ there lies a great constitutional disarrangement, because, as I have already ventured to point out, the power by the Crown of creating as many peers as the Crown may think fit is the sole method of bringing the two Houses to an accommodation on a question on which they are at issue. Therefore, if you had a new House, and limited the numbers of that House, you would have to find some other constitutional arrangement to bring the two Houses into harmony. I believe you could do this by simply retracing our steps, and going back on the ancient lines of the Constitution.

“The real mother of Parliaments is the *Magnum Concilium*, the Great Council, which in the reigns of the Edwards divided itself into two and nearly into three, and became a House of Lords and a House of Commons; and I think that under certain guarantees it might be provided in any scheme of reform that the two Houses should meet together and form one body, and by certain fixed majorities carry or reject a measure which has been in dispute between them. This, of course, would be impossible with an unrestricted hereditary House; but it would be possible with a restricted Senate. My lords, there is another way of getting over the difficulty, which, I think, has been put forward by Mr. Bright; but I am not sure. It is that after a measure has been

passed once or twice by the House of Commons, and rejected once or twice by your lordships, the House of Commons shall be enabled in the language of diplomacy to *passer outre*, and proceed with the measure 'as if it had met with no opposition from your lordships, and so override the ruling of this House. My objection to that is this. In the first place it would involve great waste of time, because if you passed your Bills by the ordinary constitutional methods, the House of Commons would be constantly employed in discussing at great length measures which they knew by the very principle of the proposal, the House of Lords would be obliged to reject; whereas if you abbreviate your proceedings, and allow the House of Commons to discharge its measures at you, after short intervals, like the chambers of a revolver, you would do away with any good in the position of this House as a Second Chamber at all, and reduce it to a second-rate court of revision or a debating society. My lords, I pass from that topic, which is an important one, because it contains an obvious constitutional objection to all possible reform. I pass to one large principle which is also vital. If the House of Lords proceeds to a reform, which includes the principle of delegation, what is to be done with the peers who have been excluded? Would those excluded peers be like the Scottish peers who are not elected, and who

are by that fact disabled from all mixture in public life? or would they be like the Irish peers, who, although debarred from the constituencies of their native country, are at liberty to roam through the boroughs and counties of this island unbarred and unrestricted? Well, my lords, I think that any person should be free to accept or refuse a writ of summons to this House, and that having either so refused or not having received a summons to this House, such a peer should be as free to be elected to the other House of the Legislature as any other subject of the Queen. My lords, there is one obvious exception to this, and that is that any person voluntarily accepting an hereditary patent of peerage would by such a process be spontaneously excluding himself from that process by which the others, on the hypothesis I have mentioned, would be endeavouring to free themselves.

“We have a very curious case which bears on this question of the necessity of peers sitting in this House. There is a mysterious personage, a connection of the noble earl who defeated the Government in the House the other night. And I may here notice one of our minor disadvantages, which is that if we want to designate each other we are placed at the hopeless disadvantage of having to go back to biographical and geographical details of a singularly involved and prolix character. I say that this nobleman, a kinsman of the noble



earl, endeavoured at the time of the Restoration to disembarass himself of his peerage. He was found sitting for the borough of Malmesbury, and the eye of the Executive was at once fixed upon him, and he was summoned to this House. He fought a gallant fight, because even under the republican rule of Cromwell he was disabled from sitting in the House of Commons; but after that he managed to include himself, and after a very severe legal contest he was again excluded; and I believe there was a resolution in his case, the resolution of 1678, which reaffirmed that of 1640. The resolution in the latter case was that no peer of this realm can drown or extinguish his honour—but that it descend to his descendants—neither by surrender, grant, fine, nor any other conveyance; and what I venture to deduce from that gallant struggle closed by that resolution is this—that what the House of Lords was competent on a former occasion to deny by such a resolution, the House of Lords by a resolution in this case is equally competent to affirm in these days.

“My lords, I thank you most warmly for the attention with which you have listened to me. I have detained you at great length, and I fear I have touched on subjects which must have been unpalatable. My lords, I have only one last word to speak to you, but it is a golden one—it is the word ‘opportunity.’ This question is no party question; at any rate I have most

sincerely endeavoured, as far as was possible, to keep it outside party lines. I have canvassed no member of your lordships' House; I have not asked a single peer to give me his vote or his support; but indeed, it is not possible for me or any other member of your lordships' House to make it a party question at this juncture, even if we so wished. It is not I or those who think with me—it is not we alone, but it is the Conservative party, both in the House of Commons and the country, that are asking your lordships to be up and doing. It is only your enemies that would have you be still. But the opportunity, my lords of the Government, is with you; you have a chance which may not occur again in this generation; you have in the one House a majority of not less than a hundred; you have almost the unanimous support of the other House; you have, besides, the supreme advantage of a political calm: for although reform is in the air, there is no agitation in its behalf to which you might deem it undignified or pusillanimous to yield.

“Such a chance, my lords, rarely occurs, and when it has passed by is not apt to occur again. Reject my motion if you will, but at any rate act yourselves.

Miss not the occasion; by the forelock take  
That subtle power of never-halting Time,  
Lest the mere moment's putting off should make  
Mischance almost as grave as crime.

“ My lords, there is one argument which will be brought against me to-night, which is brought forward publicly and privately, and which, I confess, has great weight. They say it is not possible to introduce some reforms in an ancient country, and they follow that up by the analogy that if you roughly or rudely touch an ancient building, even for purposes of repair, it is apt to fall about your ears. My lords, I venture to say in reply to that argument that no remodelling would come suddenly upon the country, and that no reform in this House, however radical it might be, would anticipate the just expectations of the people. And as for the argument and the analogy of the old building, I would venture to say this, that if the old building be sound it will safely stand repair; if the building be so unsound that it will not stand handling, in God’s name let it be so certified and declared. In truth, my lords, the frequent reconstructions of the House of Commons leave you no choice as to undertaking some measure of reform. In the last sixty years the House of Commons has dug new foundations for itself, and each time it has dug them broader and deeper, each time it has received an enormous and immeasurable accession of strength, and in the meantime we have remained practically as we were at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries. My lords, if such a position as this is not wise, politic, or secure, it

is not even safe to continue; it is better frankly to admit to ourselves and the world that, both in principle and in practice, we need great reform and great reconstruction. Frankness, my lords, indeed, on such an occasion is neither a merit nor a demerit in a person who thinks as I do; it is an absolute matter of duty, and reticence is little better than a crime. I therefore implore you, my lords, and chiefly your lordships who are privileged to be in the Government, not to neglect this opportunity, so marvellous if we look at the past, so bountiful if we regard the immediate future—this opportunity, by wise and by kindly legislation, to repair, renovate, and reconstruct the authority and usefulness of this immemorial Chamber. I beg, my lords, to move the motion which stands in my name.”

Lord Rosebery's motion was rejected by ninety-seven votes to fifty.

## CHAPTER XXI

THE SHADOW OF DEATH—LADY ROSEBERY'S UNEXPECTED DECEASE—  
THE FUNERAL—PUBLIC TRIBUTES

THE year 1890 was to bring Lord Rosebery an unexpected and terrible loss. The blow came after his lordship had for nearly two years been engaged in that municipal work in London to which he later on returned, and which will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter. The Countess of Rosebery was, early in October, seized with typhoid fever, and she died in November. *The Jewish Chronicle* said: "Lady Rosebery, who had remained a steadfast Jewess, notwithstanding her marriage, died in the faith of her fathers. During her illness she frequently sought Jewish ministrations, and at her special desire her sister-in-law, Lady Leconfield, read to her passages from the Jewish Prayer Book. Indeed, the most touching incidents throughout her protracted illness were connected with the anxiety she exhibited to recite her prayers as she had punctiliously done previously."

Lady Rosebery had been the good angel to many persons and institutions. She was devoted

to good works. She was especially attached to the institution for the Oral Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb, of which her mother was the foundress, and she also followed in the footsteps of her parents in associating herself intimately with the movement for promoting a better system of nursing. On the formation of the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for Nurses, Her Majesty signified her appreciation of the Countess's services by appointing her President for Scotland. Another movement that benefited much from her sympathy and aid was the Scottish Home Industries Association, of which she also acted as President. She took much interest in the condition of work-girls, and it may be noted that her last public engagement—which she was unable to fill on account of her illness—was in connection with a movement for promoting a Provident Society for Young Women in Glasgow. When in London she was in the habit of paying a visit almost every week to a club for working girls in Whitechapel, which she had been instrumental in founding. There she used to play the piano to the members, or read to them, and she succeeded in brightening the lives of many.

Lady Rosebery continued all the many pensions and charities established by her mother, besides adding liberal contributions of her own. She gave £50 a year to the Jewish Board of Guardians, and subscribed to other Jewish institutions, but

the bulk of her benefactions was given privately, and with remarkable discrimination. Almost the very last, if not actually the last, public appearance of Lady Rosebery in London in connection with philanthropic work was at Steinway Hall on July 15, 1890, when she presided at the distribution of prizes to the pupils attending the School of the Association for the Oral Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb, founded by her late mother. A touching incident of the proceedings was the reading of a brief address to the Countess by one of the "deaf-mutes," thanking her for her personal interest in the institution, and recalling the great work of the Baroness Juliana de Rothschild, its creator. Lord Granville, the President, in subsequently moving a formal vote of thanks, remarked that no words of his could improve on the sympathetic thanks offered to her by one who had been a mute. In 1876 Lady Rosebery had performed the ceremony of handing over the "Michael Henry" lifeboat at a public meeting. She took a profound interest in the cause of her oppressed brethren in Russia, and evinced an eager anxiety to exert her influence on their behalf. Lady Rosebery had a special affection for her great-uncle, Sir Moses Montefiore, and delighted him with her visits during the centenary celebrations. Visitors to East Cliff Lodge will remember the magnificent floral tributes from Mentmore, which adorned the



*Photos. by F. T. Newman, Berkhamstead.]*

**THE LATE LADY ROSEBERY'S MODEL VILLAGE AT MENTMORE.**





drawing - room. She was always exceedingly pleased to welcome her Jewish friends to Lansdowne House. An instance of her thoughtfulness may be mentioned. When, early in the year (1890), she received the members of the London County Council at her splendid Buckinghamshire residence, she specially asked some of the Jewish members, with whose scruples she was acquainted, to come down the day before and pass the night at Mentmore, to obviate their travelling on Saturday.

As soon as the Countess passed away Lord Rosebery, in accordance with his wife's express wishes, sent for the Rev. I. Fürst, minister of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, with a request that all the last rites should be carried out according to the prescriptions of the Jewish religion. The *tahara* of the body was performed on the Thursday, in strict accord with the prescribed ritual. The brass plate on the coffin bore the inscription :—

HANNAH ROTHSCHILD

COUNTESS OF ROSEBERY

BORN

27th July, 1837

DIED

19th November, 1890.

The removal of the coffin from Edinburgh was marked by a general demonstration of

sympathy with Lord Rosebery. So was the arrival in London. The coffin was taken to 38, Berkeley Square, where wreaths were arriving every minute. Whilst those from relatives of Lord and Lady Rosebery were placed on and around the coffin, the rest were arranged on the floor, and formed a splendid parterre of flowers. Especially touching were the inscriptions which accompanied the floral tributes from the four children. Lord Dalmeny wrote: "To Mamma, from Harry. Picked out of his own garden." A similar expression was used by his younger brother, the Hon. Neil James Archibald. The Hon. Sibyl Myra, the eldest child, wrote: "To Darling Mamma, the best of mothers."

Amongst the later arrivals at Berkeley Square on the day of the funeral were Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, who were accompanied by Lady Hayter. Mrs. Gladstone placed on the coffin a wreath which she had brought with her as a final tribute to one whom both she and her husband held in the highest affection. The Queen was represented at the funeral by General Sir Henry Ponsonby, who, however, travelled direct to Willesden from Windsor. Sir Henry was the bearer of a wreath of laurel, interspersed with Cape everlasting flowers, with the following inscription written by Her Majesty on the card: "A mark of sincere regard from Victoria R.I." General Sir Arthur Ellis attended

on behalf of the Prince and Princess of Wales, and was the bearer of a wreath from their Royal Highnesses as "a token of sincere friendship and regard from the Prince and Princess of Wales." The Duke of Cambridge was represented by Major-General Bateson and Mr. Christopher Sykes, M.P., and the Duke and Duchess of Connaught by Colonel Egerton.

Shortly after the appointed hour the funeral procession left the mansion, the coffin, laden with flowers, being placed in a hearse drawn by four horses. The simplicity of the hearse, devoid as it was of all funeral trappings, was commented on by several bystanders along the line of route. "How plain!" was the remark frequently heard. It was as both the late Countess and the Earl desired. Lord Rosebery and his two little sons, as chief mourners, followed immediately after the hearse in his private carriage; and next came as mourners, also in their own carriages, Lord Rothschild, Mr. Leopold de Rothschild, Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild, M.P., and Baron Edmond de Rothschild, of Paris. Then followed three Royal carriages, and behind them were thirty mourning coaches and nearly fifty private carriages, the first containing the officiating ministers, the Rev. D. Fay and the Rev. E. Spero.

Many of the foreign ambassadors attended the ceremony, also many members of both Houses of

Parliament and of the London County Council. At the cemetery there were detachments of children from many charitable and educational institutions of which Lady Rosebery was a patroness.

Some time elapsed after the arrival of the mourners before the burial service was begun, so large was the body of friends for whom room had to be found in the Mortuary Hall. For some minutes Lord Rosebery, holding by the hand his young sons, stood before the coffin which held all that was left of the loving wife and mother; and the haggard look on his lordship's face, and the unmistakable evidence of a great mental struggle to suppress his emotion, increased the sympathy which was already abundantly felt for him. On the left of Lord Rosebery stood Lord Rothschild, who now and again pointed out to one of the little boys the place in the English translation of the burial service. Immediately behind the group of chief mourners was Mr. Gladstone, who closely followed the service throughout. No order, naturally, could be followed in placing the company; and almost near the door, yet naturally a conspicuous figure, stood Sir William Harcourt, who, like his illustrious political chief, attentively listened to the recital of the prayers. Close to him also was the "Red Earl," Lord Spencer.

With but one exception there was no deviation from the ordinary burial service, the exception

being the offering up of the prayer for the repose of the soul (in English), usually said only at the services during the week of mourning.

The grave, which is of brick, is adjacent to the last resting-places of the Baron and Baroness Meyer de Rothschild, Lady Rosebery's parents, and of Mrs. Isaac Cohen, her grandmother. As the coffin was lowered the Rev. E. Spero said the usual formula, repeating it afterwards in English: "May she come to her appointed place in peace." Lord Rosebery and his sons threw earth on the coffin (which was hidden from view by the wreaths which covered it), and Mr. Gladstone, as also the members of the Rothschild family, followed their example. With the usual parting words of comfort addressed to mourners, the service concluded, the Rev. E. Spero, who spoke these words, shaking hands with Lord Rosebery and his sons. By special request of Her Majesty a copy of the burial service was sent to her at Windsor. Mr. Gladstone also took away with him a copy of the service as a memento.

Sympathetic allusions to the death were made in many pulpits. At the Central Synagogue the Rev. D. Fay said: "Your thoughts revert, as mine do, to the sad loss the sick and poor of this country have sustained in the death—at too early an age—of our sister in faith, the late Lady Rosebery. Seldom has regret so widespread been expressed as that which the demise of the

deceased Countess has evoked. Respect so general, affection so universal, could only have been won by genuine goodness of heart and far-reaching sympathies. Highly placed amongst the first in the land, endowed with means almost unlimited, she utilised her position and her wealth in the best interests of the people at large. She not only relieved distress, but, better still, the cause she knew not she searched out. Thus, indeed, every ear that heard her blessed her; and thus it is that to-day all sorts and conditions of men vie with each other in expressions appreciative of winning kindness and true charity. The general community has lost in her a warm-hearted woman, a liberal and discriminating patroness of every useful work, a pure-minded dispenser of the solid benefits which she was able to confer upon a numerous and ever-extending class of clients, upon the many institutions whose career of usefulness was in no small degree owing to her munificence and personal service. Into her, alas! too short life has pressed a rich harvest of seeds which will make her memory live on in the hearts of a large circle of relatives, friends, and sincere admirers. She will be really mourned. As for us, I am sure I am speaking the sentiments of my whole congregation when I say that we sympathise deeply with those more especially near and dear to her, to whom her loss is an irreparable calamity."

At Dalmeny Parish Church the Rev. P. Dunn said: "The late Countess of Rosebery was one who discharged the duties of her high station with admirable grace and conspicuous fidelity, so far as human judgment could discern, under the guidance of two great principles of love to God and love to her neighbour. Having set before her a lofty ideal of her responsibilities, she strove with touching earnestness to realise it. Her clear and correct perceptions and her wide and generous sympathies led her to originate and actively to engage in numerous benevolent agencies, while the perfect candour and sincerity of her nature ensured the confidence of those on whom her influence was brought to bear, and largely contributed to the success of her efforts. The schemes with which Lady Rosebery was most intimately associated were not showy, but such as were eminently practical and directed mainly to bettering the condition and lightening the burden of the struggling, the lonely and the weak. The early close of a life so philanthropical and serviceable may well be mourned. A time of social distress and social destruction like the present can but ill bear the loss of one possessed in so unwonted a measure of the ability and the desire to relieve the miseries of life, and to heal the jealousy and estrangement of classes. But I feel it is not for me in your presence to use many words in regard to the lamented Countess;



for these many years you have been witnesses of her worth. You have known her desire to do good. You can speak, for example, of her kindly and unaffected interest in the children attending our schools, and of her efforts here, as elsewhere, by classes and otherwise, to advance the welfare of girls. There are many in this neighbourhood who have had experience of her gentle charity, of her genial and gracious bearing towards the homeless, and who, with countless others, will bear a warm and grateful tribute to the kind heart that is now at rest."

At the Free St. Paul's Church, Edinburgh, the Rev. W. M. Falconer said: "The veil has been reverently lifted on her private life, to reveal the true lady in her home and in the circle of her intimates—the devoted wife, and tender mother, and faithful friend."

At a meeting of the Town Council of Glasgow, Councillor Michael Simons, referring to the death of the Countess, said: "It is only a few weeks ago that I had the felicity of spending a few hours in that bright, happy, and exalted home, which has been darkened by the shadow of death in a manner which will not be very readily forgotten, and saw there a spectacle of life which, for perfect simplicity, was one, I am sure, which not only we who had occasion to be there, but all those who knew the accord that existed there, would fully appreciate. But I cannot trust myself

to speak in connection with that matter, or even with the great personal qualities of the deceased lady. I am sure that they are fully appreciated, and I know that the benefit of her good example will not die with her; that her memory will be treasured; that, in fact, 'to live in hearts we leave behind is not to die.'"

In its issue of November 28, 1890, *The Jewish Chronicle* published the following lines on the death of Hannah Rothschild, Countess of Rosebery:—

*"Return unto Me and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts."*

AH, lost for ever, lost too soon,  
 Ere half thy earthly work was done!  
 How many hopes left unfulfilled,  
 How many projects scarce begun!  
 Oh, large of heart and free of hand,  
 And friend to every saddened life,  
 And bright exemplar of the ties  
 Of tender mother, loving wife,  
 We mourn thee, lost to humankind,  
 We mourn thee, taken ere thy years  
 From all that gilds a noble life,  
 And made thee greatest 'midst thy peers.

\* \* \* \*

And when the shades of death drew near,  
 And on a thread thy being hung,  
 Thy languid eyes still sought the page  
 Of David, in the sacred tongue;  
 And now within the "House of Life,"  
 All doubtful issues reconciled,  
 Oh, earth, receive this priceless dust;  
 Oh, God of Mercies, take Thy child.

## CHAPTER XXII

LORD ROSEBERY AS COUNTY COUNCILLOR—AND ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE—TWICE CHAIRMAN OF THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL—MUNICIPAL PROGRESS IN LONDON—THE INFLUENCE OF BOOKS—INTELLECTUAL FREEMASONRY—THE MUNICIPAL RENAISSANCE.

LORD ROSEBERY in 1889 was a singularly happy man. It has been recorded of him that he told Mr. Gladstone he would gladly give up his peerage for a seat in the House of Commons. His character and constitution fitted him for an active position. It is not possible yet for a peer to decide to leave the Gilded Chamber alone, and take his chance of securing a seat in the Commons Chamber by the will of the electors. It was possible, however, for Lord Rosebery to stand before the public as a candidate for their votes at the London County Council election. The Local Government Act of 1888 had brought into existence the London County Council, and sent the old Metropolitan Board of Works to an unregretted grave. Lord Rosebery consequently stood at the first election under the Act. He became a candidate

for the City, running in conjunction with Sir John Lubbock. Lord Rosebery addressed many meetings, and when the figures were announced it was shown that he had polled 8,032 votes. Sir John Lubbock secured 8,976. And now that Lord Rosebery was one of the people's representatives, elected by their votes, he threw himself heart and soul into the work. To his personal influence more than perhaps to that of any other man was due the distinction which was at once given to the London County Council meetings. The Council had been jeered at by those who were responsible for its creation, and who since have been so anxious to claim credit for all its works. Lord Rosebery was not only elected to the London County Council, but he was made its chairman, the voting figures being— for, 104 ; against, 17.

Lord Rosebery was very earnest in his County Council work. The problem of London appealed to him by its vastness, by its complexity, by its urgency. He desired to see a London that should not be merely the biggest city in the world, but one of the brightest, healthiest, and best. And with these high ideals before him he took his coat off to it and worked with all his energies to achieve great results. He was no ornamental chairman. He set the example of active labours for the objects hoped for. The mere figures of his attendances

are an indication of how he laboured. In one year alone he attended nearly three hundred committee meetings and over forty public sittings of the Council. The result was that while at first there were a few, like Mr. John Burns, who raised objections to Lord Rosebery's presence, the whole Council soon became most ardent admirers of the Earl, and his personal popularity helped him largely in his work. He found time to hold a kind of informal reception in the tea room on the days of the Council meetings. In the meantime he was fulfilling many other duties—attending a fire brigade display one day, opening a public library another, attending, as he did on one occasion, a midnight meeting of discontented omnibus drivers, to whom he spoke kindly, firmly, and genially, and to whom he not only gave good advice, but found that it was appreciated and followed. During these early County Council days he found, too, time to visit many towns and address political meetings everywhere, increasing his reputation and coming to be regarded by many as the certain successor of Mr. Gladstone whenever the time should come for such a selection to be made. Lord Rosebery was never better in health and never more thoroughly enjoyed his public life than during the County Council days; and he was able to see the great City and County of London making municipal progress at a pace

and in directions which a few years before would have been regarded as impossible. Between the first County Council election in 1889 and the second one in 1892 that great sorrow of the loss of Lady Rosebery had fallen upon the Earl. It caused him to retire from the chairmanship. Nevertheless, when, two years after Lady Rosebery's death, the London County Council elections came round, Lord Rosebery again consented, though unwillingly, to stand. He felt that London had now been brought to a clear understanding as to its greatness and its municipal possibilities and needs, and that his exertions were no longer needed. That, however, was not the view of the people of London, for they wanted Lord Rosebery to continue the work which had been so splendidly begun. In a letter which Lord Rosebery at this time wrote he defined the policy of the new Council thus :

“(1) The removal of petty and annoying restrictions on the Council's expenditure.

“(2) London's right to control its own water supply.

“(3) The readjustment of local taxation, so that the incidence of rates might fall more fairly on different classes.

“(4) Municipal control of the police.

“(5) The unity of London. ‘Of all London reforms I lay infinitely the most stress on this . . .

I am not blind to the difficulties, but they will have to be faced and overcome.'”

He defended the past work of the Council, which had aimed at removing from London the reproach of being a quarter of the very rich, surrounded by a vast section of the very poor.

Lord Rosebery had declined invitations to again stand as a candidate, but, after attending numerous meetings, his determination not to sit again gave way under pressure, and he became the colleague of Mr. J. Williams Benn in East Finsbury. So he stood, and was elected at the top of the poll; and again he was elected chairman, though he pointed out that it would be impossible for him to tie himself to the position over the general election.

Lord Rosebery has delivered many speeches on municipal work in London, and from them two are here given which indicate his view of the problem. On October 25, 1892, he opened a new library at Whitechapel, and his address on that occasion was as follows:—

“I cannot help being struck by the contrast between the occasion to-day and the last meeting that I attended in Whitechapel. That was an electoral meeting. Everything was at fever heat; the crowd bulged against the platform, and had to be diverted into the open space outside for fear some accident should occur. You would have thought then that the country would go to pieces

if one set of men were elected, and could only find salvation if the other set of men were elected. But after that fever and fret, public opinion usually falls into a very languid state of health, and we meet under the apathy produced by the reaction after the general election. After a general election, after the fever, public opinion usually requires to be wheeled about in a bath-chair. Its knocker is tied up; it speaks in a whisper under the prostration of its nervous system; and sometimes it makes an expedition and goes altogether abroad. But what I always think is, perhaps, the most striking feature of our life in this country is this—that we have under the storms and turmoils of our political controversies a municipal life always silently proceeding, which is absolutely untouched and unaffected by the storms and strifes of parties. I believe that if there is one great safeguard to which we may look in the future of our country, it is this—that if by any chance party politics should become a mere scene of violence and corruption, slander and malignity, you have always below and beyond that a perfectly safe and solid substratum of public municipal life on which you may fall back, at any rate, if I may say so without confusion of metaphor, as your second line of defence. While your orators are banging tables and calling each other every kind of name, the municipal authorities go on providing gas, and water, and pavements for their streets, free public



libraries, and public baths and wash-houses, and do not care one farthing about those conflicts that are going on.

“ In the same way you, during all the stormy times to which I have alluded, brought this period of your municipal life to its perfection, and made the best of all centres for this district of Whitechapel in this public library. I attribute, as I have said, very great importance to the municipal life of this country; but London up till a very few years ago had, if I may say so, no municipal life, no municipal spirit at all, and it has been only within the last four or five years that a spirit has come and bid these dry bones live. To what is it that we owe this sudden revival, this sudden life of London? In the first place, I think we owe it largely to the London County Council. I think that great body, gathered together from every part of London to deliberate over the affairs of London, made London for the first time a unit. Then I think the great movements of the masses of late years have done much to breathe a sense of unity into London, because unity of trade and the unity of callings are sure foundations on which to build municipal or national unity.

“ Then, again, we have been welded together to a great extent by the arduous exertions of the Churches in London. To them we owe much in this great task. We owe much to the writers—to men like Mr. Besant, who has raised an interest

in the East End of London in many quarters where it did not exist before. And, lastly—I do not know whether it is the cause of municipal life, or whether it is the effect of municipal life—we owe a great deal to the benefactors of London, to men like Mr. Passmore Edwards. You have heard from your chairman to-night how it was that, having collected a certain sum of money, and being at the last gasp as to how to collect the rest, you sent an emissary to Mr. Passmore Edwards, knowing his large public spirit; and instead of giving you the sum you wanted, he gave you the whole cost of the building, and a thousand volumes of books besides. But he has given so many thousands of books in London that I do not think it necessary to mention that fact on this occasion. And, if I may say so, he raised and dignified his gift by the way in which he made it. There were no pompous paragraphs, no florid articles, no blowing of trumpets and beating of drums; he sent a note and a cheque, and the note has in it so remarkable a sentence that I ask the permission of the recipient to quote it to this meeting: ‘I cheerfully comply with your request, and relieve you of the difficulty which presses upon you by paying the entire cost as specified in your letter—namely, £6,454. I do this, not merely from a sense of duty, but because I think it is a distinguishing privilege to assist in lightening and brightening the lot of our East End fellow-citizens.’

In another note he says: 'I have long felt that the East End of London has stupendous uncancelled claims on the wealthy and well-to-do people of the West End of London, and it affords me unalloyed gratification that I am enabled to wipe out a small portion of our moral indebtedness.' Acts and language like that find an echo in all hearts, and we know that this is by no means the only act that Mr. Edwards has done of this kind. He has been in Bethnal Green; he has been at the Borough Road Polytechnic that I opened the other day,—I do not know whether he ventured to smoke on that occasion or not,—and he is strongly under suspicion of having been in Battersea lately, and gone to see the Albert Palace. In fact, wherever he goes, the suspicion of benevolence dogs his steps.

“What are the uses of these free libraries? In these days the cheapness of books is so great that it can hardly be said that free or public libraries are so essentially necessary for the mere primitive purpose of reading as they would have been thirty or forty years ago. But they have a stimulating effect on the public that has not yet felt the slightest incitement to read, which is, in my opinion, the greatest benefit that they can confer; and in the second place, they have this further advantage, that as the appetite comes in eating, and as the lion that has once tasted blood is anxious for more, so the reader who has got

beyond his own library, and has had new lines of thought marked out for him by what he has read, cannot hope to follow that up with satisfaction except by entering a public library.

“ But I do not think, upon the whole, that we must consider the diffusion of books is now in any degree limited to the public libraries among us. I think there is nothing so striking as the fact that you can get almost all the great works of the human mind for so very small a sum. You can get half the masterpieces of intellectual production, you can get half the masterpieces of literature, at about threepence apiece. I asked a friend of mine to draw out a list for me of what is the lowest price at which you can get some of the great names of literature. You can get the whole of Shakespeare for 9*d.*; the whole of Milton’s poetry for 9*d.*; you can get Bacon’s ‘Essays’ for 3*d.*; Macaulay’s ‘England’ for 4*s.*, his ‘Critical and Historical Essays’ for 2*s.*, with his ‘Lays of Ancient Rome’ for 2*s.*; and you can get his ‘Miscellaneous Writings and Speeches’ for the same sum. You can get almost the whole of Dickens at 4½*d.* per volume. Just fancy what it is to be able to get ‘Pickwick’ for 4½*d.*! You can get every one of the ‘Waverley Novels’ at 4½*d.* per volume. The fact is that now, for the price of a hat, you may get a library that all the merchant princes of the Middle Ages—all the Fuggers and the Medicis—could not have obtained

had they given their hearts' blood for it. I regard that as a very priceless fact in these days, because, after all, whether you read your books in a public library or whether you give fourpence for them and read them at home, they must have the influences upon you which Mr. Barnett has indicated.

“One influence he has not indicated, and therefore I will venture to touch on it. It seems to me that books are the great democratic agent of the world. You hear of many democratic agencies—you have heard, for instance, of the invention of gunpowder, and how it destroyed chivalry and swept away the knights in armour and the aristocracy of war. The invention of gunpowder had that levelling effect on the battles of the Middle Ages. The invention of printing has worked more slowly, but not less effectually. It has worked more slowly because, in the first place, it only brought the learning out of the monasteries in which it was secluded into the palaces of the great. It brought it from the palaces of the great to the central places of learning as they existed in this country; but it has taken a long and a weary time—though that time has now come—to bring it from the central places of learning in this country to the homes and hearts of the people.

“What does that fact mean? It means that the men who possess that literature, whether they give fourpence for the cheapest possible edition, or whether they give £500 for a first edition of

which there may be only three copies, are placed on a level, and that this influence, democratising as I believe it to be, is not democratising in the sense of levelling, it is democratising in the sense of elevating. For instance, the man who enjoys Shakespeare—the book for which Tennyson asked on his death-bed—enters a freemasonry to which all the greatest who have lived since Shakespeare belong. He sits down at a banquet to which no rank and no wealth without the necessary qualification—without the necessary wedding-garment—can obtain admittance. And not merely by that is he placed in direct relation with the mind of the man who wrote that book, not merely has he an opportunity of endeavouring by his own perception to find out new nooks, new doors, and new paths in this most marvellous production of the Almighty which is called Shakespeare's mind, but he is placed also in communication with those before him, with the great minds of all time who have enjoyed Shakespeare's works.

“I say I believe we cannot exaggerate the intellectual freemasonry which the cheapening and diffusing of literature among us has done for our people. It has raised humanity itself, and I believe that that cheapening process will go on to such an extent that we can hardly foretell what the future of this movement will be. It is not merely, as Mr. Barnett has said, that you place yourselves in relation with these great

minds, but that you have at your hand in a book a refuge from all the worries, all the miseries, all the anxieties of life. You may not have a room to sit in, but if you have a book to read you have something which may remove you from this life to something better. I have always been very much struck by the words which Cardinal Newman uses in that great book of his life, when he is about to leave the controversial part of his previous pamphlet and enter upon the story of his life. He says: 'And now I am in a train of thought higher and more serene than any which slander can disturb. Away with you,' he says to his traducer, 'away with you into space.' I think that men, whether they have their worries, or whether they have their anxieties in private, if they can take up a great book, they can say, with Cardinal Newman, 'I am in a frame of mind higher than these mortal troubles can effect. Away with you, mortal troubles; away with you into space.' The same idea is expressed, I think even more beautifully, by Macaulay, in two stanzas which convey very well the comfort that literature has been to the great and good of all ages, and I cannot better conclude than by reading them:

In the dark hour of shame, I designed to stand  
 Before the frowning peers at Bacon's side;  
 On a far shore I smoothed with tender hand,  
 Through months of pain, the sleepless bed of Hyde:

I brought the wise and brave of ancient days  
To cheer the cell where Raleigh pined alone ;  
I lighted Milton's darkness with the blaze  
Of the bright ranks that guard th' eternal throne.

“I believe that to all who realise the comforts of the best of books it is unnecessary to enlarge on these noble verses. I think we ought now, as a sign of that municipal life of which we have spoken, to begin to drop these expressions of the ‘West’ and the ‘East.’ I have always tried in the London County Council to put an end to those distinctions, for a very simple reason. I am always afraid of the spirit creeping in of the different districts of London carefully computing how much money has been spent out of the public rates during the year, and insisting that if the same amount had not been spent in the West as in the East, or *vice versa*, that a similar amount of money should be spent there whether it is wanted or not. Therefore I was always opposed to geographical distinction in the London County Council, and, as we have obtained unity, we ought to keep those geographical distinctions out of sight as much as possible. But there is one thing which keeps up division between the West and the East. It is a physical and practical obstacle—it is the narrowness of the streets of the City. Anybody who wishes to go from the West to the East, or from the East to the West, may be pretty certain of being jammed for half



an hour at the busiest time behind a couple of large vans in one of the narrow streets; and I do not believe you will ever have what may be called the unity of London, and perfect community of feeling between the different parts of London, until you run one or two wide thoroughfares through these traps or obstacles, which are called streets, by which we pass from West to East."

Rather more than a year afterwards Lord Rosebery opened the new municipal buildings at Battersea. He said: "You asked me to help your free library; you asked me to open your bridge; and now, to crown all, you have done me this most distinguished honour of asking me to inaugurate your municipal buildings. These municipal buildings, ladies and gentlemen, are no mean thing in themselves. They are a noble and stately structure, which may form an honest source of pride to every inhabitant and citizen of Battersea. But they are, besides that, a symptom of that municipal renaissance which is creeping over London. You have here now a free library; you have, or are going to have very shortly, a technical institute; you have a gigantic organ, and you must have a palace to put it in; and, last of all, you have this noble building.

"Well, why is it that we who are interested in municipal life welcome these things? It is not because they are unique, because other places have

technical institutes, and other places have free libraries, and other places have town-halls. It is because it is a symptom of what I have contrived to call that municipal renaissance which we welcome as a most hopeful sign in London for the present and the future. In London hitherto that spirit has been singularly dead. Within the City there has been, there probably is, a considerable development of municipal spirit. But outside the City it has never existed. We have had plenty of political spirit in London. On one occasion, in a fit of political spirit, we cut off the head of our king. On another occasion, in a fit of Protestant fervour, and in the name of religion, we burnt down half London. And even within our own days we have not altogether fallen short of these lofty ideals, and in order to lower the suffrage we have pulled down the palings of Hyde Park.

“That, no doubt, is some time ago, though it is well within my memory. Although we have not been able to give any such signal proof of political spirit since then, there are few Sundays in the year in which we do not throng the streets and flock into the Park at the call of some great cause, from the spread of temperance down to the claims of Sir Roger Tichborne. Well, though we have political spirit in abundance, we have hitherto lacked the municipal spirit. While other dwellers in England and Wales have each been proud of their birthplace and their home, it was the Londoner

alone who was not. The Yorkshireman was proud of being a Yorkshireman, the Birmingham man of being a Birmingham man, the Manchester man of being a Manchester man, but you never heard of a Londoner who was proud of being a Londoner until now. There was nothing to boast of. London was a wilderness of houses inhabited by a multitude of men. But it represented to the dwellers of those houses simply their place of toil, their place of industry, their place of business, without any community of feeling or aim. I declare it is the greatest pride of this generation among the five millions who inhabit this vast city that all this should be changed, that London should be waking up, that London should at last be conscious of its greatness, that London should see in itself not a mere aggregate of houses more or less hideous, but a city which, as it is the first in the world in size, may become the first in comfort and in the excellence of its administration.

“Ladies and gentlemen, what are the two qualities that have been developed by this waking up of London? The first, I take it, is self-respect. London begins to feel respect for itself ever since the date when by a freely elected body it has managed its own affairs as it is conscious they ought to be managed. Before then we were at the mercy of vestries more or less admirable, some of them, I believe, far from admirable. But on this occasion I gladly except the Battersea Vestry from

any of the reproaches which may be directed against vestries in general. We were at the mercy of vestries; we were at the mercy of the short-lived Metropolitan Board of Works, of which I will say nothing, for it is better to say nothing but good of the dead, and I do not know that I have any special good to say.

“As regards municipal life, London was like Lazarus in the parable, and only took the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. The institution of the County Council has changed all that. We at last feel that we have a centre for our hopes and aspirations, that we have a body, industrious, zealous, pure, practical, to which we can look in order to carry out our wishes. There is another quality which has been developed by the new birth of life in London, and that is emulation. The spirit of civic emulation has been aroused, which is a healthy sign in such a commonwealth as ours. When the people’s representatives spend the people’s money they will not spend too much, and they will endeavour to spend it to the best purpose. All this points to the greater development of municipal life.

“It seems to me if anybody casts his eye over the general trend of human affairs, he will see that individuals have a tendency not to become so conspicuously rich,—in fact, to become poorer,—and that the one purse which can afford to build and spend money is the municipal

purse; and I take it that, if we have to found any hopes on the beautifying of London, these hopes must rest rather on municipal or public expenditure than on the construction of their private palaces which used to be the pride of our citizens and aristocrats. Still, I say I hold this to be a wholesome change. It is a thing which we must welcome; but it is a thing also which we must watch.

“We are municipalising a great many things, and I think that so far as we have gone municipalisation has been an unmixed benefit. But it is not a principle of unlimited application. What I should deprecate is what I sometimes think is a danger in the near future, which is the municipalisation of the individual. I sometimes think that in this great desire that all should be good in common, and in that great energy which is expended on behalf of public objects, particularly aided by journalism and particularly aided by natural curiosity, the privacy of the individual is disappearing. I do not think that this appeals to my audience as much as it does to me. But I think it may appeal more to Mr. Burns than to most of us. I take it that no man can act in a public position without feeling that his life has ceased to be his own. That, no doubt, has always, to some extent, been the case with all public men. But they had some private life. When I read the newspapers it seems to me

that the private life of a public man has ceased to exist. I seem to know everything that Mr. Gladstone does, from the moment he rises in the morning to the moment he goes to bed at night. I take it that if any man of equal eminence should arise, he would have to divulge every act of his life to the prying gaze of publicity. Is this entirely a good thing? Have men who work for the public no right to retirement and repose? Have they not a right to meditate, which they can hardly do in public, more especially when their meditations may be supposed to be on behalf of the public? I do not know where you are to localise the sort of literature to which I allude—the literature which makes common the life of every man, and which is only the supply to meet an irresistible demand. But I do hope that those who find any fascination in it will offer a grain of sympathy to the subjects of that literature. I will, however, after this protest against municipalising everything, give what blessing I have to give to the municipalisation which has been done hitherto, and therefore I come here to-day to say—Honour and good-luck to Battersea.”

## CHAPTER XXIII

WILLIAM PITT THE YOUNGER—A COMPARISON OF FATHER AND SON—  
AN ESTIMATE OF CHARACTER—WILLIAM PITT THE ELDER—THE  
GLORY OF BATH—HOW HE LOST HIS "SAMSON LOCKS"—AN  
EPIGRAM

AFTER the death of Lady Rosebery the Earl spent a good deal of time at his country homes and on the Continent. His health had broken down under the bereavement he had suffered, and his two daughters were in delicate health. Lord Rosebery had determined to devote a large portion of his time for the future to his children, and from that time, however deeply engrossed in his public work, he has never failed in his devoted attention to their education and training. Early in 1891 he paid a visit to Spain, meeting there our Ambassador, Sir Clare Ford, through whom, during the Earl's first period of office as Foreign Secretary, the Commercial Treaty with Spain had been arranged. Lord Rosebery at the same time, on the advice of Mr. John Morley, gave his attention to the book on Pitt which he had promised to write, and that book was soon produced.

Lord Rosebery's study of Pitt<sup>1</sup> had this prefatory note: "This little book has been written under many disadvantages, but with a sincere desire to ascertain the truth. My chief happiness in completing it would have been to give it to my wife; it can now only be inscribed to her memory." The book is a study of the character and doings of the great statesman all through that interesting career.

"Of the private life of Pitt there is not much to be said. There are constant attestations of his personal fascination in that intimate and familiar intercourse which was the only kind of society that he enjoyed. He seems to have liked that country-house life which is the special grace of England: we find him visiting at Longleat and Stowe, at Wycombe and Dropmore, at Cirencester and Wilderness, at Buckden and Short Grove, at the villas of Hawkesbury, and Rose, and Long, and Dundas, and Addington. Here we find him indulging—*proh pudor*—in a game of cards: the once fashionable Speculation or Commerce, now relegated to children. In all these societies he seems to have left but one unfavourable impression. A high-born spinster, who met him at Dropmore, says: 'I was disappointed in that turned-up nose, and in that countenance in which it was impossible to find any indication of the mind, and in that person which was so deficient in dignity that he

<sup>1</sup> "Pitt," by Lord Rosebery. Macmillan & Co., Ltd.



had hardly the air of a gentleman. If not tropes, I fully expected the dictums of wisdom each time that he opened his mouth. From what I then heard and saw, I should say that mouth was made for eating.' This is a harsh judgment. On the other hand, one of the choicest ladies of the French aristocracy, who met him during the Revolution, expressed her delight in his grave and lofty courtesy, and long recalled the patient pleasure with which he heard French books read aloud. To the purity of his French she also paid a tribute. Butler records that his talk was fascinating, full of animation and playfulness. Pitt said of Buckingham that he possessed the condescension of pride. It was said of his own manners in society that he possessed the talent of condescension; than which, if it means that he made condescension tolerable, there is perhaps none more rare. His friendship, although, like all worthy friendship, not lavishly given, was singularly warm, and was enthusiastically returned. Nothing in history is more creditable and interesting than his affectionate and lifelong intimacy with Wilberforce, so widely differing from him in his views of life. Hardened politicians such as Rose and Farnborough were softened by their intercourse with him, and cherished his memory to the end of their lives with something of religious adoration. His family affections were warm and constant. His letters to his mother are pleasant

to read; he was indeed the most dutiful of sons. His grief at the death of his favourite sister, Lady Harriet, and her husband, Mr. Eliot, was beyond description. His kindness to his oppressed nephews and nieces, the Stanhopes, was constant and extreme; the father who harassed them had long quarrelled with him. It was truly remarked that he unselfishly made a great sacrifice and cheerfully ran a great risk, when, after a life of bachelorhood, he took his niece Hester to keep house for him. She led him an uneasy life with her terrible frankness of speech; but he bore all with composure, and she repaid him with the rare devotion of that vain, petulant nature, which fretted off into something like insanity.

“Once, and once only, he formed an attachment which might have led to marriage; though he liked women’s society, and is even said to have drunk a toast out of the shoe of a famous Devonshire beauty. But in 1796 his feeling for Eleanor Eden, the eldest daughter of Lord Auckland, went so far that he wrote to her father to declare his affection, but to avow that his debts made it impossible for him to contemplate marriage. Auckland was obliged to take the same view; Pitt discontinued his visits; and the lady married Lord Hobart, afterwards Lord Buckinghamshire. Lady Hester said that this nearly broke Pitt’s heart; but Lady Hester’s statements do not impress one with conviction.

Lord Holland, also an indifferent authority on this subject, says that Pitt paid attentions to Miss Duncan, who was afterwards Lady Dalrymple Hamilton. But there seems no further confirmation of this statement. However, though we cannot imagine a married Pitt more than a married Pope, it is clear that he did seriously contemplate the married state; and cynics may remark with a smile that he afterwards showed a certain dislike of Lord Buckinghamshire, and a reluctance to admit him to the Cabinet; though other reasons might well account for that. His life was pure; in an age of eager scandal it was beyond reproach. There was, indeed, within living recollection a doorkeeper of the House of Commons who from some chance resemblance was said to be his son; but Pitt's features, without the intellect and majesty which gave them life, lend themselves easily to chance resemblance and ignoble comparison. Wraxall hints at a licentious amour; but even Wraxall expresses his scepticism. The austerity of his morals inspired many indecorous epigrams, but also a real reverence. His one weakness, it is said, was for port wine, on which he was reared from childhood, and of which he drank prodigious quantities.

“To estimate Pitt as a statesman, to sum up his career, to strike his account with history, one must take adequate means and scales. It

is impossible to complete any sketch of his career, or indeed to form an adequate estimate of his character, without setting him, if only for a moment, by the side of Chatham. Not merely are they father and son, not merely are they the most conspicuous English Ministers of the eighteenth century, but their characters illustrate each other. And yet it is impossible for men to be more different. Pitt was endowed with mental powers of the first order; his readiness, his apprehension, his resource were extraordinary; the daily parliamentary demand on his brain and nerve power he met with serene and inexhaustible affluence; his industry, administrative activity, and public spirit were unrivalled; it was perhaps impossible to carry the force of sheer ability further; he was a portent. Chatham in most of these respects was inferior to his son. He was a political mystic; sometimes sublime, sometimes impossible, and sometimes insane. But he had genius. It was that fitful and undefinable inspiration that gave to his eloquence a piercing and terrible note which no other English eloquence has touched; that made him the idol of his countrymen, though they could scarcely be said to have seen his face or heard his voice or read his speeches; that made him a watchword among those distant insurgents whose wish for independence he yet ardently opposed; that made each remotest soldier and bluejacket feel when

he was in office that there was a man in Downing Street, and a man whose eye penetrated everywhere; that made his name at once an inspiration and a dread; that cowed the tumultuous Commons at his frown. Each Pitt possessed in an eminent degree the qualities which the other most lacked: one was formed by nature for peace, the other for war. Chatham could not have filled Pitt's place in the ten years which followed 1783; but, from the time that war was declared, the guidance of Chatham would have been worth an army. No country could have too many Pitts: the more she has the greater will she be. But no country could afford the costly and splendid luxury of many Chathams.

“To sum up: it is not claimed that Pitt was a perfect character or a perfect statesman. Such monsters do not exist. But it may be confidently asserted that few statesmen and few characters could bear so close a scrutiny. He erred, of course; but it is difficult to find any act of his career which cannot be justified by solid and in most cases by convincing reasons. It may be said that his party acted more on him than he on them; but the relations of a successful leader with his party are so subtle that it is difficult to distinguish how much he gives and how much he receives. It is, no doubt, true that the changed conditions of the world compelled him to give up

his first task of educating his followers, and to appeal rather to their natural instincts or prejudices. It may be alleged that he clung to office. This is said of every minister who remains long in power. Office is, indeed, an acquired taste, though by habit persons may learn to relish it; just as men learn to love absinthe, or opium, or cod-liver oil. But the three years which Pitt spent out of place and almost out of Parliament seem to have been the happiest of his life; and his resignation was generally condemned as groundless and wanton.

“It may, however, be conceded that unconsciously he may have become inured to office, and that as leaving it implies at any rate a momentary defeat, he may have been unwilling to face this. Men who pine for unofficial repose dread the painful process of quitting office—the triumph of enemies and the discomfiture of friends and the wrench of habit—as men weary of life fear the actual process of death. It may also be said that, though he generally saw what was right, he did not always ensue it. What minister has or can? He has to deal not with angels, but with men; with passions, prejudices, and interests, often sordid or misguided. He must, therefore, compromise the ideal, and do, not the best, but the nearest practicable to the best. But let us remember what is indisputable. No one suspected his honesty; no one doubted his capacity; no one impeached

his aims. He had, as Canning said, qualities rare in their separate excellence, wonderful in their combination. And these qualities were inspired by a single purpose. 'I am no worshipper of Mr. Pitt,' said Wilberforce in the House of Commons, long after Pitt's death, 'but, if I know anything of that great man, I am sure of this, that every other consideration was absorbed in one great ruling passion—the love of his country.' It was this that sustained him through all. For he ruled during the convulsion of a new birth at the greatest epoch in history since the coming of Christ, and was on the whole not unequal to it. There let us leave him; let others quarrel over the details. From the dead eighteenth century his figure still faces us with a majesty of loneliness and courage. There may have been men both abler and greater than he, though it is not easy to cite them; but in all history there is no more patriotic spirit, none more intrepid, and none more pure."

Lord Rosebery has written about the younger Pitt, and has frequently spoken about both the father and the son. He has promised a book about the elder Pitt, but it has not yet appeared. His lordship, however, took occasion, on a visit to Bath in the autumn of last year, when he unveiled tablets to both the elder and the younger Pitt to speak of the former. In an address subsequently delivered, he said :

“I came here as it were in the train of the two Pitts, to do honour in your name to the residences which they occupied, and therefore what personal reference I shall make will be to them and not to myself. But on the other hand, even there I am under a grave disadvantage, because I have written and published all that I have to say about the younger Pitt, and I am not without hopes of doing the same, at no remote period, for the elder Pitt; and therefore, if I dilate too much on the one hand I shall be abstracting from what I have published, while on the other I shall be anticipating what I hope to publish. Well, of the two it is quite clear that to anticipate what is not published, and may never yet be published, is best. It is better, therefore, to say a word of the elder Pitt than of the younger; but of the younger there is this at least to be said, that his connection with Bath is the most pathetic in the whole of his extraordinary career. He had been here once or twice before, and I gather from the *Bath Chronicle* that he was not uniformly popular in Bath, owing to the shop tax, and that a lady called Pitcairns was so annoyed that she omitted the first syllable of her name. The younger Pitt went out of fashion, as we had reason to recall this morning. His health was then completely broken, and he had yet only a short time in which to serve his country with such vigour as remained to him,



and in the course of his administration he was once more sent to Bath.

He arrived in Bath at the beginning of December, about the very time, if not on the very day, of the battle which was destined to be his death-blow. It was at Bath that, feeble and broken in health, he learnt the news of the battle of Austerlitz—news from which he never recovered; it was at Bath that, with the hand of death upon him, he returned home to die. That is the connection that I most value between the younger Pitt and Bath. It is the elder Pitt who is the glory of Bath, the elder Pitt who was associated with Bath all through his career, and became associated with Bath much too early for his own happiness, in consequence of the hereditary gout which was in his blood. But it was to that circumstance that you owe a man of whom Bath should be proud. It was in one of his many residences at Bath that, on the death of Mr. Pelham, when the Duke of Newcastle was called upon to form a Government, Pitt wrote that famous letter—famous though it has never yet been published, and is omitted from that unfortunate and haphazard collection which is called the Chatham Correspondence—in which he protested against the dead set made against him at Court, and demanded that the bar of exclusion should be removed from one so capable of serving his country.

“ Then again, in 1757, we have a very striking connection of Pitt with Bath, when that bar of exclusion had at last been removed. Pitt had been a Minister of the Crown, but the King, at the instance of the Duke of Cumberland, had dismissed him from office. At once the whole nation sprang to rally round the dismissed Minister. The City of London voted him its freedom. Bath was second only to the City of London, and behind Bath there came, too, the great towns of England, and even some of the towns of Scotland, then in political darkness, to assert the right of the people that their Minister should retain his place. I remember well the terms in which you offered him that freedom. It was for his ‘ great services ’ during his late short Administration, and I am bound to say that, in the words of ‘ his late short Administration, ’ there is, I fear, the only connection between Lord Chatham and the youngest burgess who is now addressing you. As regards ‘ the lateness and shortness ’ of the Administration, he cannot compete even with Lord Chatham. Then again later in the year you chose Pitt member for Bath. He had been a member of the Court in the interval. The King had tried every possible and impossible combination to find a Minister who would keep Pitt out. He had asked at least one of his Lords of the Bed-chamber, who consented to be Prime Minister, to find out that the Ministry would consist only of himself ;

and for three months or so the shores of the country were covered with the wreck of every form of political combination. But at last the inevitable happened, as it usually does happen, and Pitt was recalled to the Government of the country.

“Well, Bath saw its opportunity. Bath at once chose Pitt as its representative, and with that connection of Pitt and Bath began the most glorious epoch in the history of England. There was at that time an epigram written on the connection of Pitt with Bath. You were giving the freedom in gold boxes, as is your munificent habit, and the wits of the day took occasion to write an ode to the nymph of Bath—

‘Nymph of Bath, thy gifts withhold,  
Pitt’s virtuous soul despises gold ;  
Grant him thy gift, peculiar health,  
He’ll guard, not covet, Britain’s wealth.’

That was the view in Bath of Pitt. Well, as I say, that glorious Administration began. What did Pitt accomplish in those four years? He seized one empire in Canada; he took half an empire in India; your ships sailed supreme on every sea, and your armies were victorious on land. There never was a moment at which the power of Great Britain reached so completely its acme as it did under the Administration of Pitt, and at the time when he took the reins of power patriots

had almost begun to despair of the future of England. Let me read an extract from Horace Walpole, which will show you what I mean. He says, a month after Pitt had become Minister, and when the news of defeats was coming in: 'It is time for England to slip her cables and float away into some unknown ocean.' That was a desponding view. Then there is another extract with regard to George II. and his prospects at that time, which is striking as contrasted with another. He says (Horace Walpole still): 'I have so ill an opinion of our secret expeditions that I hope they will always remain so' (that is, secret). 'What a melancholy picture is that of the old monarch at Kensington who has lived to see such inglorious and fatal days!' Well, I will tell you why I read that extract out: because three years later that monarch had come to die, and Horace Walpole was able to write—'What an enviable death in the greatest period of the glory of the country!' Sir, it was not merely that Pitt was enabled to be victorious all over the world, and to add the largest share to that British Empire which we are mainly entrusted with the duty of maintaining; but he had also this credit with regard to himself, that he made commerce flourish in the midst of war. The country never was so prosperous as it was in the time of the wars of Pitt. We may contrast him in that respect with his less fortunate son. The England that Pitt the

Younger led against the French Revolution was malcontent and half starving; but the England that the elder Pitt led and guided against France was prosperous and thriving.

“Well, then, there is another point to which I would call your attention. He managed to extinguish party from this brilliant administration. He knew that he was fighting a battle almost for the existence, but certainly for the future of the country. The nation came to recognise, too, that he was their champion in the battle—that they could trust him; and Parliament met in reality for little more than to register the votes of supply that Pitt required to carry on his great enterprise. Well, that is an example we ought never entirely to lose sight of in this country. To such a degree had things arrived, that in a document of the Common Council of the City of London, it is mentioned that four years after Pitt came into power they spoke of the ‘present happy extinction of parties.’

“We must remember another thing. What was the material with which Pitt wrought these prodigious deeds? The population of England was something below seven millions. The population of Scotland, of course, has to be added to that—perhaps another one-and-a-half millions; and the cost of that formidable war in which we, so to speak, carry everything before us, is calculated to have been £111,000,000, or less than we spend

at present in a year of peace. Well, considering its importance, the results were prodigious, and you must never forget, gentlemen, the central figure that is present to your mind and my mind to-day.

“Throughout that time Pitt was member for Bath. Ah, and I will go further than that,—I will say this: had Pitt remained member for Bath his glory would have continued. Had Pitt remained member for Bath and had not left the House of Commons, his power would have been equal to that wielded by his son. His administration would probably not have been any less long in proportion. He might have rendered incalculable service to this country. He might have saved the American Colonies, and restrained the growth of corruption, and, no doubt, of encroachment of the Crown. But in an evil hour for his own fame, and power, and happiness, he entered the House of Lords.. From that day he was cut off from the sources of his power. His Samson locks were cut, his wings were clipped, he was away from the scene of action. And what was the result of the absence of Pitt from the House of Commons? Why, twenty-five years after you first elected him member for Bath—twenty years after the period when I have stated that England reached her highest point—it was appointed for England to reach her lowest point also—to see her arms driven from pillar to post,

and a great portion of the United States severed from her for ever, to see herself sometimes humiliated, and to see herself compelled to sign a disgraceful peace at a time when she was overwhelmed with debt, and when the best statesman of the time inclined to the belief that her sun had set for ever! Am I not justified in wishing that Mr. Pitt had always remained member for Bath?

“And yet, even as a peer has to sink down to the grave, his departure was not without a gloomy majesty of its own. He was still able to fight, often alone or in a minority of half a dozen, for what he believed to be the cause of liberty and justice. He was able to fight on behalf of the Colonies, that there should be no taxation without representation; he was enabled to combat the secret encroachment of the Crown; he was enabled to stand up for the right of the constituents to elect their own representative and to maintain a free press.”

## CHAPTER XXIV

LORD ROSEBERY AND SIR ROBERT PEEL—THE HIGH PRINCIPLE IN POLITICS—A STUDY OF PRIME MINISTERS—THEIR DUTY AND POWER FIFTY YEARS AGO AND NOW—PEEL, THE CORN LAWS, AND HIS PARTY.

SIR ROBERT PEEL had been the subject of what Lord Rosebery described as the "historical monument" to him. The Earl had written and spoken about the Pitts. He was constantly in his public speeches making allusions to Peel also; and now, just before the description of Lord Rosebery's chief period of office as a Minister of the Crown, it will be a fitting time to show his views of one of his most distinguished predecessors in the great office of Prime Minister. The publication<sup>1</sup> led to a criticism and appreciation of Peel by Lord Rosebery. The "historical monument," he admitted, "set forth fully, but not redundantly, the career of a statesman who ended or commenced an epoch." "Almost, but not quite,"

<sup>1</sup> "Sir Robert Peel, from his Private Papers, edited for his Trustees by Charles Stuart Parker," 3 vols., 1891-9. John Murray, Albemarle Street, London, W.



was Lord Rosebery's comment, written for and published in *The Anglo-Saxon Review*. Lord Rosebery thought—and thinks—that the monument to Peel will never be complete without a new edition of his speeches. Whether we shall ever see that depends upon the publishers. There have been many volumes of Peel's speeches; one collection ran to four volumes. But Lord Rosebery thinks that what is needed is a much smaller collection, well printed and well edited. "Two or three volumes," he says, "of fair type and respectable paper would contain all that it is necessary to preserve. It is not much of a tribute to pay to the man who gave his fellow-countrymen 'abundant and untaxed food, the sweeter because it is no longer leavened by a sense of injustice,' and without it the record of his career is still inadequate and unfair." Apart from that, Mr. Parker produced a most interesting work. There is a story that Sir Robert, in the last year of his administration, appeared late at night in the bedroom of Cardwell and paced up and down without saying a word; Cardwell watching with amazed perplexity from his bed. At last he broke silence. "Never destroy a letter," he oracularly said. "No public man who respects himself should ever destroy a letter." He then turned on his heel and left the room. It was understood that he was referring to the solace which might be derived, under the

philippics of an alienated supporter, from the possession of the orator's applications for office. Be that as it may, we may be sure that as Sir Robert preached so did he practise. He preserved his papers, and so the most exact revelation of himself. Well, Mr. Parker dealt with a careful selection of the papers, and Lord Rosebery's comment was: "We feel that we have only gained by having to wait for them; as the editor may be cited as a chief among the rare masters of that fastidious calling. Laborious, conscientious, and fair, Mr. Parker is anxious never to obtrude himself on the reader's attention. We might, indeed, wish that he had given us more illustrations derived from his close intimacy with Lord Cardwell, one of the original trustees. But with one exception—the essay at the end of the volumes—Peel is allowed to speak for himself. It must, therefore, be felt that that essay, clever and interesting as it is, is out of place. Without it, the direct and majestic delineation of the statesman is consummate and complete. The piety and enthusiasm of his descendant jar with the austere self-revelation of the man. A portrait such as this can only be produced of one of the princes of mankind. They gain by that scrutiny which would kill and damn lesser beings. Nothing personal to them can be spared or omitted—not the wart of Cromwell, or the burlesque mask of Gibbon, or the deformed foot of Byron. It is at

once their glory and their penalty, for it is only the great in spirit and in truth that must and can endure the glare of minute biography. How does Peel bear this test? To that question there can be but one answer—that few can endure it so well, that we have here the picture of a public career, happily not unique, but illustrious and unalloyed. It is a little derogation to add that he had lived in the search-light of the world, or prepared for it, from the beginning of things. The tradition goes that on his birth his father, in a transport of pious gratitude, had on his knees vowed the baby to the service of his country, and had expressed the hope that his child might tread in the steps of his political idol, William Pitt. From his childhood, then, when he repeated to his father critical abstracts of the sermons he had heard in church, in order to strengthen his memory in view of a political career, the little Robert lived, as it were, devoted to the public—in the very eye, so to speak, of the Muse of History.”

A specially interesting portion of Lord Rosebery's book is the comparison incidentally introduced of the duties of a Prime Minister fifty years ago and now. Peel, he says, was the model of all Prime Ministers. It is more than doubtful, indeed, if it be possible in this generation, when the burdens of empire and of office have so incalculably grown, for any Prime

Minister to discharge the duties of his high post with the same thoroughness or in the same spirit as Peel. To do so would demand more time and strength than any man has at his command. For Peel kept a strict supervision over every department: he seems to have been master of the business of each and all of them. He was conversant with all departmental questions, and formed and enforced opinions on them. And, though he had an able Chancellor of the Exchequer, in whom he had full confidence, he himself introduced his great Budget of 1842 and that of 1845. The War Office, the Admiralty, the Foreign Office, the Administrations of India and of Ireland, felt his personal influence as much as the Treasury or the Board of Trade. In the House of Commons he, with Graham, mainly bore the burden, so much to the exclusion of even so brilliant a colleague as Stanley, that we find this last demanding his removal to the House of Lords, on the ground that business in the House of Commons was done entirely by Peel, Goulburn, Graham, and Gladstone, and that he had therefore become a cypher: an extraordinary testimony, when we reflect that this Stanley, for whom no use could be found, was incomparably the first debater in Parliament. Charles Villiers, an opponent, but even then a practised parliamentarian, offered evidence of equal weight: "See how those two

men (Peel and Graham) do their business and understand it." It is probable, then, that no Prime Minister ever fulfilled so completely and thoroughly the functions of his office, parliamentary, administrative, and general, as Sir Robert Peel; though it may perhaps be found that Peel's greatest pupil followed in his footsteps during the famous Administration which began in 1868. But in these days of instant, continuous, and unrelenting pressure, the very tradition of such a Minister has almost departed; indeed, it would be impossible to be so paternal and ubiquitous. A Minister of these days would be preparing or delivering a speech in the country, when Peel would be writing minutes of policy for the various departments. Which occupation is the better or more fruitful is not now in question: it is sufficient for our purpose that the difference exists.

Nor, perhaps, would such a Minister be now altogether welcome to his colleagues. For Peel was in name and in deed that functionary so abhorred and repudiated by the statesmen of the eighteenth century—a Prime Minister. With a collection of colleagues perhaps unparalleled for ability and brilliancy, he stood among them like Alexander among his Parmenios and Ptolemies. In these days we have returned, perhaps necessarily, to the views of the last century. A Prime Minister who is the senior partner in every

department as well as president of the whole, who deals with all the business of government, who inspires and vibrates through every part, is almost, if not quite, an impossibility. A First Minister is the most that can be hoped for, the chairman and on most occasions the spokesman of that board of directors which is called the Cabinet; who has the initiation and guidance of large courses of public policy, but who does not, unless specially invoked, interfere departmentally.

The Prime Minister, as he is now called, is technically and practically the chairman of an Executive Committee of the Privy Council, or rather perhaps of Privy Councillors, the influential foreman of an executive jury. His power is mainly personal, the power of individual influence. That influence, whatever it may be, he has to exert in many directions before he can have his way. He has to deal with the Sovereign, with the Cabinet, with Parliament, with public opinion, all of them potent factors in their various kinds and degrees. To the popular eye, however, heedless of these restrictions, he represents universal power; he is spoken of as if he had only to lay down his views of policy and to adhere to them. That is very far from the case. A First Minister has only the influence with the Cabinet which is given him by his personal arguments, his personal qualities, and his personal weight. But this is not all. All

his colleagues he must convince, some he may have to humour, some even to cajole: a harassing, laborious, and ungracious task. Nor is it only his colleagues that he has to deal with: he has to masticate their pledges, given before they joined him, he has to blend their public utterances, to fuse as well as may be all this into the policy of the Government; for these various records must be reconciled, or glossed, or obliterated. A machinery liable to so many grains of sand requires obviously all the skill and vigilance of the best conceivable engineer. And yet without the external support of his Cabinet he is disarmed. The resignation of a colleague, however relatively insignificant, is a storm signal.

Regarding the incident of 1846, Lord Rosebery says:

“The year was destined to be fatal to high principle in politics. Peel, with the view of saving his country, betrays his party. His party revenges itself on him by a coalition as discreditable as that of North and Fox. And the mischief does not end with the moment. Twenty-one years afterwards, Peel’s bitterest censor, from the point of view of political consistency, imitated his tactics with that fidelity which is the sincerest form of flattery. ‘First pass the Bill and then turn out the Ministry,’ said Mr. Disraeli in 1867. This was Peel’s attitude in 1846. The year 1846 scarcely seemed perilous to political principle, the

retribution was so swift and severe. But it produced 1867. From the transactions of 1867 English public life received a shock which it has scarcely recovered.

“Our view is that Peel did not exhaust the alternatives before returning to office. We think that he should have reasoned thus: ‘Nothing but Free Trade in breadstuffs, promptly given, can avert a famine in Ireland, but I am the last person who should pass the measure; for I cannot a second time be placed in the position of a Minister betraying his political position. All that I can do, I will do. I will co-operate with any Ministry that will take the necessary steps, and give it my cordial support. If I am consulted—and I must inevitably be consulted—I will give my best counsel. I will do anything and everything, except remain in office.’ We cannot doubt that, had Peel used this language, Lord John Russell would have disregarded or overcome the hesitations of Grey, would have formed a Government, and have passed the Bill. In any case we hold that it was Peel’s duty to try every conceivable and inconceivable combination to obviate the necessity of his remaining Minister, and so lowering the standard of English public life.

“Peel thought differently. He considered himself absolved and freed by a genuine resignation, followed by the failure of the Opposition, and



the apparent impossibility of any other combination. Nor is it possible to judge him hardly. It is difficult for a Minister to exercise an absolutely clear and unbiassed judgment, when the horror of famine is upon him, and when the literal rules of the political game appear to have been observed. Moreover, he had hoped not to break up his party, but to carry it with him; he had also to remember that he was the rock and pillar of essential Conservatism, not merely in Britain alone, but in Europe. This was no light trust and responsibility, and it made him, we doubt not, reluctant to relinquish his post.

“So he judged, and we will not judge him. If he deceived himself, he deceived himself nobly, and he wrought an immortal work. He paid, moreover, the full penalty; he redeemed his reputation by his fall; his political sins or errors, if sins or errors at all, were condoned by the affection and gratitude of the nation. On the night of his resignation a silent multitude awaited him as he left the House of Commons, and, with bared heads, escorted him home. As he lay dying, a sadder crowd surrounded that home day and night, waiting breathlessly for the tidings of the father of their country. This was his reward. And his expiation became a triumph. The two extremes of political party combined to overthrow him. Both, to use a familiar expression, turned their backs upon themselves, in order to secure

his defeat ; and both acquired those fruits of victory which they coveted. The Protectionists obtained the desert apples of revenge : the Whigs the more succulent substance of office. Lord John Russell and his followers, including Grey, who now sacrificed his scruples, occupied Downing Street ; but propped and overshadowed by Sir Robert Peel. For then, and now, and for all time, above and beyond that Government and the perished passions of the time, there looms the great figure of the great Minister, with feet perhaps of clay as well as iron, but with a heart at least of silver, and a head of fine gold."

## CHAPTER XXV

THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1892 — LIBERAL DIFFERENCES — MR. CHAMBERLAIN AND THE TORIES — MR. GLADSTONE'S GOVERNMENT — LORD ROSEBERY GOES AGAIN TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE — SKILFUL NEGOTIATIONS — JABEZ BALFOUR — GRAIN — SPAIN — HOME RULE OF THE LORDS — A GREAT SPEECH

**D**URING the year 1890 the Irish question had been greatly complicated in consequence of the exposure with regard to Mr. Parnell and Mrs. O'Shea, and the divisions in the Irish ranks. Time did little to heal the differences, and the friends of Home Rule in this country could only look on at the conflict in the hope that the Irish would make up their minds to work in unity for the objects they had in view. It was, however, to be ten years before any formal amalgamation of the two camps was to be brought about, notwithstanding that Mr. Parnell had died soon after the controversy arose. Still, those who, like Mr. Gladstone and Lord Rosebery and Mr. John Morley, with whom Home Rule was a conviction, and not merely a promising experiment, remained true to their opinions. Liberal feeling in the country had been steadily growing, and in the following year there

was a special significance attaching to the meeting of the National Liberal Federation at Newcastle. It showed what the general election of 1892 was to be fought on. Speaking there, Mr. John Morley referred to the difficulty about Mr. Parnell, and said: "But we had on board of our ship a captain whose heart never quailed; he is not a man to take in a hurry to the lifeboats, and though there were some who thought that our ship was a wreck, he resolved, and we resolved, and you have since resolved, that we were right to stand by what seemed a wreck, and we have been rewarded within twelve months by seeing the Liberal party, as I judge from you here, in a temper of confidence which has never been surpassed, and seeing that ship which some thought might be a wreck, rapidly approaching the haven to which we are steering." Mr. Morley also spoke of the Temperance question, of the coming battle with the House of Lords, and of Disestablishment in Wales, and said that during the last five years there had been an immense ripening of great political questions. Sir Edward Grey, in proposing the Home Rule resolution, spoke of the threatened opposition of the House of Lords, but thought we might rely on its instinct of self-preservation. The House of Lords, he said, was like a rusty old musket hanging over the Tory chimney-piece—an old musket of which they might use the butt end as much as they pleased, but

from which they never dare fire a full charge. Mr. T. E. Ellis moved a resolution declaring that the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of England in Wales should be taken in the next Parliament, as soon as Irish Home Rule was attained. This was seconded by Major Evans Jones, and carried unanimously. On the motion of Mr. Bryce and Professor Stuart, the Conference unanimously affirmed the policy of putting the London County Council in full possession of all municipal powers. On the motion of Mr. Sydney Buxton, seconded by Mr. Fenwick, a resolution was passed expressing satisfaction at the adoption of Free Education, setting forth the defects of the new Act, and declaring "That no system of public elementary education can be regarded as satisfactory and final, unless it secures that every family shall have within reasonable reach a free school, and that all schools supported by public money shall be subject to public representative control."

The second sitting of the Council had been held earlier in the day. Sir George Trevelyan moved and Mr. Storey seconded a motion on registration and electoral reform. This motion demanded, as among the first efforts of a Liberal Government, the appointment of responsible registration officers, the reduction of the qualifying period to three months, the abolition of the disqualifications now attaching to removals, and one man one vote. The resolution further

declared for shorter Parliaments, the placing on the rates of the expenses of returning officers at elections, the holding of all elections on one and the same day, and the recognition of the principle of the payment of members. Lord Ripon moved and Mr. R. W. Perks seconded a resolution declaring "that the condition of the rural population should receive the immediate attention of Parliament." Three points were set forth as of primary importance. (A) The establishment of District and Parish Councils, popularly elected. (B) The concession of compulsory powers to local authorities to acquire and hold land for allotments, small holdings, village halls, places of worship, labourers' dwellings, and other public purposes. (C) The reform of existing Allotment Acts by the removal of restrictions, by giving security of tenure, and the power to erect buildings and the right of full compensation for all improvements. The resolution was seconded by Sir Walter Foster and supported by Mr. R. W. Perks, Mr. F. S. Stevenson, Mr. J. Spencer Balfour, Mr. G. M. Ball, and the Rev. W. Tuckwell, and carried with enthusiasm. The last resolution was moved by Sir Wilfrid Lawson, again affirming the declarations of the Council in favour of "A thorough reform of the land laws, such as will secure—(a) The repeal of the laws of primogeniture and entail; (b) Freedom of sale and

transfer; (c) The just taxation of land values and ground rents; (d) Compensation, to town and country tenants, for both disturbance and improvement, together with a simplified process for obtaining such compensation; (e) The enfranchisement of leaseholds; The direct popular veto on the liquor traffic; The Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Established Church in Scotland; The equalisation of the Death Duties upon real and personal property; The just division of rates between owner and occupier; The taxation of Mining Royalties; A 'Free Breakfast Table'; The extension of the Factory Acts; and The 'mending or ending' of the House of Lords."

The Liberals had during the year been considerably encouraged by the results of some of the bye-elections, though at the same time the work of perfectly welding together the Liberals who dissented from Home Rule and their Tory companions was proceeding. In November, in connection with the meeting of the National Union of Conservative Associations, there was a luncheon in the Birmingham Town Hall, when Lord Salisbury was the chief guest, and when Mr. Chamberlain made an interesting statement. He began at once by defending his position. "It is not for a mean, personal or private question," he said, "that one can repudiate one's old leader." He had looked forward, he said, to reunion with his old friends. "But if I refer

to that now," he added, "it is to say, that since then the gulf has widened and deepened; now I neither look for nor desire reunion." Two days later Mr. John Morley attended a great meeting at Wolverhampton, in which he replied to the Birmingham speeches. He spoke with regret upon personal and private grounds at Mr. Chamberlain's formal and definite declaration that he had parted company with his old friends, his old colleagues, and his old party. "But," said Mr. Morley, "he cannot be a more active opponent than he has been for four years past." On the succeeding Saturday Mr. Gladstone delivered an address at Port Sunlight, in the Wirral peninsula. Referring to the position of the Dissident Liberals, he said: "Mists are being lifted and ambiguities are being cleared up, the true positions and the true tendencies of those who call themselves Liberal Unionists—with some ambiguity of language, because they are neither Unionists nor Liberals, and whom we term not unkindly but with historic truth Dissident Liberals—are beginning to understand their own position. Hitherto they have declared that they retain in full an ardent Liberalism." Speaking of a similar declaration of Lord Hartington's, Mr. Gladstone said: "I think you will understand it, and I think Rossendale will understand it, for the last rag, or pretext, or shadow of Liberalism that hung on Lord Hartington is now removed by his



own frankness." In the first week of December Sir William Harcourt, in addressing his constituents, replied to Mr. Chamberlain, whom he called "the Bazaine of Birmingham": "The reception of Mr. Chamberlain into the Tory Church was a fine stage effect; it was accompanied by all the solemnities which belonged to a rite of that description. There was the Confession, the Abjuration, and after that the Absolution. He had to cry *Peccavi; mea culpa, mea culpa!* The old doctrine of 'Ransom' was to be repented and atoned for. He humbled himself in dust and ashes for his old faith. . . . Mr. Chamberlain's melodramatic declaration that he did not desire reunion with the Liberal party was worthy of a minor theatre. The Liberal party may reply to him in the language of the simple and well-known ballad, "'Nobody asked you, sir," she said.' It is a long time since reunion has been possible for Mr. Chamberlain, however much he may have desired it. His account in the books of the Liberal party has long been closed, and written opposite to his name are the words, 'No effects.' . . . Mr. Chamberlain has ceased to be a mischievous Liberal, and has become a harmless Tory."

The cleavage in the Liberal party was now complete, and the political atmosphere was to some extent cleared. Liberals everywhere adopted the Newcastle programme as their platform, and the proposals were approved also by a unique

conference of agricultural labourers, held at the Memorial Hall in London, under the auspices of the National Liberal Federation, and the direct result of a series of articles which Mr. (now Sir) J. R. Robinson, of the *Daily News*, had had written for his journal on "Life in our Villages." The Liberal party were, indeed, getting very ready to fight and win the next election. Then came the general election of 1892. The result was to convert the Unionist majority of 66 (the bye-elections had reduced it to that during the life of the Parliament), into a Home Rule majority of 40. Mr. Gladstone was staying with Lord Rosebery (who in the spring had been made a Knight of the Garter) at Dalmeny when the last results came in, and, though pleased with victory, he sadly said that the majority was by no means large enough. The Government did not immediately resign, but they were defeated on August 11, on an amendment moved by Mr. Asquith, and then Mr. Gladstone formed his Government, which included:—

Prime Minister, and First

Lord of the Treasury . . . . .	Mr. Gladstone.
Foreign Secretary . . . . .	Lord Rosebery.
Chancellor of the Exchequer . . . . .	Sir William Harcourt.
Secretary for War . . . . .	Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.
President of the Local Govern- ment Board . . . . .	Mr. (afterwards Sir) H. Fowler.
Home Secretary . . . . .	Mr. Asquith.
Vice-President of the Council . . . . .	Mr. Acland.

Immediately the general election was over Lord Rosebery had gone away for a yachting tour with his two sons. He was recalled by Mr. Gladstone, who pressed him to become Foreign Secretary. Lord Rosebery declined, regretfully, but firmly. His health was not good: that was the reason for the refusal; he did not feel equal to the strain. It was, however, felt that the Gladstone Government must include Lord Rosebery—that it would be seriously weakened if he remained outside the Cabinet; and Lord Rosebery at length gave way, and, to the satisfaction of all sections in the country, accepted the foreign portfolio, where he administered the affairs of the department with firmness, skill, and that true Imperial spirit which he had always exhibited. The holding of the office is so recent that it is unnecessary to quote the opinions expressed regarding Lord Rosebery's work there. On all hands it was admitted that he was the best Foreign Secretary we had had for many years—"better than Salisbury" some critics did not hesitate to assert.

Lord Rosebery had during his first tenure of office completed one Commercial Convention with Spain. In 1893 another was signed. It provided:

"ARTICLE I.—The Spanish Government undertakes to continue to give to the United Kingdom and to Her Britannic Majesty's Colonies and foreign possessions their minimum tariff, as well as all advantages relating to commerce, navigation,

and consular rights and privileges contained in any treaty or agreement concluded or to be concluded with any European State, except Portugal, as long as such advantages affect the commerce, navigation, and consular rights and privileges of the United Kingdom.

“ This clause shall extend to any advantage given to such third European State in Cuba, Porto Rico, or other Spanish Colonies or foreign possessions.

“ARTICLE II.—The Government of Her Britannic Majesty will continue to grant to Spain, her Colonies and foreign possessions, most-favoured-nation treatment in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and in Her Britannic Majesty’s Colonies and foreign possessions, in all that concerns commerce, navigation, and consular rights and privileges.

“ It is further agreed that it shall be open to any British Colony to withdraw from the present Agreement on notice to this effect being given by Her Majesty’s Ambassador at Madrid to the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs within six months after the date of its signature.

“ The Government of Her Britannic Majesty engage further not to propose to Parliament, while the present Agreement remains in force, any increase of the customs duties now levied on Spanish goods imported into the United Kingdom.”

Another matter which was carried through successfully, under great difficulties, was the extradition

of Jabez Spencer Balfour, formerly a Liberal M.P., and the financier of the Liberator schemes. That the matter was troublesome is shown by the following extracts from the correspondence:—

The Earl of Rosebery to Mr. Welby.

“FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 22, 1893, 3.50 p.m.*

“J. S. Balfour, ex-M.P., accused of very serious frauds. Is supposed at present to be in the Argentine Republic. Her Majesty’s Government are very anxious that his arrest should be effected, and would be glad to ascertain whether the Argentine Government would be prepared to grant extradition pending the ratification of the Treaty,<sup>1</sup> provided that the necessary proof be produced. If they will consent, information for provisional arrest will be sent to you by telegraph, and warrant and documents by post.”

Mr. Welby to the Earl of Rosebery.

“BUENOS AYRES, *February 25, 1893.*

“In reply to your lordship’s telegram, dated the 23rd instant, I have the honour to state that the Argentine Government refuse to grant the extradition of J. S. Balfour unless, in the absence of the ratification of the Treaty, reciprocity is conceded, and they refer to the decision given in the case of James Coupe, as reported in Mr. Pakenham’s despatch of the 3rd November, 1890.”

<sup>1</sup> A Treaty which had been previously discussed but not ratified.

The Earl of Rosebery to Mr. Welby.

“FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 1, 1893, 5.30 p.m.*

“EXTRADITION.—Her Majesty's Government are only in a position to grant reciprocity by means of a Treaty. The present state of things is dangerous and derogatory to the Argentine Government. Urge the completion of Treaty on grounds of mutual interest.”

The following interesting description of Balfour was given by the Earl of Rosebery to Mr. Satow :—

“FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 3, 1893, 4 p.m.*

“JABEZ SPENCER BALFOUR, late Member of Parliament, absconded, charged with fraud as Director of Public Company, and obtaining money by false pretences. Sums charged in warrants, £20,000. Balfour believed to be residing in Buenos Ayres. Age 50, looks 55; height, 5 ft. 6 in.; broad shoulders; very corpulent; hair dark, turning grey, parted centre, thin top of head; eyebrows dark; nose short; face full; complexion florid; straggling beard; dark, slight whiskers, turning grey; dark, slight moustache; appearance of having weak legs; usually dressed in dark jacket; gentlemanly appearance.

“—————, accountant, London, passenger for Buenos Ayres on the 29th March, steamship *Sorata*, berth 89, due Monte Video on the 23rd April, to transact business with Balfour, who

may go to Monte Video to meet —. Apply for provisional arrest if Balfour lands at Monte Video.”

Nevertheless, difficult as the matter was, Lord Rosebery saw it through, and by December 15, 1893, had secured the ratification of a treaty between Great Britain and the Argentine for the Mutual Extradition of Fugitive Criminals.

Other matters of importance which were secured by Lord Rosebery were an agreement between Great Britain and France, respecting the territories in the region of the Upper Mekong, signed at Paris on July 31 and November 25, 1893. The matter caused grave anxiety, and but for the skilful conduct of the negotiations it might have landed us in very serious difficulties with France, though Siam was disappointed with the result. Nevertheless, when threatened troubles were over, it was undoubtedly of the utmost importance that a buffer state should be arranged to separate the Asiatic possessions of the two nations, and this was satisfactorily arranged. Throughout all his work it was clear that Lord Rosebery had a lively appreciation of the great importance of Indian and Colonial questions. He was always an Imperialist, and speaking at the City Liberal Club, he said :

“ I think you may say this—that if you went to the Foreign Office to-morrow and said, ‘ We will remove from this office the discussion of

every foreign question which has relation to the Colonies or to the Indian Empire'—I will not say that you could do away with the Foreign Office on the Estimates, but I do say that you could very materially reduce the staff. That is a fact that is not sufficiently known. Our great Empire has pulled us, so to speak, by the coat-tails, out of the European system; and though, with our great predominance, our great moral influence, and our great fleet, with our traditions in Europe, and with our aspirations to preserve the peace of Europe, we can never remove ourselves altogether from the European system, we must recognise that our foreign policy has become a Colonial policy, and is in reality at this moment much more dictated from the extremities of the Empire than it is from London itself. That is a very remarkable fact. Is it a fact that we should deplore? I think not."

The Session of 1893 was one of the most notable in the history of Parliaments. It saw the Home Rule Bill of Mr. Gladstone brought in and passed by them and sent to the House of Lords. In September the Bill was in the House of Lords, and on its second reading Lord Rosebery, after complimenting the Earl of Selborne on his speech, said:

"The speech of the noble earl, as I heard it, divided itself into two distinct parts. The last part was of a kind with which all readers



of history are familiar, in which the word 'capitulation' frequently occurred, and from which the phrase 'unknown and rash experiments' was not absent; exactly the type of speech, in fact, which has been made against every great reform of the century—Catholic Emancipation, the first Reform Bill, and the Repeal of the Corn Laws. The first part of the speech was of a more detailed character. I do not propose, and indeed I should not be competent, to follow the noble and learned earl in that critical and legal examination of the Bill to which he subjected it with the arts of a great lawyer, the arts of a great Chancellor; but I hope he will not think me disrespectful if I say that that argument, elaborate and interesting as it was, only added to the unreality of the debate in which we have been taking part.

"He supplied in one of his closing sentences the reason why it was unnecessary to discuss the criticisms which he has submitted to your lordships, because, he said, 'you are not legislating for to-day or for to-morrow.' He was right. We are legislating for this day six months. This is not a dissecting-room; it is the chamber of death itself. Somewhere in the passage, in that short lobby that leads from the House of Commons to the House of Lords, this Bill caught its death of some passing chill, and it is, if I may say so humbly, an interesting but an academic discussion, unreal in every part and particle of it, to which

we have been listening for the last three days. If any peer will say that he came here with his mind open to argument, prepared to consider the Bill on its merits, prepared, if necessary, listening either to the accents of noble lords below the gangway or to the accents of the noble lords above, either to accept or to reject this Bill, according to the arguments that were offered, I confess he will have made a very considerable breach in the opinion that I have formed of this debate. I waited a moment in case any noble lord would arise and state that his mind was in that state of angelic candour, but as none has chosen to place himself in that position, I may take it for granted that my opinion is correct, and that none of your lordships has entered this House except with a preconceived resolution for or against the Bill. I think that from one or two noble peers I did hear with a sort of blushing diffidence that they were of opinion that this Bill would ultimately be rejected.

“The other reason for which this discussion has been unreal and academical is, that there is no equal division of parties in this House. There is only one party in this House and a percentage of another. I do not know what is the exact number of the legions which my noble friend who leads this House with consummate ability professes to muster under his standard, but I venture to think it would be most fitly described by the

couplet that Sidney Smith put into his description of the salad :

Let onion atoms lurk within the bowl,  
And, half suspected, animate the whole.

“Under the circumstances of this debate it is therefore not remarkable that the speeches have divided themselves mainly into two categories and classes. There are the speeches of denunciation, and among these I will give a high and honoured rank to the speech of the noble duke, the Duke of Argyll, whom I do not see in his place, who told us with an engaging candour that he could not treat this subject with rosewater. I have nothing to say except in a spirit of gratitude of the noble duke. He treated me in a spirit to which I am entirely unaccustomed from him, and, if I may reverse an expression in Scripture, I expected a stone and he gave me bread. He was good enough to praise a little book which I not long ago published. He read extracts from that little book, as if they were in any respect damaging to the position of the Government regarding Home Rule. From not one of the statements he read out, or from any of the statements in that little book, have I seen the slightest cause to recede; but at the same time it does not in any degree impair my general loyalty to the course which has been pursued by her Majesty’s Government.

“One of the great specialities of the noble duke is this—that he is always going to make a speech about Home Rule on every subject which may present itself to your lordships, but that he never gets to Home Rule. Just as he is approaching it, just as we think we have the cue to the argument for which we have so long sought, he is seized by that fatal and malignant disease to which he is more subject perhaps than any other of the many invalids who suffer under it in both Houses of Parliament—*lues Gladstoniana*. He is led away by some morbid spirit to discuss and analyse the views and the speeches of the statesman whom he is proud and pleased to call, in every term of affection, his ‘right honourable friend.’ I do not see why candour should not reign among friends, but I do think the noble duke reads more into the character of my right honourable friend than even his greatest admirers have been able to perceive. He reminds me of the lines in ‘The Rejected Addresses’:

Who makes the quartern loaf and Luddites rise?  
 Who fills the butchers’ shops with large blue flies?

“I cannot help thinking that, as my right hon. friend and the noble duke advance in years, the flies perceived by the noble duke get larger and bluer on every occasion. I know that we on this bench are below his notice. We are merely Gladstonian items, blind tools of an imperious

and, if I rightly understood him, a partially insane Prime Minister.

“It is a comfort under these circumstances to find out that he had once been one of these Gladstonian items himself. I had almost forgotten the lapse of time since he left the Liberal party, but he reminded us last night, with a good deal of expression and force, that he had been a member of a Cabinet that had proposed a Bill which he considered eminently absurd—a confession which I do not suppose that any one of my colleagues on that bench, who have been longer in Gladstonian Cabinets than I have, is able to make on this or any other occasion. I pass from the choice specimen of invective provided by the noble duke to the more full-flavoured, and perhaps from my point of view equally interesting, specimen provided by the noble marquis last night. It was one of the most interesting speeches I ever heard in my life. It was like a dictionary of animated quotations. He had an enormous mass of elegant extracts in his hand, and he read them out sometimes from Irish sources and sometimes from Ministerial sources. He is bitten by a disease parallel but not exactly similar to that under which the Duke of Argyll is suffering. His disease is the *morbis Spenceranus*. As I heard him, I began faintly to imagine the course of debate in an Irish Second Chamber when that Irish Second Chamber should come into being, because it was like Cicero of

Ulster denouncing Catiline of Cork with outstretched finger, piercing eyes, and queries in every interruption; and I am glad to find that my noble friend is able to be present this evening without any material deterioration of his health.

“I said there were two classes into which the speeches of this debate divided themselves. One is mainly the speech of invective. That, I confess, is the speech I prefer, as being more lively. The other is the speech of detailed examination of the measure that you have determined to destroy. I do not know why noble lords think it right to fire this sort of military salute over the grave of this Bill. Every one of their speeches is couched in the spirit of Antony’s speech in the Senate-house: ‘I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.’ We do not expect praise of the Bill from noble lords below the gangway or from noble lords opposite, but I think they might, under the very delicate circumstances of the case, spare us any detailed criticism, or, in fact, any detailed reasons founded on the Bill, when they have already made up their minds.

“May I take three instances of what I mean? I will take the instance of the noble and learned lord who has just sat down. He discussed at great length and with every variety of treatment the question of the retention of the Irish members in Parliament. Now, I say that the retention of the Irish members in Parliament, though a very

important detail, though an organic detail, is only a detail still, and that if the noble and learned earl had any genuine and sincere wish to discuss this Bill on its merits he might perfectly well have voted for the second reading, reserving this point of the retention of the Irish members. I think he might give us some credit for the fact that the retention or exclusion of the Irish members is not a point unattended altogether by difficulty. In 1886 we proposed their entire exclusion. From what I understand to-night, the noble and learned earl has a preference for that course. I wish he had told us so in 1886. [The Earl of Selborne.—“I did.”]

“I am greatly obliged to the noble and learned earl; the circumstance escaped my recollection. What we did hear were much louder voices demanding the retention of the Irish members as essential to the integrity and supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. If the noble and learned earl prefers that course, I can tell him that, as far as I can gather from his public speeches, he has a very illustrious colleague in that preference—no less than the Prime Minister himself. No one who read the speech of the Prime Minister on the second reading, no one who has read his speeches in the country, will doubt that it was owing to the overwhelming pressure of public opinion, both within and without his party, that he gave way on that particular point to the wishes

of those around him. And I must say this about the rather jaunty manner in which noble lords opposite bestow their criticism on this Bill. They seem to think that any criticism is fatal to any clause; that the Bills which they are in the habit of introducing are essentially perfect and unamendable; and that the subject with which we have to deal, if properly dealt with, would present no difficulty at all.

“To-night I would ask to waive all discussion of the Bill, for the reason that, in my opinion, first, the discussion is an unreal discussion; and secondly, the point on which we are at issue to-night is much larger than this Bill or than any Bill. It is the vast question of the policy which we propose for Ireland—a policy which, on the one side, is founded on the experience of the past, and which, on the other side, is in the womb of the future. I cannot help thinking that in taking this view of this discussion, and in making it a question of a policy and not of a Bill, we might do something to raise both the debate and ourselves. We might do something better than chew the dry bones of the Bill, or what is left of them by the keen and unwearied teeth of the House of Commons, and we might at least desist from the petty and pitiful personal recrimination which has been indulged in. There is not one of you, my lords, who in his heart believes that we are Separatists and traitors and place-hunters. There



is not one sane member of your lordships' House who believes in the imputations which are made freely outside, though not inside this House, on the honesty of our motives. And we, on our side, do not believe that you are statesmen anxious to tyrannise and ride roughshod over the Irish people, and imbrue your hands in Irish gore.

“The truth is very simple; and if we were to open our eyes to that truth we should greatly facilitate discussion. We are two political parties disagreeing as to the best practical method of governing and conciliating Ireland. That is a very great question in itself. No much greater question could occupy us. It is a question which has puzzled the wisest minds of ages past; and I do not believe that we, in attempting to arrive at an honest conclusion on this subject, will much further our purpose by blackening the political morality of a political party. You may be certain, in regard to this controversy, of the infallibility of the course you have pursued or propose to pursue. I may frankly say that I am by no means sure of mine. I am not certain about anything with regard to Ireland. I was never more gratified than by those cheers. They show that there are some points, at least, on which noble lords opposite have not yet made up their minds. They are not quite certain about Ireland. That is, at least, a ray of hope. I say that I am not certain about Ireland; but I can at least

say this, that I have come to the conclusion at which I have arrived after a long and painful study—that I have arrived at the convictions which I hold in the teeth of all, or almost all, that would tend to make me take the other side.

“We here have known the bitterest pang that can fall to public men to suffer. We have known the separation from colleagues and friends. We have known not merely separation from colleagues, but the bitterness of their denunciations of us; and I venture to say that if we had been anxious to lead a quiet life or a pleasant life, if we had been willing to sacrifice our convictions, as you think or assert that we have sacrificed them, it would not have been in the direction which we are pursuing that we should have gone. My Lords, I say then to-night that it is not the Bill, but the policy, which is at issue, and nobody knows that better than your lordships. Your treatment of the Bill shows it both in the House of Lords and in the House of Commons.

“It seems to me that there were in the House of Commons two logical courses to pursue, and only two, with regard to the Bill. The first was to say that you could not touch it in any shape or form; that you would have no dealings with the accursed thing; that you would vote for its rejection on the second reading; and that nothing

would induce you to incur any responsibility for any detail of the Bill. The other course was this. Having accepted the second reading as the expression of the voice of Ireland on its own destiny, and the voice of the House of Commons as to what it thought best for Ireland, that you should endeavour at any rate to manipulate it in order to get it as much to your minds as possible. I am perfectly certain of this—and I am speaking without consultation with, but in the hearing of, many of my colleagues—that if you had taken that second course, and frankly accepted the principle of some large measure of local legislature in Ireland, and had offered *bonâ fide* suggestions with a view of bringing that to pass in a manner consonant, as you believed, with the safety and integrity of the Empire, we should have held out not one, but both hands to welcome your assistance.

“My Lords, the Opposition in the House of Commons did not care to take either course. The course pursued reminded me of a very interesting national sport to which, perhaps, none of your lordships are addicted—I mean the Spanish bull-fight. The bull-fight in Spain is a national and almost sacred institution. They have to kill the bull, that is the primary purpose. You had to kill the Bill, that was your purpose; and you went about it very much in the same way. The first act of the drama is when the

*toreadors*, or lance-bearers, attack the bull openly. The bull generally gets the better of them, and they are hurried from the scene. That stage is analogous to the second reading of our Bill. Then comes the stage when the light infantry of the bull-ring—I cannot pronounce their name, but I can write it on paper—attempt to fix light darts into the bull, to prick it all over, and to annoy and exasperate it in every way, not for the purpose of killing it or wounding it seriously, but apparently out of general ‘cussedness.’ That, I think, reflects not unfaithfully the Committee stage. Then comes the last and most solemn process of all, when the *matador* comes into the ring. In one hand he holds the sword for the purpose of killing the bull, and in the other a cloak with which to mislead the bull as to his intentions. And I think I recognise the noble marquis opposite in the features of the *matador*.

“The contrast in the treatment of the Bill by the two Houses is very remarkable. The House of Commons lingered over it with a sort of affectionate solicitude. If they saw the slightest danger of its departure they hastily pinned new sheets of amendments to its wings, and it might be said almost that they viewed its appearance and disappearance with equal regret. I do not know of anything like it since the occasion when the well-known traveller Herman Melville was surrounded by almost every luxury and attention

on the island of Tahiti, when nothing was too good for him, and he enjoyed it all, till he found out that it was only preparing him for a meal that was subsequently to take place on his own carcase. But the House of Lords treats this Bill in a very different spirit. It gives it a very short shrift indeed. Less than a week is sufficient from the time of its leaving the House of Commons for its destruction in the House of Lords. Here there are none of those little attentions which distinguished it in the House of Commons. There are no amendments, no instructions to the Committee, and no Committee to instruct.

“I do not know that there is anything which this Bill, in its treatment, so much resembles as the old recipe for cooking a pike. You fill the pike with everything that is most rich, rare, and toothsome in quality, and, having done that, you fling the pike out of the window as being of no value at all. This was very humorous behaviour of the Tory party in the House of Commons, and it is not altogether without humour in the House of Lords. But surely your conduct is hardly respectful to your colleagues in the House of Commons! At what a price do you value all their ability, their energy, and their time! I know that they did not attempt obstruction; such a course as that they would indignantly repudiate. But they did attempt legislation. They did suc-

ceed in introducing some clauses into the Bill ; and the result of all their efforts, of all their quips and cranks, of all their philippics, of all their pugilistic encounters is, that at the moment the Bill arrives at the House of Lords you have nothing to say to it at all.

“I do not know whether we are to consider that the course of the House of Commons was entirely a matter of blowing soap-bubbles ; that it was merely a sham fight ; that it was merely the playing of a big fish, while confident in the conviction that the noble duke was on the bank ready with the gaff for it. There was one very instructive illustration of the way in which this Bill was treated by the Conservative party in the House of Commons. And when I say the Conservative party, I do not mean the free and uncontrollable free-lances of the Conservative party, but the solid and respectable and almost venerable occupants of the front bench. I will take the clause on which the noble and learned earl has spent so much time, the ninth clause—now, I think, the tenth. Let us apply to that the test of either not touching ‘the accursed thing,’ or only touching ‘the accursed thing’ in order to amend it in some given direction. On July 10 the front Conservative bench voted in Committee for retaining the whole of the one hundred and three members instead of eighty to vote for Imperial purposes. That was a large and liberal allowance,

even more liberal than the noble and learned earl would be inclined to concede. This was the way in which the Conservative Opposition in the House of Commons endeavoured to avoid the evil of too large an Irish mixture in the Imperial Parliament. The same day they voted on an amendment by Mr. Heneage for the total exclusion of all the Irish members. On July 11 an amendment was proposed by Mr. Seton-Karr to reduce the number to forty-eight; on July 13 they voted in favour of the 'in-and-out' arrangement against Mr. Gladstone's final proposal of eighty members for all purposes; and last, they voted to omit the clause altogether.

" 'Hear, hear,' says the noble viscount opposite. Will the noble viscount tell me the object of these tactics? Was it to bring parliamentary institutions into contempt? I do not credit the noble viscount, one of the pillars of the Constitution, with any such nefarious design; but to the rank outsider, the armchair critic, it appears as if the real design was to bring parliamentary institutions into disrepute. It has had that effect; I do not know whether it was meant to bring them into disrepute, and invite some Cromwell to put an end to them both for Imperial and Irish purposes. I say that, great as has been the responsibility of the House of Commons in this matter, your responsibility is tenfold greater.

" You have undertaken a tremendous responsi-

bility. I will not ask what means you have taken to fortify yourselves for the contest in which you are preparing to enter. I will say nothing as to the general position of this House. I have never concealed my opinion as to the unfortunate condition of an unreformed House of Lords. On two occasions I have brought that subject before your lordships. For any peer holding the opinions that I do to bring any subject in any circumstances before this House is merely waste of time and breath. But I will say this, and I say it in sober seriousness, without any wish to say anything that could be disagreeable to the noble marquis opposite, for whose abilities I entertain a sincere admiration: I do believe that perhaps the gravest reproach that posterity and history will bring against his six years of government is this—that he made no serious attempt to reform the Second Chamber, which, after all, is the pillar of the Conservative party. I am sure that he himself will be the last to disclaim any such description for the little Bill which was being withdrawn by the late Mr. Smith in the House of Commons at the time he was about to explain it to us in the House of Lords. But I venture to think, with regard to this contest in which you are about to engage, there is a particular consideration which should have not much less weight with you than the general consideration which I have submitted to you.



“The noble marquis (Lord Zetland) alluded the other night, in terms of some disparagement, to the fact that the benches behind the Government were not swarming with Irish peers. They do not usually swarm with peers of any kind, and I do not particularly know why on this occasion they should swarm with Irish peers. There are, as I see from a return recently issued, one hundred and thirteen Irish peers who have seats, I think, in this House. I want to know—because it is an important factor in fighting five-sixths of the popular representation of Ireland—how many of those Irish peers can be said in any sense whatever to represent any part of Ireland except that fraction of a province which you choose for your own purposes to call the province of Ulster? I say it without the slightest desire to say anything that may be offensive to an Irish peer, but at the same time it is true. The noble lord (Lord Muskerry) who spoke with great vehemence from behind the Opposition bench the other night told us two or three times in the course of his speech that he knew all about Ireland. That is not the question. The question on this occasion is—I do not wish to put it offensively—what does Ireland know about him? Does he represent Ireland in any shape or form? Because if this House is going with one hundred and thirteen Irish peers, who, I venture to say, can only represent one class

in Ireland, to enter into a contest with the House of Commons on a subject in which they are face to face with five-sixths of the Irish representation, on a subject which concerns all and every class in Ireland, then I say they are very insufficiently equipped indeed. I repeat that in my opinion your responsibility with regard to this Bill is infinitely greater than the House of Commons. I will tell you why. It is because you are masters of the situation, and you have the power absolutely in your hands. The noble duke who moved the rejection of this Bill, and whose speech I had the misfortune not to hear, at Ilkley recently spoke of the reasons which made him desirous to move the rejection of this Bill.

“One of the reasons he gave was that the Bill has not had adequate opportunity of discussion. Now, I say, you are in the position of being able to give it the fullest and freest opportunity. If your objection to this Bill was really on the ground that it had not had sufficient discussion, you could in a moment put an end to that complaint, and give it more discussion than any Bill ever received. You could, if you have any wish to settle this Irish question in a way in which I have sometimes felt it will be settled, by an agreement between both political parties, you have an opportunity on this occasion, which I suppose you are going to throw away, of obtaining adequate discussion and of having a

conference which should settle the terms on which Ireland should have self-government in the future—a conference not less elaborate, not less important, nor less representative than that which met in May, 1787, to settle the matchless constitution of the United States. You may say that you do not wish to have anything to do with any form of Home Rule. But that is not the case. I do not know what it may be with noble lords opposite, but, after all, noble lords must remember that many of the reforms they have opposed they have come with the greatest philosophy to propose themselves in course of time; and therefore they must not be too absolutely certain that the course they are likely to pursue on this occasion is conclusive.

“ But with regard to the Liberal Unionist leaders the case is different indeed. We have the election addresses of Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Hartington in 1886, in which they plainly state and lay down the fact that, after all, Home Rule is mainly a question of degree; and they state the limitations succinctly and definitely within which they may be prepared to grant Home Rule. Are they of that opinion now? If so, the noble duke was singularly ill-advised in moving the rejection of this Bill, because what might you have done? You might have allowed the second reading to pass *sub silentio*, or have carried it with every form of protest; but when

you got into Committee you might have modelled the Bill to your liking. You might have struck out every clause you disliked—perhaps you will say that would be every clause—then it would have been open to you to substitute what clauses you preferred. You might have had an opportunity—which, of course, you are not going to take—of declaring and defining your policy with regard to this great question of Ireland. The Bill might then have gone down to the House of Commons, where it would have met, no doubt, with a stout resistance.

“ But what would ultimately have come about, what would have happened if you and they had both insisted on the mass of your amendments? A conference might have taken place between the two Houses which might have led to a future result ; and I say that the patriotic course for your lordships to have taken, unless you are determined never to devolve any local business to Ireland, was to give this Bill a second reading, and take an opportunity of settling with the other House. I find that suggestion receives very little favour from noble lords opposite. I can quite understand the prospect of spending laborious days and nights in Committee right through September, far into October, with perhaps a conference in November, is not particularly inviting ; but I am not sure, according to the precedent we have before us, that we are not

likely to spend a great deal more time in other ways if some such course as this is not adopted.

“We have been constantly taunted by noble lords opposite with changing our minds in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the bidding of a scarcely responsible politician. For us, after all, knowing what our fate in the division is likely to be, this is the main question: How did it come about that in the year 1886 a great English party, comprising responsible men—an ex-Viceroy of Ireland and an ex-Chief Secretary—deliberately proposed a measure of Home Rule, a measure which they resisted for eighty years? The noble and learned lord has given his history; and I should like, on the other hand, to be allowed to give mine, because, after all, it is a point on which our characters are at stake. I speak as a witness, but not as an enthusiastic witness, in favour of Home Rule. With me, at any rate, for I am speaking for one moment of myself, Home Rule is not a fanaticism; it is not a question of sentiment; it is scarcely even a question of history. It is not a counsel of perfection; but it is on the whole the best of the courses to be pursued in dealing with a highly critical and complex subject. With me, at any rate, it is merely a question of policy, and as such alone I argue it. I argue it simply as a question of policy, and I take it no higher and no lower than that. It seems to me that

the function of any one who pretends to be a statesman is to attempt to sever what is really wheat from what is really chaff. It is a long and laborious process, and it is in attempting to do that with regard to the Irish question that I have become a supporter of Home Rule. I will go one step farther. I say that I am not an enthusiastic witness on this subject, and I will make one or two other admissions. The noble duke (the Duke of Argyll) spoke strongly last night about the Union; he said it was a matter of necessity, and I entirely agree with the noble duke. I believe that there is scarcely any statesman who, if he had been in Mr. Pitt's place, confronted with such a war as that which he had to face, confronted with the rebellion of 1798, would not have sought in the Union a refuge and a guarantee against Irish disaffection. But I must also add this—the Union was only a portion of Mr. Pitt's policy. I believe that if the whole of his policy had been adopted—if the payment of the Catholic clergy, if Catholic emancipation, if the abolition of tithes had been carried concurrently with the Act of Union—we should not now be discussing a Home Rule Bill.

“So far we seem to be in some measure of accord. But unfortunately much has happened since the Union. The Duke of Argyll said that the last utterance of Grattan was in favour of the Union. Well, I think the most striking

sentence in all Grattan's speeches occurs in the last of those speeches; and it is not favourable to the Union. It is this: 'The ocean protests against separation, and the sea against the Union.' What he meant, I take it, was this—that while separation from the imperial control of Great Britain was impossible because of the ocean which surrounds these islands, it was equally impossible, because of the sea that separated them, to attempt to administer Irish local affairs at Westminster.

“That is all the admission I have to make with regard to this question.

“Our views of Home Rule are founded upon history; but they are founded on a history somewhat more recent than the Union—on very recent history indeed. The noble and learned earl said, very truly, that the departure in favour of Home Rule was taken in 1885. Now, I am going to approach a subject on which the noble marquis, the leader of the Opposition, is extremely sensitive, and I shall be greatly surprised if I get to the end of my few sentences without an interruption or interpellation from him. What occurred in 1885 to make this change in our course? It was simply this: we left office upon a side issue—I think it was a vote with regard to the beer duties; and we went out prepared to renew certain clauses of the Coercion Act, certain clauses which we thought necessary with

our detailed knowledge of Irish administration and affairs. The noble marquis came in. Last night the noble marquis said he was most unwilling to come in—that he was forced to come in. That is very much at variance with my recollection. I do not, of course, know what the internal feelings of the noble marquis were; that no one can judge but himself. If he means that he was forced to come in by his followers who wanted to come in, I believe that what he says is strictly and accurately true. But if he says he was in any sense forced to come in by our Government, his memory is playing him a trick.

“What occurred was this; I remember perfectly well. The noble marquis entered into some negotiations with the outgoing Government as to the measure of support he would receive if he was prepared to take office. The noble marquis asked for the support of the then Government until the general election took place, and he said that without that support he would not take office. We were unable to give him that support; we told him so; and yet he took office. Therefore I am under the impression that if there was any compulsion on the noble marquis to take office, it was not, as he implied, from this side of the House, but it was from his own side. What happened? The noble marquis, without the slightest examination into the facts of the case, without even the twenty-



four hours he thought necessary in 1886 to examine the state of Ireland, without any possible examination of the state of the case, said he was determined to try the experiment of governing Ireland without what was called coercion. That was a very grave announcement, because it cut altogether the ground from beneath the feet of the Liberal party. Coercion is a valuable instrument, but coercion demands continuity. If either party is prepared as a matter of party politics to abandon any idea of administering coercion without regard to the circumstances of the case, from that time coercion becomes impossible.

“I will give an illustration, but I will not give it as from myself; it would not be proper to do so, because of the office I hold. I remember that Mr. Chamberlain, in a famous and much-quoted speech, said that the rule of England in Ireland was parallel to that of Russia in Poland or of Austria in Venice. I do not know what takes place in Poland now; therefore I would rather take the case of Austria and Venice, which is now merely matter of history. Austria held Venice entirely by coercion. Would Austria have been able to hold Venice if every four or five years a party was to come in and announce that it had not examined the case, but it was prepared to drop coercion? Does it stand to common sense? The Venetians might have been better off, but the rule of Austria as described

by Mr. Chamberlain would have come to an end. The Liberal party, forced, and I think happily forced, from coercion, was obliged to try a new experiment and a new departure. We were face to face not merely with the abandonment of coercion by the opposite party, but we were also face to face with the moral and material failure of the Union to secure prosperity to Ireland. What was the proof of the moral failure? It was that eighty or ninety members out of a hundred came back from Ireland prepared to strike a mortal blow at that Union.

“The late Lord Chancellor of Ireland cast a good deal of ridicule upon statistics of potatoes grown to the acre now as compared with former days, and seemed to think these details were beneath the notice of a statesman; but I venture to think that, if the proverb correctly describes as the greatest benefactor of his species the man who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before, it is not unnatural to take the correlative view, and say that that Government is not the greatest benefactor of its species that makes one blade grow where two grew before. We then were driven, and not unwillingly driven, to the policy of Home Rule; all other policies we had tried had failed,—this alone remained, and we tried it. The Bill of 1886 was introduced with a burst of enthusiasm, and rejected by a considerable majority in the House of Commons, and at the

polls by an overwhelming majority. I do not regret that defeat, and I am sure noble lords opposite will not regret it either. I do not regret it, because it was good for the Liberal party to have a full experience in opposition of the advantage of the measure they had proposed in 1886 by contrast with the policy proposed by their successors. It was good, also, because it made the Irish party more known to the Liberal party; and in the third place, because it tested the professions of the Government and of their Liberal Unionist supporters. The professions of the Liberal Unionists were to have no coercion and no land purchase. Since that time circumstances have widely changed. There has been a Land Purchase Bill involving an expenditure of ten millions, and there has been a Coercion Bill accompanied by the curt instruction, 'Do not hesitate, if necessary, to shoot.' All this confirms our view that the course we had chosen was the one and only alternative to coercion. After that experience we came to this Bill.

"But we have also other motives besides history for coming to this conclusion. We have, in the first place, an Irish representation which is almost unanimously in favour of it. We have also the difficulty of understanding Ireland in England, which seems to me to be very great. I do not suppose that most wedded unions are precisely qualified to gain the historic fitch of bacon at the end of twelve months, but even then they are not

always considered a failure. But what is to be held of a couple who, after a silver or even a golden wedding, come to the Divorce Court on the ground of incompatibility of temper? That is the case with regard to Ireland. We had, besides that, the necessity of devolution, on both Imperial and local considerations. We were sick of always voting Bills that the Irish always opposed, and we were sick of voting money that the Irish always disregarded. I myself would have preferred some scheme of devolution which would have been applicable to all countries alike in the United Kingdom, such as that I indicated in that speech at Paisley which has formed so favourite a theme with the Opposition. But you cannot get all you want. There is a fatal objection to an equal scheme of devolution. The maximum you want for England would not be the minimum you want for Ireland, and so you would cause discontent to both parties without achieving your object. And we had, further, this object, that we wanted to get Ireland out of the way. We wanted to get Ireland out of the way in order that the time and energy that it engrossed might be better given to other purposes. There is another motive that I would wish to give for this Home Rule policy, and it is perhaps a more homely one. It is to some extent a feeling of mortified pride that makes the Liberal party take up Home Rule. No one can doubt that, if you could set Ireland afloat at this

moment and float her across the ocean till she reached the shores of America, within ten years, as a State of the Union, she would be as prosperous and contented as any other State of the Union. I say it is a reproach to our Empire, to our Government, and to our Parliament, that while we covet every square inch of unoccupied ground that we can administer of the world, right at the core of our Empire there is, and there has been for seven or eight centuries, a difficulty we openly confess, but with which we are hopelessly unable to deal.

“May I give two other reasons—reasons which are usually given as arguments against Home Rule, but which make me a Home Ruler at this time? The first is the phrase that is constantly used—the ‘dismemberment of the Empire.’ A more meaningless phrase was never invented. It is because I wish to avert a practical dismemberment of the Empire that I stand before your lordships as a supporter of Home Rule to-night. There has only been one great dismemberment of the Empire. That occurred about a century ago. It was when the United States broke off from their allegiance and set up as a separate State across the Atlantic. What was the cause of that dismemberment? Was it because of too great a respect for their local aspirations? No, it was your insisting on establishing your own views of law and order in that country, in disregard of the wishes of the colonists. And what I fear is this, that

if we do not arrive at some such scheme as we propose, and I do not pledge myself to the details of the scheme, we shall have that practical dismemberment which is implied by Ireland sullen, discontented, and rebellious, always at our side. There is another ground on which I am a supporter of Home Rule. It is constantly urged as an objection to any such Bill. It is on the ground of foreign policy. I am not at all sure that the Opposition are not right in saying that foreign Governments distrust the proposals for establishing a Home Rule Parliament in Ireland. But I put that down, with all respect to any distinguished representatives of foreign Powers who may be here, rather to that ignorance which all nations have of other nations, than as a deadly argument against our proposal.

“But what is the case? At present we have from twenty-five thousand to thirty thousand troops in Ireland in time of peace. What force would you want in time of war? I would ask one more question. If you were engaged in a European war, what would be the first point at which your enemy would attempt to reach you? What would be your most vulnerable point? It would, of course, be Ireland. I do not know whether they would be successful in establishing themselves there—they have made many attempts; but if, with the gigantic armies of the Continent, anything were to happen to your fleet, not twenty-

five, nor thirty, nor one hundred thousand men would prevent the invasion of Ireland, and the invasion by a foreign force would find many friends on its shores. The true defence of Ireland from the point of view of foreign policy is to give Ireland something worth defending, to give her something that no liberating nation could offer, to give her institutions which she would value as much as we value ours, and, in fine, to set up that spirit of contentment which is so sadly lacking at the present moment. While there are positive arguments in favour of our proposal, there is an overwhelming negative argument. What do you propose? Have you any scheme—any such scheme as the noble duke adumbrated in his election address of 1886, any such scheme as Mr. Chamberlain in his election address of the same year? If you had such a scheme, I venture to say it would find no unfriendly reception on these benches. We are only too anxious to get the Irish question out of the way, in order to make way for English, Scotch, and Welsh reforms. You must have a scheme. When we go out, the eighty Irish members will not go out too. They will remain with you. You may reduce them by a small percentage, and I believe that is part of your scheme, but that will not alter five-sixths of the representation of Ireland. You will not get rid of the eighty Irish members; they will remain as

a clog, a calculus, and an aneurism in the middle of your body politic, which you will have to take some drastic measure to remove. I remember what was the former policy of the noble marquis—I do not know whether it remains the same—twenty years of resolute government and free emigration. How are you to get your twenty years of resolute government? Twenty years means three Parliaments. Will you get three Parliaments to give you *carte blanche* to administer resolute government in Ireland? You have not so far been able to get more than one.

“I do not think we are prepared to give a perpetual dictatorship, but on the other hand there is a difficulty in any twenty years of resolute government. The democracy cannot govern, and will not govern, in the way you wish them to govern. You may have your Coercion Bills; you may have your ‘Do not hesitate to shoot’ policy if you will, but you will also have incidents inseparable from coercion; you will have regrettable incidents which will inspire the whole country with a horror and hatred of your policy such as existed three or four years before the general election. Is emigration any better remedy or more practicable than twenty years of resolute government? Emigration greatly increases the difficulty with which you have to deal, if you send out discontented instead of contented emigrants. If you are merely going to pour into



the United States or Australia Irish peasants torn from their homes by the impossibility of living there, going with a burning hatred of your institutions and your monarchy, you will raise up ten evils for the one you are laying.

“ You have tried your policy, and it has failed. It has reduced already your British majority, and it has produced no effect on the Irish majority in the House of Commons against you. I do not know that you have any but three choices left to you. The first is the disfranchisement of Ireland, and its conversion into a Crown colony; the second is your former policy, which is, if I may say so, both expensive and ineffective; and the third is some form of Home Rule. The first is impossible, and the third you have not come to yet, but you may not be long in coming. But what will happen if you pursue the policy you adopted in the last Parliament? We shall have Ireland always on our back, that incubus that we have been so anxious to shake off by Home Rule. The noble marquis in 1887 said, ‘The politics of the present are all summed up in the word Ireland,’ and he was perfectly right; but we should be entitled to expect, from his utterances as to resolute government and emigration, that we should have had some time for English and Scotch legislation.

“ But how was the time occupied in the House of Commons? In 1887 there were 39 private

Irish Bills and 8 Government Bills, occupying 96 days. In 1888 there were 43 private Bills and 13 Government Bills, taking 63 days. In 1889 there were 32 private Bills and 9 Government Bills—total 41—occupying 52 days; and so we go on with an equal story all through those six years, though you promised us that we should discharge that burden of English legislation and Irish business by your resolute government; but it was found equally as heavy, as obnoxious, and as encumbering as it had ever been in any previous Parliament. I put aside the expense with which this policy is accompanied, the million or so spent on light railways and sops to feed the Cerberus of Irish discontent which you are unable by any means to allay. But, in pursuing the policy of Irish Home Rule, we are guided quite as much by discontent and dread of what you propose, as by any special content with what we have proposed ourselves.

“We see in the future that if your policy be pursued, we shall have all those secret societies of assassination and outrage once more brought to work their way in Ireland, because the one hope which inspires the Irish people to withstand the incentives to rebellion and outrage will then disappear. We see Parliament encumbered, we see great expense, we see great waste of time; and we know that, whether you plaster Ireland with your garrisons or with your gold, the end of it, by some devious path or other, will be only

some form of Home Rule. It is animated by these considerations, both positive and negative, that we have adopted the course which has brought so much obloquy upon us, both from our open foes opposite and our open friends on my right.

“ We propose this Bill in the sense so much decried by the noble earl as an experiment. I grant that it is an experiment. All legislation is experimental, and all Irish legislation is necessarily experimental. But it is at least a large and a generous experiment. I remember only two experiments of equal magnitude—I think they were of greater magnitude—that have ever been proposed to Parliament in my time. They both struck deep at the Conservative institutions of this country, they both menaced all that the party opposite holds dear, and they were both, I need hardly say, opposed by a Tory Government. One was the establishment of the London County Council—an infinitely more perilous experiment than the establishment of an Irish Parliament could ever be, where you focused into one small body all the social, all the revolutionary elements, all the discontent, and all the poverty of an unprecedented aggregation of five millions of people. The second was the Reform Bill of 1867. I well remember the introduction of that Bill, which was brought in by the noble and brilliant Prime Minister of that time, Lord Derby, who tossed it on the table with the exclamation: ‘ My Lords, I

bring you this. This is, after all, but a leap in the dark.' We claim that this Bill is not a leap in the dark. We claim that it is a leap towards the light, a leap and a long stride towards a more generous Irish policy, towards the reconciliation of two great nations, too long connected and too long divided; and, furthermore, a considerable stride towards that adjustment and devolution of local business which will alone enable the British people to support the vast and various burdens of their Empire."

The Bill, as every one knows, was thrown out, after four days' discussion, by a remarkable gathering of peers, many of whom had never been in the House before in their lives, and one or two of whom the writer, who was present during the debate, saw carried in through infirmity.

Lord Rosebery very happily finished the year by an act of diplomacy at home that took food to thousands of starving homes, that brought hope and joy and happiness to a vast number of his countrymen and countrywomen. Ruin to many homes was being brought by the great coal strike of 1893; and when the evil was at its height, when the disaster threatened to become a national one, Lord Rosebery called the masters and men together at a meeting at the Foreign Office, and almost by his personal influence alone brought the two classes to reason, and ended the dispute on satisfactory terms.

## CHAPTER XXVI

LORD ROSEBERY SUCCEEDS MR. GLADSTONE AS PRIME MINISTER—AN  
ATTACK ON A PEER PREMIER—DECLARATION OF POLICY—ONLY  
A CHANGE OF MEN—THE GOVERNMENT'S LEGISLATIVE MEASURES  
—LORD ROSEBERY AND THE TURF—HIS SECOND SESSION AS  
PREMIER

DURING the session of 1894 there had been persistent rumours that Mr. Gladstone was about to retire. They were emphatically denied. Nevertheless they were soundly based. On the last day of January the *Pall Mall Gazette* specifically stated that the determination to resign had been come to. The same day Sir Algernon West issued the following: "The statement that Mr. Gladstone has definitely decided, or has decided at all, on resigning office is untrue. It is true that for many months past his age, and the condition of his sight and hearing, have, in his judgment, made relief from public cares desirable, and that accordingly his tenure of office has been at any moment liable to interruption from these causes, in their nature permanent. It remains exactly as it has been. He is ignorant of the course which events, important to the nation, may take, even during the remainder of

the present session, and he has not said or done anything which could, in any degree, restrain his freedom and that of his colleagues with regard to the performance of arduous duties now lying, or likely to lie, before them."

Mr. Gladstone's health did not improve, and in about a month it was known that he would retire from the Premiership. The House of Lords had been for some time engaged in mutilating the Parish Councils Bill, and one of the last remarks Mr. Gladstone made in the House was when, on March 1, he rose and stated that the Cabinet had decided, in order to save "the wreck of a session's work," to accept the Lords' amendments to the Bill. After the House had emptied that day, Mr. Gladstone mounted the step at the side of the Speaker's chair and took a searching glance round the House. "He is taking his last look at the House," said a member; and it was true.

So soon as it was known that Mr. Gladstone was about to retire, there arose a great agitation as to the succession to the Liberal leadership. It became known that Mr. Gladstone would advise the Queen to send for the Earl of Rosebery. "We will have no Peer Premier," was the cry of Mr. Labouchere and a number of other Radicals, who forthwith sent a deputation to interview Mr. Marjoribanks, the chief Liberal Whip, on the subject. They desired to have

Sir William Harcourt as Premier. Mr. Marjoribanks promised to bring the representations of the deputation before Mr. Gladstone, and did so. The intervention had no effect. Mr. Gladstone went to Windsor to see the Queen, and stayed throughout the night at the Castle. During the evening Lord Rosebery received a communication from Her Majesty, and on March 2 the Earl accepted the office of Prime Minister.

“In the two-and-thirty years of public life, Lord Rosebery has shown both the capacity for administration and the full sympathy with Liberal progress which pre-eminently fit him for the great duties to which he has now been called. This appointment will be in accordance with the general belief of the country and the general desire of the Liberal party,” remarked *The Daily News* the following day.

Parliament was called together on March 12, and previously to the gathering there was a meeting of Liberals, at the invitation of Lord Rosebery, at the Foreign Office.

The Earl of Rosebery, who was received with enthusiastic cheers, said:

“Gentlemen,—I return to you my sincere thanks for doing me the honour of coming here to meet me to-day. Only a week has elapsed since the prorogation of Parliament, and yet in that week how much has happened! When the House of Commons last sat, the central figure in that body

was the figure of the Prime Minister. When you—I cannot say ‘we’—return to that House you will miss that central figure, that sublime and pathetic presence, which enriched and ennobled not merely the Treasury bench, but the House of Commons itself. Gentlemen, I need say no more on that point, for all your hearts are full of it; but it has been thought convenient that I, on whom it has been laid to succeed him without filling his place, should meet you here to-day, and it has been thought possible that I and my colleagues on this occasion might take the opportunity of making some formal declaration of policy. In my opinion there is no need for any such declaration. We stand where we did. There is no change in measures; there is only a most disastrous change in men. And after all, gentlemen, what has happened is only this,—that in a week we have lost our leader, but the other sixteen of his colleagues still remain, and they are all pledged to the policy that he laid down.

“I think that you will agree with me that any detail on that subject to-day would be rather an accusation against ourselves than a gratification to you. What are the facts? In 1893 the Queen’s Speech laid down the policy of the Government. It contained, if I remember aright, some twelve measures of the first importance, only two of which, I think, we were able to pass



into law. Those measures still remain with us. They remain an exposition of the Liberal policy of this time and for some time to come, and I think I speak on behalf of those who do me the honour to sit in the Cabinet to-day when I say that we have no intention of receding from any one of them.

“As regards foreign policy, I will only say one word. We believe that the honour of England and the peace of Europe are safe in our hands.

“As regards domestic policy, there are perhaps two points on which it is necessary that I should say a special word. As regards the other measures, they will come in their due time. Who is to decide their priority? It is not for me to say. We leave that with absolute security in the hands of our honoured colleague, the Leader of the House of Commons—who has played so rare and so magnificent a part. One of those questions is that of the Welsh Church. With regard to the Welsh Church I take it for granted that the settlement of that question will receive the earliest possible notice of Her Majesty’s Government. The question of exact priority is not one that I, who have never sat in the House of Commons, can pretend to lay down succinctly on this occasion; but it shall be pressed to the forefront, and so far as in us lies will be pressed to a definite and successful conclusion.

“The other question that I have said requires more than a passing word is the group of questions known as the Irish Question. Gentlemen, to that question we are bound by every tie of honour and of policy. I know that it would be affectation to deny that a speech of mine in the House of Lords last year has raised some doubts as to my position on that question. I think it must be to those who have read that speech in a cursory manner that these doubts occurred. There are a great many readers of speeches who go on one fixed principle. I am not at all sure that it is a bad one. They always read the sentences that end in “laughter” and “loud laughter,” and skip the rest of the speech; and I am inclined to think that that is the course which has been pursued by students of the discourse to which I refer. It is said that all roads lead to Rome, and there are many roads by which to arrive at a conviction on Home Rule; but I venture to say that our line is as direct as any that conducts to the goal, and that it will be steadily pursued. If, gentlemen, you had any doubts in your minds as to the course that I was likely to take on this question, I think that there is one pledge that this Government gives no less in character than that of the headship which Mr. Gladstone lately imparted—I mean the presence of Mr. John Morley. It is an open secret that higher office, from the hierarchical point of view,

was pressed upon Mr. John Morley's acceptance, but that he thought it his duty not to sever his career from the cause of Ireland.

“Gentlemen, there is one other question to which our late leader—who remains our leader whenever he cares to lead us—alluded in the last speech which he made: I mean the question of the House of Lords. I venture to say that with his declaration on that point Her Majesty's present advisers entirely identify themselves. I myself have for a long time past studied that question without much success, and in the course of that study I have used language, I am afraid, much stronger about the House of Lords, to the House of Lords itself, than even Mr. Gladstone employed on that occasion. What the House of Lords have got to understand is that, though the task of revision is delicate, the task of rejection is dangerous. The conviction has long been forcing itself upon me that, with the democratic suffrage we now enjoy, a Chamber so constituted is an anomaly, and a danger; and the conviction of that fact which came to me before the suffrage came into force has been deepened and strengthened by the unhappy chapter of accidents which has turned the House of Lords from a body of hereditary legislators more or less equally divided in party, into one great Tory organisation, guided, and at the beck and call of a single individual. The result of that unhappy condition

of affairs is this, that when a Tory Government is in power, the power of veto is not exercised by the House of Lords; but when a Liberal Government is in power, it is exercised at the dictates of the Carlton Club. I say that condition is a danger to the constitution of this country. It is one to which the present Government is not less alive than the Government which, constitutionally speaking, preceded it, though it is identically the same.

“I venture to say that we shall not lose sight of any measure that may force upon the attention of the country the grave anomaly and the grave peril in which that second Chamber places us. Gentlemen, though I think badly of the House of Lords, I do not go so far as some of our friends, who consider peers are pariahs. I am not disposed to think that because a man is born to a particular position he should therefore be debarred from the higher opportunities of serving his country. I sympathise entirely, so far as I know them, with the views of a certain deputation which waited on our late Whip (Lord Tweedmouth). I hold that it is a grave inconvenience to the Liberal party when a Liberal Minister is not in the House of Commons. It is a grave inconvenience—especially to the Prime Minister. But I am not one of those who think he is under a stigma and a bar. I have not so learned the Liberalism in which we were brought up, and which has

broadened the confines of our body politic. It is comprehensive enough to satisfy the most exacting. Our Liberalism has been an enfranchisement, and not an exclusion. In this century we have freed the Jews, we have freed the Roman Catholics, and it is not in this stage of our political development that I am prepared to make a new genus of exclusion, to create a fresh disability, and to set up the principle that the accident of birth shall debar a man from reasonable service, and that in future there is to be written over the doors in Downing Street, 'No peer need here apply.' It was therefore against my will that I left the Foreign Office—the office in which we are assembled, and which I loved with an intense devotion—to come to the post where I might not be unanimously acceptable, but where I felt that the call of honour was so clear that it could not be mistaken. I sympathise with those who view it otherwise; I hope they will forgive me if I cannot share their opinion. I would only ask you to judge me, not by my words, but by my acts. When you are tired of me I shall be only too ready to relinquish a service which, though honourable, is arduous; but while I am where I am, you may be sure of this, that no Liberal in your ranks will endeavour more steadfastly to do his duty to the Liberal party."

The Ministry was thus constituted :

IN THE CABINET.

Earl of Rosebery . . . . .	} Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury, Lord President of Council.
Lord Herschell . . . . .	
Lord Tweedmouth . . . . .	} Lord High Chancellor. Lord Privy Seal, Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster.
Sir William Vernon-Harcourt	
Mr. Herbert Henry Asquith, Q.C. . . . .	Chancellor of the Exchequer. Sec. of State Home Department.
The Earl of Kimberley . . . . .	Sec. of State Foreign Department.
The Marquess of Ripon . . . . .	Sec. of State Colonial Department.
Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman . . . . .	Sec. of State War Department.
Sir Henry Hartley Fowler . . . . .	Sec. of State Indian Department.
Sir George Otto Trevelyan, Bart. . . . .	Secretary for Scotland.
Earl Spencer . . . . .	First Lord of the Admiralty.
Mr. John Morley . . . . .	Chief Secretary for Ireland.
Mr. Arnold Morley . . . . .	Postmaster-General.
Mr. James Bryce . . . . .	President Board of Trade.
Mr. George John Shaw-Lefevre	Pres. Local Government Board.
Mr. Arthur Herbert Dyke Acland . . . . .	Vice-President Committee of Council.

NOT IN THE CABINET.

Mr. Herbert John Gladstone . . . . .	First Commissioner of Works.
Mr. Herbert Colstoun Gardner . . . . .	President of Board of Agriculture.
Mr. Richard Knight Causton . . . . .	} Junior Lords of the Treasury.
Mr. William Alexander McArthur . . . . .	
Mr. Ronald Craufurd Munro-Ferguson . . . . .	

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Sir John Tomlinson Hibbert .	Financial Sec. to the Treasury.
Mr. Thomas Edward Ellis .	Patronage Sec. to the Treasury.
Mr. Charles Seale-Hayne .	Paymaster-General.
Sir Francis Henry Jeune .	Judge-Advocate General.
Admiral Sir Frederick William Richards . . . . .	} Lords of the Admiralty.
Rear-Admiral Sir Frederick G. D. Bedford . . . . .	
Rear-Admiral Sir J. Arbuthnot Fisher . . . . .	
Captain Gerard Henry Uctred Noel . . . . .	
Mr. Edmund Robertson(Civil)	
Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth, Bart. . . . .	
Mr. George William Erskine Russell . . . . .	Parliamentary Sec. Home Office.
Sir Edward Grey, Bart. . . . .	Parliamentary Sec. Foreign Office.
Mr. Sydney Charles Buxton . . . . .	Parliament. Sec. Colonial Office.
Lord Reay . . . . .	Parliamentary Sec. India Office.
Lord Monkswell . . . . .	Parliamentary Sec. War Office.
Mr. Thomas Burt . . . . .	Parliament. Sec. Board of Trade.
Sir Balthazar Walter Foster . . . . .	Parliament. Sec. Local Gov. Brd.
Mr. William Woodall . . . . .	Financial Secretary War Office.
Sir Robert Threshie Reid, Q.C.	Attorney-General.
Sir Frank Lockwood, Q.C. . . . .	Solicitor-General.

SCOTLAND.

(See Cabinet). . . . .	Keeper of the Great Seal.
Lord Robertson . . . . .	Lord Justice-General.
Mr. John Blair Balfour, Q.C..	Lord Advocate.
Marquess of Lothian . . . . .	Keeper of the Privy Seal.
Lord Kingsburgh . . . . .	Lord Justice Clerk.
Duke of Montrose . . . . .	Lord Clerk Register.
Marquess of Breadalbane . . . . .	High Commis., Gen. Assembly.
Mr. Thomas Shaw, Q.C. . . . .	Solicitor-General.

IRELAND.

Lord Houghton (now Earl of Crewe) . . . .	Lord Lieutenant.
(See Cabinet) . . . .	Chief Secretary.
Sir David Harrel . . . .	Under Secretary.
Mr. Samuel Walker . . . .	Lord Chancellor.
Mr. Andrew Marshall Porter .	Master of the Rolls.
The MacDermot, Q.C. . . .	Attorney-General.
Mr. Charles Hare Hemphill, Q.C. . . . .	Solicitor-General.

The Queen's Speech, which was read to Parliament by the Lord Chancellor, was as follows :

“MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,—I regret, in view of the recent completion of your arduous labours, to have to summon you so soon to renew them.

“My relations with foreign powers continue to be amicable and satisfactory.

“The negotiations between my Government and that of the Emperor of Russia for the settlement of frontier questions in Central Asia are proceeding in a spirit of mutual confidence and good-will, which gives every hope of an early and equitable adjustment.

“Negotiations are also in progress with the Government of the United States for the purpose of executing the award of the Court of Arbitration on the question of the seal fisheries in the Behring Sea.



“I have pleasure in also informing you that the protracted and intricate arrangements for fixing the frontier between my Burmese dominions and those of the Emperor of China have been brought to a satisfactory conclusion by the signature of a formal convention.

“Two collisions, accompanied by a lamentable loss of life, have lately occurred with French colonial forces in West Africa. I await the result of the inquiry instituted with regard to these deplorable occurrences in the full confidence that they will be examined in the calm and dignified temper that befits two great nations on such an occasion.

“GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,—The estimates for the public service of the year will be laid before you. They will be found to make full and adequate provision for the defence of the Empire.

“MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,—The recent improvement in the state of Ireland has been continuous and marked, and agrarian crime has been reduced under the administration of the ordinary law to the lowest point that has been reached for the last fifteen years. The condition, however, of a considerable body of evicted tenants in the country requires early attention, and a measure will be submitted to you with a view to the reasonable settlement of a question deeply affecting the well-being of Ireland.

“Bills will be submitted to you for the amendment of registration and the abolition of plural voting at Parliamentary elections.

“Measures will be laid before you dealing with the ecclesiastical establishments in Wales and Scotland.

“There will also be presented Bills having for their object the equalisation of rates in London, the establishment of a system of local government in Scotland on the same basis as that recently accorded to England and Wales, and the exercise of a direct local control over the liquor traffic.

“You will be asked to consider measures for the promotion of conciliation in labour disputes, for the amendment of the Factory and Mines Acts, and for the reform of the present method of conducting inquiries into fatal accidents in Scotland.

“Upon all your labours and deliberations I humbly implore the blessing and guidance of Almighty God.”

In the House of Lords Lord Swansea moved and Lord Hawkesbury seconded the Address. Lord Salisbury also spoke.

Lord Rosebery, who was greeted on rising with Ministerial cheers, said :

“My Lords,—My first duty in the position I now unworthily occupy is to return the thanks of Her Majesty’s Government to the noble lords who

moved and seconded the Address to the Crown. I will not dilate on either with the discursive interest displayed by the noble marquis. But I will say that I fully appreciated the knowledge and the zeal with which the mover applied himself to the consideration of a subject of which he is a master, and on which we shall hope to hear his sentiments whenever the Bill dealing with the Ecclesiastical Establishment in Wales comes before the House. I must also say a word in passing on the singular charm with which my noble friend the seconder invested the often jejune task of seconding the Address. I have also, as they have, the need for asking your lordships' indulgence. We, on this side of the House, meet under the shadow of a great grief. A week ago we had, perhaps, the greatest leader that any party has ever been led by. The tribute of the noble marquis to his merits, character, and his genius left nothing to be desired on this side of the House. Every one can appreciate the greatness of Mr. Gladstone's character and attainments, but there is one aspect of his career which makes his retirement especially pathetic and interesting: I mean the long reach over which his recollection passes. He heard the guns saluting the battle of Waterloo, he heard some of Mr. Canning's greatest speeches, he heard the Reform debate in 1831 in this House, and Lord Brougham's memorable speech; he was over half a century ago the right-hand man of Sir Robert

Peel's famous Government, and when to this coating of history which he had acquired so long ago is added his own transcendent personality, one cannot help being reminded of some noble river which has gathered its colours from the various soils through which it has passed, but has preserved its identity unimpaired, and gathered itself in one splendid volume before it rushes to the sea. The reason is one specially personal to myself, because it is I who have been forced, as it were, by a call which I could not honourably refuse, to stand in his place. And not merely in his place, but in the place of the noble earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Lord Kimberley), to whose consummate leadership of the House I was glad to see a universal tribute paid this afternoon.

“The noble marquis (Lord Salisbury) complains of the brevity of the recitals and narratives of Her Majesty's gracious Speech. I gather that his notion of what a Queen's Speech should be is this—that it should contain a chronicle of all that has taken place of interest in foreign affairs, at any rate since Parliament last met.

“On this occasion, and by that test, this Speech would, I think, fairly meet with a favourable judgment. It is only a week since Parliament separated, and if we had chosen to confine ourselves to the austere rules which the noble marquis has laid down for a Queen's Speech we should indeed have had less to record than the

meagre narrative of which he complains. I do not believe—and I am guided to some extent by my recollection of the speeches that were presumably composed by the noble marquis himself—that it is necessary on this occasion to put into the gracious Speech from the Throne all the most material affairs which have taken place in the year and within the control of the Foreign Office. But as the noble marquis has pointed out some omissions which he thinks of importance, I will endeavour, so far as my imperfect knowledge goes, to supply the deficiency. The noble marquis misses any mention of Siam. The acute part of the Siamese crisis was over last August, and it seemed hardly worth while to resuscitate that transaction for the benefit of Parliament in the month of March, 1894. But as respects Siam there is not very much to report. The negotiations for a treaty between France and Siam came to a conclusion, and as soon as the articles of that convention have been executed by the Siamese Government, we are assured that the place of Chantaboon, which was occupied as a guarantee for execution of these provisions, will be evacuated by the French Government. There is no provision that I am aware of in that convention which remains unexecuted, except the trial of the alleged murderers. That trial is now in progress, and I do not doubt when it is concluded the French Government will fulfil its engagements.

Her Majesty's Government are fully aware of the responsibility imposed upon us by the fact that the commerce of Siam is almost entirely British, and we have taken due note of the assurances of the French Government, made not less to myself than to my predecessor in office, that the boundary of the French and English influence is divided by the Mekong river. Then the noble marquis touched upon Matabeleland. Of Matabeleland I confess I do not know much more than the very ample reports published in the daily press. I do not know much more than that the campaign was conducted with singular courage, singular skill, and singular success; and that the settlement of the territory so acquired is now in process of completion under the auspices of my noble friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

“Then the noble marquis opposite wanted to hear something about Egypt. I might almost say the same of Egypt. There is not much more to report than that duly narrated in the papers—perhaps, indeed, there is not so much. At any rate, this may be said—that Egypt is tranquil and is prosperous. Certain incidents that have occurred in the last fourteen months have given us grave reason to doubt the permanency of the institutions that we have established in that country. They will, no doubt, need the vigilant supervision of this country for some time to come; but I am happy to say that peace

reigns in Egypt, and that we have, so far as I know, no cause for anxiety in that country. Then there comes the last point to which the noble marquis directed my attention—the question of Uganda. Here I can but say one word as to the irreparable loss that is associated with that region. I mean the death of Sir Gerald Portal. He had the singular combination of talent and chivalrous courage which makes some of our younger English diplomatists almost matchless for the prosecution of such work; and it was a heavy blow and a great discouragement when, at the termination of his arduous pilgrimage, without having orally communicated his views to us on the inquiry he had prosecuted, he returned to this country to die. That melancholy event must have in itself a delaying effect on the presentation of our scheme with regard to Uganda; but I can promise the noble marquis that in a very short time, when the Supplementary vote comes to be asked for for the purpose of Uganda, a full exposition will be given of the policy of Her Majesty's Government, and papers will be laid on the table in ample time to give an opportunity for the discussion of the subject.

“The noble marquis devoted some pungent remarks to the domestic legislation of Her Majesty's Government. He said that it embodied some well-known programme—and I am not sure that it does so fully as he thinks—so com-

pletely that it was only necessary for us to put, after our insufficient foreign narrative and our allusion to the Estimates, 'The domestic programme as per previous.' He also stated that so long as we are in office we seemed to think there was room for believing that that programme would remain substantially unimpaired because of our want of success in bringing it into legislation. No one knows better than the noble marquis what has been the obstacle against which most of our legislation has been wrecked. I confess I thought it showed a disregard of appearances on his part when he threw this in our teeth, he having been the main object and primary cause of why we have not passed more Bills. He alluded with an air of humorous regret to the absence of shorter Parliaments from our schemes. My lords, as long as the House of Lords deals with our Bills as it has been dealing with them lately, it is not shorter but much longer Parliaments we shall need to carry our measures. But as regards the particular item in question, it is no doubt an important one, but not so pressing as others that are mentioned in the gracious Speech. And I think we were of opinion that, having set forth legislative desires and ambitions in the Speech of last year, it might be necessary to curb our experience this year, and keep some *bonne bouche* for a new Session. He complains of the absence of the Bill



for conferring additional power on the London County Council. I can reassure the noble marquis. I am quite sure that he wishes to see that creation of his Government fortified with every power the Legislature can give it; and I am quite sure that this House will second the anxious wish of the House of Commons in furnishing it with all the authority that it can be provided with. Though it is not mentioned in the gracious Speech, a Bill will be introduced—I am not sure whether in the form of one Bill or several Bills; but the noble marquis may allay all his fears for it, for it will soon be presented to the other House of Parliament.

“The noble marquis touched upon the question of the Church Establishments of Wales and Scotland. I do not propose—and perhaps there may be some feeling of relief at the announcement—to follow my noble lord the mover of the Address, who is much more conversant with the subject, into the question of the Church Establishment in Wales. Nor do I even wish to deal on this occasion—because, as the noble marquis has truly observed, I may have an opportunity later in the week, and in a more appropriate place—to deal with the case of Scotland. I do not put the cases of Wales and Scotland exactly on the same basis. The case of Wales is the demand of a country, so great as to be almost unanimous, for the

removal of a branch of the Church of England which is alien to it, and is therefore, as we are advised, doing more harm than good to the cause of religion. The case of Scotland, on the other hand, is a case of a creed substantially identical, divided into two parts by a hard-and-fast line of Church Establishment and non-Establishment, and it is for that reason I cannot put the question of Scotch Disestablishment on precisely the same footing as Welsh Disestablishment, and so far curb the patriotism with which the noble marquis justly credits me, as to advise Her Majesty to put it second on the list.

“Now, my lords, we come to the point which, after the badinage of the noble marquis, lay evidently deep at the bottom of his heart and conviction—I mean the question of Ireland. That is a question which we have no desire to shirk or to evade. We did not omit it from the Queen’s Speech because of any idea of that description. We omitted all mention of the Home Rule Bill because, unlike last year, it is not our intention to propose a Home Rule Bill in this session of Parliament. . . . It does not appear to me to be the mere function of the House of Commons to prepare and pass Bills simply in order to furnish sport for the House of Lords. If that were our idea, I cannot conceive a better course to adopt than to accept the advice of the noble marquis, and to begin at once with

our Home Rule Bill, and to postpone all legislation relating to England, Scotland, and Wales for one year more in order that we may have the pleasure of bringing it up in the month of September to be rejected again by a majority of four hundred in your lordships' House; and I suppose that, when that had ensued, at the beginning of the next session the noble marquis would urge the same reasons for adopting the same course.

“There is undoubtedly another course we might adopt, and that the noble marquis has not explained. We might appeal to the country. My lords, to the country we shall not be afraid to appeal when the time is ripe in our opinion. But I will give him one conclusive reason why we will not appeal to the country at his invitation, which is that we shall never concede the right of this hereditary House to force a dissolution. The noble marquis spoke of the lapse of time which would be required to bring into operation the only two remedies for Irish discontent, of which he appears to be the sole depositary. . . . If we have any signs of happiness and contentment in Ireland—and I am happy to say that in the last eighteen months these signs have multiplied and increased—they are, in our opinion, not due to the light railways or the other remedies that the noble marquis adumbrated, but to the hope held out by the

Liberal party that the great boon of local self-government for purely local affairs, so far as it is consonant with the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, would not be long delayed.”

After dealing with some figures regarding agrarian crime in Ireland, and paying a tribute to the wise and just administration of Mr. John Morley, Lord Rosebery concluded: “Lastly, I view it (Home Rule) from the highest Imperial ground, because I believe that the maintenance of this Empire depends not upon centralisation but on decentralisation, and that if you once begin to tread this path you will have to give satisfaction, under the same conditions, certainly to Scotland and possibly to Wales, not in the same degree or in the same fashion, but so as to relieve this groaning Imperial Parliament of the weight under which it labours. I will not detain you longer on this subject to-night. I will only ask you in conclusion for that generosity which, in this House, whatever its legislative and constitutional defects may be, is the rule of political warfare. We stand before you a remnant as at Balaclava: we have enemies in front of us, and more moderate enemies, I trust, on the right of us, and from what I have recently seen I am afraid no very cordial friends there (pointing to the Episcopal benches); but we stand before you in the confidence not of our numbers here, sorely crippled as we are by the loss of our leader; limited as we are in the

number of our votes in this House, we stand before you confident—confident not in our own strength, but in our firm belief that we have a large measure of support from the people of the three kingdoms.”

March to August is not a long period ; but it was a busy one for the Government, as is well indicated by the Queen’s Speech at the close of the Session in proroguing Parliament. The prorogation took place on August 25, and the Speech ran :

“ MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,—

“ It affords me sensible gratification to be able to dismiss you at the end of a session which has been little less than a prolongation of the previous one ; and it gives me pleasure to reflect that your labours, if they have been exhausting, have also been fruitful. I am confident that you will share in the joy with which I and my people have welcomed the birth of an heir<sup>1</sup> in the third generation to my throne—an event not merely propitious, but unprecedented in the history of this country.

“ My relations with foreign Powers continue to be friendly and peaceful. It is, however, matter for regret that a variety of questions relating to Africa between my Government and that of the French Republic still remain unsettled. It is my wish that these should be arranged without

<sup>1</sup> Prince Edward of York.

unnecessary delay, and I am engaged in friendly negotiations with that object.

“The state of affairs in Siam continues to engage my earnest attention. The welfare of that kingdom, in which the interests of British trade are so preponderating, cannot be a matter of indifference to my Government. I trust that the final settlement of questions arising out of the recent treaty between France and Siam may not much longer be delayed; and, in the meantime, I have directed commissioners, in conjunction with those of France, to lay down on the spot the proper limits of a neutral region in the neighbourhood of the Mekong, which shall separate my dominions from those of the French Republic.

“In concert with the President of the United States I have taken the steps necessary to give effect to the award of the Tribunal of Arbitration on the question of the seal fisheries in the Behring Sea; and I have assented to an Act of Parliament for this purpose. A similar Act has been passed by the Congress of the United States. The Governments of the two countries are also in communication with the principal foreign Powers with the view of obtaining their adhesion to the regulations prescribed by the award.

“I regret to state that war has broken out between the empires of China and Japan. After endeavouring, in concert with Russia and with other Powers, to prevent the outbreak of hostilities,

I have taken steps to preserve my strict neutrality between the contending parties. I have concluded a treaty with the Emperor of Japan for the regulation of commercial intercourse between that country and the United Kingdom.

“A conference was held at Ottawa in the month of June last, at which representatives of the Imperial Government, the Dominion of Canada, the Cape, and the Australasian Colonies met to consider questions relating to intercolonial tariffs and communications. I have learnt with satisfaction that the proceedings of the conference were of a character calculated to strengthen the union of the colonies concerned, both among themselves and with the mother country.

“GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,—

“I thank you for the liberal supplies which you have provided for the requirements of the public service. Though I lament the necessity for increasing the burden of taxation, it had become indispensable for the security of my Empire to increase my naval strength. I trust that the alterations which you have made in the fiscal system of the country, and to which the greatest part of this session has been necessarily devoted, will have the effect of materially alleviating that portion of the burden which falls upon the less wealthy classes of the population, and may redound to the contentment and prosperity of the nation at large.

“ MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,—

“ While the general tranquillity of Ireland has been maintained in a remarkable degree, certain social and administrative difficulties still subsist, which continue to engage the earnest attention of my Government. I have given my ready assent to the Bills which, notwithstanding the shortness of the session, you have been able to consider and mature. The measure dealing with the system of local government in Scotland will, I doubt not, tend to reorganise that system on a more popular and more efficient basis. You have also passed a beneficial measure for the better adjustment of the rates levied by the several local authorities in London.

“ A large number of Bills of substantial importance have been passed, amongst which I would mention that of the amendment of the law relating to railway rates and charges, and that for the better regulation of building societies.

“ In bidding you farewell, I pray that the blessing of Providence may rest upon all your labours.”

The Colonial Conference referred to must have been a special source of gratification to the Prime Minister, as a step towards that federation of the Empire which he has longed to see brought about. His conception of the Empire is grand and ideal, as some of the speeches which have been quoted show; and being at the head of the Government, he was anxious to see some progress made in



this direction. The Imperial Federation League had by this time ceased to exist, though its work was practically being carried on by other bodies. But it had achieved its main object—that of making Imperial Federation a subject which engaged men's minds, and which was coming to be regarded as one of rapid growth, without any formulated hard-and-fast schemes for the purpose. In one speech, delivered some years before, Lord Rosebery urged the case thus :

“When you declare war, on whatever ground—it may be in a fit of anger, under an idea of slighted honour—under any of those causes for which we have seen nations hurry rashly into war—whenever you declare war on any of these grounds, you do not declare war alone, but Canada declares war, Australia declares war, every dependency in the Empire declares war, and they declare war without having an official voice in the control of our policy. Remember this: you form a policy, and my critic says you demand that it shall be uncontrolled by your Colonies. But when your policy has begun to take effect, your Colonies may be invaded, they may be harassed, they may be burned, they may be plundered—all in consequence of the course of action in which they have had no controlling voice. Now, that is not a dream, that is not an idea. It is an uncommonly concrete fact—both for our critics and for the Colonies.”

And he had defined Imperial Federation as "the closest possible union of the various self-governing states ruled by the British Crown, consistently with the free national development which is the birthright of British subjects all over the world—the closest union in sympathy, in external action, and in defence." The Ottawa Conference, though mainly for questions of tariffs, was an indication of the growth of the Federation spirit, of which he was thinking when he had asked:

"Now, what is the greatest Federation that exists in the world? The Federation of our children, the United States. I believe a great many people, and many of them our adversaries, and some of them sceptics as regards ourselves, are under the impression that, when the war with Great Britain was concluded, the American Federation sprang, ready-made, into existence. I recommend those gentlemen to read the history of the United States. They will see that the circumstances were so favourable that there would almost seem to have been no obstacle. Thirteen States of an exactly common race and origin, that had lived together in perfect sympathy for a century and a half, in the full spring of victory, in the full flush of youth, with everything that could unite and cement them together, found six or seven years not too short a time to enable them to patch up a constitution amongst themselves. Their population was small, their territory

scattered, and their communities dispersed over a large space. They had what we should consider every advantage for the purpose of union, and yet not till they had touched the brink of civil war, after having asserted their own independence, could they construct that vast system of Federation which, to some extent, is now our admiration and envy. If we consider the case of America, the most despondent amongst us will have no cause for despair."

And again, as to conferences: "They must be in the first place periodical, and at stated intervals. In the next place, they must be composed of the best men available at the moment; and therefore the Government of this country, whatever Government it may be at the time, must send its best men to represent it at the conference, and must invest these periodical congresses with all the authority and splendour which government in this country can give. In the next place, the task of these gatherings will not be the production of statutes, but of recommendations. You may say that a congress which only meets to report and recommend has but a neutral task before it. Those who take that view have a very inadequate idea of what the utterance would be of a conference representing a quarter of the human race, and representing the immeasurable opulence and power which have been garnered up during the past centuries of our history. If we have

these conferences, and if they are allowed to discuss, as they must be, any topic which any party to them recommends, I do not fear their wanting in authority or in weight. I would further lay this consoling unction to the souls of those who have schemes in their pockets for immediately carrying out Imperial Federation. If any closer scheme of Federation is to come about, it can only come about through the medium of such a conference as I have sketched out, and not through the medium of any private organisation ; whereas, on the other hand, if no closer relations come out of these conferences, and if these conferences are found to be of no avail, you may be perfectly certain, whatever your views may be, and whatever your exertions may be, that Imperial Federation in any form will be impossible. You bring the question to the touch by the adoption of such a practical scheme as I have indicated."

The Ottawa Conference was undoubtedly a step in the direction in which Lord Rosebery desired to see the Imperial Federation movement progressing.

The Building Societies Act, which was passed during the session, greatly added to the security of those whose funds are invested in these institutions. Unsuccessful attempts were made to pass a Factories Bill, and the Welsh Church Dis-establishment Bill was dropped. The London

Equalisation of Rates Bill came into operation on September 30. The "Children's Charter"—the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Bill—received the Royal assent on July 20. The Act greatly strengthened the previously existing law for the protection of children, and its operation during the years that have since passed has been of the most beneficial and deterrent character. The Wild Birds' Protection Act was also passed.

During the session a great deal of interest was caused by the Prime Minister winning the Blue Riband of the Turf—the Epsom Derby. With the exception of a period from 1885 to about 1893, Lord Rosebery had been continuous in his interest in racing. He ran horses purely for the honour of winning. Before the great success came he had several times run a placed horse in the Derby.

He acquired a taste for the turf when at Eton, and it had greatly developed when up at Oxford, where he used to take a lively interest in the Undergraduate races annually held over the Aylesbury course, one of the stiffest and best steeplechase courses in England. Whilst he was at Eton he expressed a desire to win the Derby; and he had not been on the turf a year or two when he purchased a colt called Ladas, which carried his colours unplaced in the Epsom race of 1869. His first classic win was the Oaks of 1883 with Bonny Jean, the mount of John

Watts. With another and better Ladas he won the 1896 Derby, and strangely enough Sir Visto won it for him the following year. Besides the Derby, Ladas secured for him the Middle Park Plate, the Two Thousand Guineas, and many other races; and Sir Visto also won the St. Leger as well as the Epsom. Much was later expected of Velasquez, but he was unlucky to have been foaled the same year as Galtee More. For the matter of that, so was Chelandry, which won the One Thousand Guineas of 1897, for she was second to Galtee in the St. Leger after Velasquez had followed him home in the Guineas and Derby. Lord Rosebery thought very highly of Velasquez, and he was compensated for the classic failures by the colt's repeated success as a two-year-old, and his winning the Princess of Wales' Stakes at Newmarket in 1887, and the Sandown Eclipse the following year—both ten thousand pound races. From 1885 to 1893 was a blank. Lord Rosebery can be said to have had two innings on the turf; and as the second included the Derby, the height of his ambition, it must be regarded as better than the first, which started at the latter end of the sixties (1868) and ended at 1883. Still, the first innings included some big handicap triumphs: a City and Suburban triumph with Aldrich; two Lincoln Handicaps, Controversy (1876), and Touchet (1879). Then there was the Portland Plate (1887), the Cam-

bridgeshire with La Merveille (1879), the Chester Cup with Prudhomme (1882), and the Northumberland Plate (1876) with The Snail; while his best two-year-old in the eighties was Kermesse, whose winnings included the New Stakes at Ascot, the July Stakes at Newmarket, the Champagne at Doncaster, and the Middle Park Plate races, won in 1881. The first important race Lord Rosebery won was the time-honoured Gimcrack Stakes at York, in 1873. And the last time the rose and primrose colours of the Earl caught the judge's eye was in the Prince of Wales' Post Sweepstakes this year at Goodwood, with Epsom Lad, one of the Ladas youngsters, which so far has not realised his lordship's expectation. There are breeding studs both at The Durdans at Epsom and Mentmore, the best produce coming from the latter paddocks, rendered so famous in the days of the late Baron Rothschild.

People who think everything connected with the turf is wrong attacked Lord Rosebery for owning racehorses. The Anti-Gambling League wrote to him. Lord Rosebery had owned horses for years, but they did not write to him until he won the Derby. The Premier rather astonished and very much discomfited his critics by reminding them that Cromwell kept racehorses. An amusing description of his relations with the turf was given by Lord Rosebery at the annual dinner of the York Gimcrack Club in 1897. In responding to the toast of his health Lord Rosebery said :

“If I am asked to give advice to those who are inclined to spend their time and their money on the turf, I should give them the advice that *Punch* gave to those about to marry—‘Don’t.’ That, I admit, is a discouraging remark for an assembly of sportsmen, and I perceive that it is received in the deadest silence. I will give you my reasons for that remark. In the first place, the apprenticeship is exceedingly expensive; in the next place, the pursuit is too engrossing for any one who has anything else to do in this life; and, in the third place, the rewards, as compared with the disappointments, stand in the relation of, at the most, 1 per cent.

“I will give you my experience of the turf, and you shall judge whether I have not some foundation for the advice that I give. A great many years ago—too many years ago from one point of view,—and at an early age—much too early an age from every point of view,—I conceived the ambition to win the Derby. For a quarter of a century I struggled. Sometimes I ran second, sometimes I ran third, very often I ran last; but at last the time arrived when, as Lord Wenlock reminded you, I was about to realise the fruition of my hopes. I was with the second Ladas about to win the Derby, and I ought to have been the happiest of men. Well, after a quarter of a century of fruitless expectation, I won the Derby. But what was the result? I at that time held high office, as



Lord Wenlock has also reminded you, under the Crown. I was immediately attacked from quarters of an almost inspired character for owning race-horses at all. With very little knowledge of the facts, and with much less of that charity that 'thinketh no evil,' I was attacked with the greatest violence for owning a racehorse at all. I then made the discovery, which came to me too late in life, that what was venial and innocent in the other officers of the Government—in a Secretary of State or a President of the Council, for example—was criminal in the First Lord of the Treasury. I do not even know if I ought not to have learnt another lesson—that although, without guilt and offence, I might perpetually run seconds and thirds, or even run last, it became a matter of torture to many consciences if I won.

"But my troubles did not end there. Shortly afterwards we had a general election, and I then found that, having received abundant buffets on one cheek from the smiter, I was now to receive them on the other. I was then assailed, or rather those associated with me were assailed, not because we were too sporting, but because we were not sporting enough. Leagues and associations with high-sounding names and unerring principles were started to attack my unfortunate supporters, on the ground that we were not supporters of sport. I having already suffered so severely from having been too much a sportsman. I say, then, I have

a right to give advice, having suffered on both sides, for being too sporting and for not being sporting enough. That is my experience. . . .

“Is there no compensation to those who pursue a sport which is carried on under such difficulties? I myself am of opinion that there are friendships formed and a knowledge of the world formed on the turf which are invaluable to any man who wishes to get on in life. There was a famous lady who lived in the middle of this century, Harriet, Lady Ashburton, who summed up her views on the subject in a remark which has been preserved by the late Lord Houghton. She said, ‘If I were to begin life again, I should go on the turf merely to get friends. They seem to me to be the only people who really hold together—I do not know why. It may be that each man knows something that would hang the other, but the effect is delightful and most peculiar.’ If that was the cause of turf friendship, the effect would be most peculiar; but of this I am perfectly certain, that is not the real basis of turf friendship. I know nothing that would hang any of those I have known on the turf, and I am quite sure that if anybody on the turf, or if anybody, had known anything that would hang me about three years ago, I should not be in life at this moment. But there must be more than friendship—more than secrets which are too dangerous for people to carry

about with them—to constitute the real bond of union on the turf.”

Lord Rosebery expressed the belief that the sport of racing was never better nor purer than at this moment, never more honest in its following, and never pursued with greater interest for the honour, as apart from the lucre, of the turf.

Returning to the labours of Parliament, it was announced at the opening of the 1895 session that difficulties between France and this country regarding the Sierra Leone frontier had been arranged. The China and Japan war continued. The Queen's Speech spoke of further atrocities in Armenia, and of the representations which had been made to the Porte urging the punishment of the offenders. The Sultan was still promising reforms. In the debate on the Address tributes were paid to the late Lord Randolph Churchill, whose untimely death had occurred not long before. The Irish members wanted to have a dissolution, in order that Home Rule should again be submitted to the country. Mr. Morley wished to know why the Irish should want to eject from office a Home Rule Government, and, though Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain attacked the Government, majorities of about twenty were secured. The Government, with so small a majority to count upon, were greatly hampered in their efforts, but persevered with their programme. They obtained the second reading of the Land Law (Ireland) Bill, got through

several of the chief clauses of the Established Church (Wales) Bill, had introduced the Local Option Bill, the Crofters Bill, the Conciliation of (Trades Disputes) Bill, and the Factory Bill. The latter was subsequently passed by general consent. It greatly strengthened the protective and sanitary regulations of the statute, reduced overtime for women, abolished it for young persons, and for the first time brought laundries and dock labour, in respect of accidents, under the law. During the year England's relations with Egypt had been of a satisfactory nature. The Khedive had inspected a British fleet at Alexandria in May, which made a most favourable impression on the natives. Reforms were being pressed on Mr. Kruger in favour of the Uitlanders, and hopes were entertained of success in that direction.

The fall of the Government was to come in June, on a minor question regarding the supply and reserve of small arms ammunition. Mr. Brodrick contended that the supply was insufficient, and moved the reduction of the salary of Mr. H. Campbell-Bannerman, the Secretary of State for War, by £100. Mr. Campbell-Bannerman was supplied with figures by his department which seemed to be a complete justification of his policy. At first, when the debate opened, there was no thought of attempting to defeat the Government. A number of Liberals were away unpaired. As the debate proceeded,

however, it was seen that, owing to the numbers then in the House, there was danger for the Government, and when the division took place the figures were: for the reduction, 132; against, 125—a majority of seven against the Government. Lord Rosebery regarded the vote as a fatal one for the Government, and the Ministry forthwith resigned, on June 24. It is probable that Lord Rosebery was by no means sorry to give up office. His health had for months been most unsatisfactory. He had been grievously affected with sleeplessness, there were constant talks of “caves” against him on his own side, the party who objected to a Peer Premier were constantly girding at him, and meanwhile he and Lord Kimberley, his able Foreign Secretary, had upon them the terrible strain of those Armenian atrocities, the dreadful anxiety of the knowledge of the facts, with full sympathy for the sufferers, but without the power, against the rest of Europe, to take isolated action—for the peace of Europe it was essential to maintain. For several reasons, therefore, it is certain that Lord Rosebery gave up the seals of office without regret. When he holds them again, may it be with a united party to support him, and a party with a large enough majority to make its path easier! Some of the work of his Government is referred to in greater detail in subsequent pages.

## CHAPTER XXVII

LORD ROSEBERY'S GOVERNMENT AND LONDON—THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE—LICENCE REFORM—CARE OF THE INSANE—LABOUR POLICY—BETTERMENT—"A PLAGUE ON YOUR PARTIES! COME DOWN AND DO SOMETHING FOR THE PEOPLE"—THE KEY OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

ONE of the most notable events of Lord Rosebery's Premiership was a great meeting at the St. James's Hall, when London gave its welcome to the Premier. It was a famous meeting, one of the largest and most enthusiastic ever held in the Metropolis. Mr. Asquith was amongst the supporters of the Earl.

Lord Rosebery, who had a magnificent reception, said :

" Mr. Chairman,—I love that designation ; it is familiar to me from some of the pleasantest associations of my life. I thank you warmly for this magnificent address that you have presented to me. It shall remain with me as long as life, and I trust that those who come after me will regard it as a precious possession. It is, after all, the greatest proof anybody can get of the confidence of any body of men that he should have worked with them in hourly and daily

relations in facing some of the great problems of life.

“ I am glad that you, Mr. Chairman, in your speech, laid so much stress on the fact that I am here not as an hereditary legislator, but as a member for a constituency as populous, as democratic, as thoroughly working-class as any that is represented in the House of Commons. It seems to me, gentlemen, that the election of a person at the head of the poll, without canvassing, without an address, if I remember aright, is a sufficient answer to those gentlemen, weighty rather from character than from numbers, who have recently raised such objection to my hereditary position. That position, advantageous in many ways, has always been a trifling obstacle to my public career. It was an obstacle when I was Under-Secretary in the Home Department. It was then found that that office was a dangerous one to be entrusted to a peer, and, under the pressure of public opinion—overwhelming, as I understand, on that subject—I had to relinquish it. It was then I took a solemn determination I would never relinquish another office on that objection. When I was elected Chairman of the County Council, I sat for two hours listening to the most unpleasant discussion at which I was ever present,—a discussion which turned mainly on that objection,—and it was with a feeling of infinite relief I

found that that cave was not so large as might have been expected. I remember looking over the names long afterwards, and I remember being struck by finding, I think without a single exception, they were the most cordial and friendly of all my colleagues, and had been from the first. Having, therefore, been beset ever since my entrance into public life with a perfect rabbit-warren of caves of that description, I am not likely, in the face of the confidence of the electors of East Finsbury, to be seriously disturbed.

“You congratulate me to-night, however, not as member for East Finsbury, but as a Minister of the Crown. I see that put emphatically in the inscription which is opposite to me, entwined with those purloined primroses to which the Conservative party have laid so presumptuous a claim. After all, it is not a far cry from Spring Gardens to Downing Street. I think that with a telescope of very moderate power my friend Mr. Hutton and myself might survey each other in our respective rooms; and as regards the transition from Spring Gardens to Parliament, which is, of course, the necessary first step, I remember at one time being a little alarmed, from the constant candidature of our councillors and their constant successes, that the County Council was only going to be used as a sort of channel and passage into the more Imperial assembly of the House of Commons. I am not



at all sure that, on a careful consideration of the respective merits and opportunities of both, there are not many who will not think that in the London County Council they have as great a scope for energy and practical action as in the Imperial Parliament of this country. I saw some influential letter in some influential paper objecting to this meeting on the ground that it was held in Holy Week. I do not laugh at that objection; I see nothing to laugh at. If this were a meeting like some meetings, I should think there might be something in the objection, but I cannot see that it is alien to the true spirit of any week, however holy, that we should discuss together, if we can do so without intemperance or violence, those social and eternal problems which concern not merely the Council and Parliament, but the cause of humanity itself. There are dreams as noble, as sublime, cherished in the County Council as there are in any assembly in the world. I remember when I was last on this platform my honoured friend and colleague, Mr. John Morley, made an allusion, which in my opinion was completely misinterpreted, to young men who dream dreams. I believe, in the first place, it was misinterpreted because it was a misquotation from the Prophet Joel. I believe the true text is, 'Young men will see visions,' and it was understood from that that he meant to cast opprobrium on these young men: and

there was a war, consisting, if I am right, principally of sonnets, which raged around this unfortunate expression.

“I do not think it was an unfortunate expression at all as it was intended, and I shall be prepared to adopt it to its fullest extent. I say young men will see visions, and I hope men who are no longer young will see visions, because it is on the visions of the future that there is the best hope for the politics of the present. If I were in any way a painter, and could illuminate the address that you have presented to me to-night, and if I could introduce into my art all the castles in the air that I and you have built in Spring Gardens, I should produce some of the most magnificent specimens of architectural landscape that have ever been submitted to the Royal Academy. And when I and you cease to dream dreams it will be time for us to give up being municipal reformers. I remember very well when we built these castles in the air, and when we dreamt these dreams; and when we found that the Author of our being was not inclined to look kindly upon our aspirations, we were inclined to sit down by the waters of Babylon—I do not mean the river Thames by that—and mourn our sad fate.

“Now, if you will allow me to say so—and I say it of myself as much as of my fellow-councillors who at that time suffered under a sense of disappointment—I think that disappointment was

a very good thing for us, because it threw us upon the powers that we already possessed, and forced us to carry by administration many reforms which we otherwise might have neglected in the exercise of new and larger powers. Now, what I want to point out is this, that we of the County Council—though latterly I can claim but a very small share of merit in connection with it—have effected enormous changes and enormous reforms, not by legislation, but by administration; and having effected these enormous reforms by administration, we are now capable, when legislation comes, of undertaking new reforms under the new powers that will be given to us. I cannot go into detail to-night. I have not time, and I would not condemn you to the suffering of sitting in this atmosphere listening to a detailed account of the work of the London County Council, because the enumeration even of some of the benefits that we have conferred upon this metropolis would take up pretty nearly all the time till midnight. But at any rate I can touch upon one or two of the points which I think will make every Londoner feel how much he owes to this new body, and how much to the spirit that animates it.

“I will take first the necessities of life. I will take air. What has the London County Council done for air? It has given you a thousand acres more air space in London. It has added to the

open spaces of London, which were already not insignificant, and it has saved from building for posterity no less than a thousand acres of ground. I think that if the County Council rested its fame and its fortunes on that fact alone, it would have no insignificant claim to your gratitude. As to water, we have not been so successful, but it has been from no want of energy on our part. In our humble opinion—we do not wish to criticise—the Royal Commission that sat on that question took too inadequate a view of the wants and the future of London. But at any rate we are doing two things. We are negotiating, as I understand, with the water companies for the acquisition of their rights if they can be obtained on just and moderate terms, and we are also determined to guard those great unexhausted sources of water supply, wherever they may be, which may some day be wanted for the Imperial wants of the metropolis. And as for food and as for warmth, what have we done? In the careful and accurate carrying out of the Weights and Measures Acts we have seen that the poor Londoner got fair weight and measure when he purchased food, and also when he purchased coal. And I believe that in a hundred and a thousand houses there would at this moment be found to exist a spring of gratitude that cannot be exhausted in exchange for this one bounty alone of the London County Council.

“ Now, there is one other point on which the London County Council has perhaps done, in the opinion of most, a great deal more for the health and comfort of the people than even in the ways which I have cited. It has refused to continue seventeen liquor licences, which it had obtained in the course of the acquisition of property for improvement ; and though these seventeen licences represented a large sum of money, and therefore a great responsibility for the London County Council, the Council never shrank from doing what it thought right, and its action has been entirely endorsed. Now, I promised not to detain you by a long enumeration of the good works of the Council. I will not, therefore, dwell on the beneficent work that it has done in connection with the asylums for the insane and with the industrial schools under its care. I have a very strong opinion that of all the painful and distasteful work which devolved upon the London County Council the care of the insane is naturally the most painful and the most irksome ; but our councillors have never shrunk from the work. They have done far more than their office compelled them to do. They have mixed with their patients at their social gatherings, and they have done all that tender care and kindness could do to alleviate their life ; and I, who have observed their work, venture to say that it is one of the brightest features in their record that they should



"WHICH IS TOD SLOAN?"

"*Westminster Gazette*," Oct. 27th, 1898.



have done so much for those unfortunate people. I suppose you care, not much less than for air and for food, for immunity from the risk of being burned in your beds. The Fire Brigade of London has been immensely developed and improved in the various branches of which it consists, and under my friend Lord Carrington, who is going to undertake the chairmanship of that committee in conjunction with the Lord Chamberlainship and the care of the drama and a hundred other functions, I am quite sure that it will attain additional development.

“ But, after all, I regard as by far the most important part of its work influencing the politics of to-day and of to-morrow as to labour policy. When that labour policy was first introduced, it was received with sneers and gibes in several quarters; but sneers and gibes carry no poison with them unless they are dipped in truth, and the result of the working of this experiment has been to convince the most incredulous that, after all, the County Council was as wise as it was daring in the experiment it carried out. What was that policy? In the first place, it began by insisting that all contractors who did work for the County Council should pay their men a fair wage, and that they should not overwork them, a provision directed against what is popularly and emphatically called sweating. Well, after all, though that policy has found great imitators, it



has been mainly successful under the London County Council. In the next place, the Council determined to look after its own men; it determined that they should work shorter hours, and that they should be given a fair wage and fair conditions of work. I venture to say that good results will be seen in the well-being and contentment of the men; and again I say of that experiment it has had imitators in the most exalted quarters.

“The last experiment which they have undertaken is not the least daring one. They have determined, as far as may be, to do away with the contractor and the middleman. Again the prophets of evil wagged their heads, and again the prophecies of evil have been falsified, because, as a matter of fact, I believe it to be established that the work has been as well done as it was ever done by a contractor, and at a lessened cost of 15 per cent. I say that this, as a record of administrative work for five years, can hardly be beaten. It is for that reason, if for that reason alone, I at this time do not regret that at the beginning additional powers were not devolved upon us, as we wished. Besides these things, the County Council has made some great parliamentary exertions. It has laid down some principles which will not be allowed to die until they are carried into effect. The first of these is the taxation of ground values. That is a principle which is be-

coming universally established, because I think at the last election, when the other party held their meeting in this very hall, the judgment of that meeting acknowledged that that was a sound and just principle. It is not a very easy principle to carry justly and simply into effect, but I have little doubt that with the brains now devoted to the application of it we shall soon arrive at a working result.

“The other principle to which I allude is the principle of betterment. That is not a new principle, but it has been allowed to lapse. It was a principle established in the reign of Charles II., and it was in operation during the clearances that followed the Great Fire of London; but, for good and sufficient reasons to those concerned, that principle was allowed to be forgotten for centuries. Well, that principle is now revived. You passed it through the House of Commons last year, and you sent it by a large majority elsewhere. Something happened there to which, on a non-contentious occasion of this kind, I do not wish to allude; but that has been followed by some extraordinary circumstances. The chairman of the Committee on the London Improvements Bill, which embodied the principle of betterment, was a Conservative member for Manchester,—I do not name him to-night because this is a non-contentious occasion; but what has occurred since? He was strongly against betterment on that occasion; but this year

the city of Manchester joins hands with the London County Council, and sends up a Bill containing the very principle of betterment which he had opposed; and the principal supporter of this Manchester Bill was the opposing chairman of the betterment committee of last year. While you make converts like that, you need not be very much afraid if for a session, or even for two, those large principles do not have immediate effect; and you may be quite certain that as long as Her Majesty's present advisers are in power you will meet with very unflinching support in any honest and honourable proposal you have to make with reference to betterment or the taxation of ground values.

“And now, what have you got from the Government? That is rather a delicate question for me. We are always told that gratitude is a lively sense of favours to come. I do not believe the London County Council is animated by any feeling of that kind in presenting this address; but I always like to look things in the face, for fear there should be an insignificant minority in the County Council animated by a feeling so contemptible as that. I should like to run over for a moment what has been our relation with the present Government. What were the conditions under which we have had to deal with the County Council? In the first place, we have been only twenty months in power. The first

six months—I think with great good judgment, considering what was to follow—we enjoyed what our opponents were pleased to call a holiday, as we were not in the least likely to get a holiday afterwards. I am inclined to think that was one of the most judicious acts of Her Majesty's Government. I had good occasion to know it was a holiday in name, but it was usefully spent in making many administrative reforms. What is the first great trophy from the Government? It is the Commission for the Unification of London. Many of you may say, 'Oh, another Royal Commission; we know what Royal Commissions are.' But this is not a Royal Commission like other Royal Commissions, because it has established, once for all, the principle of the unification of London, and it is only now engaged in discussing the vast plan for carrying that principle out. I see that a very eminent municipal authority—I say it without any tinge of irony—has recently written a letter to say that he is in favour of six or seven municipalities for London. I do not say that there may not have been a great deal to say for that proposal once, but the time for that proposal has gone. Indeed, I scarcely see how it ever could have been operative.

“What is it a municipality takes pride in? It takes pride in its administrative functions, in its police, in its fire brigade, and in the various departments which the great corporations of the

country administer. Should we then in London, under this precious scheme, have seven police forces, seven fire brigades, seven various organisations? and if we had not seven organisations, what is the use of calling them municipalities? They would have been simply glorified District Councils federated into one, and the unification would have been complete in one sense, while it would have been as imperfect as it could be in another. If you had obtained that alone, you would have done well by the present Government. But what did you get besides? You will remember the first session of Parliament was an Irish session, and, for reasons I will not expatiate upon, not so fruitful a session as we could have wished. The second session was devoted to rural England; but you got a very good slice out of the Parish Councils. You got the freedom of your vestries; you got the free election of your guardians; you got an extension of your powers; and you got one indirect advantage which I do not think you have put so much to the front, which is, if, as we believe, these rural Councils give a new life to the rural villages, you will not be in the danger of a constant incursion of the rural population, who come in here to swell the roll of the unemployed, and to increase the number of the miserable and destitute of this city. I fancy, therefore, that out of the Parish Councils Bill you have got your share.

“You have got also a Bill which is to be introduced in a week or ten days, as I understand—a Bill for the equalisation of rates. We did not get it through before; but we hardly ever get anything through, for reasons to which I will not further refer. But you may be certain of this, that we, to use another of Mr. John Morley’s phrases, have nailed the Bill for equalisation of rates to the mast, and we intend to carry the vessel that bears it into port. Lastly, there was the constant support you got for your proposals for betterment and additional powers from Her Majesty’s Government whenever opportunity offered. I know that these do not satisfy ardent London reformers. It will be useless, with a faculty of looking facts in the face, to disguise the fact that among ardent reformers there was discontent at the slowness of the progress. I do not regret that discontent. I consider a satisfied reformer is a dangerous being. He contains very much the same elements and character of danger that those derelict vessels do that are such a cause of peril to our commerce on the Atlantic. He is a floating obstacle; you never know where to find him; and, therefore, I hope we shall find in the London County Council a large proportion of hungry and discontented reformers, who will keep the Government up to their work. I remember very well that that discontent found vent in the usual channel of

discontent—in an article in a magazine. Israel was bidden to proceed to its tents. ‘To your tents, O Israel,’ said the article—and the article was written in so genial and so witty a manner as to make me think that if I had had a tent I should have almost proceeded to it. I am glad to say that, on consideration, that advice was not followed. I do not know exactly what it meant, what it was Israel was to do in its tents; but I am certain that Israel was much better outside its tents than in them. It could do some good outside the tents; it could do precious little good in them. You remember that a certain person is always reported to find mischief for idle hands to do; and the idle hand in the tent is not less mischievous than the one out of it; and I rejoice, in spite of that spirited harangue, which was meant rather to act as a spur than a curb, that Israel continued to do its good work. I view all that has been done by yourselves in administration and in the effort to promote principles of legislation as important mainly for one circumstance, that it is another proof of those great and growing forces in legislation which are practically a growth of the last few years in this country, but which are swelling to colossal proportions, which cannot be longer ignored by any statesman, however highly placed he may be, and which are taking the place of those fossil politics—for there is fossil Radicalism as well as fossil Toryism—

which are beginning to find too late that they are out of date.

“I should like to tell you for a moment that those forces affect not less the Government than the London County Council. While the Government was enjoying its holiday, and when the Government was enjoying the interminable debates on various measures which have occupied hours of its time, it has been in a manner treading in your footsteps, and endeavouring to do for its employees what you have done for yourselves. They tried to do something in legislation. They passed the Employers' Liability Bill; they passed it to where the limits of their powers ceased. They did pass a Bill for regulating the hours of railway servants—a Bill which was greatly required not merely for the welfare of those servants, but for the safety of the passengers on the railways. Now, what has been the effect of that Bill? The great companies are gradually falling into line in accepting that Bill. One great company, I heard only to-day, is building eight new locomotives to meet the additional supply necessary to comply with the requirements of that Bill, and they are prepared to spend £15,000 a year in additional labour to bring their staff under it. Further, we have promised to give Government support to an Eight Hours Bill for miners, the promoters of which, I believe, will not require facilities in the House of



Commons in its first stage from the Government, but may not be unwilling to receive these facilities later; and I think that in itself is a recognition of the fact that the Government views this new force as a force on which it must base its support.

“ Besides these measures—I daresay I have omitted some—the State is endeavouring to become a model employer of labour itself. There was, if you remember aright, a resolution moved and carried in 1891, by a gentleman who ought to be a member of the County Council if he were not a member of the House of Commons and of the Government—I mean Mr. Sydney Buxton. His resolution, if you remember, was that contractors under Government contracts were to pay fair wages under these Government contracts, and wages and terms that could be accepted by trade unionists and by trade unions. He carried that resolution in a not too friendly House of Commons, and it was given immediate effect to. What have we seen since this Government came into power? I am not sure that the first experiment of an eight hours' day was not tried in the office with which I am now connected, which was then an office employing but comparatively few men—I mean the County Council Office. I believe it was Mr. Acland, who has done so much for the people in so short a time, who first put the eight hours' term of labour into operation in the Edu-

cation Office. He was promptly followed up by the War Office. The War Office employ, I think, some eighteen thousand or nineteen thousand: I speak under correction. They proceeded logically to apply the eight hours principle to their men. They were encouraged by the success which has attended that principle in the works of Messrs. Mather at Oldham, and Mr. Allan at Sunderland; and the Secretary for War, Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, writes to me to say that, so far as they can judge as yet, the experiment has been a complete success. The men have their breakfast before they go to work, and they do their work on a full stomach, and therefore do it much better than they did before. They do not have to go away for breakfast, and they save the additional time that they work for the enjoyment of their homes and their families; and, after all, the Government itself saves in fuel, fire, lubricants, and all that it expended money on in the additional hours of labour. Then you are aware that in the same way the Admiralty has now followed suit, and that in the vast dockyards of this country an eight hours' period will now be the rule in operation.

“I see some on this platform who are Fabians, some who hold advanced views on labour questions, and I venture to ask if they two years ago would have deemed it possible for one moment that such a step as this would have

been undertaken by the responsible Government of this country with the complete assent and approbation of everybody? I have not done with my Government budget yet. I am only going to give you a brief sketch of what we, or rather they, have done. There is the Home Office. The Home Office has at last become a Home Office, not merely in name, but in deed. I think that possibly it might be well, in the presence of one I see not far from me, who knows the work of the Home Office better than I do, if I dispense with any enumeration of what the Home Office has done. It is, I believe, sufficiently well known to you all. But, as a matter of fact, in the multiplication of inspectors, in mines, in factories, and in quarries, in the appointment of female inspectors, in the regulation of dangerous trades, and in seeking further powers, as he is now doing, for the further regulation of dangerous and unhealthy trades, Mr. Asquith, I believe, has beaten the record. Let me say one word about the Board of Trade, where my friend Mr. Mundella has once more been showing his zeal and his interest in labour questions. In the first place, he has thoroughly constituted that Labour Bureau which he administered in 1886, and which he has now made the most perfect labour bureau, as I believe, in the world, the envy and the imitation of Continental nations. With Mr. Giffen at the head, with Mr.

Llewellyn Smith as the chief labour commissioner, and with Mr. John Burnett as the chief labour correspondent, I believe that that Labour Bureau, with its numberless correspondents, male and female, in every industrial district, is perhaps the best equipped department of that kind that any Government has ever had. Then he has set on foot a new magazine, which is called *The Labour Gazette*. That *Labour Gazette*, if you have ever seen it—and I do not doubt many of you have seen it—is the most perfect compendium of all the facts that will interest labour that has ever been drawn up.

“ If this Government had existed only for the purpose of producing *The Labour Gazette*, I venture to say this Government would not have lived in vain. Mr. Mundella had passed through Parliament that very Bill for regulating the hours of railway servants to which I alluded. He has also on hand re-drafting a Bill for introducing conciliation in labour disputes. Those of us who remember—and who does not?—the great labour conflict of last year, and the calamities it entailed upon us, the advantages it gave to foreign nations in the struggle of commerce, the calamities it entailed, as keen as those suffered from war, famine, and pestilence, will regret no step, however effectual or ineffectual, no attempt in the direction of further conciliation.

“ All this is good in itself. I think it is a

record of which any Government may be proud. I think your record also is one of which any municipal body may be proud. When you consider that the one body has only lived for five years and the other only for twenty months, you may say that no two such bodies have ever effected so much for labour in the time. But if this is good in itself, it is infinitely more important, in my opinion, as a sign of that new spirit which is passing from municipal into Imperial politics, which aims more at the improvement of the lot of the worker and the toiler than at those great constitutional effects in which past Parliaments have taken their pride. To what do you attribute that spirit? I attribute it to two things. In the first place, I believe as England has been governed under various suffrages for the benefit of various sections, that, now the suffrage has been made accessible to all, it is about to be governed for all. In the next place, I believe in the further course of the lowering of that suffrage we somewhere or other lit up the conscience of the community. I believe that at last the community has awoke to its liabilities and duties to all ranks and classes. And I believe the people are now inclined to think that politics is not merely a game at which the pawns have to be sacrificed to the knights and the castles, but is an elevating and ennobling effort to carry into practical politics and practical life the

principles of a higher morality. I believe that, increasingly, Governments will be judged by that test. I believe the people are coming to recognise that in that spirit alone must Governments be carried on. It is all very well to make great speeches and to win great divisions. It is well to speak with authority in the councils of the world, and to see your navies riding on every sea, and to see your flag on every shore.

“That is well, but it is not all. I am certain that there is a party in this country not named as yet that is disconnected with any existing political organisation, a party which is inclined to say, ‘A plague on both your Houses, a plague on all your parties, a plague on all your politics, a plague on your unending discussions which yield so little fruit! Have done with this unending talk, and come down and do something for the people!’ It is this spirit which animates, as I believe, the great masses of our artisans, the great masses of our working clergy, the great masses of those who work for and with the poor, and who for the want of a better word I am compelled to call by the bastard term of philanthropists; and whether that spirit be with them or not—and I am convinced by conversation with many individuals it is increasingly so—you will find that that spirit will spread if Parliament is not able to do something effective. You will find it will spread higher and wider in the social

scale; and I for one shall not despair some day to see a Minister, Prime or otherwise, who shall not scruple from time to time to come down from the platform of party, and speak straight to the hearts of his fellow-countrymen, speak to them as Sir Robert Peel spoke to them when he was hurled from power for cheapening the bread of the people. Were that Minister here to-night, he would, I imagine, ask you not to save his Cabinet or himself, but to make a great effort to save yourselves, to save yourselves by some noble, by some direct, by some effective action from the dangers that encircle a great population—the perils of violence, of crime, and the greatest peril of all, the peril of ignorance. We ask you to rob no class, to rob no man; but we do say that unless effective means are taken to deal with this enormous, this incalculable population which is growing up around us, half noticed, half ignored, there is a danger for England such as war has never given her, and which it is the prayer of this Government she may escape.”

Two years later, on December 7, 1896, Sir Walter Besant delivered a lecture on “London,” at the Queen’s Hall, London. Lord Rosebery was in the chair, and after the lecture said :

“I should have been glad had it been possible for me to-night to confine myself to the duties—

the inane and luxurious duties—of chairman of such a meeting as this; but I have been asked to express in your name our thanks to Sir Walter Besant for his lecture to-night—that is to move a vote of thanks, because it will be seconded with more authority. I came with the greatest pleasure to his lecture. It was my privilege to submit Sir Walter Besant's name to the Queen for the honour of knighthood, and I did so for this reason. There are, of course, many literary men in London, as he has reminded us—and I will break a lance with him on that point in a moment—there are many men of letters in London who have distinguished themselves by the brilliancy of their works, but I doubt if there is any man of letters in London or elsewhere whose works have produced so practical and beneficent a result as those of Sir Walter Besant. But for him the People's Palace would not, I believe, have been built, and since that time he has enriched our literature in various ways, but in no respect, in my judgment, more usefully than in those two fascinating books in which he has dealt with London and with Westminster.

“In spite of all he may say to-night, London has wanted a little interest to be attracted to it. I confess I have never felt that, in proportion to the interest which provincial towns and places feel in themselves, London has ever received an adequate notice either from the antiquary or the



historian. Think what pregnant interests invest the streets of London! You cannot touch the railings of St. James's Square—hideous as those railings are, and dull as are the houses that surround them—without thinking that Johnson and Savage, hungry boys, starved by their kind mother London—who attracted men of letters to her—walked round that square one summer night and swore they would stand by their country. I take that only as an instance. Our houses are built, in the absence of those principles you wish to revive, only to last a generation or two, but while they last should not the facts to which they have borne witness be recorded on them? I take one or two concrete instances. There was a famous building in London called the Cockpit—the Cockpit of old Westminster Palace. The Cockpit was a famous political building at the beginning of this century. At the beginning of this century the Minister of the day used to read the Sovereign's Speech to his supporters in the Cockpit—it was not an inappropriate place, considering the political controversy to which it would give rise—but it was a political place of notoriety and importance. I do not believe—I shall, of course, be contradicted to-morrow; but a public man, however humble, blossoms and buds under contradiction—I do not believe any one lives in London who can tell you where the Cockpit was, which was existing at the

beginning of the century, and which was as well known to Londoners as Westminster Hall. Sir Walter Besant says that he knows, but he will only give a version, and there are many versions and no proof. I will take another case. During the present century many Governments have been formed in London—all Governments are formed in London. I wonder that Sir Walter Besant did not claim that to the credit of the metropolis. In my time three if not four Governments have been formed in Carlton Terrace or Carlton Gardens—it is the same thing. I do not believe that in twenty years anybody will be able to point out the house in which those Governments were formed. In our lifetime—in the lifetime of all of us, I think I may say with confidence—three Governments have been formed in Arlington Street. How long shall we know where those Governments were formed? At any rate, no stranger, however distinguished, wandering about the streets of London, would have the faintest idea where these important transactions were carried on.

“ I know there is a society that affixes a rare and scattered medallion on the houses that it is able to identify. I sympathise with that society, but I feel that its efforts are inadequate. I know the difficulty of identifying houses, because numbers have come so comparatively lately into use ; but the London County Council, never

wearied in the cause of good, might yet develop a new spring of activity, and establish a historic department, which might identify to Londoners some of the sites and houses in which they could feel an interest. But if, as I know, the overburdened ratepayer should object to this development, I do suggest that more attention should be given to making our streets of London living storehouses of history instead of being blanks of stucco, as they are at present.

“You, Sir Walter, said that London had never been more beautiful than it is at present. I hope that that is not true. It is, at any rate, a very guarded sentence, but it conveys so bitter and painful a reflection on the past of the Metropolis that I am unwilling to accept it as true. You, in your book about London, have described eloquently the brilliancy of London under the Plantagenets and the Tudors—the great palaces of the Strand, the palaces that extended far beyond even the present limit of the City—at any rate, palaces which connected London and Westminster. I cannot believe that London was not proportionately more beautiful than it is now. I feel quite certain that the beauty of London is as yet—I hope so—only the positive quantity, and that it may be comparative and even superlative before we have done with it as a task. I have another minor quarrel with the

lecturer. It is a quarrel not in the interests of history, because I have no doubt that he has history on his side; it is in the interests of morality. Why should he destroy the legend of Whittington? I have always understood that, as a French soldier is supposed to have a marshal's *bâton* in his knapsack, the London apprentice saw an encouragement of the same kind in the legend of the penniless Whittington and his cat. I beg, whatever the lecturer may feel on that point, whatever may be the crushing testimony he is able to bring forward against the legend of Whittington, that, in the interests of common morality and of the future of the apprentices and young men of this Metropolis, he will allow to be cherished undisturbed the legend of Whittington. I am not quite sure I am even disposed to allow that the claims of London as the mother of literature are quite well founded. Stepmother would be a better word. It is quite true that London, by the sheer and brutal force of money, and also by the libraries and scientific appliances she is able to give in such profusion, does attract within her walls a greater share of literature than that to which she is entitled. She sucks within herself the literature of other cities, and I suppose she will continue to do so as our railway system, and even our motor-car system, develops. But she takes them. They have to come to her, and

she has not, as a rule, treated them very well; but, considering the advantages she has, I cannot think that the roll of men of letters to which she is distinctively entitled is such a very long one as it may seem. What is the greatest name in our literature? Shakespeare. He came to act in London because he got more stalls filled there than anywhere else, but we have a strong suspicion that he wrote in Warwick. Sir Walter has himself excepted in the last century the illustrious names of Scott and Burns. He need not have stopped at Scott and Burns. He might have given us Southey, one of the most fertile men of letters of that day, who never came near London except for the purposes of business. He might have given us Wordsworth, who is the poetic prophet of many, though, judging from the applause, I should say he is not so much admired as that Jack Cade who was so loudly cheered. I do not know if you will claim Browning; I am very doubtful about Browning. You certainly cannot claim Tennyson. You will not claim Byron, who was hunted out of London when he came here. You will not claim Shelley, who was obliged to live in Italy. I am not here to break literary lances with the lecturer, whom I so much admire, and I think he is bound to put forward a good case for the City he so much loves and honours.

“I said London was a stepmother. How did

you treat these men of letters in the last century? What was the line? I shall be excused if I do not give it literally, 'The Muse found Scroggen stretch'd beneath a rug.' Your Parnassus was Grub Street, where the poets starved and their bowels were extracted from them by predatory booksellers.

"The claims of London must not be put too high. She is the greatest city in the world. She will always be the greatest city in the world if her sons and daughters are only true to themselves. I sometimes wonder why it is that Governments in the past—we are not talking politics to-night, so I will not say Governments of the present—but it has been a source of wonder to me that Governments of the past, living in the midst of London, breathing the air of London, should have been content to leave London what it is. After all, you have your problems in South Africa, you have your problems constantly arising in India, you have problems all over the world; but the greatest problem of all is that which is underneath your nose, and which, as a rule, you always ignore. I do not believe—it is a commonplace to say it—that in the history of the world there has ever been such a problem for statesmen as this of London. I am not allowed to call it a city, because the City of London is only a small part of it. But there has never been such a problem to exercise the faith and the ingenuity and the

enterprise and the enthusiasm of mankind as this great conglomeration of human beings which is called London. Because it surrounds the Houses of Parliament it seems to be hardly anything to those Houses of Parliament; because it is the most present and the most pressing of problems it seems to be the one problem which Governments always determine to ignore.

“Developments of industry do not in any degree promise any hope of relieving the superfluous population of London or to take it elsewhere. All these developments of machinery—this new cheap motor principle, for example—promise exactly the reverse. They promise diminution of employment in the country, and fresh additional flocking of the rural population into the towns. This new problem of London is not waxing less, but is waxing greater. You, Sir Walter, see in London a beautiful woman. Let the beauty pass. But she is a woman, with her arms in one place, her legs in another, her head in another, and her heart in another. What is this great body of disjointed but populous parishes; what is this great desert, inhabited by neglected humanity? Is it a town, populous indeed, but remote from the seat of Empire? No; it is the seat of Empire itself. You have alluded, sir, to the enterprise which has sent forth from London great schemes of colonisation. You have drawn an eloquent and pathetic picture of the dying young king,

drawn from his deathbed to see the last adventurer pass on his northern journey. But, after all, that is only a type of what is going on every day. The last great speech made by Lord Beaconsfield was the speech with regard to the retention of Kandahar. Lord Beaconsfield rose at the end of the debate, and, as was not unusual with him, threw over all the previous speakers from his own side. They had said that Kandahar was the key of India. He said: 'I hear a great deal of nonsense talked about this.' That was the gist of his remarks. I presume he put it more politely; I am only speaking from memory. 'I am told that the key of India is Kandahar, or that the key of India is Herat. No, my lords; the key of India is neither one nor the other. The key of India is London.' That is a true saying. But you may extend it much further than that.

"The key of the British Empire is London; it is that great city in which we live. If, then, representing as it does a population equal to that of many kingdoms converted into a small span, if, then, the key of the Empire as it is, it cannot merit in a greater degree the attention of statesmen of the future than it has the statesmen of the past, I can only bid you pluck up your energies and stimulate them by the remarkable lecture that we have heard this evening. Be proud that you are citizens of no mean city, and determine, in



so far as it lies with you, it shall be not meaner, not even so mean as it is, but worthy of its central position, of its great history, and of its unmeasurable destinies."

## CHAPTER XXVIII

LORD ROSEBERY'S DESCRIPTION OF HIS GOVERNMENT—ITS LEGISLATIVE RECORD—GENERAL ELECTION OF 1895—LIBERAL IMPERIALISM—THE ROOT OF ALL POLITICAL QUESTIONS—THE HOUSE OF LORDS—GREAT SPEECHES AT THE ALBERT HALL AND AT BRADFORD.

LORD ROSEBERY fulfilled many engagements in the last six months of 1895. The Government was defeated on June 21, 1895, and the general election followed. That election fight produced one of the finest orations that even Lord Rosebery has ever uttered. It was delivered to an immense audience at the Albert Hall on July 5, 1895. Lord Rosebery said :

“ There is nothing in the Government just at an end to defend—nothing in its life, nothing in its death, nothing in its spirit, nothing in its work. It lived a noble life. It died a noble death. It passed great measures ; it wrought great acts of administration. It leaves behind it a mighty surplus ; it leaves business reviving and commerce prospering. It leaves behind it a contented people. That is something to build upon, that is a treasure stored up beyond the reach of time. But, on the other side, I have nothing to

attack. Every morning I ransack the newspapers in the hope of coming on that long-retained and not yet divulged declaration of policy. I am told that their policy is comprised in the word 'dissolution.' Dissolution of what? [A voice—"The Lords."] That may be the result, indeed. It cannot be a dissolution of the Ministry, because that is not yet formed. It cannot be a dissolution of partnership, because they are yet in the honeymoon. I came naturally to the conclusion that a scheme of policy would be launched, and that, after a fitting time, in which the country could appreciate and digest it, the dissolution would take place.

"But, instead of this, the dissolution comes and no policy. A Cabinet of nineteen should be able to frame a policy, and yet there is no sign. I do not, of course, call that placard which at this moment covers Birmingham—I am told that it is as large as a four-roomed tenement—I do not call that placard the policy of the Government; it is only the last and latest of many unauthorised programmes. I am told, vaguely indeed, that the policy of the new Government is to be the maintenance of the Empire and social legislation. In that case, why did they turn us out? We maintained the Empire; we increased the Empire.

"What is our record in social legislation? There is the Bill for regulating the hours of railway

servants; there is the Employers' Liability Bill. But that is not an Act of Parliament. There is the raising of the exemptions for the income-tax, which have benefited some three hundred and fifty thousand people. There is the Parish Councils Act, there is the Equalisation of Rates (London) Bill, and there is the Factory Act of this session. We are told that we were a wretched Government, that thought of nothing but clinging to office. Now we have a great God-given Government, and let them see if, in the long years of office which they contemplate are before them, they will be able to rival that list of measures.

“I myself think social administration as important as social legislation. What did the late Government do? It established fair wages and short hours in all the Government departments. It administered the Factory Act in a new spirit; it appointed working-men inspectors and women inspectors throughout the country. I could multiply that list, but it is not necessary to do so tonight. Well, gentlemen, if we have simply to fight—as it appears we have to fight—nothing but a blank sheet of paper inscribed with pious aspirations, or a futile programme presented with the old modesty and the old unselfishness, I say there is nothing left for us to do but congratulate Mr. Chamberlain on having at last attained the object of his later ambition of being the head of

a united Tory Government. There is one point in which I hope to be able to give my support to the new Government, and that is on questions of foreign policy. If there is one thing in my life I should wish to live after me, it is that, when I first went to the Foreign Office as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, I argued for and maintained the principle of a policy of continuity in foreign administration. My view was this, that whatever our domestic differences may be at home, we should preserve a united front abroad; and that foreign statesmen and foreign courts should feel that they are dealing, not with a Ministry, possibly fleeting and possibly transient, but with a great, powerful, and united nation. Of course, even in continuity of foreign policy you may have differences of skill, differences of manipulation; and here I should do an injury to myself and the Government if I did not pay an ungrudging tribute to the way in which foreign affairs were conducted by Lord Kimberley. Suffering under the sorest and saddest of domestic bereavements, he gave his whole time and energy, and the whole of his great ability, to the work of his department with conspicuous success. I remember once I was taunted by a member of the new Government—an Under-Secretary of State; he should have been Secretary of State for the Home Department—Mr. Jesse Collings. He said that I was a Liberal Imperialist. Well,

if that be my shame, I glory in my shame, for Liberal Imperialism implies, first, the maintenance of the Empire; secondly, the opening of new areas for our surplus population; thirdly, the suppression of the slave trade; fourthly, the development of missionary enterprise; and fifthly, the development of our commerce, which so often needs it.

“That, if I may say so, is a digression. There are two points of foreign policy on which I would touch for a minute to-night. One is the occupation of Chitral. The late Government never had an opportunity of announcing the unanimous conclusion at which they had arrived with respect to Chitral. They had instructed the Governor-General of India that, at the earliest possible moment, consistently with safety and with dignity, they should withdraw from Chitral. I have no time now to give the reasons for this decision; but if the new Government think of reversing it, I trust they will mete out to us the measure they asked us to mete out to them, and will give us an opportunity of discussing their policy before they finally adopt it. The second question to which I would allude is that of Armenia. The late Government, in conjunction with the Governments of France and Russia, put strong pressure on the Sultan's Government to insist on measures with regard to the Christian populations of Asia Minor, which should secure to them not merely good government, but

at least security from intolerable oppression, intolerable cruelty, and intolerable barbarism. They did not ask—they did not desire to set up a separate and an autonomous Armenia, which might be the cause of umbrage and even of danger to European peace; but they did insist, and with their allies would have continued to insist at the Court of Constantinople, upon due guarantees against the recurrence of such horrors as occurred last year. I trust that the new Government—though its head has not always been discreet in his allusions to that subject—I trust, I say, that the new Government will not flinch or flag in the course we have laid out, for if otherwise they will have an account to settle, not with the outgoing Government, for that is nothing, but with the whole Christian population of the United Kingdom.

“In all its history Ireland was never so tranquil, never so contented as she is at the present moment. What is that due to? [Cries of “Morley,” and loud cheers.] You have anticipated my answer. It is due, in the first place, to confidence in the Liberal Administration, and especially in Mr. John Morley; and secondly, to the vigilant, the just, and the sympathetic administration of Ireland conducted by that gentleman. And, on the other side, we must gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the Irish party in Parliament, who have sat day after day and night after night in supporting us on measures in which they had little or no



*Photo. by Fredk. Hollyer.]*

*LORD ROSEBERY, from the Portrait by G. F. Watts, R.A.*





interest, compelled sometimes to see measures in which they had an interest rejected or deferred, and yet not unwilling to take their share with us in the legislation of England, Scotland, and Wales. We had given them, and we wished to give them, a fair share of parliamentary time. They had almost all our first session; they had a part of our second session, and they would have had an important part of our third session. Well, that I am afraid will always be the case so long as you insist on keeping Irish members in London transacting British affairs, when their sole wish is to go to Dublin and transact Irish affairs. That is the Irish question. What is it that the Irish want? Is it separation? But you are told so by those who ought to know better, and who have not scrupled to stigmatise the whole of our party by the nickname of Separatists. No, it is not separation they want; they could not if they would, and they would not if they could. There is not a Liberal in this hall who would not resist the idea of separation, and, what is more, separation would be death to Irish commerce. The interests of Irish commerce, to put things at their lowest, are a safer and a higher bond of union than the legislative Act of the beginning of the century which was forced through the corrupt Irish Parliament. But I believe that, beyond and above commercial bonds, there is a surer and higher bond, both of sympathy and of affection,

due largely to the exertions of Mr. Gladstone; due in the next place to Mr. John Morley; and due in the last, I hope in some degree, to us, the humbler members of the Liberal party.

“Well, then, if it is not ‘separation,’ what is it that the Irish want? They want a local legislature for the management of those Irish affairs which they allege, and justly allege, are grossly misunderstood, grossly mismanaged, and grossly neglected at the Palace of Westminster. We speak of their occupying a disproportionate amount of the time of the House. They do not wish to occupy one moment of our time. They only ask to be allowed to go to their own country and to their own people. When I think of their aspirations and the obstacles to them, I am irresistibly reminded of the old story in the Old Testament, of the children of Israel who wished to leave Egypt, and of Pharaoh who would not let them go. Sometimes there were signs and portents, and then Pharaoh softened and relented; but the king’s heart, we are constantly told, hardened, and he would not let them go. But they went at last. England—not Scotland, not Wales—England alone is the Pharaoh in this matter who will not let the people go. And how are we to convince this obdurate monarch? In the first place, as I think, by pointing to the patience, the respect for law, and the capacity for self-government shown by the Irish people.

And in the next place, by pointing out to Pharaoh that it is for his own interests, for his own comfort, for his own convenience, and for the better regulation of his own business, that he should let them go. The Irish have already proved the first proposition, and I strongly suspect that Pharaoh is beginning to be aware of the second. He is beginning to perceive that if he continues to centralise all business at Westminster there will be no business done.

“What was the record of the session which has just been violently interrupted? The first Bill was a great Bill for the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales. That affected Wales alone. Then there was a Land Bill, which affected Ireland alone. There was a Crofters Bill, which affected a part, and a part only, of Scotland; and looming in the background there was the Disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. Well, I think England under these circumstances had a right to ask a question in popular phraseology, ‘Where do I come in?’ There are four hundred and seventy English members of Parliament, more or less, as I believe, and they must want some legislation. As the majority of them are Tory, I do not suppose they want much, but at any rate they must want some. You cannot expect them to do without any legislation at all, but, depend upon it, as long as things are as now, there will be little for

each, and not enough for all. You will find, as I believe, in the devolution of some of your attributes to local centres, and in the federalisation to some extent of your legislative powers, the only ultimate and certain remedy for this state of things.

“The fact is, as the great Sir Robert Peel is once reported to have said, this country has outgrown its institutions. It certainly has outgrown its legislative institutions. The secret of the success of this country in the past has been that its growth has coincided with the growth of its institutions. In the eighteenth century that development was arrested because, owing to the constant warfare in which we were engaged, there was little time or opportunity to devote the energies of the country to reform. In the beginning of the nineteenth century those energies arose and sprouted again, but, as we are slowly and painfully approaching the beginning of the twentieth century, our reforming energies have begun to flag. Our wealth, our commerce, our people have increased beyond the wildest dreams of the politicians of the past; the nation appears to be becoming aware of the necessity that is incumbent upon it, and by councils, both in counties and in districts and in parishes, attempts to relieve the great mass of work which is thus thrown upon them. There is only one body which so far has

remained impervious to this sensation and to these views, and that is the Houses of Parliament. Let us take the House of Commons, which has been impervious, as I think, to the reforming spirit. It has been purged of its rotten boroughs. It has been purged, as I hope and believe, of corruption; it has been purged, as I hope and believe, of aristocratic influence; but it is still cumbered with a huge mass of rules and precedents of procedure which make it, as I believe, the slowest, the most cautious, and, at the same time, the most careless of all legislative machines.

“I believe that if you want real legislation, either Liberal or Tory, you will have to reform, and very drastically, the procedure of the House of Commons. But there is another House which offers obstacles only to Liberal legislation. What is the question of the House of Lords? Go and see for yourselves. Go to the House of Lords. There is no alarming competition for seats. On the Government side of the House you will see huddled and crowded together five hundred peers, or as many as think fit to attend, ranged in order of battle; and on the other side you will see, sparsely sprinkled on the great ocean of red benches, some miserable twenty or thirty peers. When you think that the twenty or thirty peers represent the Liberal party of the country in that Legislature, repre-

sent the Liberal party when it is in a majority in the House of Commons, as it is at the present moment; or whether it is in a powerful minority or in a great majority, as I trust and believe it will be in the coming Parliament,—that will give you cause for reflection; and when you reflect that the five hundred peers are on the other side there to resist steadfastly and hereditarily every proposition that comes from the Liberal party, that will give you food for reflection too. Gentlemen, I believe that is the tap-root of all political questions. I trust when I say that, and I believe when I say that, I speak not as a partisan but as a patriot, for I see not merely the dangers in the present, but the infinite peril of the present arrangements in the time to come. I know it is said, by some of our party even, that the House of Lords is a secondary question, because when it comes to the point it always yields to the will of the people. Is that true? I know not myself where to look for the will of the people except in its elected representatives; and if that be a reflex of the people, it certainly is not true. But then we are told it will always bow to a sufficient majority. ‘You do not command a sufficient majority in the House of Commons. It will always bow to a majority of one hundred.’ Well, that is the argument seriously used. But it is not so easy to obtain a majority of one hundred. But the argument comes to

this—we are to understand that, in the opinion of these bulwarks of the Constitution, the Liberal party is only to legislate when it has a majority of a hundred, and the Conservative party may legislate safely with a majority of ten. I do not think that that represents exactly my idea of equity. It does not represent my idea of the equipoise, the secret, and the spirit of the British Constitution. We are told that any violent demonstration of the popular will will always be obeyed by the House of Lords. But you cannot legislate by a succession of hurricanes. Say, a Government comes in with five first-class measures. There is one hurricane to support the first; is it in human nature that there should be a second, a third, a fourth, and a fifth hurricane to support the remaining four? I say that the supporters of this branch of the Constitution are asking too much of our credulity when they support it by arguments like that.

“The question of the House of Lords, it is said, is a question which should not be put too much in front, because it may obscure and retard other questions of policy. They say that Irish Home Rule may be retarded by putting forward the question of the House of Lords. In my opinion the passing of Irish Home Rule depends upon the question of the House of Lords. For, after all, the House of Lords question to my mind is not so much a measure which retards or



obstructs other measures, it is a policy which should accompany and guide those measures. If you will allow me, I will illustrate what I mean by a figure. There is at this moment going on in London one of the most remarkable mechanical experiments of the present age—the Blackwall Tunnel. You are boring a tunnel under the bed of the Thames; you are doing it by means of a great shield, which is pushed forward by some twenty-eight or thirty hydraulic jacks. No one, I suppose, alleges or believes that the shield obscures or hinders or is an obstruction to the jacks. Every one sees that the impulse comes from the jacks, also that the working of the jacks would be useless and futile if they did not concentrate their force on the shield. I ask you to apply that metaphor to the House of Lords and to the measures which are arranged in battle order behind it, and I do not think you will be likely to complain of the obstruction of that question.

“ Now, let me say a word as to those other questions. We retract none of our pledges. We stand committed, as we have always stood committed, to our pledges. We have still on our banner the construction of an Irish Legislature for distinctively Irish affairs, maintaining always the Imperial supremacy and control. We stand pledged, as ever, to the Disestablishment of those two National Churches which have ceased to be national. We stand pledged, as

ever, to the struggle with the liquor ring; we stand pledged, as ever, to what I see the Primrose League manifesto calls a Socialist measure, but which I call a measure of bare and simple justice, the question of one man, one vote. We do not retire from any of our pledges, but we do want in future a little air and elbow-room. We do not, I repeat, retire from any of our pledges, but we ask you to have confidence in the Liberal leaders as to when, as to how, and as to the order in which those pledges should be redeemed. There are constantly arising questions from the circumstances of the moment which are not foreseen in any programme cut and dried beforehand. I will give you one instance which appeals to you all—the unification of London. That arose from a Commission which we appointed, and I for one would not have scrupled, at any juncture, when I saw a favourable opportunity of interposing it, to lay on the table of the House of Lords or the House of Commons a measure providing for that unification in the terms of the Commission, if only to set it against any possible scheme of tenification which may be presented by Her Majesty’s present advisers. That is a great question. It affects five millions of people. It affects the greatest city the world has ever known, and I say the Government had a right to take that question up at any moment in its programme, and press it to a foremost place. I

will take another question not less urgent, the question of the unemployed, a question which is acute in London, Glasgow, and all the great cities in the United Kingdom. We did not scruple to interrupt the business of the House of Commons to appoint a committee to inquire into that terrible state of things, and we should not have hesitated, had we remained in office, to interrupt the business of the House of Commons in order to ask the House to consider the recommendations of the Committee.

“ I say, then, that, while we do not retreat from any of our pledges, we ask you, if you give us a great majority, to give us also a little air and a little liberty—to give us, if I may say so, a little perspective. But, whatever you propose, and whatever you put in the forefront of your individual programme, I trust you will consider all that as fitting into and as subservient to the policy of the party with regard to the House of Lords. This is what I come to ask you to-night—make the question of the House of Lords the prominent and the primary question. For my part, I do not attack them as individuals; I do not attack their rank or their titles; but what I do attack is the indefensible, the one-sided, the anomalous, the mediæval control that they exercise over your legislative work. But if you wish to make an effective attack on this great institution, which has survived the storms of six centuries,

you must give the Liberal party a great majority.

“Remember, I do not ask you to-night to return me to power, but I ask you to return the Liberal party to power, and those Ministers, some of whom I see around me, who have worked for the people of Great Britain as they never were worked for before. There is not a village in England, there is not a parish in London, that is not quick and alive with the electric spark given to it by the Parish Councils Bill. There is not a workshop in all Great Britain that does not bless to-night the name of Mr. Asquith. There is not a school throughout England and Wales, there is not a branch of education which does not regard with the deepest gratitude the beneficent administration of Mr. Acland. At the very moment when we were struck down in our career, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had unfolded to the House of Commons the outlines of a great scheme of administrative reform of which one of the most important parts had already been passed. We have given you, besides, under the auspices of Lord Spencer, the mightiest fleet that England has had since Waterloo. After all, ladies and gentlemen, this is only a part of the achievements of this Government that the House of Commons has just dismissed. But as against that, what have the other side to set? A long rule of Tories, fledged or

unfledged, mute as regards a programme except that unauthorised one of many colours, but doomed with a dismal and disastrous negative. Gentlemen, the forces of battle are in order. I have placed the contrast, lamely and inadequately, before you; but, lame and inadequate as my presentation may be, in my heart, in my conscience, and in my intellect I do not dare for one moment to doubt the result."

Another great speech was delivered at Bradford, when the House of Lords was specially dealt with. It was the question on which Lord Rosebery desired his party to go to the country; and if the party had acted as he wished, instead of the various leaders each going for some different question, the result of the coming election might have been different. At Bradford Lord Rosebery said:

"When the dissolution comes, what will it be fought upon? Will it be fought upon Disestablishment, or Home Rule, or the liquor question? I hear all these mentioned as a motive power at the next election; but, in my opinion, and I give it for what it is worth, the next election will be fought on none of these questions, but on one which includes and represents them all—I mean the House of Lords. I propose, then, to speak about the House of Lords to-night, and if I do not do so with all the passion and with all the fervour and with all the power of invective which

orators in a less responsible situation may be able to indulge in, to your unbounded delight and my own, you must put it down not so much to my want of zeal in the cause as to the fact that I should be wanting in my duty as a Minister if I approached the greatest constitutional question that has arisen in England for two centuries or more without a solemn sense of responsibility for my words.

“ Now, this question of the House of Lords is not a new question. It is over a hundred years since Mr. Pitt declared that that was the part of the Constitution which would first give way. It is just under a hundred years since Mr. Burke said of the House of Lords, ‘ It is done with, that part of the Constitution. They have been.’ But for ninety-nine years since then the House of Lords has continued to exist. And if you will pardon me one word of egotism, I would say that all through my political life it is the question to which I have attached the most importance. On two occasions I have brought it before the notice of the House of Lords themselves, and on neither occasion have I spared or minced my language ; and some five years ago, when at a great Liberal conference in Scotland they spread out their plan of operations, and the number of subjects with which they proposed to deal, I had to tell them that their programme was a foolish programme, because it omitted the one question which must

take precedence of the realisation of all their projects, and that was a drastic dealing with the House of Lords. When I have said these things to my English friends, they have said, 'Why do you tilt at those windmills? Take up practical subjects. That question will settle itself.'

"But that question will not settle itself. It cannot settle itself; but if you do not take care, it will wreck many Liberal measures and many Liberal Governments before it has done. I will tell you why. When Liberal Governments come back to the country to give an account of their stewardship, they do so with many promises unfulfilled, because of the action of the House of Lords, and the country does not always scrutinise very nicely the reason for that emptiness. They blame the Liberal Government, and the Liberal Government is overthrown. Is this a moment at which to deal with the House of Lords? I think it is; and I think I can show you and our opponents that no more opportune time could have been found. I know well the advantage that the House of Lords has in representing the English majority against Irish Home Rule. I know that, linked to that majority, they occupy a stronger position in many ways than they have for some years past. If it is a time of calmness and apathy with regard to the House of Lords, as our opponents say, that is precisely a reason for dealing with it now, because great constitutional

questions should not be dealt with at moments of passion and of revolution, but they should be dealt with by the calm and unbiassed reason of the people of the country.

“What has been the course of history on this question? There have been paroxysms of passion against the House of Lords, followed by intervals of calm. When the nation has been thwarted on some great question in which it took an interest, it has flamed into a fury. The House of Lords has given way. The nation then has relapsed, and by that has given the House of Lords a new lease of life. And those periods of passion and of reaction have been so constant that they have not given us, at any time perhaps, on the showing of our opponents, the requisite calm for dealing with this question. What is more unfortunate about these sudden paroxysms of passion against the House of Lords, which are so easily allayed, is this, that your passions against the House of Lords are selfish passions in England, that you flame into a rage when the House of Lords defeats some Bill that affects England and is dear to England; but you will not flame up when the House of Lords deals in the same way with Scotland, or with Ireland, or with Wales. In that way I might compare it, to take a metaphor from Roman history, to the powers that the Prætorian Guards exercised.

“You might say that, by giving way to the



English Prætorians, the House of Lords buys the right of dealing as it chooses with the more distant provinces of the Empire; and the misfortune of that is this, that it produces a feeling of neglect and of differential treatment as between England and Scotland and Ireland and Wales which in itself is a great danger and a dissolvent of your Empire. I contend, then, that this is a favourable moment. It is not a moment of passion; it is not a moment of reaction; and if the Tories say it is a moment of apathy with regard to the House of Lords, we reply that that is a reason for dealing with the House of Lords with exceptional promptitude. If, on the other hand, there is, as we believe, a feeling of subdued but persistent resentment against the House of Lords, it is equally a moment to deal with the question.

“I shall be asked the question that Lord Melbourne asked about every great political question, ‘Why not leave it alone?’ After all, it may be said, we have got on with it for a great many centuries, and we have prospered in spite of it. There are worse things than it, such as our climate; and, if we can bear with our climate, is it worth while working ourselves up into a rage against the House of Lords? That might be very well if things had remained as they were; but, while the House of Lords has remained as it was, circumstances have changed all round it. If you pull down a street and rebuild it all with

the exception of one house, you will probably find in the course of the year that house will be condemned as a dangerous structure.

“On three separate occasions you have, in the last sixty years, popularised the Lower Chamber—the House of Commons. In 1832 you proposed the first great Reform Bill, and the House of Lords resisted it to the death. If it had resisted it a little more, you would have no question of the House of Lords to deal with now. That changed the balance of the Constitution; because not merely did it make the House of Commons in itself infinitely more powerful and infinitely more representative, but it diminished the influence of the House of Lords, which up to that time, through the medium of the rotten boroughs, exercised a control over the majority of the House of Commons. Therefore the Reform Bill of 1832 was a nail, and a deep nail, struck into, I will not say the coffin, but the future arrangements of the House of Lords. In 1867 you had another great democratic Reform Bill, which, I may note in passing, the House of Lords allowed to become law at once, because it was introduced by a Tory Government; and in 1884 you had another Reform Bill, which completed the measure of 1867 to a certain extent, and which, as it was introduced by a Liberal Government, was fiercely resisted by the House of Lords. This produced another great outburst of popular

feeling, which again ended by strengthening enormously the power of the House of Commons in this country. In 1886 another event took place which still further weakened the House of Lords. For one peculiarity of the situation is this, that each of these three strengthenings of the popular element in the House of Commons has been accompanied, strangely enough, by a diminution of the strength of the popular element in the House of Lords. Even up to the time of the last Reform Bill of 1884 there was some sort of balance between the two parties in the House of Lords. I even recollect, I believe, once in my life, being in a majority in the House of Lords, but that cannot have been on any vital question. But in 1886 the House of Lords changed its character for good or for evil. In 1886 the proposal of the Irish Home Rule Bill alienated the great remaining mass of the Whig or Liberal peers, and from that time to this the House of Lords has represented no balance of parties whatever, but an overwhelming mass of Tories and so-called Unionists, with a handful of Liberals among them.

“And so we come to the present state of things. What is that state of things? It is, on the one side, a House elected on almost the most popular possible basis, representing with freedom and directness the wishes of an aspiring and educated people; and, on the other side, a

House almost entirely composed of hereditary peers, and hereditary peers opposed to popular aspirations, and that House so composed claims the right to control and veto in all respects except finance the proceedings of the House of Commons. See how it stands according to the figures. The House of Commons consists of six hundred and seventy members, of whom three hundred and fifty or thereabouts support the Government—the Government of the day. The House of Lords consists of some five hundred and sixty members, of whom about thirty support the Government of the day. Nor can there be any possible change in those conditions. No Liberal Government, however Liberal or however little Liberal it may be, can ever hope to possess much more than 5 per cent. of the whole House of Lords in its support, and any Tory Government would be disgraced if it possessed much less than the remaining 95 per cent. And you must remember this, that this House, which thus contains 5 per cent. of Liberals and 95 per cent. of another party, which I will not now define, rules Scotland, which sympathises with the 5 per cent.; Wales, which sympathises with the 5 per cent.; Ireland, which sympathises with the 5 per cent.; and England, which, except on the question of Home Rule, does, I believe, in fact and in practice, in general sympathise with the 5 per cent. also.

Now, suppose at the next election you were to send back only a hundred Liberals to the House of Commons, there would be thirty Liberal peers. Suppose you were to send two hundred back to the House of Commons, there would be thirty Liberal peers. Suppose you were to send three hundred back, there would be thirty Liberal peers. Suppose you were to send four hundred back, there would be thirty Liberal peers. Suppose you were to send five hundred back, there would be thirty Liberal peers. Suppose you were to send six hundred Liberal members back, still there would be only thirty Liberal peers. And if you sent the whole House of Commons back Liberals, there would be only thirty Liberal peers.

“What a mockery is this? We boast of our free institutions. We swell as we walk abroad and survey less fortunate countries. We make broad the phylacteries of freedom upon our foreheads. We thank God that we are not as other less favoured men are, and all the time we endure this mockery of freedom. You are bound hand and foot. You may vote and vote till you are black in the face, it will not change the face of matters at all; still the House of Lords will control at its will the measures of your representatives; still you will have to go hat in hand to the House of Lords to ask it to pass your measures, in however mutilated a shape

they may wish. It has practically come to this, that we, knowing the House of Lords is a party body of one complexion, cannot any longer introduce the Bills that we think fit, unless we mean to waste the time of the House of Commons by an absolutely bootless and fruitless process, or else we must simply introduce the Bills into the House of Commons which we think have some possible chance of passing the Tory party in the House of Lords.

“I confess quite freely that I am a Second Chamber man in principle. I am all for a Second Chamber. I am not for the uncontrolled government of a single Chamber, any more than I am for the uncontrolled government of a single man. The temptation of absolute power is too great for any man or any body of men; and I believe—I am speaking from recollection—that so keen and ardent a Radical as John Stuart Mill held that opinion. I am also strongly of opinion that all experience points to having a Second Chamber of some sort. That does not imply an admiration for the House of Lords. The American Constitution-makers, who made a Constitution under the inspiration of their fresh breath of freedom and independence, created a much stronger Second Chamber than any of us ever wished to see in this country; and, what is more, I believe that the feeling of the country on the whole coincides with my prin-

ciple in that respect. There may be differences of opinion on that point, and I am aware that there are; but I am bound to tell you what is my conviction in the matter, and I should not be worthy of your confidence if I did not. But I am bound to say that, if I am asked to choose between no Second Chamber at all and a Second Chamber constituted as the House of Lords is, I will not make my choice before this assembly, but I will say there is ground for hesitation with regard to my principle.

“The fact is this, that to my mind it is an absolute danger, an invitation to revolution, that there should be an assembly of this kind in this position, and therefore it is as a lover of the Constitution as well as a lover of freedom that I implore you to take this question into your immediate consideration. If I hesitate between no Second Chamber and the House of Lords, between my dislike for a single Chamber and the feeling as to whether the House of Lords is a better one than none, it is for this reason, that in my judgment the House of Lords is not a Second Chamber at all. I will not say that it is a Tory caucus, because that might be considered an offensive expression. A caucus, after all, is but a temporary body. But I will say this, that it is a permanent party organisation controlled for party purposes and by party managers. I remember Lord Salisbury’s

defence of the House of Lords in 1888. It was a very ingenious defence, and tickled my fancy amazingly. He admitted that the House of Lords was not always wise or experienced, but he said there seemed to him to be a considerable advantage in having a House which was not particularly devoted to political affairs, but which brought a fresh and innocent and unbiassed judgment to the consideration of the projects presented to their notice. I confess I think there is something rather attractive in that idea. But you must remember that these innocent political sheep require a shepherd. And Lord Salisbury is that shepherd. And when he commends them for this very process of innocence and readiness to accept conviction, we know whose conviction it is that they are ready to accept. When they are so led and when they are so guided, it very little matters to those who wish for Liberal measures to pass whether they are as innocent and unbiassed as Lord Salisbury represents, or whether they are a collection of political hacks.

“ . . . The House of Commons, in my opinion, after long consideration of this most difficult of subjects, can only proceed, in the first place, as it has always proceeded in its contests with the House of Lords—by resolutions. In regard to the powers of the House of Lords over finances, they were restrained once, twice, and



thrice by resolutions of the House of Commons. As regards the powers of the House of Lords to interfere with elections for the House of Commons, those have been equally restrained by resolution of the House of Commons. But the great resolution which I suppose we should have in our mind, in passing the resolution which will assert the privileges of the House of Commons as against the irresponsible control of the House of Lords, would be the resolution of 1678, as I think it is, which asserts the free and uncontrollable right of the House of Commons to represent the people in matters of finance. And I suppose—of course I do not pledge myself at this moment to the exact form of resolution, but I take it that that resolution would declare in clear and unmistakable terms, what I have once before said, in a phrase which I have often heard since, that the House of Commons in the partnership with the House of Lords is unmistakably the predominant partner.

“I hear you say, ‘But the House of Commons has passed such resolutions before.’ I think there was some little resolution of this kind passed this year, but there will be one vital and essential and pervading difference between such a resolution as I suggest and any resolution that has been passed before, because this resolution will be passed at the instance and on the responsibility of the Government itself. It will be the duty of

the Government to move the House of Commons to pass such a resolution, and I cannot doubt that the House of Commons will do so. It will be the duty of the Government to move the House of Commons to pass such a resolution, and, if they do pass it, remember that never before in the history of Parliament has such a resolution, at the instance and on the responsibility of the Government, been passed in the House of Commons against the House of Lords. What will it represent? The joint demand of the executive Government of the day and of the House of Commons for the revision of the Constitution, and in that way the question will enter in itself on a new phase.

“That resolution will stand for ever upon the journals of the House. No Government, however bold, however cynical it may be, that may eventually succeed ours will be bold enough or cynical enough to propose its reversal. Not all the perfumes of Araby itself will wash that resolution out of the books of the House. Not even if the verdict of the country should go against us on that resolution would, I believe, any leader of the House of Commons be bold enough to propose its reversal. But the verdict of the House of Commons, the verdict of the country, will not be against us. I feel as sure of the country as I do of the House of Commons. Neither the House of Commons nor the country

would stultify themselves by sending up a majority to reverse any such resolution as that, and therefore we may consider that if such a resolution be passed it will stand, perhaps not as the laws of the Medes and the Persians,—because we are not living in the times of the Medes and the Persians,—but as substantive a resolution as the resolution of 1678, to which I have alluded.

“ Well, if that be so, the resolution in itself would be a new charter, or, as the Americans would say, a new constitutional amendment, and this would be the first act of a drama of which perhaps we may have the third and the fourth and the fifth as well as the second.

“ But, gentlemen, you may ask, ‘ Will this be enough? The House of Lords may snap their fingers at your resolution. They may say, “ We have had resolutions of this kind before, and we do not care a fig for your resolution.” ’ Well, I admit that in my judgment it will not be enough. Powerful as the House of Commons is for such a purpose as this, it must call on a power even greater than itself. That power can only be given, that strength can only be afforded, that inspiration which I have been derided for asking can only be afforded by the people of Great Britain. Nothing else will suffice for us. To this august assembly we will appeal. We will ask you to give us strength and afford a majority and a mandate to deal with this question, and to come back empowered to deal

in your name with the question of constitutional revision. The Government then will put these forces in motion at the proper time. It will ask the House of Commons to pass such a resolution as I have indicated, and at the proper time it will endeavour to appeal to the country on such a resolution.

“Why do I say, ‘At the proper time’? Why do I not say, ‘Do it at once’? Why do I not say, ‘Call Parliament together, and put the resolution at once before them, and at once ask the Queen to grant the Ministry a dissolution on this resolution’? I think the members of the House of Commons would answer this question without the slightest difficulty. In the first place, the course of this Government is not entirely run. We hope to pass some useful, if not much useful, legislation before we end this Parliament; and, in the second place, it would be rather hard to punish the House of Commons for the faults of the House of Lords. Well, then, this is the second act. The first act is a resolution; the second act is the appeal to the country to support that resolution. Beyond that I cannot go to-night, for the will of the people is the final and supreme court of appeal. It will be for the nation to decide between the House of Lords and its own responsible representatives, and therefore what we shall be particularly asking you is this, for a direct popular reference such as in other countries is called a referendum—for a

direct popular reference as to whether you desire a revision of the Constitution in this sense or whether you do not.

“ If for years you have been chafing under the foot of the House of Lords, if for years you have been wondering at this strange survival of an almost antediluvian period, if for years you have been instructing your representatives to do all that in them lies to maintain your interests against their influence, then you will make ready for the fight. You will remember, as I have told you before, that in this great contest there lie behind you to inspire you all those great reforms, those great aspirations and great measures upon which you have set your hearts. Before you lie all the forces of prejudice and privilege; before you lie the earthworks behind which are concealed, as I have said, the enemies whom you long to fight, whom you have fought so long. Let me say, if you are prepared to go into this fight, fight as your forefathers fought, fight with their stubborn, persistent, indomitable will. Fight as they fought in Yorkshire, as those old Ironsides fought in Yorkshire, never knowing when they were beaten and determined not to be beaten. Fight—as they would have said to you—fight, not in the arm of the flesh, but with the arm of the spirit. Fight by the means of educating your fellowmen—not as to the object, for in that I maintain

you are clear, but as to the proper means of attaining that object. But if you believe that this Government are in earnest in this matter you will come to their support. We fling down the gauntlet. It is for you to take it up."

Lord Rosebery, after the defeat of his party at the polls, and before going out of office, recommended the creation of four new peerages to the Queen. For this he was violently attacked, and at Huddersfield, on March 28, 1896, he thus answered the attacks :

"I am not one of those who think that the Liberal party, because it is opposed to the present functions of the peers in the House of Lords, is necessarily to debar itself from the creation of peerages. I do not think we should be debarred from honorary distinctions in our party any more than the opposite party, that we should remove every inducement from our control, and that we should at the same time deprive ourselves of the method of rewarding supporters in a way which I trust will always continue to be honoured. Therefore, though in the abstract I had no objection to recommending the creation of peers, in the concrete I will frankly admit that I rather hoped to avoid it. I had embarked in an agitation against what I believe to be the undue power and privileges and the unfair constitution of the House of Lords, opinions which I still

hold, and which, so far as I can predict, will only leave me with life itself; but, at any rate, I hope I may outlive the present constitution of the House of Lords.

“I should have been glad, for reasons I can hardly define, if it had been possible to avoid the recommendation to Her Majesty of adding peerages during my short tenure of office; but it was not possible. I received letters from Mr. Gladstone, who authorised me to use his name freely in that connection, in which he stated that just before the fall of the Government he had promised, when in office, two peerages to men of the class from whom peers are selected—men of great stake in the country, men of great wealth and high position, and one of them of great and high industrial capacity. Well, it was not till I received two, or I think three, letters from Mr. Gladstone, pointing out that the honour of the Liberal party was pledged as to those peerages, that I consented to make the recommendation.

“I am not saying anything in the slightest degree derogatory to those gentlemen; it was only that I had debarred myself by a silent rule, if I could possibly have adhered to that rule, not to recommend peerages to the Queen. I stated this to one of them in a letter in which I indicated the fact of their recommendation; but before doing that, and when I knew

that of course it would not be possible for me to adhere to my rule, I had stated to two other gentlemen, one a political opponent of ours, and I believe the Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, and the other the late Minister of Agriculture, who had served us well and honourably both as Minister and in a private capacity, that if it should ever devolve upon me to recommend any creation of peers their names should be included in the list.

“In that lies the whole history of those four names. As regards receiving one farthing of corrupt consideration for those peerages, I declare on my honour as a gentleman that it is a scandalous lie. There was no question raised, there was no question even suggested, that any of those four gentlemen gave one shilling or one farthing to the election funds, or even subscribed five shillings a year to local Liberal Associations. There are no such scandalous transactions; and it was not a matter for the Whips, because—and this is a view which makes it simpler and stronger—I did not hear one single word on this subject from any Whip. I had no communication with Mr. Ellis or any other Whip about it.

“My only communication was with Mr. Gladstone. I discussed and deliberated this matter directly with Mr. Gladstone, and if you think that Mr. Gladstone received corrupt consideration for the recommendation of the creation of those two peerages, well, you had better go and state so before some large



public audience. I do not. To make my explanation quite complete, I ought to say why it was Mr. Gladstone himself did not recommend those gentlemen. The reason is very simple. They occupied seats in the House of Commons, and he did not wish at that time to vacate those seats: therefore he had promised to make the recommendations whenever a general election or a resignation should come. Now I hope that that lie is thoroughly dead. We of this Liberal party do not traffic in titles in that way."

Lord Rosebery, speaking of the House of Lords at a Trades-House banquet in Glasgow, on October 8, 1890, remarked :

"The dangers, to my mind, to the House of Lords—at any rate, the more immediate dangers—are twofold. One is, that it has by constitutional precedent a claim to constitutional equality with the House of Commons; which it is impossible altogether to sustain. The other is, that men become members of the House of Lords against their will and without their option. The compulsory entrance of persons into the House of Lords whether they like it or not has this result, that many young men go into the House of Lords, and are disgusted and repelled by the coldness of the House and by its legislative methods. There being no business before the House, there is not the same attraction for attendance, the debates are languid and often



"COMPARING NOTES."—A CHAT OVER THE PLEASURES OF RESIGNATION.  
From the "Westminster Gazette."



exceedingly unattractive ; and the result is that many young men, who if they had been allowed to enter the House of Commons at once would have led useful and attractive political lives, are retiring from political life altogether. Now, these are the two conditions of the House of Lords, the only two to which I shall refer. They are two which, in my opinion, do not trench even remotely on party politics, but which I thought it due to this assembly to take the opportunity of putting before you. I for one shall never flag in my hopes of reforming the House of Lords, in making it a part of the Constitution, more active and more useful, and in that effort I hope I shall receive the prospective assistance of those who may hereafter be elevated to that House."

The result of the election was what might have been expected from the lack of cohesion which at the time characterised the Liberal party. One man urged one reform, one another. Liberals never throughout the election presented a united front. They had lost all that the leadership of Mr. Gladstone meant, and they did not give the support to Lord Rosebery which he ought to have received, and which, if given, might have made all the difference to the result of the election. As it was, the Liberals were hopelessly defeated—crushingly defeated. They had half a dozen programmes before the country, and the

electors may well have been confused at the issues thus put before them. Sir William Harcourt at Derby and Mr. John Morley at Newcastle were both defeated. The Liberal party for the time had almost ceased to be; and so a Tory Government came in with a majority great enough to enable them practically to have a free hand as to what they might choose to do. If the Liberal party had taken Lord Rosebery's advice, and made the reform of the House of Lords the chief plank in an agreed platform of reform, they might have won the election; and if, further, they had given a loyal and zealous support to the chief of the party, they would doubtless have seen by this time a good many reforms carried out which their own differences and want of concentration have apparently deferred for many years.

## CHAPTER XXIX

A DISCOURSE ON DISESTABLISHMENT—THREE POINTS OF VIEW—CHURCH  
DISESTABLISHMENT—TWO DISTINCT MATTERS—THE QUESTION OF  
“SACRILEGE.”

IN January, 1895, a great meeting of the National Liberal Federation was held at Cardiff. Lord Rosebery there made the main feature of his speech an expression of his views on the question of the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church, which his Government hoped to carry out.

“We now come to the general question raised by both Scotland and Wales with respect to Disestablishment. It seems to me that there are three points of view from which Establishments may be regarded. There is, first, the clear, hard, logical school, which regards all preference given by the public or the State, or the public in its character of the State, to any form of faith as injudicious, derogatory, and degrading both to the State and to the Church. It holds that there should be absolute religious equality, and that each Church should be supported by its own adherents.

“That is a general proposition which it is difficult to dispute, and which, if we were beginning with a clean slate, there would probably be none found to dispute. But as we are not beginning with a clean slate, there is a second school which regards the question of Church Establishments as a question of national option. It holds that it is a question for the decision of the nation which is affected, and that, if it be really the national wish to recognise religion in the shape of Establishment, there is nothing absolutely immoral in the carrying out of that wish. It is quite possible that a Church may be happier, freer, more powerful, if you will, without the fetters of Establishment. But if, on the other hand, the mass of the nation holds to a Church Establishment as it exists, and does not wish to disturb it, this second school, of which I have spoken, holds that there is nothing immoral in a nation carrying out its wish. When you recollect in how many worse ways money may be spent by the public, it is, perhaps, not an unreasonable proposition. You might, for example, take the case of Spain, where the nation is practically at one in its religious creed, and I do not think that even the most zealous Disestablisher would say that there is anything absolutely incongruous or immoral in the wish of the Spanish nation to give some support to ministers of religion, whom all equally obey.

Well, my creed on this point is very simple indeed, and it applies to much more than to Church Establishments. To my mind the Church and the Establishment are two perfectly distinct matters. The Church is too high for me to discuss to-night; the Establishment is not too high. An ecclesiastical establishment, like other establishments, must rest upon the deliberate will of the people, or it rests upon nothing.

“That I believe to be sound doctrine. That was the doctrine and basis on which the Irish Church was disestablished. It was a missionary Church that converted nobody. It was an alien Church that alienated everybody. It kept for a minority what was meant for the nation. And so, coming, as it did, as a stranger to Ireland, repudiated by the mass of the nation, it passed away. You know another Church Establishment which embodies these characteristics, and which, in like manner, is doomed.

“I may be asked, in reference to this doctrine, do Churches, does religion, does the Christian faith rely upon the chance will and vote of the majority of the people? That is the question I shall be asked by people in whom the warmth of heart hardly compensates for confusion of head. My reply is simply, No! The Church does not rely on such a majority, but the Establishment does. Now, we hear much in these



days about the State. This, that, and the other is to be provided by the State, as if the State were a beneficent fairy with a private gold mine at its disposal. Gentlemen, you know as well as I do that the State for all those purposes is only the nation under another name. If the State, that is the nation, is to provide any of these things, it is the nation, that is the State, which will have to pay for them; and if it is the State, that is the nation, which is to establish and countenance a religion, it is the nation, that is the State, which will have to support it. Well, under these circumstances, when you consider the matter in this cool and abstract way, when you remember that an Establishment can only exist by the will of the State, and that the State only means the nation, the talk of an Establishment long continuing against the will of the nation is as if you spoke of water running permanently uphill.

“There are no doubt temporary circumstances, circumstances temporary in their nature, which enable Establishments to exist for a longer time against the will of the nation than they otherwise would; those I will discuss in a moment. Besides these two schools of thought from which Disestablishment is regarded, there is a third, with which you are familiar in the Principality, which regards Disestablishment as robbery and as sacrilege. I have never understood what the

application of these words may be. As to robbery. If the State, that is, if the nation, chooses to apply funds for one purpose, I suppose it has an equal right to divert and set them apart for another. It is what the State is constantly doing. It is what the Charity Commissioners do, I will not say daily, but certainly monthly and yearly, and have been doing for the last thirty years. What it has done with these endowments, the State, I suppose, may do with another. We all remember what the State did once with these endowments. How it took them at the time of the Reformation and handed them from the old Church, not all of them to the Reformed Church, but to the barons, great and small, to the adherents of the Court, to the laity, many of whom are ardent Conservatives now, but who in their blind enthusiasm for Church Establishment have not, so far as I know, proffered any restitution of this alienated money. Gentlemen, the State took them and then assigned them, and that in my phraseology was an act of national option which may be repeated at any moment. If, therefore, I am correct in my reading of these endowments, and if my statement as to the Reformation is correct, it is not wise for the defenders of the Establishment to rest too much on the rights of property, because if the right of indefeasible property rests with any one, it rests, not with the

Reformed Church, but with the Roman Catholic Church.

“ But we shall be told that that is a question of robbery, a wrongful diversion from one Church to another, and that, if you intend to secularise this property, it is nothing less than sacrilege. Well, sacrilege is a hard word. I will not attempt to give you my own opinion on the point, but I remember hearing Bishop Thirlwall, one of the greatest bishops of our generation, make a speech in the House of Lords on this subject, and I shall make you no apology for reading an extract from it. ‘ I must own,’ said Bishop Thirlwall, ‘ that, in this sense, the phrase “ robbery of God ” grates upon my ear. It seems to me to correspond to a view of the Deity which is neither Christian nor even Judaical, but heathenish. When I open the Old Testament I find several passages, familiar, I have no doubt, to your lordships, in which the Jewish people are severely reprovèd for cherishing the vain and superstitious notion, common to the heathen nations around them, that material offerings might be accepted by the Most High as supplying some want of the divine nature. When I read those passages, when I read others in the New Testament, in which the sacrifices with which God is well pleased are described, together with the nature of a pure religion or worship, I am led to the conclusion that no material offerings are so acceptable to the Almighty

as those which are most beneficial to man. Let me suppose a case, not wholly imaginary, to illustrate my meaning. A wealthy and munificent gentleman builds a magnificent cathedral in Dublin; a wealthy and munificent lady builds a public market in London. I believe that each of those acts was, in the intention of the donor, an offering to God, and I believe each of them to have been an equally acceptable offering to Him. But let me suppose that a fund had been bequeathed to be appropriated at the discretion of a trustee to one or the other of those purposes, I should like to know on what principle the decision of that trustee—if he were worthy to exercise so important a trust—ought to depend. I think I shall have the assent of your lordships when I say that his decision ought to depend not on the superior sanctity of the destination, but on the local need or the general usefulness. It is not a question between God and man, but between one kind of gift beneficial to society and another. The word "sacrilege" has been heard very often of late in this House, and I must say its use reminds me of some instructive pages in the history of the early Christian Church. The cry of "sacrilege" was raised against St. Ambrose; and it was raised by a party with which, I am sure, neither any of my right reverend brethren, nor the noble lord the Chairman of Committees (Lord Redesdale), feel the slightest

sympathy—the Arians. And on what ground was this cry raised? Why, because St. Ambrose had sold the sacred vessels of the church of Milan in order to apply the proceeds to the profane purpose of ransoming prisoners who had fallen into the hands of the Goths. My lords, in my opinion, that was not the least meritorious or the least holy act of that holy man's life. And observe, what does it imply? It implies that—in the opinion of one who was undoubtedly a very sincere Christian and not at all a Low Churchman—circumstances might arise in which Church property, even while it continued to be capable of serving its original purpose, might be rightly and fitly diverted to another and a wholly different use. I am not saying that in this case such circumstances have arisen; but what I say is, that the possibility of such circumstances arising, if that be admitted, at once transfers the question to the broad ground of general expediency and common utility. It shows that such expressions as “sacrilege” and “robbery of God” applied to this subject are as irrelevant and misapplied as they are irritating and offensive.’

“I think I need say no more on the question of sacrilege. We are told that Disestablishment un-Christianises the State; that it removes the recognition by the State of Christianity in religion, and in that way un-Christianises the State. Well, all I can say is this, that if that be true, the

State must be in a very bad way. If a State is in reality Christian, it certainly does not need the outward symbol of an Establishment to prove it; and if a State is not Christian, an Establishment is merely an hypocrisy and a sham. Why, gentlemen, how about Ireland? We heard all these prophecies about Ireland and all these statements about Ireland when the Church was disestablished. Has Ireland ceased to be Christian? Has Ireland lost the vigour of either of her Churches—the Church to which the mass of the people belong or the two other Churches, Protestant Churches, which are in the minority? These Churches were never so vigorous. Never did Ireland so richly deserve her old title of the island of saints. And at this moment she is not satisfied with her own development within her own borders, but she has lately sent out, perhaps with more zeal than judgment, one of her Protestant archbishops to consecrate a Protestant bishop in Spain. I argue, then, that a Church which relies on Establishment stands by that confession self-condemned.

“A Church may very well argue that it is better off for having material and independent sources of revenue at command. No one can blame its champions for defending these revenues as long as they can, so long as their arguments are not carried too far either in scope or in style. But though I understand the pain which

Disestablishment causes to many excellent and devout people, they must remember this, that no great reform can be carried out without great pangs, and great wrenchings, and great seachings of heart, and great lookings back—ay, and as the result of looking back, as we have experienced in the Liberal party, a considerable number of pillars of salt. But to contend that these material supplies or the privilege of seats in the House of Lords are necessary to the life and the vigour of a Church is to make a fatal confusion between the essence and the incidents of a Church. The essence of a Church is spiritual: the inspiration, the tradition, the gracious message, the divine mission, the faith that guides us through the mystery of life to the mystery of death—all these were produced in poverty, in a manger, in the cot of the Carpenter. They flourished under persecution. Nothing can be so remote from their essence and their spirit as the wealth, or power, or dignities of this world. Establishment and endowment at most represent the gifts of the laity to the temple—the ornaments, the rich essences, the corn and wine and oil, which depend for their merit on the willingness and enthusiasm of the offerers, but which lose all value and all significance when they are wrung out against the will of the people.

“The question arises, Is the State Church in Wales an alien Church? I know that some of

your pastors and masters are very fond of chopping figures on this question. They spend a good deal of time in that, and their powers of calculation are so marvellous that they seem to be a kind of spiritual Babbages, although I confess I am not always able to follow them in their computations. Every man who is not for us is reckoned against us. Every man who does not vote at a parliamentary election is reckoned as a zealous, though silent, defender of the Church, as one who in his zeal preferred to remain by his own fireside to encountering the discomforts of the polling-booth. So also, every person, every man, woman, or child, who is not a member of one of the four great Nonconformist bodies in Wales, whether he be a Roman Catholic or belong to some other dissenting body, is reckoned as a sheep in the fold of the Establishment. Now, these are mysteries to me. I hope they serve the cause of truth, but I, at any rate, shall not discuss them. So far as I am concerned, they do not concern me; they in no wise affect my opinion on this question. For me, I am content to take, as we do in most other cases, the parliamentary representation as a test of feeling on this question, and parliamentary representation, you will remember, elected mainly, or even solely, on this question of Church Disestablishment. Whatever may have been the Imperial issues presented to the Welsh people since 1880, no one, I think,



will contend that any has taken precedence or even occupied so large a part of the mind of the electors as this question of the continued existence of the State Church in Wales. Then, if we are allowed to take the parliamentary representation as a test of the real strength of the State Church army in Wales, we come to those remarkable figures, and they are the only figures with which I will trouble you. What is the result of the last four general elections? In 1880 you had four defenders of the State Establishment. In 1885 you had four. In 1886 they rose to the magnificent total of five. But I am sorry to say that at the last election they had undergone a humiliating reduction to three.

“Well, gentlemen, I do not know that I am to take these figures as the permanent view of Wales upon this question. [‘Yes!'] Oh, you say, ‘Yes,’ but you have to watch the signs of the times. You are not perhaps aware that a great constitutional party, under the guidance of a great constitutional duke, dealing with a great constitutional question, in a great constitutional way have met together in a London palace to organise funds and to select candidates for the battle that is about to take place on the question of the Established Church in Wales. A subscription was opened, and while there were some munificent contributions, I will not hurt the feelings of the promoters by hinting at what I am informed

was the result of the popular subscription. Now, gentlemen, I agree with you in laughing at all that. It is chiefly remarkable for the light which it throws on the view which a great constitutional party takes of the great constitutional rule—that peers should in no way, direct or indirect, interfere in parliamentary elections. This, at any rate, is clear, that a Church Establishment in Wales is an alien Church; and that, if you had to deal with that Church Establishment in a National Council of Wales, that Church Establishment would be lost in a week. Well, I contend that a Church in that position is not so placed that it can ever benefit the nation among which it serves, or the Church itself, or even the cause of religion itself. It tends to alienate each day the people still further from the Church, and it may even tend, in the heat of party passion, to give some minds a disgust for religion so protected and so endowed.

“Then there is this further curse upon an Establishment in this position—namely, that those who have to defend it against the nation which repudiates it are forced to impugn the nation itself; they are forced to do that which Mr. Burke, with all his genius, declared it to be impossible for him to do—namely, to draw an indictment against the nation. On the other hand, also, they are forced to appear in the invidious and disagreeable light of defending, not the spiritual, but the material

claims of their Church. And in that way these ministers of a religion which is meant, ordained, to bring peace among nations and goodwill among men, are the unhappy and involuntary, and, I doubt not, the unwilling agents for bringing, not peace, but strife to the nation in which they live. You may ask how, if the State Church is so alien, does the nation tolerate it; and if the Establishment depends on the will of the nation that surrounds it, how is it that the Establishment manages to survive?

“I am afraid there are two causes for that. The first is the House of Commons. If your thirty-four members were left alone to settle this question, as I have already said, you would make short work of the Church Establishment. But unfortunately you have only a small representation in the House of Commons, which comprises six hundred and seventy members, and therefore your turn for legislation comes but seldom. It is hard for the thirty-four—and I again appeal to Mr. Thomas—it is hard for the thirty-four to direct the attention of the other six hundred and thirty-six members to what concerns those members in so slight a degree. And it is hard for the representatives of the other thirty-seven millions of population which are comprised in the United Kingdom to give the first and the foremost place to a measure which affects only a million and a half. I may remark, however, in an aside, you

have not done so badly under a Liberal Government. I will only refer, in a word, to the sterling services which Mr. Acland, who, I think, is more than half a Welshman, has rendered to Wales and to Welsh education. Then you have a Land Commission, which is not merely a pledge of policy, but a good Land Commission in itself. And lastly, you have had the first position given to your Church Bill during the next session. So, I do not think the Liberal Government has done badly, or your thirty-four members either. But what is the result of this calculation? That the Church Establishment which you repudiate is kept in existence, when a Tory Government is in, entirely by English votes. Irishmen vote with you for its Disestablishment; Scotsmen vote with you for its Disestablishment, and the maintenance of the Establishment of Wales is confined not merely to the three valiant beings of whom I have spoken, but is really supported by English members of the House of Commons who represent places south of the Humber. And while you are badly placed, my native country of Scotland is worse placed, because you sometimes get a Bill which applies to you in common with England, but we in Scotland are so situated, by law and character, and by language perhaps, that we invariably require a separate Bill for ourselves. Domestic legislation, then, bids fair to stand still sometimes, both in Scotland and in Wales. This leads me to a point

on which I must say a word. I, for my part, would gladly see both these ecclesiastical questions settled in Scotland and in Wales. That would be much more satisfactory to all parties concerned, both to you who are affected by these Establishments, and to those members of the House of Commons who are not directly affected by them. After all, there are no questions which are so local or lie so near to inhabitants as these ecclesiastical questions. If you pass the Tweed northward, you leave Episcopacy and you go into Presbyterianism. If you cross the Marches into Wales you find Episcopacy indeed in a somewhat frail condition, but you find Nonconformity as a predominant fact; and if you cross the Channel into Ireland you will find largely predominant there the Roman Catholic faith. I think, therefore, I am justified in saying, that in these four kingdoms or principalities which constitute the United Kingdom there are no questions so local as these ecclesiastical questions.

“The more I see of our political system the more I am convinced of this, that in a large measure of devolution, subject to Imperial control, lies the secret of the future working of our Empire. Daily also, in my opinion, that devolution comes nearer and nearer. For the last few years much of the work of Parliament has consisted in handing over business to local representative institutions. You have now representative bodies as before in towns, in counties, in villages, and in parishes; as the

people get more and more familiarised with this idea, the easier you will find its extension; and only in some further devolution, subject, as I have said, to the Imperial Parliament, will you find it possible to work that vast and complicated organisation which is called the British Empire. It has been by such a system of devolution that we have been able to found, outside these kingdoms, the greatest Empire that the world has ever seen; and we shall find in the same principle the solution of many, if not most, of our difficulties inside. In that respect the cause of Ireland stands first, but not last. The Liberal party, in my opinion, will never find its full strength until it has enlisted all the power and sympathy and freedom which it would gain in every part of the United Kingdom by the systematised devolution of local business to the localities themselves.

“Well, that is as much as I can say on that head. But there is another and more permanent barrier which opposes itself to your wishes in respect to Welsh Disestablishment. I need not mention to this assembly the attitude of the House of Lords. You know how it treats Welsh matters; how it treats those Welsh popular schemes of education which have been sent up to it during the past two sessions. I have no time to-night to deal with the House of Lords, and there really is not the slightest necessity for my doing so.”

## CHAPTER XXX

THE ARMENIAN ATROCITIES—THE DIFFICULTIES WITH TURKEY—MR. GLADSTONE'S ATTITUDE—LORD ROSEBERY AND THE LIBERAL PARTY—RESIGNATION OF LEADERSHIP—HIS "GOOD-BYE" SPEECH—OUR POLICY IS PEACE—THE CONCERT OF EUROPE—A PEER LEADER'S DISADVANTAGES—"IF I HAD BEEN IN THE COMMONS"—RESIGNATION TO PROMOTE UNITY

WHEN Lord Rosebery appeared in the House of Lords at the opening of the new Parliament, he appeared to be in much better health and spirits than for the last few months during which he had been in office. The relief from the cares of office must have been most welcome. The new Government had come into office at no easy time. In South Africa the Jameson raid had been conceived, and was being prepared. It took place at the end of the year. In the East the atrocities committed by the Turks upon the Armenians filled the heart and conscience of the nation with horror and indignation. The real facts, long and carefully hidden, were becoming known. Englishmen would gladly have torn the Sultan Abdul Hamid from his throne, and have made the power of Turkey a thing of the past. But the Turks were—and are

—a strong and powerful people, claiming to act as they please within their own territories; and to destroy the Turkish power meant the disintegration of the Turkish dominions and an inevitable squabble amongst the European Powers over their distribution. No one knew that better than the Sultan. Successive foreign Ministers in England might protest and persuade and warn and threaten the Sultan; but Abdul Hamid turned his eyes to the Courts of Europe, and saw in the jealousies and disputes of the Powers the opportunity of proceeding as he pleased with his cruelties, practically unchecked. The British Government, whether that of Lord Rosebery or of his successor Lord Salisbury, protested as firmly and strongly as they could, and did not hesitate to threaten.

Reforms were demanded, but not made. Lord Rosebery and Lord Kimberley just before they left office had been considering the sending of an ultimatum to the Sultan. Lord Salisbury shortly afterwards said:

“ If, generation after generation, cries of misery come up from various parts of the Turkish Empire, I am sure the Sultan cannot blind himself to the probability that Europe will at some time or other become weary of the appeals that are made to it, and the factitious strength that is given to his empire will fail it. . . . The Sultan will make a grave and calamitous mistake



if, for the sake of maintaining a mere formal independence, for the sake of resisting a possible encroachment on his nominal prerogative, he refuses to accept the assistance and to listen to the advice of the European Powers in extirpating from his dominions an anarchy and a weakness which no treaties and no sympathy will prevent from being fatal in the long run to the Empire over which he rules."

Lord Rosebery, speaking on this gloomy subject at the opening of Parliament in 1896, said :

"I cannot believe, and there are millions of my fellow-countrymen who cannot believe, that all has been done that might have been done. We do not live in an age of crusades. The inspiration and perhaps the faith which impelled embattled Christendom to rescue the Cross from the dominion of the Crescent are not present in these days. But between that chivalrous exaltation and the position of apathy, and, I would add, of degradation, in which we now find ourselves, in reference to the Christian populations of the Sultan, there is a wide abyss. I cannot but believe that between these two extremes some middle course might have been found, and that we might have been spared a page in our history to which we shall never look back without compunction, and the humiliation of seeing those Christians whom we were

pledged to protect massacred and plundered and harried under the sublime gaze of the European Concert, complete in itself and directed by one of the authors of the Treaty of Berlin."

On several other occasions Lord Rosebery spoke on this subject, always expressing the most sincere sympathy with the suffering Armenians, but apparently at times greatly depressed by the hopelessness of helping them.

No amount of protest on the part of the European Powers for a time seemed to have the smallest effect upon the Sultan, for the massacres of Armenians still went on. Doubtless they would speedily have been stopped if the Concert of Europe could have been brought to more actual work—if jealousies and hatred of England could have been destroyed. At last Mr. Gladstone, who for long had been silent, came out from his retirement to speak of the atrocious cruelty of "The Great Assassin." He said :

"Let us consider what was the massacre of Bulgaria in comparison with the massacre of Armenians. It created in Europe a greater sensation. Was it worse and more atrocious? On the contrary, I don't hesitate to say that, abominable and execrable and unpardonable as it was, yet it was of paler colour than those massacres which have taken place in the recesses of the Armenian hills. It was of a paler colour

because, in the first place, it was in the main confined to the work of murder; but in the Armenian massacres to the work of murder was added the work of pillage, the work of torture, the work of lust, the work of starvation, and every accessory that it was possible for human wickedness to devise. The distinction of the massacres of Constantinople, as compared with those that had taken place before, was not in their moral infamy: it was in this—that to all the other dreadful manifestations which had formerly been displayed in the face of the world, there was added consummate insolence. Translate the acts of the Sultan into words, and they become these: ‘I have tried your patience in distant places, and I will try it under your own eyes. I have desolated my provinces; I will now desolate my capital. I have found that your sensitiveness has not been effectually provoked by all that I have hitherto done; I will come nearer to you, and see whether by vicinity I shall or shall not awake the wrath which has slept so long.’ Some of it has been awakened; and the weakness of diplomacy, I trust, is now about to be strengthened by the echoes of a nation’s voice.”

Mr. Gladstone believed that isolated action on the part of this country would not mean war. Others—more closely in touch with our diplomatic efforts—were quite convinced that if we took



LORD ROSEBERY'S FAREWELL SPEECH AT EDINBURGH.  
*From the Drawing by H. M. Paget.*



isolated action it would be to have a Concert of Europe turn to crush us if possible, and the prospect was not pleasant or encouraging. Mr. Gladstone wrote as well as spoke on the subject; and it became so evident that he and Lord Rosebery took different views of the remedies that could be applied, that there were repeated references in the newspapers and reviews to the possibility of Lord Rosebery's retirement from the leadership of the Liberal party. On October 8 came the announcement, in a letter to Mr. Ellis, of his retirement; and at the Empire Theatre, Edinburgh, on the following day, he explained why he had retired. It was one of the greatest gatherings ever held in Edinburgh, and four members of Lord Rosebery's former Cabinet—Sir H. H. Fowler, Mr. Arnold Morley, Mr. Bryce, and Mr. Asquith were on the platform. Lord Rosebery said:

“You have always been kind to me in Edinburgh, and you have never been kinder than you are to-night. I stand before you, as you know, in a somewhat strange, perhaps in a somewhat isolated, position. It will not be necessary for me at this period to call attention to the circumstances to which you, Mr. Chairman, have adverted. Later on I will say a word on them. But my first object must be to deal with one subject of policy on which I feel I am pleading for the interests of my country, and of my party as included in my

countrymen—an interest which you cannot sacrifice to any personal ambition, or even to any personal convenience, and upon which, as you, sir, have reminded us, we have been obliged to make a final stand; but I have received many letters suggesting that to-night I should treat of various policies which, I suppose, I should bequeath as some sort of legacy to the Liberal party. I have no intention of doing anything of the kind. In the first place, in my present position, a declaration of policy from me would be an individual declaration, and would have no importance. In the next place, I do not believe, if I may say so, that the time has yet come for the Liberal party to make a substantive declaration of the policy on which they may have to appeal to the country. I hope, whatever course the Liberal party may take, they will not adopt that fatal course of breaking up into all sorts of variegated policies long before the general election at which those policies are to be decided.

“And thirdly, I will not speak to you about domestic policy to-night, because, in the last five weeks, there has come a question before the country which, like a torrent, has swept everything before it. I need not mention it to you. You, I dare say, have taken part in some of the innumerable meetings that have been held all over England with regard to it. Now, gentlemen, I do not for one moment deprecate those meetings. I

am one of those who welcome those meetings. I welcome them for three reasons. In the first place, I welcome them because they show that the spirit of our country is not dead, but dormant. Some of us had begun to fear, from the apathy that prevails on many subjects, that we had grown soft and tepid in our prosperity, and that the nation was suffering from fatty degeneration of the heart. That idea, at any rate, is dispelled by this agitation; and even though I cannot go the full length with it, I rejoice in the spirit which it is proving. Secondly, I welcome them because I think that they tend to convince foreign Governments—and they require a deal of conviction on this subject—of the unselfishness and integrity of our policy in this matter. In the third place, I welcome them because they strengthen the hands of Her Majesty’s Government in dealing with this question.

“That may seem, sir, a strange declaration from one who was till yesterday, not the leader of Her Majesty’s Government, but the leader of Her Majesty’s Opposition. But in foreign politics I have never known party, and, even if I had known party in connection with foreign politics, in this grave crisis of our national relations I should have deemed it my duty to give what strength my feeble voice or vote could give to Her Majesty’s Government in dealing with this matter. As regards that uprising, it seems



to me that the enthusiasm of the country needs more guidance than stimulus. It has been stimulated enough, and what it needs at this moment is rather guidance and direction. I think it needs guidance, because we cannot allow the whole foreign policy of this country—indirectly it may be, but still in effect—to be guided entirely by the Sultan and the acts of the ruffianly Kurds. The policy of this country consists, if you like it, of a thousand portions or a thousand interests, and we cannot allow nine hundred and ninety-nine of these portions or interests to be sacrificed to the remaining one, however important that one may be.

“ This agitation is often compared to that which was carried on by Mr. Gladstone in 1876 with regard to the massacres in Bulgaria. But allow me to point out that there are two essential differences between that agitation and this. In the first place, on that occasion we had Russia and her armies behind us in the cause which we were advocating ; but now, as far as our last news goes—it is not very recent, but as far as our last news goes—we have Russia and her armies not behind us, but against us in this matter. I know that that is denied by some enthusiasts, who think that that exists which they wish to exist, but as a matter of fact the declarations of Russia on the point are absolutely conclusive to those who know the use of diplomatic language.

“ But what does diplomatic language matter? Deeds are more valuable than diplomatic language; and though those writers profess to be supporting Lord Salisbury in his policy, they remove, by denying the fact of Russian opposition, the one ground of excuse and apology on which Lord Salisbury rested his inaction after his speeches of last year. Well, I say that, though it may seem a trivial matter to those who reason about foreign politics in their study, it is a difference of very considerable importance that in this agitation we have Russia against us and in the former agitation we had Russia for us.

“ Then there is another important difference. The agitation of 1876 was directed against the then Government, which we believed was thwarting the wishes of the nation. We were right in that belief. We fought the Government tooth and nail, and we won. But on this occasion, as far as we know, the Government are animated by the same wishes and the same resolution as ourselves. To doubt that would be to doubt their humanity, to doubt that would be to doubt their common sense, because the poorest and humblest motives of self-preservation and of expediency could not but fall in line with the declarations of the British people with reference to those horrors that have existed in the East.

“ The question raised by these massacres, however, is much larger, I think, than is usually

supposed. I do not wish to discuss the question in a partisan spirit, but in a patriotic spirit to-night. Were I to discuss it in a partisan spirit I might point out that the source of all our difficulties lies in the policy that was pursued some eighteen years ago. My purpose to-night, however, is not historical, but practical. I do not care how the evil has arisen; to-night what we have to consider is how it is to be met.

“ Now let us clear the ground. There is no need to discuss these massacres. There is no need to express our horror of them. As to that we are all agreed. From the Government that reigns in Downing Street to the beggar that asks your alms in the road, every class and creed and category of our fellow-countrymen are agreed on this point. But there is a difference in the indignation, because there is a difference in the information. Not all, I think, have read, as I have read, the consular reports that came in when I was in office. I say that, though they have been produced, I do not think those passages were capable of being printed in which horrors were described in detail so shocking, not merely that I could not read to the end of the page, not merely that they seemed to surpass all that I had ever read of ferocity and cruelty, but that they seemed to transcend the imagination of very fiends to have devised. I say, then, that

we who have been behind the scenes must, if possible—if there can be a comparison in the detestation which all must feel—have felt to a greater amount and extent than those who have only obtained knowledge from popular sources of information.

“It is better also to differentiate those matters, because they have an important bearing on the question as it is before us. The first massacres, and all the massacres up to only quite recently, were carried on in remote districts, and inaccessible, or difficult, at any rate, to communicate with; and therefore it was easy in those cases for those people or those Powers who very naturally did not wish to believe in them, because they were afraid that by them the Eastern Question would be raised—it was very easy for those persons and those Powers to deny the facts of these massacres. But the case was changed when they took place in Constantinople, in what was once the capital of Eastern Christianity, and which, I pray, may yet be the capital of Eastern Christianity—when, in what was once the capital of Eastern Christianity, murderous mobs were brought forth, armed and inspired from Imperial sources and the Commander of the Faithful himself, to massacre and beat down these wretched Armenians, that formed part of the population of Constantinople, till the centre and flower of the East, as Constantinople may without hyperbole be called, ran

down with the blood of his victims, shed coolly and ruthlessly by these assassins.

“What is the change? How does it matter whether a man’s throat is cut on a mountain-side in Asia Minor or in the street in Constantinople? It matters in this way, that these horrors were committed under the eyes of Ambassadors of the great Powers, who have professed to doubt their authenticity; under the eyes of the Embassies, and the Secretaries of Embassies, and the dragomans, and the whole diplomatic apparatus of Europe lodged in Constantinople; and therefore you arrive at this as the result of these massacres, that it is not possible for any Power whatever to deny or to blind itself, or to wink at the fact of the massacres, and they pass from isolated and local atrocities in various parts of Asia Minor to constitute a question not of isolated massacre, but of the general misgovernment and methods by which Mohammedan and Christian alike are oppressed throughout the length and breadth of that Empire.

“Before you deal with a problem, gentlemen, the great thing is to understand what that problem is. That is why I have dwelt on the character of these massacres. The question with which you are dealing in your public meetings of sympathy, and will soon deal with at your political meetings, is not the question of tens of thousands of Armenians cut down in cold blood. It is

the whole question of the future government of one of the fairest regions of the earth, that has all along been oppressed and misruled by the unspeakable Government of the Turkish Sultan. That is the question before you; that is what is called the Eastern Question. That is a question so large, from the jealousies of the Powers concerned, and from its immensity, that it is a question that has long been the bugbear of all Europe. That is the Eastern Question with which you are face to face; that is the question, no less, no slighter, with which you are called upon to deal.

“Well, gentlemen, if that is the question, it shows at once that partial remedies will not do very much towards solving it; that some partial remedies, indeed, might do harm; and that all remedies which are merely partial and temporary in their nature will not deal with the root of the evil itself, but will simply patch up, for the moment, that question which is sure to recur. Now, let me discuss some of the remedies, so far as I have been able to gather them, which have been proposed by responsible politicians—and some who are not particularly responsible. I think I may be able to point out that some of these remedies are futile, and some are dangerous, and that some combine the characteristics of both adjectives. But, whether they are futile or dangerous or not, I fully recognise the good intention with which they

have been brought forward. It is only, I think, my duty, as it is the duty of every one of us, to weigh them carefully, to ponder them carefully, before we urge them on the executive Government of this country. Now, the first and most obvious remedy that is proposed is the deposition of the Sultan. That is obviously a remedy that occurs to all of us. It has one excellent feature, at any rate, which is, that you might possibly get a better Sultan and you could not possibly get a worse. But I am afraid that even that remedy would prove illusory. In the first place, it would only scotch the question, if I have accurately stated that question; it would not deal with it thoroughly.

“It is not a man that you have to deal with, it is with a method, and therefore the removal of one man, however bad and cruel and cowardly he may be, would not in reality apply a remedy to the evil. Then the next point is this, How are you to depose the Sultan? I have not seen any answer to that question. You cannot depose the Sultan alone, because that would be the very isolated action which the Powers of Europe would oppose. You must, then, get the concert of Europe to assist in deposing the Sultan; and I venture to say this, that if you can once get the concert of Europe into life for such a purpose as that, you had much better call on it to deal with the far larger issue involved. Then there are other methods and policies of indirect pressure, to which

I think my friend and colleague, Mr. Bryce, has alluded in one of his speeches, and to which I myself alluded last year. Now, let me say to you of these measures, that if you mention them you thwart them. When you tell a man exactly what it is that you are going to do in case he does not take a particular line, you give that man the very means and opportunity that he wants to prevent your carrying out your policy. Therefore, the indirect means and policies to which Mr. Bryce and I have alluded are means and policies which it would be useless to discuss in a public speech, and therefore I cannot allude to them here.

“ But what I will say is this, that though I thought them possible last year, when my information as a Minister was comparatively recent, I cannot on my responsibility say that in the present state of circumstances they are practicable and possible, because I do not doubt, or at least I think it extremely probable, that the situation has hardened and crystallised as against British policy since then. Well, then, there is another remedy by which we are to put pressure on the Sultan. We are to withhold the Cyprus tribute. Now, that sounds very efficacious at first, but it is one of the remarks, and not by any means the only one, which convinces me that some of our instructors are not so deeply and thoroughly informed on this question as they ought to have



been before they took up their parable. We pay no Cyprus tribute to the Sultan, and therefore it is impossible to withhold it even if that were the efficient course.

“What we do is this: We first take what is necessary for the administration of the island, fixed at a certain rate, and the remainder is paid to the creditors under certain loans to the Sultan’s Government, and as a sinking fund for the redemption of those loans. Well, then, the proposal is, I presume, that we should keep back the payment from the creditors in order to put pressure on the Sultan. You may as well tickle a tortoise’s back to make it laugh. I remember that in the Courts of our earlier kings those princes, when they were of tender years, had an indispensable household officer about them who was called the whipping-boy. That was to say, that when his little Majesty or his little Royal Highness was naughty, as it was indecorous that coercion should be applied to himself, it was usual to whip the whipping-boy. I have always doubted if that had much effect on the little prince, but I am quite certain that if you attempt to put pressure on the Sultan by making the Sultan’s creditors your whipping-boy, that will cause less than no effect at all upon his Majesty’s mind. Well, then, there is another policy, which consists, so far as I can understand it, simply and broadly in handing over to Russia either the Dardanelles or the adminis-

tration of the Turkish Empire. Well, I have only one primary observation to make as to this proposal, which is that neither is the passage of the Dardanelles under our control, nor does the Turkish Empire belong to us. It is not an unfavoured form of policy in certain circles to give over to others what does not belong to them ; but, so far as I know, it is not one that is easy of practice in the present government of Europe. Therefore I am inclined to think it would not be efficacious on the present occasion.

“ Then there is only one objection I venture to mention. The late Government was extremely anxious to arrive at an understanding with Russia. We settled the anxious Pamir question with Russia, and we were prepared to go great lengths in reconciling Russian and English policy in the East, and I desire to speak with every wish and every hopefulness about the possibility of establishing a working understanding with Russia. We were asked to hand over large districts to Russian administration ; and I wish to make one remark, which is rather in the nature of a reminder than an observation of my own. I never care myself to criticise the internal government of other civilised countries. That is their affair and not mine, and I am, in the long run, of opinion that every civilised nation gets the government for which it is suited, and which it likes best. But it has not always been the fashion of Englishmen to approve of

Russian administrative methods to the extent of handing over all parts of the world to the same authority. There was a time, not so long ago—because the mind of the country moves somewhat quickly—there was a time when we deprecated Russian administrative methods towards the Poles and towards the Jews and towards some dissenters.

“Now, I do not wish to criticise those methods because I say that. That is never my purpose, and it is certainly not my purpose to-night; but I do say this, that those who wish to hand over everything to Russian administration as the acme and object and purpose of their policy should, at any rate, lay to heart these things. Now, there is another policy, which is to withdraw our Ambassador from Constantinople, and to give the Turkish Ambassador here his passport. That is a policy which I understand comes to us with no less an authority than an authority that we must always revere in this hall, in this city, and in this country—Mr. Gladstone. I am obliged to differ from Mr. Gladstone on this question, but we differ as friends. This morning only I had a long and affectionate letter from him, in answer to the announcement of my resignation, which I shall always cherish; and whatever our differences on public policy may be, what has passed between Mr. Gladstone and myself is too deep-rooted, too entwined in all that I value and hold dear in public life—whatever our differences of opinion

may be, that never could alter the veneration, respect, and deep affection with which I regard him. Nay, I must say one word more. Perhaps Mr. Gladstone has been the indirect cause, or the latest indirect cause, of the action that I have thought right to take, and to which you have alluded. But let none think that for that reason I have regretted his intervention in the Armenian question. It is now seventeen years ago since Mr. Gladstone came to Midlothian. I remember then making a speech in which I said that we welcomed the sight of a great statesman, full of years and full of honours, coming down at his advanced period of life to fight one supreme battle on behalf of liberty in Europe. Little did I think then that seventeen years later I should see a still nobler sight: a statesman—the same statesman—fuller still of years, and, if possible, still fuller of honours, coming out and leaving a well-earned retirement which the whole nation watches with tenderness and solicitude, to fight another battle, but I hope not the last, on behalf of the principles in which his life has been spent.

“With that preface I must say that I do not agree with the proposal to withdraw our Ambassador from Constantinople. In the first place, it withdraws our presence from the European concert, it necessitates our handing over our interests to the Ambassador of some friendly state. But friendly as that state may be, I should prefer those interests

remaining in the hands of our own Ambassador, more especially when I observe the tone of the European press. In the next place, we lose the remaining method by which we could influence the policy of the Sultan. You may say that is a feeble and ineffectual method; but it is, after all, the only method, and in the present shocking state of affairs in the East I should think long and carefully before I cut myself off from even that method. In the next place, if you withdraw your Embassy, it will have an even more regrettable effect. It would deprive your consuls in Asia Minor—throughout the Turkish Empire, indeed—of almost all their use and their employment. They would be reduced to commercial functions, they would be thwarted and harassed at every turn by the Turkish authorities; while at present they do in some respects act as an assistance and guide to those suffering Armenians who still look to England for help; and they are now, at any rate, and have been in the past, the only channels through which trustworthy information of their condition has reached the outer world.

“ I say, then, that I am unwilling by the withdrawal of an Ambassador to cut myself off from these valuable instruments; but I will go a step farther in deprecating this policy. It is one of the ways by which, without meaning it, you may drift into war. The withdrawal of an Ambassador, and the dismissal of the corresponding Ambassador,

is after all, in its essence, a great affront offered by one Empire to another. When you once begin on the policy of affronts, you do not know where you may end ; and, though I am quite aware it is possible and not infrequent to suspend diplomatic relations in cases where you do not mean to go to war, I very much deprecate that course in instances where you need to be linked with the spot at which diplomacy is acting, and where, on the other hand, in the strained condition of affairs you know not at any moment by what act or by what incident you may find yourself in the condition of war which you profess yourself to be anxious to avoid.

“ Well, there is another part of Mr. Gladstone’s policy which I deprecate, but which I am not quite sure if I understand. If I have misunderstood it, I offer my apology, and I beg that any remarks upon it may be considered cancelled. But what I understand it to be is this, that you are to put pressure on the Sultan by threatening him with certain action ; but if you find you get no support from the other Powers, you are not to take action, but that then you are to throw the whole of the responsibility on the other Powers, and withdraw, so to speak, into your shell. Now, I protest against that policy. It seems to me to be a most unfortunate one, because, after all, if you can have concert with Europe, bring your concert, as I have said, to bear on the whole question. But do not first announce action, and then, when you

are unable to take action, withdraw, because you will only find yourself in the same position in which you are now—*plus* a public and humiliating confession of impotence. Then, I further say this, that if there is one rule in diplomacy which I regard as sacred it is this—you should never put your foot forward farther in diplomacy than you can keep it down. I in this matter would have England not put her foot an inch farther than she can keep it, because, if so, her influence, which is complained of as being insufficient, would gradually be reduced to something less than nothing.

“I have another point of disagreement, I am sorry to say, with Mr. Gladstone, and with some orators who are also friends of mine. That is with regard to what is known as the Cyprus Convention. Mr. Gladstone holds that we are bound in honour by the Cyprus Convention to intervene; and that if, having—I think I state the arguments clearly—and that if, having taken certain responsibilities upon ourselves, we do not discharge these responsibilities, because other Powers prevent us, then the word ‘honour’ should be erased from our dictionary. Well, I confess that I do not hold that we are bound in honour by the Cyprus Convention. I have always felt and have always acted when at the Foreign Office upon the presumption that, the Sultan not having fulfilled, or tried to fulfil, any one of his pledges under that

convention, we have equally been released from ours.

“ I believe—and I do not rely on the description which the author, Lord Salisbury, gave of it at his Nonconformist dinner this year—I believe, and shall always believe, that that convention has been a dead-letter since it was signed. The Sultan, in the first place, as I have said, has never performed his part ; but what is more important to us is this, that we have never performed our part, and that, from the time that convention was signed, I do not believe, in the nineteen years or so that have elapsed, any single Government, Liberal or Conservative, has ever taken action to fulfil its pledges under that convention. A gentleman says ‘ Shame,’ but my impression is that it was found to be an impracticable and a futile convention, and that Governments, whether Liberal or Tory, were only too glad to find that, as the Sultan did not fulfil his part, we also were liberated from our part, and had no further duties or responsibilities otherwise. If those Governments—of two or three of which I have been a member—if those Governments have thought that they were bound by the terms of the Cyprus Convention to interfere authoritatively, and by force if necessary, to secure the good government of the Ottoman Empire, all I can say is this, that they were guilty of a grave dereliction of duty ; and that, whether they were guilty of a grave dereliction



of duty or not, they have for eighteen or nineteen years passed *sub silentio* the second and operative clause of that treaty; and they are not entitled, in my opinion, in the nineteenth year, to come down and say that they are bound in honour or in law to interfere, by force if necessary, to secure the good government of the Ottoman Empire. It is quite true, I think, that some consular officials were appointed in 1879 to supervise any reforms that might be carried out; but in the next year, I think, or very shortly afterwards, they were withdrawn, I suppose because they had no reforms to supervise. That is, so far as I know—and I think I am pretty well informed on that subject—the only action that has been taken under the great Cyprus Convention.

“Now, gentlemen, what is the Cyprus Convention? I can give it to you in three words. By the first clause, which is somewhat extraordinary, Great Britain pledges herself to assist the Sultan to defend the Empire against aggression. In the next place, the Sultan promises to introduce reforms. In the third place, Great Britain takes over Cyprus, in order—I confess I think it is a *non sequitur*—but in order to enable it to carry out those promises in that convention. These are the three clauses. The first clause has never been attempted to be carried out. The second clause has never been

attempted to be carried out. The third clause, the occupation of Cyprus, has been most conscientiously carried out. I say, then, that that convention has been practically abrogated by disuse. It has been null and void from the beginning, and, with the exception of the occupation of Cyprus, no action has ever been taken under it. And I venture to say this, that in my opinion, if the Government that came in in 1880, after the Midlothian campaign, had thought that the convention was operative, they would have felt bound to denounce it, as pledging them in explicit terms to defend a Government and an Empire which they had denounced in such scathing terms when they were in opposition.

“Now, you may say that if a treaty is not explicitly renounced or repealed, it remains operative. I advise you not to hold that doctrine; it may take you a good deal farther than you think. There is a much more drastic instrument in existence, undenounced, unrepealed, still in force on paper. It is called the Tripartite Treaty. It was concluded in 1856 between the Governments of Austria, France, and Great Britain, and those Governments in it bind themselves in the most solemn and drastic terms to maintain in its strictest sense the independence and the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. That was in 1856. Since that time, by war and under the auspices of Europe, the Ottoman Empire

has seen itself deprived of some of its fairest provinces. None of the three great contracting Powers who guarantee the integrity of that Empire think that it is their duty to lift up a finger to prevent the dismemberment. Surely if one treaty is in force, the other treaty is in force; and surely if the word 'honour' is to be expunged from our dictionary for the neglect of a convention which I think I have shown was null and void from the beginning, some word even more forcible than 'honour' must be expunged for our explicit disregard of the terms of the Tripartite Treaty.

"Now I contend, as regards this convention, that it was never operative; that it was a still-born child from the very beginning; that we never intended to execute the first article, pledging us to defend the Turkish Empire; and that in practice deprives us of the right to interfere, except by authoritative advice, with regard to the second article, and the execution of reforms. I might add to that, which I think is a sufficiently compendious condemnation of our obligations under the convention, that they are practically impossible to carry out, as Lord Salisbury himself said—though I confess I thought it a humiliating avowal for the author of the convention. We cannot by any means, as a naval Power, interfere in the internal districts of Asia Minor. But if, then, it be, as I believe it to be,

impracticable to carry out, and if we are not, as I maintain we are not, bound in honour to carry it out, I say that neither in honour nor by practicability are we to be considered bound to carry out the terms of the Cyprus Convention. There is perhaps always a sting in the word ‘honour.’ If that sting applies, it applies not to the nation now, which has apparently for the first time woke up to the obligations of the Cyprus Convention after eighteen or nineteen years; it may apply possibly to the authors of that convention, but, in my opinion, to no other Englishman, Scotchman, Irishman, or Welshman whatever. Then there remains the third clause, which we have faithfully carried out. There remains this island of Cyprus. Now, I am not very much in love with the island of Cyprus. I have never been able to see any good that it did us. I am a disbeliever in its strategical importance. It has no harbour, and it would cost an enormous sum of money to make an available harbour. I therefore am not particularly anxious to retain the island of Cyprus, which some regard as a proof of our dishonour in the Eastern Question; but I would ask you, if we give up Cyprus, to whom are we to hand it over? Its proper and legal possessor is the Sultan.

“I do not envy any Ministry in Great Britain that would attempt to hand over an inch of

territory to the Sultan. But as regards the island of Cyprus, I will say this, that if as a proof of our disinterestedness, if as a price to pay for a large-minded dealing with the Eastern Question on the part of the Powers of Europe, we were asked to give up Cyprus, I myself, with a reservation that we should not hand it over to the Sultan, and with certain other reservations which are not material to our discussion to-night, should think the handing over of Cyprus a very cheap price to pay for the concert of Europe on this question.

“There are others who say, ‘Why should we not act alone? We have a righteous cause, we have a mighty fleet, we have millions of money.’ It reminds me—this argument—rather of a certain popular refrain well known at the music-halls about 1878, which gives its name to a party which we used not to regard with much approbation. You will remember the lines :

We don't want to fight,  
 But, by Jingo, if we do,  
 We have the ships, we have the men,  
 We have the money too!

Well, these people, gnashing their teeth, as I think, with righteous indignation at the horrors that are being carried on in the eastern part of Europe, feel that, if nobody else will go in, why should we not go in ourselves? I had at the

beginning of this agitation, in fact when the massacres had taken place, but before the agitation had begun—it must have been early in September—a letter from an intelligent and a very right-thinking lady, who said, ‘Why, if Europe fails us, why do we not go in alone? We might be shattered, but in what nobler cause could Great Britain be shattered?’ I wrote back, after some deliberation, to say that I did not wish Great Britain to be shattered; and she replied, ‘My lord, your answer saddened me.’ I do not know that everybody goes as far as this lady, but there are a great many who argue in a way that, consciously or unconsciously, leads only to the same logical conclusion, and on this point I must speak without possibility of compromise or misunderstanding. Against the policy of solitary interference in the affairs of the East I am prepared to fight tooth and nail. The party who support the interest of peace must also be vigilant, and must also be prepared to fight tooth and nail if they do not wish that isolated policy to be carried out.

“Mr. Gladstone speaks, urging, as I think, indirectly, some idea of this kind—speaks of the phantasm of a European war being excited by any such thing. I believe it is no phantasm at all. I am convinced, as far as my information and my knowledge go—and up to recently I think that knowledge and information were sound,

although the situation may have changed for the better—I do believe that there was a fixed and resolute agreement on the part of the great Powers of Europe, all of them, or nearly all of them, to resist by force any single-handed intervention by England in the affairs of the East. Well, if so, I do not say, ‘Shame,’ as somebody in the gallery says. I do not criticise. That is not my purpose to-night. I only want to point out the practical result, that if that fact is true—and I believe it to have been very recently true—isolated action by Great Britain means a European war. You know what a European war means. It means the massacre, the slaughter, of hundreds of thousands of people; it means the ruin and devastation of the regions it invests; it means danger to many countries, and perhaps worse to this country—almost our national existence. It means that, on the hypothesis that our fleet would be engaged largely in the extreme east of Europe, our coasts, our liberties, our properties, would be largely exposed to attack at home; and in all probability the war would be preceded by the extermination of those very Armenian populations on whose behalf you proposed to engage in it. I say I can conceive nothing more futile, more disastrous, more dangerous than such a policy as this; and it is against this that I raise my earnest protest.

“Some of you belong to a generation which

has grown up unconscious of the horrors of war, but in this city you, at any rate, remember that old legend of the ghastly phantom that appeared over the Market-Cross before the battle of Flodden, that summoned in awful tones King, Lords, Knights, and Commons to appear within forty days at the judgment-seat in another world. Flodden was bad for Scotland; a European war in which we were engaged would transcend twenty Floddens; and that angel of death who appeared, or was said to appear, in Edinburgh before Flodden, would appear in every hamlet, every village, every town in our kingdom, to summon your sons, your brothers, the flower of your youth and manhood, to lose their lives in this European conflagration. I do not say that I am unwilling to draw the sword in a just and necessary cause. I have myself, while a Minister, incurred the risk of war. I do not believe that any British Minister, with reference to the vast interests committed to his charge, can avoid the risk of war; but I say that any British Minister who engages in a European war, except under the pressure of the direst necessity, except under interests directly and distinctively British, is a criminal to his country and to his position.

"There is one point, too, about any war in which you might engage in the East. The United Kingdom is the heart of the Empire, but the greatest part of the Empire lies outside the



United Kingdom. You have those vast Colonies which are your pride. I believe that the Colonies of Great Britain, in support of Great Britain in a just and necessary war, would rise, and without hesitation would stand by the mother country; but I confess I do not feel the conviction of that enthusiasm, or that readiness in regard to a war waged on behalf of the Armenian interests in the East. My impression is this: That the Colonies would rather take the attitude of a nation not less Anglo-Saxon, not less Christian, and much more populous than yours—a nation whose interests and whose subjects have been more directly affected by these outrages than your own—I mean the United States; and, while willing to join in diplomatic action, would deprecate invoking the arbitrament of the sword on a question which does not directly concern their vital interests.

“One vital consideration there is connected with all our foreign policy which I have not seen noticed, and to which I must call your attention in a sentence—that is, the character of the British Empire itself; and it is a consideration not applicable to this question alone, but to the whole course of your foreign and your Colonial policy. The British Empire is, in truth—as Napoleon III. said quite falsely of his empire—the British Empire is peace. It means peace and it needs peace. For the last twenty years, still more during

the last twelve, you have been laying your hands, with almost frantic eagerness, on every tract of territory adjacent to your own or desirable from any point of view which you thought it desirable to take. That has had two results. I dare say it has been quite right, but it has had two results. The first result is this, that you have excited to an almost intolerable degree the envy of other colonising nations, and that, in the case of many countries, or several countries rather, which were formerly friendly to you, you can reckon, in consequence of your Colonial policy, whether right or wrong—and I myself am supposed to be rather a sinner in that respect—you can reckon, not on their active benevolence, but on their active malevolence. And secondly, you have acquired so enormous a mass of territory that it will be years before you can settle it or control it, or make it capable of defence or make it amenable to the acts of your administration.

“Have you any notion what it is that you have added to the Empire in the last few years? I have taken the trouble to make a computation which I believe to be correct. In twelve years you have added to the Empire, whether in the shape of actual annexation or of dominion, or of what is called a sphere of influence, two million six hundred thousand square miles of territory. I observe you sigh. Whether it is with a sense of repletion or relief at hearing you have so much

undigested empire about you I will not stop to inquire. But just compare these figures; it will show you more clearly what you have done. While the area of the United Kingdom—England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, the Channel Islands, and so forth—covers one hundred and twenty thousand square miles, therefore to the one hundred and twenty thousand square miles of the United Kingdom, which is a part of your Empire, you have added during the past twelve years twenty-two areas as large as that United Kingdom itself. I say this, that that marks out for many years a policy from which you cannot depart if you would. You may be compelled to draw the sword—I hope you may not be; but the foreign policy of Great Britain until its territory is consolidated, filled up, settled, civilised, must inevitably be a policy of peace.

“You may fairly ask me, having discussed all those other remedies with disapprobation, ‘To what do you look yourself for dealing with this question?’ No gentleman has a right in the medical profession to condemn the pills of his opponents without offering some medicaments of his own. My view—I am afraid it is not a very fresh one, but it is equally certain it is the only sound one—my only panacea for dealing with the Eastern Question is the concerted action of the Powers. It may not be all the Powers—I should greatly prefer it were all the Powers; but at any

rate the concerted action of the Powers most immediately interested is the only way in which you can deal with the Eastern Question. Now, I know very well that the concert of Europe is not in particularly good odour at this moment—I think with very good reason. It has been impotent, and it is, -or at least they say it is. I cannot so readily give up the concert of Europe. I was politically bred and suckled on the concert of Europe, and it is not at this comparatively late stage of my existence that I can afford to give up *in toto* the concert of Europe. The concert of Europe is not impotent. It was extremely powerful last year, but, unfortunately, it was powerful in a sense opposed to the British policy. It was the power of the concert of Europe behind Russia that thwarted British policy, and it is the object of every British statesman who is worthy of the name to obtain concerted action in favour of that policy.

“I venture to say that a question of the magnitude of the Eastern Question can only be settled by that august tribunal which is called the Concert of European Powers. Whether they meet in congress, or whether they join in action together, or whether they only act by diplomatic pressure, they are omnipotent in this Eastern Question, and every other method of dealing with it is comparatively impotent; and I am inclined to found some hopes that their action may

not be unfriendly to us on this occasion. I found it on two reasons. First, I think that, after the flagrant exhibition given of the Sultan's methods of government in the streets of Constantinople lately, it is not possible for them to abstain from taking steps to prevent those massacres in the future. Their press is not altogether friendly to such action. Their people are not fully informed; but the hearts of the people of the continent of Europe are in the same place as your hearts, and they have only got to realise the infamies that have been committed, and to some extent tolerated by the Powers that govern them, to insist that that opinion, which is powerful even in the case of a despotism, should take up action to prevent their recurrence. And in the next place, I found my hopes on this: whether the Powers like it or not, sure I am that they will not, for their own comfort and convenience, postpone the consideration of this thorny question. Whether they like it or not, the condition of the Turkish Empire, the political condition, the financial condition, the moral condition of the Turkish Empire, is such that it must soon invite, in terms and in a manner which cannot be withstood, the anxious consideration and settlement of the Powers.

“ I venture to say that, though we long suffered the Sick Man, he is sicker now than ever. His methods are exposed, his Government is dis-

credited, his massacres have got rid of some of his best tax-paying subjects, and it transcends the ability even of a Sultan or a Kurd to extract the taxes from an Armenian corpse. A great darkness is falling over them. The writing is upon the wall, and even if the Powers neglect these serious intimations, which are only too visible in the state of Turkey, of its condition of decay, they cannot long postpone that action, however much they may wish they could. One word more on this point. You say, with a sense of disappointment, 'After all, this is only diplomacy; these are only diplomatic methods, soft methods, wheedling methods. Oh for something manly and downright! Oh for an hour of Cromwell and his action!' I knew the name of Cromwell would elicit a cheer. He has been frequently summoned from his grave to do duty at these recent meetings, but I think with an imperfect knowledge of what Cromwell really did. Cromwell interfered, it is true, on behalf of people oppressed much as these Armenians are. He wrote, or rather he signed some letters on that subject, which were written by John Milton and signed by Oliver Cromwell—an august conjunction, which in their agony and vehemence of pathos still thrill our hearts across the generations that separate us. And, gentlemen, if this Eastern Question has no other result than this to you, I hope it will make you betake yourselves to

those sublime despatches. You will be amply repaid by reading the letters which Milton himself wrote. There is nothing more eloquent or more noble, and they are worthy of the signature of Oliver Cromwell.

“ But how did Oliver Cromwell protect these people? How did he save these people? Did he bombard anybody? Did he declare war against anybody? Did he take isolated action against anybody? He did none of these things. He took diplomatic action. He knew, as we know, that he could not with a fleet reach the scene of the outrages. He knew that there was another Sovereign who could, and by diplomatic pressure he induced that Sovereign to take action, which in the end preserved the lives and the liberties of these unhappy people. Well, we are apparently each of us worth a dozen Cromwells now. We all know something ‘manlier’ or ‘finer’ than to trust to the concerted action of the Powers of Europe. There may be things manlier and there may be things finer; but nothing else, I venture to say, for dealing with the future of the Ottoman Empire is either safe or efficacious. I know very well that this is not the popular side of the question. I believe that it is the unpopular side of the question. I care very little in this matter which it is—the unpopular or the popular side. I remember very well that, when I was a child, Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden were hounded

out of public life for opposing a war for which no one now ventures to say a word in defence. I remember when I was grown up, Mr. Gladstone had his windows broken, and was mobbed in London, for advocating a policy on this very Eastern Question, which at the general election two years afterwards was the policy of the nation itself. And therefore I care very little about popularity or unpopularity in this matter.

“ But let me make it clear what it is that I advocate, and what it is that I fear. I advocate concerted action as the only solid, safe, and effectual method of dealing with this question. I deprecate any other method as both futile and dangerous. Against any other, which may imply the solitary intervention of England, I will raise my voice and my strength as long as I have voice and strength to exert. I am not less haunted than you are by the horrors of Armenia, by the horrors that have transformed an earthly paradise into an organised hell. For all that, I would not attempt to do away with those horrors by adding to them a horror a hundredfold greater. We are a great nation and a just nation; but, to employ the fine phrase of Mr. Gladstone, ‘ we do not wield the sword of the Almighty.’ It is not ours to dispense in this world universally the punishment of wrong and the reward of right. We have to balance, as it were, between two evils, and of the two I cannot balance between



the evil of Armenian massacre alone and the evil of Armenian massacre *plus* European war. There is no doubt a certain concord that reigns over the aspect of Europe at this moment. But that concord is chiefly directed, not in your favour, but against you. Remember, however you may be appeased by the aspect of Europe, that for years and years past there has hung like a sullen cloud over the Continent the murderous spectre of that conflict of the nations for which the peoples of Europe have been standing in battle array. A little thing might fall out and call down that storm, and I venture to warn you that your diplomacy in this Eastern Question must be cautious as well as straightforward if you do not mean to call down that storm.

“I know I shall be told to-morrow, as I have been told before, ‘Nobody wants war. What are you arguing against in arguing against war?’ It is not so much what you want that I dread. It is not so much what you say that I dread. It is not so much what you mean that I dread. But it is where your language, if it has any logical meaning at all, will irresistibly land you. It is, then, a solitary and feverish intervention in the East, against which I enter my deliberate protest. Some persons, some guides of public opinion, are trying to work up in this country the sort of ecstasy which precedes war, even if it does not intend war. Against that I

protest, and against that I will fight. It is therefore that I implore you to walk warily in this matter, and to weigh well in the interests of yourselves, your children, your future, on behalf of the welfare, the prosperity, nay, and the safety, of the Empire of which you are so proud; to pause before you adopt any of these perilous policies of which you can see the eloquent commencement, and to which no one living can see the catastrophe or the end.

“Now I have done with public affairs. It would be affectation to deny that you expect from me some sort of personal statement now. Much allusion has been made to a letter which appeared in the papers yesterday. I have seen it said that it would have been well if I had waited till this meeting was over before I had written that letter. In my opinion that is not a wise criticism. I have no constituents, or, if I have any constituents, it is the people of Scotland, and I think I had a right when I had come to this grave resolution to announce it before I came before my constituents, so that I should not appear among them in a false character, and should be enabled to add to my letter any further explanation that seemed to me to be necessary. I have, I am sorry to tell you, no piquant revelations to make. I think you might be satisfied with the reasons which I gave in my letter, but some people are never

satisfied. I see that some are of opinion that it is the attacks of the newspapers that have driven me from the lead of the Liberal party. That is not so. If I could have been driven from that position by attacks of newspapers, I should have been driven long ago, because they have been pretty pertinacious, and, I think, almost universal; but I myself am not one of those who see anything but good in fair and reasonable newspaper criticism. Newspaper criticism, when it is fair and moderate and reasonable, braces and stimulates the man whom it criticises; and when it is unfair and immoderate and unreasonable, it provokes a reaction in favour of the man whom it purposes to destroy.

“ But I do not profess to found my resignation entirely on the difference of opinion that exists between me and many others on the subject of the Armenian question. It is, after all, only the last of a series of incidents. I do not think, gentlemen, that you have ever quite sufficiently realised what is the position of a Liberal leader who is also a peer. He is, parliamentarily speaking, almost impotent and helpless. He is shut up in a permanently hostile assembly with a handful of followers. His voice, under the most favourable circumstances, can only be heard in the House of Commons, the seat of power, through the mouth

of another. At a general election, when the fortunes and future of himself as well as his party are in the balance, he is restricted to absolute silence. He is, in effect, in the position of riding a horse without reins.

“ Well, the only reason for which I mention that to you is this—that a man in that position has no chance of succeeding in the lead of the Liberal party unless he receives very exceptional support, very exceptional loyalty, and very exceptional co-operation from the party inside and outside Parliament to make up for his own inherent deficiencies. Perhaps I had no right to expect any such exceptional measure to be dealt out to me, but, at any rate, I cannot say that I received it; rather was my being a peer, which was to some extent the reason, as I have explained, of my impotence, urged as a reason for further hampering my efforts. Well, I do not wish to instance the events of which I say this last difference is the last, but I will take three. Before we had been in office, or rather before we had confronted Parliament, for more than two days, we were defeated by our own followers by a majority of two. That was not a God-speed to the new Government, or any sign of the special and exceptional cordiality and support which was required by a Liberal Government headed by a peer. The next point to which I will call your attention was that of the

general election. I ventured, as it was my duty and my privilege to do, to urge a definite and concentrated policy on the party. That definite and concentrated policy was not adopted. And, in the third place, this last event has in my mind been, so to speak, the last straw which decided my position. Our leader—for Mr. Gladstone must always lead the Liberal party when he wishes to—our leader has come forward, as I told you, in a noble and sublime spirit; but he has equally innocently and unconsciously himself administered the final *coup de grâce* to his successor, because, however much I may differ with Mr. Gladstone in opinion on this question or any other, I never will appear in sharp conflict with him when I am holding the position, titular or otherwise, of leader of the Liberal party.

“That is why I claimed my freedom before I came here to-night. The difficulties that I have recited to you are external difficulties. Of the internal difficulties I will only say that they were not less than the external. I will not say that they were more, because the external were so considerable as almost to constitute a disability of themselves; but I will say<sup>1</sup> that they were not less. Of course it might have been possible, had I been in the House of Commons, to fight my own fight, and to deal with these difficulties as they arose, imperfectly I doubt not, but in my

own person. But in the position of a peer I could only speak vicariously to the House of Commons, and it is difficult, if not almost impossible, to find the particular kind of political twins that can act together in the position of leader of the House of Lords and leader of the House of Commons, when the peer is Prime Minister and the other is not.

“Well, I say, then, that my position was so hampered that it had almost become untenable. I think you will urge that if these were my difficulties I should have resigned earlier; but I kept my position almost beyond the conditions of dignity and of self-respect. Why, for example, you may justly say, did you not, after the general election, when a large part of your party turned their back upon your advice—why did you not say, ‘If you will not follow, I will not lead,’ and resign a position which had ceased to be either dignified or efficient? I will tell you why. In the first place, because the party was then at a very low ebb, and it would not have looked well, and it would not have been well, after holding the position that I had in office under the late Government, if at the first breath of adversity I had deserted the sinking, or the almost sunken, ship; but I am bound also to say this—and this I have never said before, but I trust my colleagues on the platform will excuse me—ever since the general election my resignation has been in the

hands of my colleagues, to use, and to put in force, whenever they should think fit and whenever the party and the unity of the party should require it. That also is the answer to what has caused surprise, that I did not consult or intimate to any of them my intention of writing the letter. That I did, because having been overridden by them before, out of their kindness and sympathy and devotion to me, against my own individual judgment, I was determined on this occasion that I should take the opportunity of overriding them.

“Now, gentlemen, I have gladly come forward on this occasion to lay down the proud post of leader of the Liberal party with one object alone—in order to promote unity. Let me beg, then, whatever else may be the result of my action, that my resignation may produce unity among you. If it does not unite you, the sacrifice has been made in vain. I will give you—perhaps I have no right to give it you—I will give you one piece of advice. Choose your leader with what caution, care, and deliberation you may. When you have chosen him, close up your ranks and follow him; for this I can tell you, as an absolute maxim, that a united party behind an inferior leader is more efficacious than a disunited party with the best leader that ever lived.

“Well, with that axiom I shall leave the subject, but I must say one word to my colleagues, who have been somewhat unjustly aspersed. It would

not do for me to select any for peculiar commendation; but I may, without invidiousness, thank those who happen to be present with us to-night, for better colleagues no man ever had. I thank Mr. Asquith, and Sir Henry Fowler, and Mr. Bryce, and Mr. Arnold Morley, who are all here to-night, for their devoted co-operation with me. If I venture to single out Mr. Asquith from even these four it is because we have been in habits of close and intimate political communion, and because I see, and see with pain, that he has been singled out for attack as not having been in hearty association with me. Nothing is more remote from the truth; nothing could be more devoid of truth. Those who say this must know Mr. Asquith very little, because, consummate and considerable as are his powers of brain, in my opinion his head is not equal to his heart; and it is that rare combination of head and heart which, in my humble judgment, if my prophecy be worth anything, will conduct him to the highest office of the State. May I say one word also to another colleague, outside the Cabinet indeed, but who has been nearer to me than some who were inside? I mean your neighbour, Mr. Munro-Ferguson of Novar. Since he has been in public life our fortunes have been closely united; we have been rather like elder brother and younger brother than like Minister and secretary, or like two political friends; and it is a pleasure to me at this solemn



moment that I have the opportunity of offering him my heartfelt thanks for all that he has done for me and been to me in my political career. And I must also thank, whether they be present or not, that small band of Liberal peers who gave me, I believe, an absolutely unanimous support. One of them has gone beyond my voice. He has gone where no acknowledgment of mine or of any of ours will reach him. Yesterday we read, when we read of my resignation, that William, Lord Kensington, who had acted as Whip of the party, had gone to his long account. No more honest, no more strenuous, no more earnest Liberal has ever been found in the ranks of the party.

“And now, gentlemen, I have only to say the hardest word of all—Good-bye. There is a strange fatality that I find in political meetings in Edinburgh. It seems only yesterday that I came to my last. I had then come fresh from being appointed Prime Minister. I came to ask you in the great crisis of my fortune and my life—you, my earliest friends—to stand by me as you had stood before. I am glad that, by an accident almost, it falls on me to lay down the leadership of the Liberal party in the very place where I took it up, in mine own ancient city, among my own neighbours, my own fellow-citizens, my own friends.”

## CHAPTER XXXI .

LORD ROSEBERY'S TRIBUTE TO MR. GLADSTONE—ENORMOUS POWER OF CONCENTRATION—INFINITE VARIETY AND MULTIPLICITY OF HIS INTERESTS—SECRET OF HIS UNPARALLELED POWER—SYMPATHY FOR MRS. GLADSTONE

LORD ROSEBERY for a long while rigidly maintained the attitude of private citizenship which he had chosen to assume, avoiding political meetings and writings with scrupulous care. But he spoke at many non-political gatherings, and delivered many charming orations. It was his sad duty in the summer of 1898 to act, with the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York, Lord Salisbury, Mr. Balfour, the Duke of Rutland, Sir William Harcourt, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Lord Rendel, and Mr. Armistead, as a pall-bearer when his great chief and dear friend Mr. Gladstone was buried in Westminster Abbey. A few days previously, when several touching tributes to the dead statesman had been paid, Lord Rosebery in the House of Lords had spoken as follows :

“ My Lords,—There would at first sight appear little left to be said, after what has been so

eloquently and feelingly put from both sides of the House; but, as Mr. Gladstone's last successor in office, and as one who was associated with him in many of the most critical episodes of the last twenty years of his life, your lordships will perhaps bear with me for a moment while I say what little I can say on such a subject and on such an occasion. My lords, it has been said by the Prime Minister, and I think truly, that the time has not yet come to fix with any approach to accuracy the place that Mr. Gladstone will fill in history. We are too near him to do more than note the vast space that he filled in the world, the great influence that he exercised, his constant contact with all the great movements of his time. But the sense of proportion must necessarily be absent, and it must be left for a later time, and even perhaps for a later generation, accurately to appraise and appreciate that relation.

“The same may also be said of his intellect and of his character. They are at any rate too vast a subject to be treated on such an occasion as this. But I may at least cite the words—which I shall never forget—which were used by the noble marquis (Lord Salisbury) when Mr. Gladstone resigned the office of Prime Minister, that his was ‘the most brilliant intellect that had been applied to the service of the State since Parliamentary government began.’ That seems to be an adequate and a noble appreciation; but there is also

this pitiful side, incident to all mortality, but which strikes one more strongly with regard to Mr. Gladstone than with regard to any one else, and it is this—that intellect, mighty by nature, was fashioned and prepared by the labour of every day and almost every hour until the last day of health—fashioned to be so perfect a machine, only to be stopped for ever by a single touch of the Angel of Death.

“My lords, there are two features of Mr. Gladstone’s intellect which I cannot help noting on this occasion, for they were so signal and so salient, and distinguished him so much, so far as I know, from all other minds that I have come into contact with, that it would be wanting to this occasion if they were not noted. The first was his enormous power of concentration. There never was a man, I feel, in this world, who at any given moment, on any given subject, could so devote every resource and power of his intellect, without the restriction of a single nerve within him, to the immediate purpose of that subject.

“And the second feature is one which is also rare, but which I think has never been united so much with the faculty of concentration, and it is this—the infinite variety and multiplicity of his interests. There was no man, I suspect, in the history of England—no man, at any rate, in recent centuries—who touched the intellectual life of the country at so many points and over so great a

range of years. But that was in fact and reality not merely a part of his intellect, but of his character, for the first and most obvious feature of Mr. Gladstone's character was the universality and the humanity of his sympathy. I do not now mean, as we all know, that he sympathised with great causes and with oppressed nations and with what he believed to be the cause of liberty all over the world; but I do mean his sympathy with all classes of human beings, from the highest to the lowest.

“That, I believe, was one of the secrets of his almost unparalleled power over his fellow-men. May I give two instances of what I mean? The first time he visited Midlothian we were driving away from, I think, his first meeting, and we were followed by a shouting crowd as long as their strength would permit; but there was one man who held on much longer than any of them—who ran, I should think, for two miles, and evidently had some word he was anxious to say—and when he dropped away we listened for what it might be, and it was this: ‘I wished to thank you, Sir, for the speech you made to the workhouse people.’ I dare say not many of your lordships recollect that speech; for my purpose it does not particularly matter what its terms may have been. We should think it, however, an almost overwhelming task to speak to any workhouse audience and to administer words of consolation and

sympathy to a mass who, after all, represent in the main exhaustion and failure and destitution. That is the lowest class.

“ Let me take another instance—from the highest. I believe that the last note Mr. Gladstone wrote with his own hand was written to Lady Salisbury after a carriage accident, in which the noble marquis had been involved. It was highly characteristic of the man that, in the hour of his sore distress, when he could hardly put pen to paper, he should have written a note of sympathy to the wife of the most prominent, and not the least generous, of his political opponents. My lords, sympathy was one great feature of Mr. Gladstone's character.

“ There was another, with which the noble marquis has dealt, and that I would only touch on with a single word : I mean the depth of his Christian faith. I have heard, not often, and have seen it made a subject for cavil, for sarcasm, for scoffing remarks. These remarks were the offspring of ignorance and not of knowledge. The faith of Mr. Gladstone, obviously to all who knew him, pervaded every act and every part of his life. It was the faith, the pure faith, of a child, confirmed by the experience and the conviction of manhood.

“ That, my lords, brings me to the only other point on which I would say a word. There was no expression so frequently on Mr. Gladstone's

lips as the word 'manhood.' Speaking of any one—I can appeal to his friends behind me—he would say, with an accent that no one who heard him could ever forget: 'So-and-so had the manhood to do this'; 'So-and-so had the manhood to do that'; and no one, I think, will, in the converse, ever forget the extremity of scorn which he could put into the negative phrase—'So-and-so had not the manhood to do this'; 'So-and-so had not the manhood to say that.' It was obvious from all he said and from all he did that that virile virtue of manhood, in which he comprehended courage, righteous daring, the disdain of odds against him—that virile virtue of manhood was perhaps the one which he put the highest.

"This country, this nation, loves brave men. Mr. Gladstone was the bravest of the brave. There was no cause so hopeless that he was afraid to undertake it; there was no amount of opposition that would cow him when once he had undertaken it. It was, then, faith, manhood, and sympathy that formed the triple base of Mr. Gladstone's character.

"My lords, this is, as has been pointed out, an unique occasion. Mr. Gladstone always expressed a hope that there might be an interval left to him between the end of his political and of his natural life. That period was given to him, for it is more than four years since he quitted the sphere of politics. Those four years have

been with him a special preparation for his death ; but have they not also been a preparation for his death with the nation at large? Had he died in the plenitude of his power as Prime Minister, would it have been possible for a vigorous and convinced Opposition to allow to pass to him, without a word of dissent, the honours which are now universally conceded? Hushed for the moment are the voices of criticism ; hushed are the controversies in which he took part ; hushed for the moment is the very sound of party conflict. I venture to think that this is a notable fact in our history. It was not so with the elder Pitt. It was not so with the younger Pitt. It was not so with the elder Pitt—in spite of his tragic end, of his unrivalled services, and of his enfeebled old age. It was not so with the younger Pitt—in spite of his long control of the country and his absolute and absorbed devotion to the State. I think that we should remember this as creditable not merely to the man, but to the nation.

“My lords, there is one deeply melancholy feature of Mr. Gladstone’s death, by far the most melancholy, to which I think none of my noble friends have referred. I think that all our thoughts must be turned, now that Mr. Gladstone is gone, to that solitary and pathetic figure who, for sixty years, shared all the sorrows and all the joys of Mr. Gladstone’s life ; who received his every



confidence and every aspiration; who shared his triumphs with him and cheered him under his defeats; who by her tender vigilance, I firmly believe, sustained and prolonged his years.

“ I think that the occasion ought not to pass without letting Mrs. Gladstone know that she is in all our thoughts to-day. And yet, my lords—putting that one figure aside—to me, at any rate, this is not an occasion for absolute and entire and unreserved lamentation. Were it, indeed, possible so to protract the inexorable limits of human life that we might have hoped that future years, and even future generations, might see Mr. Gladstone’s face and hear his matchless voice, and receive the lessons of his unrivalled experience—we might, perhaps, grieve to-day as those who have no hope. But that is not the case. He had long exceeded the span of mortal life; and his latter months had been months of unspeakable pain and distress. He is now in that rest for which he sought and prayed, and which was to give him relief from an existence which had become a burden to him. Surely this should not be an occasion entirely for grief, when a life prolonged to such a limit, so full of honour, so crowned with glory, has come to its termination. The nation lives that produced him. The nation that produced him may yet produce others like him; and, in the meantime, it is rich in his memory, rich in his life, and rich, above all, in his animating

and inspiring example. Nor do I think that we should regard this heritage as limited to our own country or to our own race. It seems to me, if we may judge from the papers of to-day, that it is shared by, that it is the possession of all civilised mankind, and that generations still to come, through many long years, will look for encouragement in labour, for fortitude in adversity, for the example of a sublime Christianity, with constant hope and constant encouragement, to the pure, the splendid, the dauntless figure of William Ewart Gladstone."

On Friday, November 24, 1898, a meeting was called by the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, under requisition by leading citizens, to consider the proposals put forward by the National Committee for the erection of a memorial to the late Mr. Gladstone, and to consider what steps should be taken in Edinburgh to carry out the objects proposed by the National Committee. The meeting, which was held in the Council Chamber, was presided over by the Lord Provost; and among others present were the Earl of Rosebery, Sir Charles Dalrymple, M.P., Mr. Cox, M.P., Sir John Cowan of Beeslack, Sir James Gibson Craig, Convener of Midlothian, and Major-General Wauchope, the last opponent of Mr. Gladstone in Midlothian.

The Lord Provost referred to the objects of the meeting, and explained the proposals put forward

by the National Committee. He called upon Lord Rosebery to move the first resolution.

Lord Rosebery, who was received with loud applause, said :

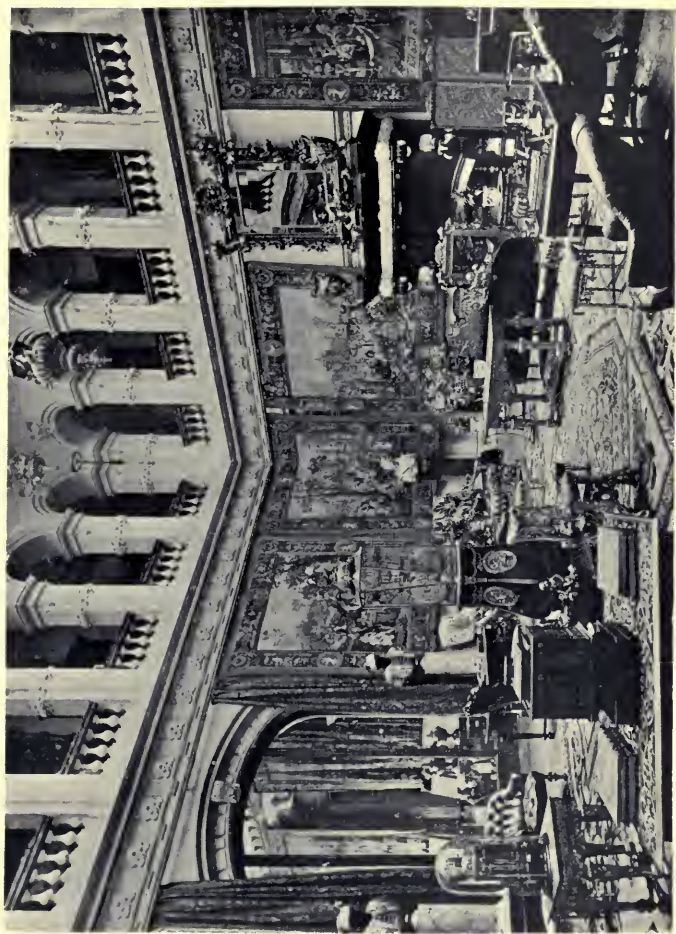
“ I will follow, my lord, the example of brevity which you have set, and wisely set, at a meeting like this, in moving the resolution which you have entrusted to my charge. It runs as follows : ‘ That this meeting cordially approves of the proposals of the committee formed under the presidency of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, for the promotion of a national memorial of the late Right Hon. William Ewart Gladstone, and resolves itself into a committee to assist in carrying out the objects in view.’ It will not be necessary for me to say many words in support of this resolution, because it would almost seem like a slight to the memory of Mr. Gladstone if I were to offer many words in its vindication to an assembly in the centre of Edinburgh. Mr Gladstone’s connection with Edinburgh may be divided into two portions. In the first place, as a young man, it was his home, for his father resided here and he lived here with his father ; and Mr. Gladstone has more than once pointed out to me the house in Atholl Crescent where he lived with his father at that time. If it be in Atholl Crescent, and I am not mistaken, I trust it will not be one of the edifices doomed to make way for the

more ambitious structure, the new City Hall. Mr. Gladstone has often talked to me about his experience in Edinburgh at that time—of the long walks he used to take with Dr. Chalmers; and on the Queensferry Road there was one particular place, which he never failed to indicate as he passed, where Dr. Chalmers's hat had blown off in one of the winds with which our climate is not unfamiliar, and where Mr. Gladstone had assisted in recovering it from the midst of a ploughed field.

“That was the first part of Mr. Gladstone's connection with Edinburgh—if we may not claim an even earlier part in the fact of the origin of his family from Leith, which, though not integrally a portion of Edinburgh, is yet connected with Edinburgh by ties of continuity and many delightful associations. But the second part of Mr. Gladstone's connection with Edinburgh must be within the recollection of all present. I think that none of us who were living and conscious in Edinburgh, in November 1879, can forget Mr. Gladstone's return to this city. So great a transport of enthusiasm was never, I believe, seen in the case of a British subject during this century. Never was there so wild a condition of excitement, so alien to the ordinary conditions of Lowland character in Scotland; never was the city, if I may so express myself, so turned topsy-turvy as it was by Mr. Gladstone's return to Edinburgh at

that time. I admit that was in the main a political occasion, but I do not think that the enthusiasm was entirely, or perhaps even mainly, caused by the political character of his mission. At that time I think it was rather a tribute given by Scotsmen to one who had constantly boasted of his pure Scottish origin, of one who, at an age when most men are thinking rather of the close of life than recommencing a new era of their lives, had come down on a mission of excitement, of conversion—a mission in which the highest qualities of mind and body responded with extraordinary exuberance and strength. No doubt there was not that condition of enthusiasm on every arrival of Mr. Gladstone's subsequent to that occasion, but there were many reasons for that. For one thing, you do not welcome one daily whom you are accustomed to feel a part of yourself and almost one of yourselves; and, of course, there had been political divisions on which it is unnecessary to dwell in a non-political assembly, because as regards him they are dead, gone, and forgotten. This is no political occasion, and we should not need the presence of the last and most gallant of his political antagonists, General Wauchope, to assure us of that.

“But after all the strife of politics is over, what remains with us of Mr. Gladstone is something beyond all politics, and which, I think, will survive all the controversies in which he was engaged.



*Photo. by Bedford, Lemere & Co., Strand.]*

THE HALL, MENTMORE TOWERS.



We have the memory of a matchless individuality, an oratory which has never been surpassed in our time, never perhaps been equalled in all its forms and varieties, and which, perhaps, will stand unrivalled in the history of eloquence since the great Athenian models existed. We have besides a model, which appeals to all classes and to all shades of opinion, of a life, the purity of which was never questioned, the integrity of which, in all the storms and trials of politics, was never even doubted, which I will not say popularised religion—that would be too audacious an expression—but which certainly advanced the cause of Christianity in this country as much as the sermons of thousands of men.

“It is unnecessary for me to add anything to what I have said. Opposite your hall there stands a testimony to his love and regard for Edinburgh in the restoration of the Mercat Cross. I am well aware that in these days testimonials and memorials are a little apt to be vulgarised. We are appealed to by daily posts for testimonials to people of whom we have never heard, and for memorials to people of whom, if we have heard, we have forgotten. But that is no reason for not contributing when there is a solid instance, as on the present occasion. By remembering Mr. Gladstone in a manner worthy of his memory, we should be raising and dignifying all memorials; we should not be associating his memory with



those lower and more trivial memorials to which I have alluded. But, in any case, I think, if we do not owe it to Mr. Gladstone, we owe it to ourselves that we in Edinburgh should be foremost in contributing to keep his memory alive among mankind. We in Scotland are inclined to be clannish. We are reproached with our clannishness. We are proud of our men. Our geese are apt to be swans; but, when we have a swan, let us show that we understand it; and I think it would be derogatory to our national character, to our warm appreciation of this great man, who had been bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, if on this occasion Edinburgh does not show itself worthy of its associations with Mr. Gladstone."

## CHAPTER XXXII

ANGLO-AMERICAN AMENITIES—THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING BROTHERHOOD—  
ADDRESS TO THE EDINBURGH PHILOSOPHICAL INSTITUTION—  
BOOKISH STATESMEN—MR. GLADSTONE'S GREAT QUALITIES—A  
CONTRAST AND AN APPRECIATION—THE SUBLIME SOLACE OF  
BOOKS—THE LAND OF SHADOWS—A STUDY OF MR. PARNELL.

LORD ROSEBERY'S public engagements in 1898 were numerous and interesting. He presided at a meeting held at the Imperial Institute on July 7, 1898, when a lecture was delivered by Professor Waldstein on "The English-Speaking Brotherhood." The *bête noir* of the lecturer, who, by the way, is Slade Professor of Fine Art, Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, late Director of the American Archæological School, Athens, etc., appears to be the use of the phrase "Anglo-Saxon Alliance" in order to designate the association of international interests between Great Britain and the United States.

Lord Rosebery delighted the audience with a most interesting discourse on the subject of Anglo-American amenities. He said :

"I am sure I am only expressing your views when I tender, on your behalf, our thanks to

Professor Waldstein for the extremely interesting address he has delivered to us this afternoon. He has set forth with a fulness and eloquence and a learning which leaves nothing to be desired his views on a question which is, perhaps, of the most vital interest to the English-speaking brotherhood—to use his own expression—of any that can lie before them. And although I may not agree in detail with all his views and with all that he has laid down, and it, perhaps, would be impossible for any two human beings to agree to so many propositions as he has laid down in the course of his speech, I think we may come to the general conclusion with him that under whatever name we may choose to call it, or whatever form it may assume, the good understanding—the more cordial the better—between the (I hardly know what to call it, for I may not use the word Anglo-Saxon) the British and American races—is one fraught with benefit to the best destinies of mankind. But I must warn you against a pitfall that lurks in the expression. It is this—that, putting the conscientious Russian, whom the Professor summoned to give testimony, aside, I am afraid all the other great nations of the world are under the same impression as to the spread of their power and their empire. I doubt if the Germans or the French, for example, and I make bold to say even the Russians, though they have been quoted against the argument by the lecturer, would

be disposed to say that the extension of their several empires was not in the best interests of the human race. It is a feeling common to all nationalities, and we can only hope that we indulge in it with more reason and on a broader basis than do the others I have mentioned.

“Our lecturer took exception to the term Anglo-Saxon, and he took exception, very justly, to that term as not being truly a scientific description of our race. But I think he would agree with me in saying that the same objection would lie against a generic description of almost any other race in the world, that there is hardly a race in the world inhabiting its own territory—I cannot recall one at this moment—which can be strictly called a race, if all the objections which lie against the term Anglo-Saxon lie against the adjective which may be applied to that race. I do not plead for the word Anglo-Saxon. I would welcome any other term than Anglo-Saxon which in a more conciliatory, a more scientific, and more adequate manner, described the thing I want to describe. But whether you call it British, or Anglo-Saxon, or whatever you call it, the fact is that the race is there, and the sympathy of the race is there. How you arrive at that sympathy, whether it be purely by language, or as, perhaps, I think more truly by the moral, intellectual, and political influences under which a nationality has grown up—how you arrive at that sympathy it is foreign

to my purpose to discuss to-day. But this at least we may say, that when a nation has inhabited certain boundaries without disturbance for a considerable number of centuries, even though it has received accessions from foreign nations, and when it has fused those accessions from foreign nations into its own nationality, and made them accept a name and language and law, and the facts of that nationality, it seems to me for all practical purposes you have a nation and a race. Isn't that the case with ourselves and the United States? Up to July 4, 1776, we lived under the same constitution, with the little divergencies which Great Britain permits to her external dependencies all over the world.

“Then came the great crash of July 4, and the Treaty of 1783. I suspect, to those who lived in those days, it appeared that the sun of England had set. It was so expressed by her greatest statesman. It was felt to be a blow from which she could never recover. George III., though we may not agree with him in many things, felt that from the bottom of his soul, and he would not sign any acknowledgment of American independence until it was wrung from him by the sternest necessities. But history moves on. Do we not now recognise that that Declaration of Independence and acknowledgment of independence was not merely a good thing for the development of the United States, but also a good thing for

the development of Great Britain? If those nations were ever to become close friends, as there seems some prospect of their becoming now, it was an almost indispensable precedent in the conditions at which they had arrived, that the United States should become an independent body of States; and we, on the other hand, can feel this, that if we had remained connected with the United States as we were before, we should probably have been satisfied and engrossed with the management of that great Empire, and should not have sought the infinite accretions which have come to our Empire since that date, and rendered it world-wide even without the United States. Therefore, on both sides we have profited. If there is to be a common bond, the United States comes into it infinitely greater and stronger than it would have been if it had lived under our dominion, and we, on our side, bring to the common stock a far greater and wider empire than would be the case if we had remained united.

“This is a very practical question. It is not merely a question for theorists, but it is a question of the most vital and practical politics. We see the old world, the old Continental world, gradually moulding itself into an attitude of not unmixed friendliness to the race which I must not name. After all, that was to be expected. So long as we were left free to develop our Colonial ambition without any particular concurrence, there was no

conflict of interest which would lead us into any violent antagonism to the older empires of the earth. But now, almost all these empires have developed a Colonial policy of their own, and therefore it was hardly possible under these conditions that a position of extreme friendliness should continue to exist between those who were seeking Colonial empires and that which already possesses one.

“You must not, perhaps, blame the European States for their attitude towards us. It is much wiser to explain by natural reasons. But whether it be a wise attitude or not, we have all to recognise, to whatever party in the State we may belong, that it is an attitude which has to be reckoned with, and that in future we must not rely too much on the extreme and altruistic friendship of some European States on which we had reckoned, and must be prepared to hold our own—I don't mean necessarily by warfare—but to hold our own in the great struggle for the division of the world which seems to be immediately impending over us. How very little of the world in a very short time there will remain to divide! Has anybody taken that very seriously to heart? Africa is portioned out into spheres of influence of more or less value. Asia is being portioned out with a rapidity to which all previous partitions must yield the palm. There is practically nothing else left in the world to divide, and you will presently

arrive at this—the world mapped out into several great portions, several great predominating influences, not necessarily actually hostile to each other, but commercially not likely to be very friendly. That points, I think, to the fact that the next war—the next great war if it ever takes place—will be a war for trade and not for territory. Therefore, in looking round for the interest which most coincides with us, even putting apart the question of nationality, we look naturally to the United States, which, though it has a protective tariff, is internally a great Free Trade Continent, and which certainly has no wish to see the external ports of the world closed to its commerce.

“The United States claims, and not without justice, that though she has a tariff which shuts out many European importations, yet so vast is the Continent within her tariff, so great is the number of the population of the States over which she presides, and among which there is Free Trade, that she is practically a Free Trade collection of States in the best meaning of the word. If that is so, if race and commerce, if the sympathies that arise from common nationality, the influence of centuries, the influence of intellectual training and political tradition are all ranged on one side in our connection with the United States, it is not necessary, as it seems to me, and still less would it be expedient, to draw any formal bond which should define these



relations and these sympathies. But this, I think, at least we may say, whatever the foundation may be, whether it be one of race, or religion, or language, or interest, the moment is coming when, to use the sublime words of Canning, 'We may once more call the New World into existence in order to redress the balance of the Old.'"

On the motion of the Duke of Abercorn, a vote of thanks was then accorded to Lord Rosebery for presiding, the duke remarking that the chairman's instructive speech would appeal to the hearts of every true Briton in the country.

Lord Rosebery on the evening of November 25, 1898, delivered his inaugural address as President of the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution, to which office he was elected on the death of Mr. Gladstone. The address was delivered in the Music Hall, Edinburgh, which was crowded. At eight o'clock the secretary of the Institution appeared on the platform and read the following telegram from Lord Rosebery to Lord Provost Mitchell Thomson, who was to take the chair: "Fear I may be few minutes late, as owing to terrible weather have had to change my carriage." The audience took the announcement good-humouredly, and five minutes later the Lord Provost came on to the platform with Lord Rosebery, who was received

with cheers. The company on the platform included Professor Masson, Lord Justice Clerk Macdonald, Mr. Cox, M.P., Sir Lewis McIver, M.P., Mr. Ure, M.P., Sir Henry Littlejohn, and Sir Thomas Clark.

Lord Rosebery said :

“ It is difficult for me to avoid a certain feeling of sadness in standing here to-night, for it is twenty-seven years since I last delivered an inaugural address to the Philosophical Institution. Twenty-seven years is a long time. Much has happened since then. Many have gone and all are changed. In the chair was the venerable and sagacious form of Lord Colonsay, who looked as wise as Thurlow, and was probably much wiser. What a formidable listener I felt him, with his prodigious white hair and bushy white eyebrows! Few prisoners in the dock can have gazed on him with more apprehension than I on that night. Then there was Blackie. We shall miss to-night general calls for a speech from him, and the not less genial response. There were Sir George Harvey, the kindly President of our Academy ; Mr. Gordon, twice Lord Advocate and then Lord of Appeal ; the gentle and venerable Sir William Gibson Craig ; Dr. Matthews Duncan, whose rugged manner veiled so warm a heart ; George Harrison, the memory of whose excellence survives amongst the best of our Lord Provosts ; last and not least, the uncle and second father I so lately lost,

so well known and loved in Edinburgh, the warm friend of this institution, Bouverie Primrose. All these familiar faces, which encouraged me in 1871, will not be on this platform to-night. We shall miss, too, the face of another friend, also a hearty supporter of this institution—I mean John Ritchie Findlay. Edinburgh can scarcely have had a citizen of more truly public spirit. We shall long miss him, never more than here. It is, then, with a necessary sadness that I speak to-night after so long an interval.

“That is not the only reason which makes it difficult for me to thank you as I could wish for the honour you have done me in electing me as your president. For I stand in the fifty-second year of our institution as seventh on an illustrious roll. It begins with Adam Black, a great citizen and servant of Edinburgh. Then comes the brilliant and wayward Christopher North. Third, there comes Macaulay, in the glory of the second instalment of his history. He was succeeded by Brougham, then in the commencement of decline, who was followed by Carlyle, whose connection with Edinburgh was so signal and pathetic. Then, in 1881, you chose my immediate predecessor—Mr. Gladstone—who had just, in a scene of matchless enthusiasm, renewed as it were his foothold in Edinburgh. It makes me blush to record these names, and to stand in the place of these men. But as time and death make

havoc in the run of mankind we cannot pretend to fill the gaps. We can only close them, and move on. My impression, however, is that of your presidents the most illustrious have only been names to you, at least during the thirty years that represent my life as your neighbour. I can recall no president of your institution who has taken part in its proceedings—I speak under correction, and I do not forget that Macaulay made his famous speech in 1846 on the literature of Great Britain, at a meeting of this institution; but he was not then president, while the occasion appears to have been a convivial one, and not, as now, a mere feast of reason. You have taken a new and dangerous course in electing the man on the spot, for in such a case you may have taken King Stork instead of King Log. I promise you I offer no such danger; but suppose it had been Brougham, one of my predecessors, who had lived at Dalmeny during his presidency! He was capable each year, not merely of delivering the inaugural address, but the entire course of lectures, and I verily believe that had he been challenged he would have insisted on doing so.

“Mr. Gladstone, too, could have done the same thing. He could have proffered at once, as the great attraction, a course of lectures on Homer, and, with scarcely less of zest, a course of lectures on Dante. But after these were exhausted, if indeed his love and enthusiasm with respect to

these subjects could ever have been exhausted, he could have given the entire course, on subject after subject, for winter after winter, with ever fresh knowledge and fire; and the audiences would have packed the hall night after night, almost indifferent to the topic, so long as they could watch the inexhaustible play of his features and listen to the matchless melody of his voice. You will gather from these words that I regard Mr. Gladstone as the ideal president of this institution—that is, had he been able to devote himself, as a country neighbour, to your business. That may seem small praise for one who held so commanding a place in the British Empire and the world at large. But I am only speaking of one Mr. Gladstone. There were a hundred Mr. Gladstones. Mr. Gladstone would have been an ideal president for you, if only in the character of the constant lover and explorer of books. For I take it to be a fact beyond contradiction that Mr. Gladstone was one of the most bookish statesmen that ever lived; or rather, to put it differently and more accurately, no one ever attained such eminence as a statesman who was essentially so bookish a man. Sir George Cornwall Lewis was not less bookish, perhaps, but he never stood on or approached Mr. Gladstone's pinnacle. He was, too, more of a book lover and book writer than of a statesman. Sound and sagacious as was his political judgment,

admirable as are his public works, he will stand higher in the field of letters than in that of practical politics. Then there is Macaulay, one of your presidents. On his herculean feats as a man of books I dare not dwell. I would rather give you the pleasure of reading them in his fascinating biography by his brilliant nephew.

“Macaulay seems to have reached his climax in India. On his voyage out he had read, he says, ‘insatiably the “Iliad” and “Odyssey,” Virgil, “Horace,” Cæsar’s “Commentaries,” Petrarch, Ariosto, Tasso, “Don Quixote,” Gibbon’s “Rome,” Mill’s “India,” all the seventy volumes of Voltaire, Sismondi’s “History of the French,” and the seven thick volumes of the “Biographia Britannica.”’ And again in another account he says: ‘I devoured Greek, Latin, Spanish, Italian, French, and English folios, quartos, octavos, and duodecimos.’ After his arrival he sums it all up by saying, ‘Books are becoming everything to me. If I had at this moment my choice of life, I would bury myself in one of those immense libraries that we saw together at the universities, and never pass a waking hour without a book before me.’ There speaks the true man of books; but, unluckily, Macaulay does not help us with a parallel, for in him the political side, gorgeous as were his speeches, is obscured by the literary side, and it is safe to say that few of the readers of to-day, as they pore spellbound over the

Essays and the History, know, or recollect, that their author was a Cabinet Minister. Bookishness and statesmanship are, one would think, scarcely compatible. Nothing, indeed, could seem more discordant and incompatible than the life of literature and the life of politics. The man of books may steal through life like a shadow—happy with his simple pleasure, like a caterpillar on a broad green leaf, untortured by the travail of authorship, or the candour of the critic, and leave it with his name unknown, until his library be sold, should he perchance have books to sell.

“The man of politics leads possibly a more useful, certainly a more arduous career. He lives in the public eye, almost in the public grasp. Out of doors there is the reporter, in the seclusion of his home there is the interviewer, both presumably hungry to receive the ideas as they pass from his capacious brain—though some go so far as to declare that the interviewer and the reporter are less the seekers than the sought. Alert, bustling, visible, deriving even a certain popularity from the fact of being known by sight; speaking at his engagements whether he has anything to say or whether he has nothing; appearing on his platform whether he be brisk and well, or sick and sorry, like an actor, only that he has to find his own words, bringing together, as well as may be, all sorts and conditions of men, with one, apparently on the

political weather, and the other, it is to be hoped, on his political conscience; a hurricane of a life, the essential quality of which is publicity.

“ I speak, it is to be observed, only of obvious externals, and only enough of these to indicate the natural antipathy between the life of politics and the life of books, and yet Mr. Gladstone, who rode the whirlwind, and directed the storm of politics, was bookish to an extreme degree. He had not, indeed, reached the superlative and morbid form of bookishness when a man is called a bookworm. The fresh breezes of a thousand active interests prevented such a development; but with encouragement and fostering circumstances, had he been matured in literary traditions like his great rival, had his health been feeble, it is not difficult to imagine him a bookworm immersed in folios. But, as things were, he loved books as much as a man may without a suspicion of Bibliomania. As a matter of fact he had none of what is technically called Bibliomania about him. To first editions, or broad margins, or vellum copies he was indifferent. Had he been a very wealthy man even this form of the noble disease might have taken him. As it was he loved collecting, buying, handling books. It was a joy to him to arrange with his own hands the books in the library he had founded in memory of St. Deiniol. It was a sport to him to hunt down books in sale catalogues. It



was a sacred trust to him to preserve the little treasures of his youth, and a classic or two he had at Eton, and the book given to him by Hannah More.

“ No one could have seen him reading in the Temple of Peace, as he significantly called his study, and have deemed it possible for him to be happy in any other capacity. Those who had witnessed that sight must have felt persuaded that when he retired from public life in 1875 nothing could ever draw him from his beloved retreat. They might well have anticipated that with old books, old friends, old trees, with a hundred avenues of study to complete or explore, with a vast experience of life and affairs to discuss, with trees to cut and plant and worship (for he was a tree-worshipper) as well, and above all with the vital care and responsibility of a living faith pervading him, he might well rest and be thankful. All this might have been safe enough to predict of an ordinary or even remarkable man. But Mr. Gladstone was a great deal more than a remarkable man. He was a number of remarkable men; and as soon as he heard the clash of a conflict in which he saw, or thought he saw, the righteous fighting the unrighteous, the fighting Gladstone could not restrain himself, and left his tent for the battle, taking the bookish Gladstone somewhat reluctantly with him. It was then his extraordinary enthusiasm and faith in great causes

that was the salt that prevented his stagnation into mere bookishness.

“But he had another safeguard still. It was his principle in reading to make his exports balance his imports. He took in a great deal, but he put forth a great deal. His close study of a book was pretty sure to precede an article on that book. It was impossible for him, under this principle, to sink into the mere passive and receptive reader. I remember, too, his applying it in conversation to an ecclesiastical statesman, for whom he had a real admiration. ‘I dare say,’ he remarked, in answer to some disparaging criticism as to thinness of matter, ‘I dare say that, as he has to speak so often, he has to put forth more than he can take in to replace his output.’ I do not doubt, then, that his principle of balancing exports and imports would have kept his mind active, even had it not possessed other animating and quickening principles. I reckon over all this to explain, so far as I can explain, the paradox of a bookish statesman—of a bookworm, to use the old expression—who was at the same time a man of practical business and affairs, one of the rarest of all combinations.

“Let us test this assertion by instances—let us take the case of Prime Ministers as an average representative of men of affairs. If you glance roughly over the Prime Ministers since the beginning of the last century you will find Harley as

a bookworm; but even he was rather a collector than a reader, and can hardly be called an eminent statesman. Bolingbroke, who was, perhaps, Prime Minister for a few hours, was a book-lover after his fall, or said he was; but in his days of office and youth and frankness, though he came a brilliant scholar from Eton, he cannot have much consorted with books. Stanhope had a library which still exists intact at Chevening, preserved in a separate room, and a priceless example of the book collection of a Minister in the early eighteenth century. Sunderland founded a great library, mainly, I think, of the editions of the classics which went from Althorp to Blenheim with the elder branch, afterwards replaced by an even nobler collection.

“Then we come to Walpole. The sublime solace of books which soothed even the gnawing ambition of his fiercest enemy was denied to him. No one deplored this after his resignation more than himself. Once, on joining a friend reading in his own library at Haughton, he expressed this feeling. ‘I wish,’ he said, ‘I took as much delight in reading as you do. It would be the means of alleviating many tedious hours in my retirement; but, to my misfortune, I derive no pleasure from such fortune. I derive no pleasure from such pursuit.’ And again in the same room he said to Henry Fox, ‘If you can read, it is a great happiness. I totally neglected it when I was in business. It has been the whole of my life, and

to such a degree that I cannot now read a page.' A warning to all Ministers. For his neglect of one branch of literature he gave one piquant and famous reason: 'I do not read history, for that I know must be false.' But he found in his country retirement one resource which he shared with Mr. Gladstone, who had all or nearly all the resources. For both statesmen delighted in trees. 'My flatterers,' wrote Walpole in a passage of such pathetic beauty that one can scarcely credit his deficiency of 'literary taste,' 'my flatterers are all mutes, and the oaks and beeches, the chestnuts, seem to contend which shall best please the Lord of the Manor. They cannot deceive; they will not lie.' And the tree was as living to Gladstone as to Walpole, but with him it was one only of innumerable living interests.

"From Walpole onwards we meet with no bookish Prime Minister till we get to Lord Grenville. He was no doubt a man of strong literary tastes, but he does not come into competition with Mr. Gladstone as an omnivorous reader, much less with the eminence, fulness, and energy of Mr. Gladstone's public life. But a friend who used to visit him gives a picture of his old age, sitting, summer and winter, on the same sofa, with his favourite books on the shelves just over his head, Roger Ascham among them—Milton always within reach. He, at any rate, in his sixty-sixth year, was clear as to the choice

between literature and politics. A Minister leaves him to go to his office. 'I would rather he was there than I,' says Grenville. 'If I was to live my life over again,' he continued, with a sigh, 'I should do very differently.' The next possibly bookish Prime Minister was Canning, but with a literary side all his life he was only Prime Minister for a few months. Beyond Canning I hardly dare to go. Melbourne, indeed, was a great reader, and, like Mr. Gladstone, a great reader of theology; but he left behind him a library of odd volumes, which puts him out of the category of book-lovers. Sir Robert Peel, like some of the statesmen of the last century, came to the business of politics as a brilliant specimen of Oxford scholarship. Lord John Russell was, perhaps, more a writer than a reader of books. The only book, I think, mentioned by Lord Palmerston in his correspondence is 'Coningsby.'

"Then we come to the author of 'Coningsby,' 'born,' as he says, 'in a library,' more bookish, perhaps, than Mr. Gladstone in early and less in later life. But all this is dangerous ground. We are passing from the land of shadows into actual life. I know not where to stop. But once when I was a child I was taken to see Hatfield. In the library we saw a tall, thin figure carrying a huge volume. The housekeeper paused in awe, saying, 'That is Lord Robert Cecil.' It was a bookish figure—then outside

politics, but now Prime Minister. I turn my face briskly from the alluring present to the prudent past. Shall we find outside the list of Prime Ministers many, in the secure latitudes of the past, who compete with Mr. Gladstone as being bookish men in high Ministerial office? Clarendon is beyond my horizon; but there is, of course, Addison, who was a Secretary of State, but so indifferent a one as to fail entirely in one point of comparison. Then there is Bolingbroke, to whom I have already alluded, who would require a volume to himself. There is Burke, a mighty force in politics and in letters, but never in such office as to demonstrate himself a great Minister any more than Charles James Fox, who held office far too short a time. But Charles Fox had a real passion for literature, could talk of it the whole day and over the whole range of it. He, I think, as a real lover of books, approaches most nearly to Mr. Gladstone, and both had a common devotion to Homer. Homer was the author that Charles Fox most loved to read, but he would also read all the novels that he could get hold of. In conversation he would range over almost the whole field of literature with zest and passion, and without apparently once straying into politics. A friend has recorded how in a single day he would discuss Homer and Virgil, Æschylus and Euripides, Milton and Massinger, Pope and Addison, Gibbon

and Blackstone, Sophocles and Shakespeare, Metastasio, Congreve, and Vanbrugh, Cowper, Fielding, and Burns. He almost convinces himself that Burns is a better poet than Cowper, but he concludes by saying, finely enough, that poetry is the great refreshment of the human mind.

“No one surely can deny that Fox was a man of books, but he is not a parallel for the combination which in Mr. Gladstone was unique in that he was only a Minister for a few months, once under circumstances dubious if not sinister, and once when he was dying. He was not then, as his predecessor was, carrying on simultaneously, on parallel lines, a great career as a statesman in office and a delightful life in a library. Moreover, all this, except in the case of the history of James II., which slumbers on our shelves in majestic quarto, was without any result. Nor was there in him, as I read him, a passionate concentration and practical application of that reading that we saw in Mr. Gladstone. ‘His favourite Sultana Queen,’ as with his Royal ancestor, ‘was sauntering,’ and sauntering was abhorrent and impossible to Mr. Gladstone. Charles Fox, at any rate, after ruining himself at cards, could sit down and derive an instant solace from Theocritus, and, indeed, as a rule, the public men of the last century seem to have been fairly well equipped in what Captain Dugald

Dalgetty called ‘the humanities.’ They would have blushed not to understand a Latin quotation, they could bandy and bet over them as Pulteney did with Walpole, but they do not seem to have been men of books.

“There are, perhaps, two signal exceptions—statesmen of eminence and power in the first rank, who were also men of books, and I don’t feel perfectly sure even of one of these two—I mean Carteret and Chesterfield. The great exemplar in the eighteenth century of the combination of literature and politics was undoubtedly Chesterfield. Perhaps, indeed, the only startling deficiency in his intellectual equipment was his unaccountable ignorance of the mother tongue of that Hanoverian dynasty which he was so anxious to serve. There his rival, Carteret, had the advantage of him, and it was not slight; but Carteret never pretended to, or indeed would have cared for, the sovereignty in the literary world that was occupied by Chesterfield, and, moreover, their habits were very different. One loved cards, and the other wine. But it was the delight of Chesterfield to combine his gambling with polite society until deafness excluded him altogether from conversation.

“Carteret, on the other hand, kept a large plain hospitable table, where burgundy flowed freely, but he was the best Greek scholar of his age. He had left Christ Church with a rich



store of classical learning. To this he added a consummate knowledge not merely of modern politics, but of modern languages. He is said to have been at his ease in French, Spanish, Italian, German, Swedish, and Portuguese, but he seems always to have been faithful to his first love of the classics. On his deathbed, indeed, he repeated with sonorous emphasis six lines from the twenty-second Book of the 'Iliad,' for he, scarcely less than Mr. Gladstone, worshipped and cherished Homer. 'Ah, friend,' he said, in the words of Sarpedon—I quote from Mr. Andrew Lang's translation—'Ah, friend, if once escaped from this battle we were for ever to be ageless and immortal, neither would I fight myself in the foremost ranks, nor would I send thee into the war that giveth men reason; but now—for assuredly ten thousand gates of death do every way beset us, and these no mortal may escape nor avoid—now let us go forward.'

"There is something sublime in the dying statesman signing his last papers with these words on his lips. It is in the old grand style, and we may infer, perhaps, that the thoughts of his old age were those of Grenville, and that he repented him of the choice that he had made; but words spoken in sickness can scarcely represent the judgment or passion of the man entering life. Carteret was too ardent a spirit to refrain from active or even fiery ambition, and it would

be tempting to draw his character, one of the most interesting of his century, but that would be outside my compass. I am only asserting his character as a man of learning and a man of affairs. Of absolute bookishness he was strongly suspected, and classics were to be found, it was said, in his dressing-room. But I am content to make the claim that he was eminently and concurrently a scholar and a statesman. It is perhaps difficult to understand on what claim or merit was based Chesterfield's literary throne. That he occupied it is sufficiently evident from the fact that Johnson, who was no courtier, had thought of dedicating his dictionary to him. A few essays more or less anonymous were all the productions known to his contemporaries—essays which appeal but little to us. His letters to his son and his godson, on which rest his fame—and which, indeed, to some of us seem dreary enough—were posthumous. In these letters, however, we find symptoms of his bookishness. From them we may suppose him versed in the literature of his own country, of France, and perhaps of Italy. In England his idol is Bolingbroke. In France he has such perfection that one would infer that he worships there a library polytheism, but his verdict on Italian literature separates him for ever from my predecessor in your presidency. The only Italian poets that he thinks worth reading are Tasso

and Ariosto. He deliberately excludes Dante—a veto which seems an abiding slur on his perception, and which in Mr. Gladstone's judgment would have constituted him a sort of literary outlaw.

“ Moreover, in spite of Chesterfield's undoubted love of reading, he places on record an injunction which strikes him altogether out of the category of thorough bookishness. ‘ Lay aside,’ he solemnly says, ‘ the best book whenever you can go into the best company, and depend upon it you change for the better.’ Perhaps when we remember that the best society, in the highest sense, is rarely attainable, he is right; but then we might not all agree as to what constitutes the best society. I am not going to discuss the point to-night, but I strongly recommend it to the debating societies of our University, which, after a protracted existence, must be gaping like stranded oysters for fresh subjects of polemic. It is in any case a hard saying, and must be held to exclude Chesterfield from the straightest sect of the worshipful company of bookmen. Mr. Gladstone would certainly not have subscribed to it in this bare and absolute form, but in any case had Chesterfield been ten times as bookish as he was he would not have equalled Mr. Gladstone any more in that quality than in the length and splendour of his public career.

“There is no parallel between them. I only take Chesterfield because I can think of nobody else. I believe, then, as I said before, nowhere in history, so far as I know, is there an instance of so intensely bookish a man as Mr. Gladstone, who was at the same time so consummate a man of affairs. I limit myself to the two last centuries as alone offering conditions analogous to those in which Mr. Gladstone lived. Of course, I guard myself by saying that I am not now speaking of the mere collections of libraries in which several, perhaps many, statesmen have surpassed him. I mean by bookishness the general love of books, reading, buying, handling, hunting them. The combination in his case was, I believe, unique, and will probably remain so. Day by day calls of public life become more and more exacting, absorbing, imperious—each fresh development of them makes them more and more unsuitable for the student and the recluse. Literature is constantly becoming less and less necessary for the politician. During the first half of this century a classical quotation was considered the indispensable ornament of a parliamentary speech. Greek quotations passed long ago into space, found their way back perhaps to ancient Hellas, and even Latin quotations may be said to have been buried with Mr. Gladstone. The Blue Book has superseded Homer, and Virgil is swamped in ‘The Statesman’s Year-Book.’

“We shall understand all this better perhaps by abandoning the task of seeking analogies for Mr. Gladstone’s love of books, and by taking the greatest imaginable contrast to him. There has of late been given to the world the remarkable biography of a remarkable man—the late Charles Stewart Parnell. For ten years Mr. Parnell filled the largest space in Mr. Gladstone’s public life, perhaps in English public life. His position in his own country it is unnecessary to define or to describe. What was the secret of this prodigious success? It has never been, perhaps it never will be, perhaps it never can be told. One point, however, is clear: that it was due to a character and temperament the exact antipodes of Mr. Gladstone’s; the one ardent, enthusiastic, fascinating, exuberant in his sympathies and studies, clutching with both hands at every fruit and blossom of the tree of knowledge; the other icy, silent, superstitious, concentrated, a political enigma of the profoundest interest. But to-night we are concerned with only one aspect of each. Mr. Parnell professed a general ignorance even of a subject that concerned him so nearly as Irish history. And this strange want of the knowledge to be found in books appears all through his life. ‘I am very ignorant,’ he once said to his biographer, who smiled incredulously. ‘Yes,’ he continued, ‘I mean what I say. I am very ignorant of these

things. I have read very little, but I am smart, and I can pick up information quickly.'

"On another occasion he had engaged to lecture on Irish history at Cork. Parnell said to a friend, 'I really do not know anything about Irish history; have you any books I can read?' The day of the lecture came. It was to be delivered at eight o'clock. At a quarter to eight, when the dinner was over, Parnell said, 'Now I must read up the history,' and he asked for some writing-paper and the historical books. He arrived at the hall at a quarter past nine, was received with enthusiasm, and got through his lecture successfully. That anecdote seems to me profoundly interesting for many reasons. The nerve, the coolness, the declared ignorance of Irish history, and the enthusiasm of an audience that had been waiting for an hour and a quarter are all equally remarkable. This carries me far beyond my contention that bookishness and statesmanship are rarely compatible, for it appears to point to a complete immunity from books as the secret of political success; and yet, is it so?

"Is not Parnell a phenomenon and an exception to all rules? Is not the true life of the politician the balance of action and study—study not merely a preparation for action, but of literature as a recreation. Among the great men of action we recall Frederick's love of letters, and Napoleon's travelling library. Among statesmen

we think of Pitt's sofa, with its shelf of thumbed classics, and of Fox, a far more ardent lover of books, exchanging them and his garden for the House of Commons almost with tears, and of Gladstone's Temple of Peace; and surely, even if it be not the best, it is the happiest way. There is little vestige of happiness in the life of Parnell. There is not perhaps too much happiness in the life of any statesman, but no one who knew him could think Mr. Gladstone otherwise than happy, and one of the main sources of his happiness was his bookishness. We may indeed say more than that. We may say that whereas in his case the mind absorbs and uses the books, and the books do not cloud and embarrass the mind, the purpose of the statesman, and the eloquence of the orator, gather colour and force from books as a river takes the hues and gathers up the springs of the regions it traverses.

“But even here I must guard myself once more. Mr. Gladstone was a prodigy, and no rule deducted from his life can be absolute for others; and so, gentlemen, I leave you to form your judgment for yourselves by the light of your own reason, by the guidance of your instinct: for in truth all ends in that; all the lectures and addresses, inaugural or otherwise, of the Philosophical Institution or any other institution, Athenæum or college, can only help you to form your own judgment and to rely on yourselves. Read books

like Gladstone, or disdain books like Parnell. As to that you must judge for yourselves. There is no royal road to success in public life. What suits one will not suit another; but of this, at least, I am sure, that, putting politics equally out of the question, if a man wants to develop his faculties to the utmost advantage, and to combine the greatest amount of work with the greatest amount of happiness, he cannot do better than imitate, so far as he is able, the methods of study, the economy of time, and the regularity of life practised by my illustrious predecessor in the presidency of the Philosophical Institution."

During the same autumn Lord Rosebery, as Honorary President of the Associated Societies of Edinburgh University, delivered his inaugural address in the McEwan Hall, Edinburgh, before a large audience consisting of the general public, the students, and their friends. The chair was taken by Mr. A. J. Balfour, M.P., the Chancellor of the University. The proceedings excited very keen interest.

The letters of apology for absence included one from Mr. Chamberlain, who regretted extremely that engagements made it impossible for him to attend.

Lord Rosebery expressed the pleasure with which they all saw Mr. Balfour present, and promised him a period of unbroken repose in the



chair for the next fifty minutes—untroubled by any one. He (Lord Rosebery) was not going to deliver an electoral address—nothing so elaborate and educational. He trusted it would be a short speech on common-sense lines. What to him was precious in connection with these societies was that they garnered up so much of what was illustrious, both in regard to memorials and men in connection with Edinburgh. He referred to the days gone by, when Edinburgh was the centre to which all the intelligence of Great Britain gravitated. That was the time when the English Universities were slumbering, or almost slumbering. The intellectual supremacy which Edinburgh enjoyed in the times to which he referred could not survive the general awakening of the world. What he feared was gone was resident originality, which in former times distinguished their city. Railways and the Press had made that impossible. After all, originality could only exist in the backwaters of life. He thought that there were some circumstances which they should bear in mind before they gave way to the wish to exchange the New Edinburgh for the Old Edinburgh. At any rate there were some circumstances which should discount their enthusiasm. In any case it would not be possible for them of the Associated Societies to concentrate all their interests in Edinburgh, as their forefathers did. In the first place, the students

were not all Scotsmen. They came from all over the world. He believed, even if students could remain in Edinburgh, it would be bad for Edinburgh and for Scotland, and bad also for the Empire. They in Scotland wished to continue to mould the Empire, as they had in the past, and they had not moulded it by stopping at home. From the time of Dundas, who almost populated India with Scotsmen, that had always been the function of Scotsmen. He looked, then, to his colleagues of the Associated Societies, not merely as going forth to their several professions and callings in life, but as going forth as potential empire-builders, or at least empire-maintainers.

It was not for any man to measure what his direct utility ought to be to his country. The British Empire was not a centralised empire. It did not, like other empires, hinge on a single autocrat or a single parliament; but it was a vast collection of communities spread all over the world, many with their own legislatures and their own governments. Some empires had rested upon arms, and some upon constitutions. It was the boast of the British Empire that it rested upon men. There never was a time in the history of Great Britain or of the world when there was such a call as now upon the energies and intelligence of men for the public service, and that call, as the chairman knew, was increasing. The

change in that respect had been very remarkable within his memory. The governing classes when he was a boy had very simple public functions in comparison to those which devolved upon the present race. They went into Parliament as a rule, and they had Quarter Sessions. But Parliament in those days was a very different business from what it was now. The work of Parliament had indefinitely and almost hopelessly increased. That took up for this island some five hundred and seventy more or less trained intelligences. Then there was the House of Lords, which took up—he was not sure of the figures—some five or six hundred more. He did not wish to claim that the House of Lords took up the whole of the time of its members; but he wished to point out that it took up some of the time, at any rate, of some five or six hundred more of our governing classes. Then there was the London County Council and the great municipalities. A new spirit had been breathed into the dry bones of the latter, and the municipalities of to-day were very different from those of his youth. Then there were the county councils, the district councils, and the parish councils, all new within the last few years, and the Government Departments, which swallowed up more and more men.

The Foreign Office had this year obtained one new Under-Secretary, and the addition of

one Under-Secretary was a cry of distress indeed. The Colonial Office he saw was about to demand an Under-Secretary. What that meant in the increase of subordinate departments he could not readily calculate. In truth the whole matter was typified in the Constitution of the Cabinet. The present Cabinet required nineteen men to do what was done by half a dozen in the days of Mr. Pitt. Why did he quote these figures? It was to show the enormous drain the State made upon our intelligent population beside the drain for military and naval purposes. What he had said referred to Great Britain alone. There was, besides, Ireland. He was not going to touch on Ireland. In the first place it was a different system of administration, and one with which he was not so conversant, and in the second place that was at present a harmonious meeting, and he had discovered that there was no topic so likely to make a harmonious meeting inharmonious as that of the administration or government of Ireland. When he passed outside Great Britain and Ireland there was still an enormous drain of our population for administrative purposes. There was India, which took so many of our young men, and trained them so incomparably well for every sort of administrative work.

Then there was Egypt. "Am I to understand from that," asked Lord Rosebery on the subsidence of the applause, "that you are all emulous

candidates for the administratorship of Fashoda? That is one of the posts which I have not the slightest ambition to occupy."

There was Egypt, he went on, which was of course on a different footing, and which was also very large in her requirements. There was also Africa, not self-governing Africa, but the rest of our African territories, all requiring men, muscular Christians ready to turn their hands to anything. There were also the Crown Colonies and the self-governing Colonies, and outside those again there were our numerous Diplomatic and Consular services.

He did not suppose that there ever was in the world half the demand that there was at this hour within the British Empire for young men of ability and skill, trained to mould that Empire into shape. Never were there so many paths to distinction open within that Empire. Of course the base of this tremendous work of government was our unparalleled Civil Service. If that once got out of gear it would be an evil day for Britain. Indeed, in his daydreams he had wished to add to that service a department devoted entirely to training young men for the task of administration, men who would always be ready to go anywhere and do anything at a moment's notice, men able to go anywhere and report on any subject, not in the sense of a Royal Commission, but in a summary and business-like

manner. To some extent this function was performed by the Treasury; but men were constantly taken from the Treasury, and if that process were continued much longer that department would, he feared, be left in an anæmic condition. His point was this, that there never was such a demand for trained intelligence and character in our public services. He would like to think that they, of those Associated Societies, would take their part in it. Enormous abilities were given to our public service to-day, either for no remuneration or for only a small one, and he was glad to think that public spirit was never higher or broader than it was at present. We were bound to remember that we owed something more to our country besides rates and taxes. Other countries had compulsory military service. We were released from that. If only on that consideration he thought we ought to be prepared to do something for the country which had done so much for us.

Even if there were no public work at hand, there were numerous ways in which our country could be served, however humbly and however indirectly. He only mentioned in passing the Volunteer movement. There were social methods, literary methods, and even athletic methods, because he was one of those who believed that one of the subordinate methods of welding the Empire together, and even the English-speaking

race together, was by those inter-Colonial athletic contests, and by such contests with the United States which were developed so much in these days. He wanted to impress upon the students that if they kept before themselves the high motive of serving their country, it would ennoble the humblest among them. The man who broke stones on the road was, after all, serving his country in some way. The irreducible minimum of this service which he would put before his hearers was that they should keep a close and vigilant eye on public affairs and municipal affairs, that they should form independent opinions upon them, and that they should give help to the men worthy of it, and oppose those whom they thought should be condemned. There was no such bad sign in a country as political abstention. He did not want them all to be militant politicians, he did not wish that for their own sake or for the country's, but an intelligent interest did not mean militant interest. They were told that there was a good deal of political apathy in these days. He did not know whether that was so, because he had no means of judging, but if there was he thought the cause was not far to seek.

Our forefathers without news agencies and such-like were able to concentrate their minds upon a particular subject, and give to it all their time, energy, and zeal. Now that was all changed

by the telegraphs. From every quarter of the globe news poured in, and under this pressure man was apt to become dazed and dull. Well, at any rate, we know that when, as now, the attention of the country was concentrated upon a single point, there was as little apathy as need be. He should not appeal even on these grounds to them if he did not hold a somewhat higher and broader conception of the Empire than seemed to be held in many quarters. If he regarded the Empire simply as a means to paint so much of the world red, or as an emporium for trade, he should not ask them to work for it. Land hunger was apt to become land fever, and land fever was apt to breed land indigestion, and, however important and desirable in itself, could never be the foundation of Empire. Empires founded on trade alone must irresistibly crumble, but an empire that was sacred to him was sacred for this reason—that he believed it to be the noblest example yet known to mankind of free, adaptable, just government. If that were only his own opinion it might not be very well worth having, but it derived singular confirmation from outside.

Whenever a community was in distress or under oppression it always looked to Great Britain first. In cases which were quite unsuspected by Great Britain at large, and only known to Ministers, communities constantly expressed the



wish to be united in some form or another to our country and to enjoy our government. On the other hand, for the most part in those territories which we had at various times ceded, we might, he thought, in almost every case, see signs of deterioration and signs of regret on the part of the inhabitants for what they had lost. He appealed to them, then, to do their utmost for the Empire. Life in itself was but a poor thing at the best. It consisted of only too certain facts—the beginning and the end, the birth and the death. Between those points lay the whole area of human joys and human opportunities. If they chose the better path he believed that nothing would give their lives so high an application as the study to do something for their country.

Mr. A. J. Balfour, in moving a vote of thanks to Lord Rosebery for his address, said that the noble Lord had struck a note of patriotic enthusiasm which must find an echo in every breast. He could imagine no address more fit by its generous spirit to animate students with the hope that what they were doing there was but a preparation for that larger work, that larger, more Imperial work, which, whether they were in this island or away beyond the seas, would not the less be connected with the fate of the British Empire. Lord Rosebery had given that night and recently elsewhere pleasing proofs of what,

after all, they were all well aware of, which was that the division of parties, healthy for any country governed by representative institutions, not only ought not but need not divide men when the interests of the Empire as a whole were concerned.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

MARRIAGE OF LADY "PEGGY" PRIMROSE—A BRILLIANT CEREMONY—  
THE POPULARITY OF THE EARL.

THERE was a brilliant gathering in Westminster Abbey on April 20, 1899, when Lord Rosebery's daughter, Lady Margaret Primrose, was married to the Earl of Crewe, the son of Lord Houghton. It was without doubt "the wedding of the season." It might have been a Royal wedding, so great were the crowds which gathered at the Abbey and in Berkeley Square to see the sight. The public were admitted to the north transept, ticket-holders being directed to the west nave, where they were ranged behind barriers throughout its length, as far as the great iron gates of the fine old oak choir-screen, outside which were grouped tall palms and banks of white flowers. Relatives and guests only were allowed to pass these gates, and were conducted to seats in the choir and to right and left of the entrance to the chancel.

The Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge, arriving about a quarter of an hour before the

bride, were given stalls in the choir, which was then completely filled with the gaily-dressed crowd. Near the Prince, but beyond the choir, sat the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, the latter in grey, with a white boa and a mauve bonnet, set above a diamond comb in her hair. Next to the Duke of Cambridge sat Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and several other of Lord Rosebery's former colleagues had seats in the choir-stalls. Mr. John Morley's clear-cut profile was here conspicuous. Sir William Harcourt was not present. The guests were marshalled by Lord Rosebery's two sons, by Mr. Foley of the Foreign Office, and other friends. Visitors were invited to say if they were friends of Lord Rosebery or of Lord Crewe—a choice which a good many must have found somewhat embarrassing—and according as they chose were marshalled to the right and left respectively. Immediately opposite the Duke of Devonshire was the beautiful Lady de Grey, in pale brocade with lace and pearls, and a black toque with roses, and Sir Charles and Lady Tennant, the latter in bright pink, and a large hat with white feathers. Lord James of Hereford and Miss James were slightly in the background, and near them the Earl and Countess of Aberdeen, both wearing mourning, though the Countess had modified hers in honour of the occasion. She wore splendid pearl and diamond earrings, and

clasp. The Marquise d'Hautpoul, in palest grey-blue, and a very high collar of transparent lace, occupied an adjacent pew, and behind her were Sir Edgar and Lady Helen Vincent, the latter lovely in grey velvet and chinchilla, and a hat of turquoise velvet trimmed with grey feathers. Mr. McEwan, M.P., and Mrs. McEwan, and Mrs. Smith-Barry were among the guests in this part of the Abbey, close to the towering palms and banks of white blossoms arranged at each side of the entrance to the chancel. On the altar there were vases filled with white blossoms, looking delicately lovely against the old carved oak.

The front pews were arranged for the relatives of the bride and bridegroom, the Duchess of Cleveland (in purple velvet), Lord and Lady Leconfield, Mr. Henry and Lady Mary Hope, Captain and the Hon. Mrs. Henniker, Lord and Lady Rothschild, Sir Edward and Lady Sassoon, the Misses Cohen, etc. While the guests were seating themselves the music of Schubert's Grand March filled the great spaces of the Abbey with melody. On the arrival of the bride, who carried a bouquet of exquisite white orchids from Mentmore, the choir sang Lord Crofton's setting of "O, perfect Love," arranged by Sir Frederick Bridge, Mus. Doc., who presided at the organ, assisted by Mr. W. Alcock. The bridal procession was a very stately one, the bride leaning on the

arm of her father, and being followed by her ten bridesmaids. The distance from the great west door to the choir is considerable; and just as the three verses of the hymn were ended, the bride, who is tall, fair, and very like her father, reached the chancel end of the choir, where the bridegroom, supported by the Earl of Chesterfield, awaited her.

The first part of the marriage service was celebrated at the end of the choir, not at the entrance to the chancel, as is more usual. The actual ceremony was conducted by Dr. Butler, the venerable Master of Trinity, the Dean of Westminster and Canon Blackburne afterwards taking some part. The latter portion of the service was solemnised in the chancel, where the bridal group made a beautiful picture against the background of old oak, the light from the clerestories catching the diamonds on the bride's dress and lighting up the responsive pale primroses in the bridesmaids' hats. At the conclusion the sweet voices of the choristers sang "Now thank we all our God," and while the married pair were receiving the congratulations of their friends Sir Frederick Bridge played Sterndale Bennett's "Minuet" and Dubois' "Cantilène Nuptiale," following it up with the Wedding March from *Lohengrin* as the clergy led the way to the vestry, followed by the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge. The Prince walked beside Dean Bradley, and

entered the vestry with him, the Duke of Cambridge following alone, immediately in front of the bride and bridegroom, after whom came the bridesmaids, then the Duchess of Cleveland and the Earl of Rosebery. Lord and Lady Rothschild also went into the vestry. The Prince, on coming out, shook hands with Lady Rothschild, and then was conducted to the west door, followed by the Duke of Cambridge. The Abbey bells were cannoned, and loud cheers greeted the Royal gentlemen from the crowds outside, while the guests applied themselves to the task of getting away—not a very easy one. The Duke of Devonshire, having put the Duchess in her carriage, turned back to have a talk with Lord Aberdeen. Lord Rosebery gave his arm to his mother, and Lord Dalmeny, very like his father, but taller than the Earl, exerted himself to find his grandmother's carriage.

At the conclusion of the service the invited guests made their way as best they could to Lord Rosebery's house. The crowd outside the Abbey was still very great, and all the way to Berkeley Square the footpaths, and even the roads, were lined with spectators. Here, as in Parliament Square, the police were taken by surprise. No adequate arrangements had been made to deal with the popular enthusiasm, and it was with the utmost difficulty that the police secured a passage for the long queue of carriages. At the bottom

of St. James's Street, and in Berkeley Square itself, the crowds were particularly dense. On the whole, it was a ladies' day. Old women, young men, and children—mostly apparelled in their "Sunday best"—lined the streets, and "passed remarks" on the gowns of the ladies as they drove by. The bridesmaids, and still more, of course, the bride and bridegroom, the Prince of Wales, and the bride's father, came in for a great reception.

On arriving at Berkeley Square the guests were all presented with wedding favours. The great centre of attraction was the ball-room, where the wedding presents were exhibited. The presents to the bridegroom were arranged on one side of the room; those to the bride on the other. In a bay-window, overlooking the garden, was the jewel-case, and this naturally excited the liveliest curiosity. Lord Rosebery's presents to the bride were of the most beautiful and costly character. Among these a large diamond tiara was the most conspicuous; but a necklace of ropes of seed pearls, with tassels, was also very much admired. The bridegroom's presents to the bride were also very beautiful and valuable. They included a diamond necklace and some very fine pearls. The Prince and Princess of Wales's present was especially interesting, for the card which accompanied it. This was written in the Princess's characteristic writing, the letters very



upright, and connected with each other by a kind of backstroke. The legend ran:—

With very best wishes  
for dear little Peggy's  
happiness, from Alexandra  
and Albert Edward.

So great were the crowds which assembled at the church and outside the house in Berkeley Square, so numerous were the public notices taken of this interesting wedding, that the newspapers on the following day nearly all contained mention of the public exhibition of feeling as a striking proof of the popularity of the Earl of Rosebery.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

A LESSON IN LIBERALISM—WHAT IS IMPERIALISM?—A GREAT CHANGE  
—MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S INDISCRETION—THE FLOUTING OF FOREIGN  
NATIONS—THE OVERCROWDING PROBLEM—MUNICIPAL DWELLINGS—  
SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

DURING last year, although Lord Rosebery maintained the attitude of "private citizenship," there were influences at work which compelled his public utterances to turn a good deal more in the direction of politics. He went, for example, on May 5 to a dinner at the City Liberal Club, and when he rose to speak he had not, as he said, any idea of delivering a political manifesto. Lord Rosebery, however, is too sincere a man always to be able to hide his feelings and bury his opinions; and on this occasion he found himself invading the political arena again. He indicated then that he had no immediate intention of returning to the political arena, but he had been thinking about political questions, and he gave his party the benefit of his thoughts. It was a lesson in Liberalism and success, showing why, and also telling how, Liberalism was to recover the ground which it held before 1886.

And the growing Imperial spirit, it will be seen, was an important feature of the address. At this house dinner of the City of London Liberal Club there was a numerous company, including Earl Carrington, Lord Burghclere, Sir J. T. Woodhouse, M.P., Mr. Albert Spicer, M.P., Mr. W. A. McArthur, M.P., Mr. Provand, M.P., Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P., Mr. J. H. Roberts, M.P., Mr. Causton, M.P., Sir James Blyth, Sir Clarence Smith, Sir Henry Mance, Sir Patteson Nickalls, Sir John Jardine, Mr. E. W. Grimwade, Mr. A. M. Torrance, and Mr. J. Renwick Seager.

Lord Rosebery proposed the toast of "The City Liberal Club." He said :

"My lords and gentlemen, I rise to propose to you the health and prosperity of the City Liberal Club. I have always found in one respect the audience of the City Liberal Club a difficult one to speak to, because it is not entirely unanimous on points of politics. I found it difficult in the days when I was in active political life, and I thought that when I had retired I should find it easier to address the audience than it was before. On the contrary, I am inclined to think I find it more difficult. One is expected by those who know one's mind so much better than one's self to deliver political manifestoes. I assure you that nothing is more remote from my mind. I am thinking more

to-night of when I first came to the City Liberal Club. It was in company with two members, now both gone, who were, I think, pillars of the City Liberal Club; one, at any rate, was a moving spirit in it. The first you will guess probably was our old friend Mr. Rogers, of Bishopgate. I never enter this club without thinking of Mr. Rogers. I really do not know to which of the so-called sections of the Liberal party he belonged, and I very much doubt if he knew himself. What I do know is that if I had to seek anywhere for an embodiment of what I think true Liberalism in mind and spirit is, I should think of Mr. Rogers. Well, I know we were here; we were sucked into a house dinner—a much smaller house dinner than to-night—and the other guest was my lamented friend Lord Herschell.

“Now, gentlemen, I have thought as much as I can with the endeavour to estimate what the exact measure of Lord Herschell’s loss is—not to the Liberal party, for that is not in question in my mind at this moment, but to the nation at large, and I have come to the deliberate conviction, which I express without any disrespect to the eminent public servants who are now in politics and in Parliament—I have come to the deliberate conviction that Lord Herschell was the first public servant of his country at the time when he died. He knew no holiday, he served

his country in season and out of season, not for honour or emolument, but with a pure anxiety to serve the Empire in which he was born. I remember the last time I saw him. He came to speak to me about his negotiations in America, to which he was proceeding, and I asked him if it would be a long business. He said 'No,' he hoped that it would be over so as to enable him to return to England at the end of the year in time for the Venezuela arbitration. That was Lord Herschell's idea of dividing his time. I cannot, on this occasion, when I think of the first dinner of this club, help recalling to my mind—for I have few opportunities of speaking—I cannot help recalling to my mind the memory of his great and exemplary public service.

“ There is another loss upon which I must touch, because, as I say, I have so few opportunities of speaking, and that is the loss of one who of course is not comparable to Lord Herschell as a public servant, for he had not the time, and he had not the opportunity. But coming so soon after the loss of Lord Herschell, it struck me with profound melancholy when I read, while in the Mediterranean, of the loss of the services, and more than the services, of Thomas Ellis. I was at once reminded, and the more I think of it the more I am reminded, of another young man who died in Parliament of exactly the same age as Thomas Ellis—I mean Francis Horner,

who was publicly mourned as no private member ever was. When the writ was moved for the seat which he had vacated, the highest members of the House of Commons vied in testifying their sense of the loss the House and they themselves had sustained. That was not done in the case of Thomas Ellis, and it would indeed be an inconvenient precedent in these days, when precedents of that kind are so far pressed home. Though that was not so in the case of Thomas Ellis, I think there was no mourning more universal for any young member of the House of Commons since the time of Francis Horner, and perhaps Charles Buller. There was something in the lofty purity of that spirit which impressed everybody with whom he came into contact, and it was not only so with the party with which he was connected, it was so with every class, every section of the community with which he came into contact, that that feeling prevailed. You will excuse me, gentlemen, even on a convivial occasion of this kind, dwelling for a moment on the melancholy associations connected with the past. It is not an entirely evil thing to bear in mind even on the most festive occasions, because, however high our standard may be of life, it is always well to have it associated with those who have gone before us and now are removed from us.

“Let me go back even a little further than

the time I spoke of. I was reading to-day the record of the meetings at which this club was founded. To-night we celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of the club, an anniversary which a Pope would call a jubilee, and which among more domestic people is known as a silver marriage, which is always a subject of congratulation. Well, what were the circumstances under which the club was founded? It is rather curious to look back upon them now. It was founded under the dismay caused by the election of 1874, when the Liberal party was defeated for the first time since 1241, so far as I recollect, but at any rate when it received its first serious defeat since that time, and it seemed to spread a sort of stupor over the minds of the Liberals of the City of London that the Liberal candidates of the City of London could possibly or conceivably sustain any defeat. The founders of this club, some of whom are alive, but not all of whom are amongst us, if they could contemplate with an unimpassioned eye the condition of things at this moment in the City of London, would be puzzled now to read their speeches on that occasion.

“I am anxious for many reasons not to refer to contemporary events or to intrude the rash foot, or perhaps rather the rash slipper, of the retired politician into contests for which he is unfitted; but I think I may at least say this

without profanity, that it would be more conceivable to our minds that a camel should pass through the eye of a needle than that a Liberal should represent the City of London. However, in those days, there was a gesture of despair, and the City Liberal Club was founded, and of course since the City Liberal Club was founded in those twenty-five years much has taken place; and I suppose if those who founded the club felt despair in 1874 it is beyond the power of all ordinary language to describe what they would have felt in 1895. But, gentlemen, as an onlooker, I cannot help saying that the decay of Parliamentary Liberalism is a very great disaster to the country itself. I used the adjective Parliamentary for the reason I will come to in a moment. But the decay of Parliamentary Liberalism is deplored even by the Government itself.

“The Government itself says, and wisely says in my opinion, that the want of a powerful Opposition is a disadvantage to the Government; and though I may perhaps say in a disembodied way how heartily I congratulate Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman on the way in which he has rallied the Opposition to himself, and the cordial spirit that he has spread in its ranks, yet I agree with the Government in thinking that the want of a more powerful Parliamentary Opposition is a real loss to the country at large.



It is a loss, as we may see from one single sign. The decay of Liberalism, or Parliamentary Liberalism, has robbed politics of all its interest. The hideous political apathy which, as I am informed, reigns at this moment, is, I think, if you may trace it home to any one cause, more due to the decay of Parliamentary Liberalism, which, whether it was right or whether it was wrong, was the salt of politics, than to any other cause whatever. I say Parliamentary Liberalism because I have never doubted for one moment the great swell of Liberalism in the country. I beg my friends who have been separated from the Liberal party since 1886 to understand that I am not speaking of sectional Liberalism. I say I believe the swell of Liberalism never was so strong as it is now in the country, that the Liberal spirit never was so vigorous, and I believe that the nation itself was never so heartily, unconsciously to some extent, in sympathy with Liberal aims.

“Well, then, you may ask me, first, why, if that be so, they do not vote Liberal. Well, since the general election they have voted pretty Liberal, and as to the general election I have a theory of my own; but I decline to state it, because I do not want to start any new schisms in that sorely tried party, and that secret will leave me only with my life. But when I say Liberalism—I speak quite frankly—I do not mean

sectional Liberalism; I mean the old Liberal spirit as it existed before 1886—before the unhappy division weakened one half of the party, and drove the other half of the party into associations which I think I may say without impertinence it must sometimes find distasteful. Well, I believe the Liberal spirit to be as powerful in the country as it ever was before. In fact, the nation is always essentially but moderately Liberal. The nation does not sympathise with extremes; it does not sympathise with either extreme Toryism or the extreme of Socialism; and, therefore, as it does not wish to be left behind in the race with other nations, as it does not wish to be unprogressive, or in any degree outside the van of development, it is always mainly Liberal. But it is sometimes alienated from Liberalism by causes which I have declined to dwell upon.

“Now, gentlemen, I think, then, I am not extravagant in saying that I find the greatest pleasure in being in this club, because it represents the old Liberal party as it existed before 1886. Now, I am not sure that I have any right to offer advice to politicians. I see so many active ones around me that I blush as I address them. But if I did venture to address any advice to politicians I should say that until you have the Liberal party as it was before 1886—reconstituted in some form or another—or until you have a

new party constituted which will embody all the elements which existed in the Liberal party before 1886—you will never have that predominance in the country which was as it appeared when I first commenced public life—the heritage and almost the birthright of the Liberal party.

“ But there is one important change which has come, not since 1886, as it was coming before then, and which has come to affect the old Liberal party, and also the old Conservative party, and which has materially changed the whole aspect of British politics: I mean the greater pride in Empire, which is called Imperialism. What is Imperialism? Many people who know all about Imperialism and everything else denounce it with the utmost heartiness. It is, they say, the cause of all our evils, it is the cause of our swollen Budgets—in fact, in it lurks every conceivable evil that affects the British Commonwealth. But Imperialism, sane Imperialism, as distinguished from what I may call wild-cat Imperialism, is nothing but this—a larger patriotism. When I first entered public life, patriotism seemed to be confined to these islands. The politicians of those days seemed to consider that the Colonies were like the tails of some creeping things—liable to be snapped off at a moment’s notice, and therefore immaterial to the creature itself. The Colonies were considered as outside provinces, with which we had only a

temporary connection, and with which, therefore, we never had any definite interest.

“But in the last thirty-five years a change, caused by travel, and to some extent caused by greater education—a change has come over the spirit of our people. They know that these islands, though they are the centre of an empire, are only a small portion of our Empire; and though I admit that the heart of the Empire lies within these islands, both parties in the State have come to recognise that British influence, which is recognised throughout the Empire, is as potent outside these islands as it is within. That is a change that has affected both parties. Sometimes I hear one party and sometimes I hear another party, with great regret—I hear them with great regret claim a monopoly of this larger patriotism. I do not care to go back into history for what is called Imperialism. I should not care to cavil with anybody as to who taught it first, and applied, or held, or preached the doctrines of Imperialism. What is enough for me is this—that they pervade every section and almost every individual of the community, and when that is the case it seems to me little to matter who is the origin or who has the title-deeds of this proud sentiment.

“Of course, now that we are all Imperialists—and I think we are all Imperialists—we can only differ about the methods of carrying the great

principle out, and I confess I am not pleased always with the methods adopted. I regretted—I must make this hurried inroad into a contemporary question—I regretted the other day to see that to raise a comparatively small sum of money a tax was to be laid upon the produce of Australian vineyards—a pure, cheap, and wholesome wine, one of the products of Australia which I should have thought everybody except the most enraged teetotaler would be glad to encourage. I am glad to see a bottle held out to indicate that one of our members is taking advantage of that vintage while it is untaxed. I cannot imagine a more melancholy method of spreading or producing Imperialism than a tax of that kind.

But I saw to-day a correspondence in the papers which indicated that there was a great Imperial measure proposed by the Governments of Canada and Australia for an Imperial telegraph-line which should connect those great portions of our Empire.

“The Government offered what I cannot help considering as a somewhat humble contribution, tied up with excessive conditions, and granted with this idea, that the matter really interested Canada, and especially Australia, more than Great Britain, and that, therefore, we should not contribute more. It seems an unhappy moment, to the unbiassed observer from outside, to select, to make a very miserable contribution to a line which is mainly to interest Australia, and to growl

at a moment when you are laying this new and, in my opinion, this most impolitic tax on Australian production. I should say there were other methods of developing the Empire, or the Imperial spirit.

“But at any rate, the Imperial spirit being there, we have certain fixed results on which we congratulate ourselves. We have, at any rate, this fact before us, which other nations have already publicly envied us for, that since the development of the Imperial spirit, of the larger patriotism, the constant wranglings over foreign policy have disappeared in Parliament, and that when large issues are presented, and when a great international crisis, as in last autumn, is presented to the consideration of the nation, all parties sink their common differences and rally round the Government of the day in face of a foreign Power. I say then, gentlemen, we have before us the consideration of the development of Imperialism. We must take that into consideration in counting up the record of the old Liberal party. If the old Liberal party, as it was before 1886, is to be revived again, or any new party is to be founded on its severance, this factor, at any rate, must be prominent to the minds of those who construct or revive—the factor of the larger patriotism that I have called Imperialism.

“I believe that if the old Liberal spirit were combined with the new Imperial spirit, definitely and nominally, as I believe it to be essentially

in the minds of the nation, the Liberal party would once more regain its lost predominance, and would have a future which would vie with the richest traditions of the past. I hope that this Liberal Club will endeavour to forward that view, that it will endeavour to keep within its walls both sections of the Liberal party, that they may learn within this building how small are the differences which divide them—how great are the sympathies which unite them. It is with that feeling, which I believe animates not merely me, as your President, but every member of the club within these walls, that I ask you to drink the health of the City Liberal Club.”

This speech had a curious sequel. In the first place Lord Rosebery had talked plain simple truth to his audience, and through his audience to the Liberal party in the country; but the truth is not always palatable, though it may be essential to face and deal with it if success is to be won. Lord Rosebery had once “admitted” that if Home Rule was ever to be granted to Ireland the majority of this country had got to be converted to it. Even that truism caused an explosion in the Liberal world, though it is a self-evident fact that no measure, whether it be Home Rule for Ireland, or any other great national question, can be carried without a majority in its favour. Lord Rosebery’s words about Imperialism and Liberalism led to another ex-



A DOUBTFUL "STAYER."

L.-D-D-Y. "YOU AIN'T GOT MUCH OF A MOUNT, GUVNOR!"

R.-S-D-R-Y. "PERAPS NOT,—BUT I'LL RIDE HIM FOR ALL HE'S WORTH!"

FROM THE "PUNCH" CARTOON, JUNE 1, 1895.





plosion of a somewhat different nature, for on the following evening Sir William Harcourt delivered a speech at a Welsh dinner which was construed into a violent attack on Lord Rosebery. Sir W. Harcourt's speech was not reported until some days afterwards, and then it was only produced in the form of a brief summary. It is a pity that no full report of Sir W. Harcourt's remarks appeared at the time or subsequently; but, whether or not he attacked Lord Rosebery's policy as violently as some who were present asserted, Lord Rosebery's speech stands, and, if read carefully, can in no sense be construed into the abandonment of any Liberal principle, for Lord Rosebery has abandoned none. To teach the doctrine that unity is strength, and that a political party must be cohesive and disciplined if it is going to win elections and carry out its programme, is not to go back upon any principle. The discussion about Lord Rosebery's speech and Sir W. Harcourt's alleged rejoinder had, however, one good effect. It emphasised the fact that the cross-currents in the Liberal ranks were strong and serious; and, that being so, the sooner the party at large recognised the truth, and set itself to bring those currents into line, to combine them, and to make them a flowing tide in one direction, the better for the party and the better for the progress of Liberal principles. It does not appear that the Liberal

party has learned the lesson well, but there are, happily, evidences that it has gone home to a considerable and rapidly increasing section, who will, it may be hoped, ere long be joined by the rest of the party.

The political flavour of his speeches was not confined to this one address to City Liberals. He had endeavoured to teach a lesson to the Liberals of the country. At Edinburgh, on December 1, he gave a much-needed one to the "new diplomatists," objecting to the practice, which seemed to be increasing, of "flouting" foreign nations. There had, indeed, been a good deal of provocation in the autumn of last year, when some of the gutter newspapers on the Continent had, in their hatred of England, been publishing disgusting caricatures of the Queen, which had far better have been left to find their sale in vicious Continental districts than have been accorded a great advertisement by English statesmen. There was, in fact, serious danger in calling attention, as Mr. Chamberlain did, to these productions, the inspection of which was sufficient to make the blood boil of every Englishman and decent-minded man anywhere. Lord Rosebery administered a rebuke to Mr. Chamberlain for the provocative language he had used in connection with these incidents, in apparent forgetfulness that Governments are not responsible for every stupid and objectionable act of individuals. The

occasion of the speech was on December 1, last year, at the two hundred and eighteenth annual dinner of the Edinburgh Merchant Company, which took place in the hall of the Company, Hanover Street, Edinburgh. The Merchant Company is one of the wealthiest corporations in the kingdom, with accumulated funds of nearly one million; and in the educational world it occupies a prominent place because of the many excellent secondary schools established and maintained by the Company in Edinburgh. Mr. John Macmillan, the Master of the Company, presided, and the principal guest of the evening was Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, M.P. The toast of "Our Guests" was proposed by Mr. W. W. Robertson, one of the past members of the Company.

Lord Rosebery, in reply, said:

"It is very kind of you to drink this toast so heartily, and of Mr. Robertson to propose it with so much eulogium. You will forgive me, however, if I do not respond at length, because I am 'pinched,' being a person of such infinite variety, as Mr. Robertson has said, I am pinched between a variety of engagements this evening, and I had asked the Master to allow me to come as a silent and private individual for the reason that I am only here as the coachman and host of your distinguished guest, and I should in any case be totally unable to answer for all the categories of

guests whom Mr. Robertson has set forth. After all, the toast of 'The Guests' is the toast of the evening in any hospitable banquet. Mr. Scott, we are extremely hospitable. I see we have now introduced the Southern custom of the loving cup, and it assists to make us still more hospitable. I do not demur at its introduction, and I know to the generosity of whom it is due. I think it might be introduced to Scottish entertainments. It would give it a Caledonian flavour, and not a mere reflective tint. If the Master will appoint me a committee of one to co-operate outside with another committee of two from the inside of the Merchant Company, I will endeavour to frame a ceremony characteristic of our country, which will accompany this novel introduction.

"I do not honestly consider that I am entitled to answer as a guest at all. I do not consider that I am a guest anywhere in Edinburgh. When I am treated as a guest, except in the private sense of the word, I feel myself almost insulted. I am as much at home here as I am seven miles off; and I hope that the Merchant Company, when they next do me the honour of inviting me to be with them, will treat me more as one of themselves, and not entrust me with the duty of making this speech. There is another reason why the toast of 'The Guests' should be the most important toast of the evening. It is because we are the most hospitable country in

the world. There is no person, however eminent, in trouble in the other countries of the world who, when he finds his own country too hot to hold him, does not come to England, to Britain. That hospitality is not always well requited. We have, in some cases, accepted among us with geniality and cordiality, even with honour, dynasties and refugees, statesmen and revolutionaries, of one or two countries of Europe, who have been unable to reside in their own countries at particular occasions. It would be strange to compute the number of people who in this last century would have died violent deaths had they not found refuge and hospitality on the shores of Great Britain. It is quite true that this hospitality is not always requited. At the present moment, if we survey the press of Europe so far as our linguistic acquirements enable us to judge of it, or so far as we receive translations and epitomes of it through the invaluable channels of the press, we find no peculiar gratitude for the hospitality we have shown many of these nations, and are willing to show many of these nations. On the other hand, it is below the dignity of Great Britain to notice them.

“There is a great saying of Cavour’s that Italy would work out her own salvation alone. ‘She will suffice to herself,’ he said; and I think when we boast, as we justly do, of our Empire, we should be prepared to suffice to ourselves, and that

we should not take notice of the gutter press. The gutter press is not the better opinion—not the sane opinion of the other nations. We should not go into the gutters and fish up the derelict press of any country and hold it up to scorn, or as a motive of our policy. There is no subject of the Queen who feels a more profound devotion for her than I do, but I venture to say there is no subject of the Queen, whatever his devotion may be, who can feel that she can be touched, that she can be injured, that she can be besmirched by what may be said in the uncharacterisable press of a foreign State. Still less do I think that it calls for any notice from us, her subjects—if it might be the province of a peculiar portion of a peculiar press to revile the first woman of the world.

“That is an attempt that recoils on them; but it does not trouble us, and for that reason I will say, and must say, that I was sorry to see yesterday, in the speech which we have all read with interest, too much notice, in my opinion, was taken of that circumstance, because after all, whatever that degraded outburst may mean, it does not even represent the best or the highest opinion of France. It represents only those who seek to make trouble with France by alienating from her the sympathies of a Government with whom she ought to be in friendly relations. And I regret it more for this: I think we have had too much

of this flouting of foreign nations. We sometimes wonder why we are unpopular abroad. That is, I think, because we are too much engrossed with our own virtues, and forget that what would annoy ourselves in others equally annoys others in ourselves; and we in the past few years have passed censure on some of the nations in Europe in a way which must give them cause for reflection, and for no enthusiastic affection for us.

“We have called one of the most ancient nations of the world a dying nation, we have compared another great Empire of the world to the devil, we have hinted that another great Empire of the world is less in space than one of our Colonies, and now we think it our duty to tell another nation to mend its manners. I do not say that these sentiments are not right, but it is new for our responsible channels to express them, and I do trust that this career of undiplomatic frankness will cease, because let us remember that these stinging words remain long after any solace that we can apply to them can endure. Long after the words that we utter in the hurry of the moment are buried in oblivion by us they are cherished and brought up against us by the nations that they offend. I hope, then, that those who speak on our behalf—and I, for my part, have shown right through that I am anxious to strengthen them in speaking on our behalf—will



remember that it is not the task of statesmen to speak under the passing irritation of the moment, and it is the duty of statesmen to remember that they are responsible for great and permanent national interests. It is for them they speak, and it is under their inspiration and under no other that they must utter words on behalf of Great Britain."

Mr. Chamberlain, at any rate, learned that lesson, for the "flouting" of France ceased so far as he was concerned, and the public ceased to be concerned about the villainous prints which were appearing not only, as Mr. Chamberlain appeared to believe, in the French journals, but also in those of other Continental countries.

Another interesting address delivered by Lord Rosebery last year was on that question of the housing of the poor in which he had always taken the keenest interest.

Tuesday, November 14, 1899, witnessed the consummation of a new departure in the municipal life of London. It is no new thing for the central authority to remove rookeries and erect desirable dwellings in their stead. But it is a new thing for the local authority to do so. Shoreditch Vestry was the first to demonstrate the possibility of simultaneously burning house refuse and producing electric power, and it led the way in the matter of providing healthy homes for areas formerly insanitary. In passing along the City Road,

and proceeding from the Angel towards Moorgate Street, you find these new municipal dwellings on your left. What was once the pestilential area of Moira Place and Plumber's Place is now approached by an airy road—Britannia Street. The three blocks of buildings, each five stories high, contain twenty-five tenements of two rooms each and fifty tenements of three rooms each—these affording accommodation for four hundred persons. A further block, to be erected at the corner of Nile Street and Provost Street, will house seventy-two more. Alas! the total number displaced by the scheme was five hundred and thirty-two. That discrepancy is the one dark feature of a bright picture. The slum area covered 11,240 superficial yards, and the space is thus apportioned now: Dwellings, 2,897 yards; commercial premises, 1,360 yards; a recreation ground, 260 yards; streets absorbing the remainder. The property was acquired by the Vestry under Part II. of the Housing Act of 1890. By order of the Home Secretary, the London County Council contributed half the expense of acquiring the area, but the cost of the dwellings was defrayed solely by the Vestry.

Each tenement is self-contained, and has a living-room 167 feet in area, looking upon the street. Its comforts include a well-ventilated, good cupboard, and a 2-feet-6-inch self-setting range. In the scullery (9 feet by 6 feet) are a coal-bunk for

two cwts., a nine-gallon copper, and a 2-foot open cottage range. There are no dust-shoots, but a galvanised iron dust-pail is provided for each tenant. One of the bedrooms of the three-room tenements has an area of over 120 feet, the other being over 96 feet; while the bedrooms of the two-room tenements have an area averaging 127 feet. Each bedroom is fitted with a mantel register stove. The height of the rooms is 8 feet 6 inches throughout. Walls of sculleries are of Fletton bricks; other walls are plastered and distempered in fancy tints. Each tenement has its own offices, disconnected from the rooms by a short lobby, and much care has been bestowed on the sanitary arrangements. Tenements can be lit by electric light at the option of the occupiers, the inclusive charge for the service being 8*d.* a week for two-room sets, and 10*d.* a week for three-room sets. These buildings are described as thoroughly fireproof. For three rooms 8*s.* 6*d.* is the rent, for two rooms 6*s.* 6*d.*, the total rental derived from the three blocks being £1,530 15*s.* Taking the cost of erecting the buildings and the value of the two plots of land at £22,917, and allowing for rates, lighting, supervision, collection of rents, empties and losses, insurance and sinking fund, a return of about 3 per cent. is expected.

The new buildings were opened by Lord Rosebery, the ceremony taking place in a large

tent erected in the courtyard of the dwellings. Mr. Joseph Cox, Chairman of the Housing of the Working Classes Committee of the Vestry, presided. He said the area had been a few years ago a nest of hovels of the wretchedest description, blind alleys, and labyrinths of courts, most dangerous and dirty, constituting a danger to the neighbourhood. On the very spot where they were assembled was a court so narrow that a person who lived on one side could shake hands with the person who lived on the other side without either having to leave his house. Since the buildings had been erected, people residing in other parts of London had offered to occupy them at rents very much higher than those it was proposed to charge. The idea of the Vestry had been to keep the rents as low as possible. On paper they seemed to yield a small profit, the figures working out at about 3 per cent., but the Vestry would be content if the buildings merely paid their way. The Committee were satisfied that they had the best model dwellings in London.

Lord Rosebery said :

“ Ladies and gentlemen, your chairman in his announcement omitted one important adjective. You will see on the programme that my address is to be a ‘short’ address. When you kindly asked me to come here I stipulated that that should be put in the programme, because if it is

not put in the programme people settle down with the sort of comfortable feeling—half comfortable and half something else—with which they begin listening to a sermon which they know will be long; and, therefore, such an address, such an expectation, is a weariness of the flesh both to the speaker and to the audience. Well, I won't detain you a minute. I would gladly have given my time to your chairman, who seemed to me to set forth the merits of the buildings as concisely and as admirably as it is possible to do.

“But, in any case, I am glad to come here. I thank you, in the first place, for a long drive through all the varied wonders of that world we call London. In the second place, I thank you for bringing back to my mind some of the duties which I frequently performed when I was Chairman of the London County Council. Nobody who has filled that high and daily more important office can fail to have an interest in every part of this Metropolis; and it is with a lively satisfaction that I see beside me on the platform four or five of my old colleagues in the assembly. In the next place, I do not think it a very bad thing that one who lives at the West End should come and show by what sympathy he can that London is a unit, and not a mere congeries of parts. Since the establishment of the London County Council we have all worked—or many of

us have worked—to try and make London feel that she is one, and I think that nothing is so calculated to do so as the visit of inhabitants from one part of the town to the other; and I am sure that if you will come and visit us at the West End, and open a new building for us, we will give you as hearty a welcome as you have given to me.

“I have another reason for thanking you, because I understand that Shoreditch is one of the model vestries of London. I have seen Shoreditch described as a ‘Municipal Mecca,’ but there are so many ‘Municipal Meccas,’ beginning with Birmingham, and going on indefinitely, that if I wanted to find the real shrine of the prophet I should have to take a good many days about it. But, in any case, Shoreditch is one of our model vestries. I think one of the most important works that you or any other vestry can have undertaken is the business of the housing of the working classes. When you read the facts, as they are presented to you, and as they are daily coming home to the minds of our people, and I hope ultimately even of our statesmen, the facts are alarming enough. Even here, when you have done so much, there is, and will always be, one great flaw. It is this. You have to turn out the inhabitants of these wretched tenements that your chairman has described, and build instead the admirable dwellings that I have been privileged

to inspect. But the inhabitants of these new dwellings are not the people that you dispossess. They cannot be the people you dispossess; and while you are dealing with this problem, in a manner large, liberal, and comprehensive, as the Shoreditch Vestry is doing, you have always at the back, looming over you, an obstacle almost, if not quite, insuperable.

“What is to be done with that residuum which you displace by your new buildings? Now, I am not here to give an answer to that question to-day. It is a question that will have to be faced, for as vestries emulous of Shoreditch, or vestries that are compelled to emulate Shoreditch, begin their operations of this kind to this extent, you will have, indeed, an improved working-men’s city growing up in the heart of London, but you will have equally pushed backwards, backwards, backwards, a residuum of misery and crime, which, in the long-run, you will be obliged to deal with. There are other obstacles presented by the problem of building decent workmen’s houses, and getting into them the tenants you want. In some cases, I believe, these dwellings are so superior that they are occupied by a class for which they were not intended. I am quite certain, if the vestry here had not exercised a wise discretion in refusing tenants who offered much more than the rent you are prepared to accept, that that would have been

the result in the present case. But look how a vestry that wishes and tries to do its duty is fettered in the effort. I take this little programme—I know nothing more than this little programme tells me, but it tells me a great deal. One of the various obstacles was that no less than eight years intervened between the first inspiration of your project and the signing of your contract with your builder.

“And how were those eight years spent? Partly in applications to the Local Government Board, partly in application to the London County Council, partly in difficulties with those gentlemen who are picturesquely called the ‘Slum Lords,’ who own the property you wish to acquire. But what is eight years? Think what a space eight years is in the life of a man or of a generation. Those eight years have been almost entirely sacrificed. There must have been some necessary delay, but those eight years have been almost entirely sacrificed, owing to the difficulties that are placed in your path by a too careful legislation. I will give an instance of what I mean, not taken from the borough of Shoreditch. You are aware that one of the great difficulties of dealing with these insanitary properties is the nature of their ownership. One of the great difficulties is even to discover who are the owners. They are very often an obscure and subterranean class who draw very considerable



rents without appearing—and without appearing for obvious reasons—on the surface. But the other day the borough of West Ham was very anxious, in a transaction of this kind, to ascertain who the owners were. It had the greatest difficulty in doing so, and in some cases it was impossible, I believe, to do so. There are so many agents and clerks in front of the real and genuine owner. Well, the borough of West Ham applied to the Local Government Board for powers to compel registration of all ownership of house property within the borough. If that were done, it is obvious enough that acquisition would be enormously simplified. But the Local Government Board, for reasons which I do not doubt—I am not speaking ironically—were good and sufficient in view of legislation and of the general aspects of the case, had to refuse their permission. But surely no more simple, no more reasonable request was ever preferred to a Government Department, and we must regret profoundly the causes which made refusal imperative.

“These Lords of the Slums are largely masters of the situation. You will read, in the picturesque and powerful letters which have been addressed to the *Daily News* on this subject, of all the many operations, all the various subterfuges which these proprietors are capable of in order to vamp up buildings sufficiently to pass for a moment the eye of the medical inspector and remove them

from the liability of condemnation as insanitary dwellings. But even when they have received that condemnation you have to purchase the property. Well, I don't deny that the property is worth something. The land on which it is built is worth something; but I am strongly of opinion that in many cases property has to be purchased at a value which it does not possess, and which it ought not to be held to possess. Now let me take another difficulty. We have this enormous problem of housing the people of London. The increase is very large every year, being some sixty thousand; and in the meantime you are only able to deal with it piecemeal in a manner which, even on the large scale adopted by this Vestry, only accommodates some three hundred persons, though many more than that were dispossessed. But you will have to take larger measures than this if you wish to deal with the problem in the most satisfactory manner. And there is one obvious method which I think suggests itself to any one who has at all studied the problem. It is this. That with workmen's trains you ought to be able to house a great part of the working population of London more healthfully and more economically in the country near London. But you have no power to acquire land for that purpose. You may buy land outside the County of London for lunatic asylums, as I well know, because I don't know how many of

your asylums I cannot see from the roof of my house in the country. You have power to expatriate the ruined and wrecked of your population in the great asylums in the middle of rural districts. Why, then, should you not have the power to safeguard against jobbery, and—subject to the consent of the Local Government Board, to be given on large and easy conditions—why should you not have the power to lodge not merely your lunatics and your invalids outside the County of London, but to lodge your intelligent artisans, with their large families, that they may be brought up in healthier conditions even than those that obtain in these new dwellings, and where they will have easy access to their work through the trains that I have spoken of?

“Now, you and I here are all private individuals. We are not occupied with any large schemes of legislation, which absorb higher minds, to whom are entrusted the task of government. But at any rate we have a right to ask this—Why so simple and obvious a relief to the overcharged population of London cannot be afforded by Government and by Parliament? It is not a scheme to which any plausible objection can be urged; it is not therefore a scheme to which any real opposition could be offered; and it is not a scheme by opposition to which—and perhaps this is most important of all—it is not a scheme by opposition to which any political

or party capital could be made. Well, I believe that if the County of London had the power to purchase tracts of land, for example, in Essex, where much of the land has been turned out of cultivation owing to agricultural distress, you would have marched, not the whole way perhaps, because you would not have dealt with that residuum of which I spoke at the beginning of my remarks, but you would have gone a long way towards dealing with the large problem of London habitation ; and I don't know why those outlying districts, planted by London in rural areas near London, should not be legislatively affixed to the County of London. We have in Scotland counties, like Clackmannan and Cromarty, that are scattered all over the map, as if they had been planted by a watering-pot.

“Well, I don't know why you should not have your outlying districts too. I do believe that some simple method of that kind, which any Government might pass, and which this Government might pass in twenty minutes, subject always to the rules and regulations of Parliament itself, would be an enormous and unspeakable and unlooked-for boon to the inhabitants of London. I declare, when I think of all this that goes on, and of the bonds of red tape in which we are swathed, I sometimes wish for a dictator, a tyrant, who should hold office for a year, and a man of large mind, large heart, and iron will, who would see what had to

be done, and who would do it. He should hold power for a year, and at the end his head should be cut off, for fear his existence should imperil our liberties. Perhaps he would not have lost much by decapitation, as it is not at all improbable that in his year of office he would have been assassinated by some of the interests which he had attacked. But in any case, whether he were assassinated or whether he were decapitated, he would have had the satisfaction, if he held office only for a few months, of having done that which, I am as certain as you are, no Parliament would have accomplished in forty times the time.

“Well, we shall never have a dictator, so this is only the sort of dream that one can indulge in under the shadow of your new buildings in the middle of Shoreditch on an autumn afternoon. But you have something in your own hands—you have a great deal in your own hands. There is one reason, there is one cause, why schemes of this kind are not adopted in many localities. And that is because members of their vestry, or local body, vestry or not, have some interest in preventing them being carried out. Now the moral that I want to bring home to you, and perhaps to some who will read what I say but who do not themselves live in this Land of Goshen—the moral I want to convey is this, that if you want to have a model vestry, if you want to have schemes carried out for the public without undue regard

for private and vested interests, you must elect pure men to your vestry. You must make, in electing your vestrymen or your councillors or your municipal governors, whoever they may be, the strictest inquiry into this one fact as a preliminary before you judge of their fitness in any other way. You must make the strictest investigation as to whether they have any axes to grind in opposition to the public good.

“I do not doubt that under the newer local bodies that have been produced by the recent Act there will be a larger and more developed public spirit. At least, I always live in hope. But, at any rate, that matter is not for Parliament—it is for you yourselves. You have to choose the men who are to govern you, and, before all things, you must choose them pure. If they are not pure, you will have a corrupt vestry, because the influence of corruption, however much it may be in a minority at the beginning, is infinitely more potent and far-reaching than the influence of disinterestedness and public spirit. Keep that taint out of your local bodies, and there is no vestry in London that might not be sanguine, with the aid of some little useful, matter-of-fact, common-sense legislation, of emulating, and even in time exceeding, the example set by your vestry. I have great pleasure in declaring these buildings open.”

## CHAPTER XXXV

THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR—MR. KRUGER'S ULTIMATUM—LETTER FROM LORD ROSEBERY—"THE NATION WILL CLOSE ITS RANKS"—TRUST THE MAN AT THE HELM—ABOUT MAJUBA HILL—A SUBLIME EXPERIMENT—"IF MR. GLADSTONE WERE HERE"—THE APPALLING RECORD OF THE TRANSVAAL GOVERNMENT.

LORD ROSEBERY'S silence during the development of the war situation in South Africa last year had led to many earnest appeals to him to give some guidance on the subject. At last, when Mr. Kruger's ultimatum was issued, Lord Rosebery gave way, and the following letter, addressed to a correspondent, appeared :

" 38, BERKELEY SQUARE, LONDON,

" *October 11, 1899.*

" SIR,—Your letter is one of many which reach me complaining of my silence, and asking me to break it. I am silent because I am loth to re-enter the field of politics.

" Last year, indeed, I intervened in a matter for which I had much responsibility ; but now the case is different. To-day, however, I can speak without touching politics, for a situation has been created beyond party polemics.

“ I think, indeed, that in a survey of the past three years there is much in the relations of our Government with that of the Transvaal to criticise, if not to condemn. But that is all over for the present.

“ It is needless to discuss how we could best have attained our simple and reasonable object of rescuing our fellow-countrymen in the Transvaal from intolerable conditions of subjection and injustice, and of securing equal rights for the white races in South Africa, for an ultimatum has been addressed to Great Britain by the South African Republic, which is, in itself, a declaration of war.

“ In the face of this attack the nation will, I doubt not, close its ranks, and relegate party controversy to a more convenient season.

“ There is one more word to be said. Without attempting to judge the policy which concluded peace after the reverse of Majuba Hill, I am bound to state my profound conviction that there is no conceivable Government in this country which could repeat it.

“ I am, yours faithfully,  
“ ROSEBERY.”

The effect of the ultimatum had just the effect Lord Rosebery urged: with the exception of a small, though not uninfluential, section of Liberals at home, the whole Empire, the home country and the Colonies, closed up its ranks in face of



the attack. Lord Rosebery's views about the war were more fully unfolded shortly afterwards, when he delivered the following address at Bath :

“It would be affectation to deny that to-day you are all thinking of something else than the past, that your minds are in the present, not perhaps even in England at all, but in that southern continent where so much of the best blood of England is being shed to-day. Well, I cannot help thinking that under these circumstances it would be wrong perhaps of me if I did not say something, which I promise shall not overstep the lines of party decorum, on that subject which is occupying all your minds. We are at this moment engaged, as we were when Pitt became member for Bath, in a war. You may think it a small war, but no wars are small. You have first to consider what are the liabilities which war may open to you ; and, secondly, you have to remember that, so far as we can judge from the press of Europe, the sympathy of Europe is almost unanimous against us. It is a plain fact to which you must keep your eyes open, and which, even if taken alone, would deprive this war of the character of a small war. Well, I don't know whether that sympathy of Europe being turned against us is the effect of the correspondence, the diplomatic correspondence, which has been published, or not. I myself do not think it is, but I think that that corre-

spondence has not managed to place our case before Europe in as clear or in as favourable a position as I should wish it to do. But on that question I certainly shall not enter to-day. The question of the correspondence is outside my limits. It is a good thing, when you are about to declare war, to investigate very closely the steps that you have taken and are taking, and the language that you have used and are using; but when war has been declared against you it is best to postpone that examination until such a time as you are again sheathing the sword in its scabbard. Then is the time for examination. Nor will I judge to-day whether, in view of the tone and, possibly, the inevitable tendency of the correspondence, our military preparations have been altogether adequate.

“I do know this—that the country is watching, with an anxiety so keen that you may almost hear its pulses, the progress of that comparative handful of gallant men, extended at first on a frontier which seemed rather political than military, and exposed to an overwhelming disparity of numbers, as against their brave and efficient enemy. We have already sustained great losses, and the voice of weeping is already heard in the land. We had yesterday to deplore the death of General Symons—that great officer on whose experience and ability so much value was placed by military experts. Before we sheathe the

sword we shall have many more such losses to deplore; but with regard to the military position, as with regard to the diplomatic position, this is not, in my judgment, the time to examine. With regard to the Crimean War, no doubt the military position was examined with acute criticism in the very middle of the campaign; but with regard to the diplomatic position, judgment was not passed until twenty or five-and-twenty years after it was concluded. I say then—if I may humbly give advice on such a question as this—that you do well to trust the man at the helm when you are passing through a storm; that you do well to present a united front to the enemy, and that it will be time enough when the war is over to examine the questions of correspondence and of preparations that may then present themselves.

“Sir, to my mind all those questions were wiped out by the ultimatum received from the Boers; and when we remember that, not merely has that Government had the courage to send an ultimatum which I think the proudest empire in the world would have hesitated about sending, but since the commencement of the war it has engaged in the strange policy of issuing decrees of annexation of British territory which are apparently desirable additions to the Republic of the Transvaal. That for the Republic which asks for nothing! But it occurs to me as a

strange incident in its history. Sir, there is another question, a larger question than either of these, which must also stand by and wait. That is the question of whether in view of the situation in South Africa, in view of the conflict of races there, things could ever have been definitely solved without recourse to the sword. That I am not going to judge to-day. We require more information than we have, but I am suggesting this for further consideration, so that when the time is come you may be able to pronounce your verdict.

“The Transvaal question, to my mind, is not a very complicated one. It is a story that you have heard before. It is the effort of a nation or a community to put back the hands of the clock. You have had exactly the same incident in the case of the Mormon community. I am not comparing the tenets of the Boers with the tenets of the Mormons. The Boers are in common in that they are a peaceful and industrious population that desire to move into a more solitary part of the world in order that they may enjoy their own existence in their own way, without coming in contact with the outer world.

“You take it quite wrongly if you think I allude in this way to the Mormons through any want of respect for the Boers, but their motives were the same. They wanted to get away from contact with other civilisation; and the Mormons made a

prodigious trek, quite as great as that made by the Boers, and passed through hardships almost unparalleled, and reached that territory where they hoped to enjoy themselves in peace; but the Mormons were soon driven out by the march of civilisation. And in the same way I contend that it was wholly impossible in this condition of the world's affairs that the Boers should seclude themselves also. The course of events, the finger of Providence, if you will, makes it altogether impossible.

“ The next incident that we had in connection with the Boers was the concession of their independence to us. Then there came the war against our control, and then there came the incident which is usually associated with the name of Majuba Hill. Now, gentlemen, I venture to think that there has been a great misunderstanding of that transaction. The battle of Majuba Hill was not a very considerable battle at all—it was a mere skirmish; and concurrently with that there was an attempt on the part of the then Government to settle peacefully the issue in the Transvaal. Now, whatever you may think of the result of that attempt, the thing in itself was a sublime experiment. It was an attempt to carry into the principle of international policy the principle of the gospel itself, and had it been successful, had it been rewarded with success, we, I think, should have been entitled to believe that mankind had taken a great stride

onward, and the hopes for the world and humanity at large would have been infinitely brighter than they are. It was not merely, if I may so express myself, that Mr. Gladstone, I believe, wished to apply the principle of that religion which was so dear to him to international policy that made him make that attempt.

“Mr. Gladstone, it is very little known except to those who were most intimate with him, had an overpowering conviction of the might and power of England. He thought that Great Britain could afford to do things, owing to that overpowering might and dominion, which other nations could not afford to do without a risk of misunderstanding; and for that reason, which I think has never been clearly enough set before the public, he endeavoured, after what was undoubtedly a reverse, to treat with the Boers as if no such reverse had taken place.

“Now we know how that magnanimity was rewarded. We may feel perfectly confident, we who follow Mr. Gladstone, that were he alive, and had he the control of the destinies of this country, it would not be possible for him, nor would it enter into his contemplation had he to make terms after this war, to make terms such as were made after the skirmish of Majuba Hill. Sir, I remember well that time. I had a great personal devotion to Mr. Gladstone. That personal devotion made me regard with hope any

course of policy that he thought fit to adopt; but on this occasion I confess I felt deep misgiving. I did not believe that the world was ripe for such an experiment.

“My misgiving mattered very little indeed, because I was only a private member of Parliament, unconnected with the Government except as a faithful supporter; but I cannot help looking back to it now, and remembering how completely the fears I felt at that time have been realised in the result. So far from the Boers taking the magnanimity as it was intended, they regarded it as a proof of weakness on which they could encroach, and it was with a deliberate and constant encroachment on the terms of the settlement that the Boers rewarded the sublime magnanimity of Mr. Gladstone.

“Then there came what has perhaps had more effect upon the position of the Transvaal than anything else—the discovery of the precious metals. Gold has a most unfortunate influence on any territory where it may be discovered. A great statesman of Australia—Mr. Wentworth—said of gold, however, that ‘Australia has been precipitated into a nation by the discovery of gold.’ Well, in a certain sense, the Transvaal was precipitated into being much more of a nation than it wished by the discovery of gold. Gold attracted those who wished to dig for gold, and in a very short time, as you know,

the population that came in with that object was so considerable a factor in the internal economy of the Transvaal that it had to receive much more attention than it formerly did.

“ Well, not merely was that the effect of gold. If we may judge from all that we have read, the income produced by that discovery of gold produced great corruption in the Transvaal. The bill for salaries—public salaries—in the Transvaal amounts on a calculation to about £40 per head of the population, and it cannot but be considered that that is a liberal allowance for so simple a Republican Government. But if you wish to read a history of the internal economy of the Transvaal I would simply suggest to you that you should procure a book published during the last fortnight, called ‘The Transvaal from Within,’ by Mr. Kirkpatrick, who was a denizen of the Transvaal and much interested in its progress. It is a book which seems to me to bear on every page and in every sentence the mark of truth, and which gives you wholesale and in detail an extraordinary and, I think I may say, an appalling record of the way in which the government of the Transvaal was carried on, and the subjection to which it reduced your fellow-countrymen there.

“ Then there came that deplorable incident of the Raid. The Raid was not merely a deplorable incident from a diplomatic point of view, but it was also the symptom of a deplorable state of



things. You may be quite certain that no English gentleman would have engaged in what may be called a filibustering raid had it not been for the strong cry of distress that proceeded from within the Transvaal. But it was unfortunate from many points of view. In the first place, it gave to the Transvaal Government very much the best of the argument. They had then a great grievance to complain of, and we, in those circumstances, could not urge those grievances of which our fellow-subjects had to complain. In the meantime almost all the taxation of the country was drawn from our fellow-countrymen, the very people who were not subjects of the Transvaal. Our fellow-subjects combined in vain for the most elementary form of education. They were losing face, so to speak, in the eyes of the natives and of the world at large. And the most important element of all was beginning to attract attention—which was that, with the money derived for the gold, the Transvaal Government was gradually piling up a great military power armed to the teeth. Sir, that was a standing menace to our dominion. If it had continued we should have had to consider whether we who rule so many nations were to become a subject nation in our turn in South Africa; and had we become a subject nation, or remained even in the position in which we were, it is scarcely possible to doubt that we should have lost South Africa itself.



**ROSEBERY TO THE RESCUE!**

*Unlabeled drawing.* "FOILED! BUT NO MATTER! A TIME WILL COME!!!"

FROM THE "PUNCH" CARTOON, JULY 15, 1893.



“Well, gentlemen, that is the question, as far as I can put it briefly before you—that is the question you will have to consider before you decide whether the issue in the Transvaal could have been ever solved without recourse to war. There are many who think that, in view of the military strength in the Transvaal, in view of their contempt for the British soldier and for the Englishman at large, in view of their deep-seated resolution to give no adequate franchise in return for the taxation they drew from the Uitlander population, there are many who think that solution could not have been effected. I, at any rate, will not answer that to-day, but what I am quite sure of is what Chatham would have done under such circumstances. I can imagine how Chatham would have treated the Boer ultimatum. You may remember what Chatham said with regard to the position of this nation when engaged in hostilities; and remember it was said, not at the period of which I have been speaking, when he was in power, but when he was in opposition and had been driven from power. He said, ‘This is no occasion for altercation and recrimination; the time has arrived when every Englishman should stand forth for his country’—and then he added, ‘Be one people, forgot everything but the public.’

“You may say that this is too heroic an attitude to take up in face of so little a war.

Gentlemen, make no mistake, this is no little war. I will give at least three reasons why I think it is not. In the first place, in South Africa people, including that vast native population, are all watching which is to be the predominant race. I will give you another reason—because in this contest the world-Empire has called to her assistance from every corner of her dominion detachments of her subjects to give her—not their assistance, for thank God we can do without that—but to show their sympathy and their resolution to be one with the Mother Country in the hour of trial. Lord Chatham would have rejoiced to see that within a century and a half that Empire which he had planned for us was so consolidated as to send troops to the assistance of the Mother Country. And there is a third reason to which I have alluded, which removes this war from the category of little wars.

“It is a circumstance to which it is unpopular to allude, but to which I have alluded already this afternoon, and which it would be improper of me to omit—I mean the attitude of Europe with regard to this country. I don't say, for I do not know, that the Governments of Europe are unfriendly to this country; but I do say, from every source from which I can learn—I do say the press is; and so far as the press represents the opinion of these countries, the press

is almost uniformly hostile to this country. Depend upon it there are nations on the continent of Europe who are watching with an eagerness which should give you cause to reflect over every trip, every stumble, much more over every catastrophe or every disaster which may overtake your arms. Then, when that is the condition of things, I am one of those who think that war waged under these circumstances is not a little war.

“Gentlemen, I cannot myself understand why it is that we attract so much ill-feeling. I will apply a very simple test to the British Empire, as compared with the other Empires who watch her with so much, I will not say malevolence, but so much candid feeling. There is one simple test which I will apply to the British Empire and to them. We should be only too glad at this moment to strike a bargain with the rest of the world that every frontier in the world should remain as it is at present, and I want to know of what other Empire can that be said; and yet we, who are not trying to gain but to maintain an Empire, we who are in the best and highest sense the most conservative force in the world, are the object of the ill-concealed dislike of Governments who, I think, are less single-minded than ourselves.

“Well, then, I come back to my conclusion, and with this I will detain you no longer. It

is this: that we have so much on our shoulders, we have such heavy work to do, we have so much sail to carry, that we cannot, at this critical juncture, afford to waste time in polemical discussions. I know that that is a very unpopular doctrine from a party point of view, but I do not care one jot or one tittle whether it is unpopular or not. When I think of this little island of ours floating as it were so lonely in these northern seas, viewed with such jealousy, with such hostility, with such jarred ambition by the great Empires of the world, so friendless amongst nations which count their armies by embattled millions; when I think of this little island, of the work which it has undertaken, of the Empire that it has founded, and which it is determined to maintain; when I think of this—of our expenditure (one hundred and twelve millions a year in a time of peace)—of the high pressure under which we live, of the responsibilities which we have undertaken, I confess I have no hesitation in recurring to the opinion of Chatham, and saying once more, ‘Be one people, forget everything for the public.’ I do not care, I do not weigh with any dismay or distrust the responsibilities or the engagements of which I have spoken, so long as we remain a united people. ‘Nought,’ as our Shakespeare says, ‘shall make us rue, If England to itself do rest but true.’”

## CHAPTER XXXVI

A MANIFESTO ON THE ELECTION OF 1900

SO far as the political history of Lord Rosebery is concerned, it is well that, as this book is in the press, it is possible to introduce a letter written on the eve of the General Election, the significance and chief interest of which are that it is purely political, and that it sketches a programme of reforms for the Liberal party to advocate. It is as follows :

“DALMENY, *September 22, 1900.*

“MY DEAR HEDWORTH,—I cannot refuse to write you a line of hearty good wishes for your success at Newcastle, and in doing so send a word to those who press me for guidance at this election.

“The question I have to answer is: How should I vote at this juncture were I a voter, which I am not?

“Could I vote for the Government?

“Now, I am reluctant to criticise, for I know too well the difficulty of conducting public affairs.



And in the present situation of the world I would vote for almost any strong administration. I have for that reason tried to support this one, at any rate, in its external policy. But this Government is strong only in votes; in other respects it is the weakest that I can recollect. Take, for example, and the instances could be multiplied, its dealings with vaccination and the Spion Kop dispatches, its withdrawal of its first Education Bill, and its retreat from Port Arthur.

“Nor could I support a Government which has neglected that social legislation for which the country calls, and to which it was pledged; which has so managed foreign affairs as to alienate all foreign nations, while keeping our own in a hurricane of disquietude and distrust, and which by its want of military foresight and preparation exposed this country to humiliations unparalleled in our history since the American War.

“Can we hope for better things in the future?

“There are three great national reforms which cannot wait. Legislation in respect of temperance and the housing of the working classes, not on extreme and visionary, but on sound and practical lines, and fearless administrative reform, more especially of the War Office.

“With regard to these there is nothing to hope for from the present Government. The housing of the working classes they have touched and scamped. They have appointed a Royal

Commission as to temperance, and then flouted the Commission and dismissed the subject with a sneer. Administrative reform could not safely be entrusted to those who appointed, conducted, and ignored the Hartington Commission.

“I should therefore vote for those like yourself who advocate at home legislation and administration on sound liberal and practical lines, who would maintain and consolidate the priceless heritage of our Empire; who would pursue a foreign policy which should preserve our interests with firmness and dignity, but be courteous and conciliatory in method; and who, in the immediate problem of South Africa could only support a settlement which guaranteed that the results of our sacrifices should in no jot or tittle be prejudiced, but should have as its ultimate aim that the Queen’s South African Dominions should present as fair a picture of contentment, confidence, and loyal harmony as the other regions of her Empire. These being my views, I wish you well, all the more as you embody in your person the heroism of our Navy and the political traditions of your heroic family.

“Yours ever,  
(Signed) “ROSEBERY.”

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### *ROSEBERIAN TRIBUTES*

BURKE—BURNS—WALLACE—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON—CROMWELL.

#### BURKE.

ON two occasions Lord Rosebery has delivered addresses on the subject of Burke. Whilst the Earl was Premier he went down to Bristol, on October 30, 1894, and unveiled a statue to Burke. Speaking afterwards in the Colston Hall, his lordship said:

“We meet to-day to fulfil a tardy act of expiation. It is about a hundred and fourteen years since Bristol dismissed Edmund Burke from her service. She has long since repented that dismissal. She repents it to-day, not in sheet and with candle, not in dust and ashes, but in the nobler and more significant form of that effigy which has been unveiled outside. It is well to be a great city. It is well to have your port filled with the commerce of the seas. But it is better to be able to own that you have been in the wrong and to put up a signal monument of acknowledgment. But there is this to

be remembered on the other side. Bristol gave Burke the greatest honour that Burke had ever received, for in what we call honours, contemporary honours, the career of Burke was singularly deficient. A subordinate office in the Government, a pension or two, the Rectorship of a Scottish University, about represent all that Burke received of official honours in his lifetime. But Bristol returned Burke unsolicited, as Yorkshire returned Brougham; and when we remember that the representation of Yorkshire was more to Brougham than the woolsack, we may measure without difficulty what Bristol was to Burke. Brougham, in a moment of unwisdom, left Yorkshire for the woolsack. But Burke would never have left Bristol of his own accord, for he well knew the strength and power that are given to a public man when he stands forward, not on his own merits, but as the representative of a great public constituency. And in those days great popular constituencies were infinitely rarer than they are now, and Bristol was then the second city of the Empire. Well, then, why did Bristol dismiss Burke? We know the ostensible reasons, because he has given them himself. One was because he voted for the relaxation of the penal laws against Roman Catholics and for the relaxation of the hide-bound commercial policy that separated England and Ireland.

“ But I am inclined to think that the real

reasons were more practical and less magnificent ; I am inclined to think that the first reason why Bristol rejected Burke was that he was too negligent of his constituents, did not pay visits enough, was too long absent from them, and that through his absence his opponents were always on the spot, were constantly employed in sowing tares among his wheat. And the other reason I shall give is this, that he had no money to fight Bristol in those days, and that in those days a contest for Bristol was enormously expensive ; and that while he had no money, his supporters at the first election had become impoverished owing to the unjust and foolish American War, and were unable to come to his assistance. Those, at least, are the deductions I arrived at after reading the most interesting and exhaustive book on the connection of Burke with Bristol published by Mr. Weare. I confess I could hardly lay down that book until I had finished it. I have only one fault to find with it. It went to disprove and regard as without foundation a historic story of Cruger, Burke's colleague, who, when Burke sat down at the end of his great oration to the electors of Bristol, said, 'Gentlemen, I say ditto to Mr. Burke.' I am happy to think that time-worn anecdote is beyond reach of Mr. Weare or any other seeker after historical truth, because so good a story, when it has been current for a century, is certain

to be immortal whether it be true or false. You must remember that, as I have said, you were then the second city of the Empire, and your seat was not an easy seat to win. You now get through the poll in a day. The poll then lasted from three weeks to five. All that time new electors were being admitted under the guise of freemen, and as often as they were admitted they voted. Two thousand of these freemen and more were admitted during the course of the three weeks' poll when Mr. Burke was elected, and the certificates of these freemen, 'copies' as they were called, were begged, borrowed, and stolen with the greatest readiness in the world. And when it was impossible to beg, borrow, steal, or manufacture any more of these certificates, one desperate course was at last resorted to, which was this: the widow or the daughter of a freeman of Bristol could confer on her second husband or on her husband the privilege of the franchise by marriage, and so these interesting ladies were dug out and discovered wherever they might exist, even in the recesses of the workhouse, and were taken to church to be married to some enterprising and ambitious politician who wished to exercise for that occasion the privilege of the franchise. It is recorded that these conscientious couples were invariably separated at the church door; the husband hurried to fulfil the new duties that had been enforced

upon him by his union, and when he had done that the ceremony of divorce was gone through with equal expedition. Proceeding to the churchyard, the couple stood, each on one side of a grave, and, in allusion to the solemn words of the marriage service, they said to each other what was true in a sense, 'Death does us part.' Both parties went their way rejoicing. That was considered sufficient divorce of such a marriage, and I am not sure that the opinion was ill founded.

"Now let me say one word to you of Burke as apart from Bristol. It is too vast a subject for me to enter upon in any detail, or as approaching any but a corner of the subject; for so wide and various are the genius and career of Burke that you might as well attempt to exhaust the character of Shakespeare in a speech of this kind as attempt to deal adequately with the genius of Burke. But what is the key to Burke's character? There is, on the face of it, some apparent complexity. Burke was an ardent reformer all his life, but ended in a frenzy of Toryism so violent that it transcended the Ministerial Toryism of that day. That appears inconsistent on the face of it, but it seems to me to bear no real inconsistency. The secret of Burke's character is this, in my judgment—that he loved reform and hated revolution. He loved reform because he hated revolution. He hated

revolution because he loved reform. He regarded revolution as the greatest possible enemy of that large, steady, persistent, moderate reform that he loved, and because by its indiscriminating violence it provoked indiscriminate reaction.

“On the other hand, he regarded reform not merely as good in itself, but as tending by its action to prevent and anticipate the horrors of revolution. Now, you know his horror of anything like parliamentary reform. He would not touch the smallest rotten borough, he would move no hand in doing away with the slightest of those abuses which all Englishmen have long agreed to see in the parliamentary history of his time. In my opinion, that is no real exception to the rule I have laid down, because in his judgment the balances and safeguards of the Constitution hung so nicely, and by so delicate an adjustment, that he had the greatest fear that if you touched them at all they would all come tumbling down together; and so, when at last he did see the violence, the massacre, and the bloodshed of the French Revolution, transcending all that he had feared in a cataclysm of that kind, he burst out in a sublime frenzy of passion and denunciation. I think to this day we feel the thrill of what he wrote then. If you remember, Sir Philip Francis wrote to complain that his description—his famous description—of Marie Antoinette and the contrast with her fallen fortunes was too florid for the



exact canons of good taste. What was Burke's reply? He said, 'I tell you again' that it '*did* draw tears from me and wetted my paper. These tears came again into my eyes almost as often as I looked at the description—they may again.' And I think that when a genius such as this puts tears into prose, posterity may still continue to shed them. Where he failed with regard to the French Revolution was in being blinded, by his disgust at what was passing, to any appreciation of the other side of the question. He saw the horrors as we see them and as we read of them. What he did not see was that they were the outcome of a century of misgovernment, and of misrule and debauchery such as had caused a long continuance of terrible calamity. The palaces and the campaigns and the mistresses of the last two Louis had ground down the faces of the poor in France, and had made life not merely intolerable, but almost impossible to them. There is no doubt that those who suffered on the scaffold in the French Revolution were not the real causes of the Revolution, but they expiated a long series of intolerable crimes against the nation itself. And the result is that Burke passes out of history with the appearance of a reactionary to whom the reaction of his day was totally insufficient, while he passed his life as a reformer, daring and grasping enough to frighten the very souls of his admirers.

“ There were two other points in the career of Burke, two admirable points to my mind. The first was his superiority to everything in the nature of private friendship and party ties when the call of duty summoned him. There was no stronger party man than Burke. He was a Whig of the Whigs. He glorified Whigs. He inspired the Whigs. He was, if I may so express myself, the prose Poet Laureate of Whiggery. And yet, without hesitation or murmur, he forsook all and followed what he believed to be the truth. He loved Charles Fox and all his other political associates. His eulogy on Charles Fox in his speech on his India Bill is perhaps the noblest tribute ever paid in eloquence by one politician to another. But he forsook them all, Charles Fox and all, to follow what he believed to be the truth. The wrench was terrible. It brought tears to the eyes of all who witnessed it. But Burke never flinched and never blenched. He went home to his lonely country home. He went home to see his son die, and all his hopes and future die with that son, and then to die in solitude and sorrow himself.

“ And what of him? Is he a shadow? No, he is, in my opinion, the one figure of the time which is likely never to be a shadow. He brightens on the historic canvas—as the other figures fade—by his speeches, which, as I have said, were read and not listened to. He will be remembered as long as there are readers to read, when those

orators on whose lips Parliaments and people hung enthralled are forgotten with the tongues that spoke and the ears that listened to them. Day by day the powerful Ministers whom he could not persuade, the great nobles whom he had to inspire and to prompt, the sublime statesmen who, forsooth, could not admit him to their Cabinets, wax dimmer and dimmer, and he looms larger and stronger; for their fame rests on Bills and speeches—ephemeral Bills and ephemeral speeches—but his is built on a broader and stronger foundation, built on a high political wisdom—like some noble old castle or abbey, which, while it stands, is a monument and beacon to man, but which often in its decay furnishes a landmark, remarkable to posterity.”

Four years afterwards Lord Rosebery unveiled a memorial to Burke in the Church of St. Mary and All Saints, Beaconsfield. Speaking afterwards at a luncheon given to the company by Sir Edward Lawson at Hall Barn, he said: “There was, of course, more than one Burke. There was the Burke who has left works which will only perish with the English language, but to-day we are thinking more of the Burke as he was seen at Gregories, the farmer, the unsuccessful farmer—as all gentlemen farmers are—the man who strolled about his place, who showed with pride his pigs and his cattle and his horses and

his sheep, the man for whom nothing was too small or too simple in the midst of this home. There have been published in a Scotch paper quite recently extracts from the diary of a Miss Shackleton, belonging to that family of Shackletons to whom Burke had been attached all his life, which, I think, give almost the most perfect picture of Burke at Gregories I have ever read. She describes with the greatest reverence how she came to see Burke, and how he presented her to Crabbe the poet, and how Burke took her into the grounds and made his dog jump into the pond after a stick to show her how well it swam, how he showed her his stables, his granaries, and his domestic animals.

“And, then, how does Burke end the day? There is no light more instructive on this extraordinary man than that he ended by compounding pills for his poorer neighbours who were ill. . Talk of cutting blocks with a razor! The man whose eloquence was the delight of his country, whose writings created an impulse over the world such as no political writings perhaps have ever exceeded, sat down to waste his time, as some might have thought it, in compounding rhubarb with other disagreeable adjuncts into remedies for his poorer neighbours. And as he did so he told a story which I think is worthy to be told on such an occasion as this. He said: ‘I am like an Irish peer whom I used to know, who was also fond

of dealing out remedies to his neighbours. One day that nobleman met a funeral, and asked a poorer neighbour whose funeral it was. "Oh, my lord," was the reply, "that's Tady So-and-so, the man whom your lordship cured three days ago."

"Well, that is the side of Burke we are thinking of to-day. There has been no pompous procession to hallow this centenary, nothing in the nature of ceremony, nothing that would attract the outer eye. But I think we who have been present in the little church to-day have felt that we have taken a moment out of the world and its cares and its businesses for one higher and more sublime process of thought, that we have been enabled to enshrine in our lives a memory in thought and in prayer to-day—a memory which the world will never let die."

#### BURNS

SEVERAL times in public Lord Rosebery has given eloquent expression to his admiration for Robert Burns. The first occasion was on April 6, 1881, when a marble statue of Robert Burns in Dumfries was unveiled by Lord Rosebery, who, in the course of his address, spoke as follows:—

"We are assembled to-day to unveil to the free air of heaven the effigy of our noblest citizen. It is true there is no need of any memorial of Burns in Dumfries. The years he spent here, his

bones which repose here, are sufficient memorials of that immortal man. While your town exists, it is his shrine; his reputation is a part of the very air you breathe. As you will recite against him all his faults and weaknesses, urge against him all that the most rigid moralist may urge, you will yet find that it is precisely the character of his career, and it is himself who gives his poetry its distinctive interest. It is because he was emphatically a man, putting his genius aside, like one of us, because we can trace all his apparent torment of struggle and remorse; it is because we see him struggling in an impossible position, like a war-horse in a morass; because, above all, he had as his mainspring of action a love and sympathy for suffering mankind,—it is for this that his memory is for us as the memory of a dead brother; it is because all this simplicity and passion of life is flung into immortal verse, that we love his poetry as much as we admire it. . . . Every word that he wrote is inspired by love of his kind. . . .

“It is for this that his memory is so universally beloved; it is for this that his sympathies reach beyond the grave. . . . Eight months only before he died, and while he lay on his death-bed, but a few miles from his death-bed there was born an Elisha on whom part of his mantle should fall—I mean Thomas Carlyle, who was destined to be, perhaps, the fittest interpreter of Burns,

and a great poet himself. It would seem that Providence was unwilling that Dumfriess-shire should cease for a moment to be the home of genius; for rarely in this world have the birth and death of genius occurred so close to each other in point of place and time."

Lord Rosebery, in 1896, on the centenary of the death of Robert Burns, was at the tomb of the poet at Dumfries, and there received a vast number of wreaths from all parts of the world to be placed upon the tomb. Speaking afterwards at the Drill Hall of the town, Lord Rosebery said :

"We are surrounded by the choicest and the most sacred haunts of the poet. You have in this town the house in which he died, the 'Globe,' where we could have wished that some phonograph had then existed which could have communicated to us some of his wise and witty and wayward talk. You have the street commemorated in M'Culloch's tragic anecdote when Burns was shunned by his former friends, and you have the paths by the Nith which are associated with some of his greatest work. You have near you the room in which the whistle was contended for, and in which, if mere legend is to be trusted, the immortal Dr. Gregory was summoned to administer his first powders to the survivors of that memorable debauch. You have

the stackyard in which, lying on his back and contemplating—

‘Thou ling’ring star, with less’ning ray,  
That lov’st to greet the early morn,’

he wrote the lines ‘To Mary in Heaven’—perhaps the most pathetic of his poems. You have near you the walk by the river where, in his transport, he passed his wife and children without seeing them, ‘his brow flushed and his eyes shining’ with the lustre of ‘Tam o’ Shanter.’ ‘I wish you had but seen him,’ said his wife; ‘he was in such ecstasy that the tears were happing down his cheeks.’

“That is why we are in Dumfries to-day. We come to honour Burns among these immortal haunts of his. But it is not in Dumfries alone that he is commemorated to-day, for all Scotland will pay her tribute. And this, surely, is but right. Mankind owes him a general debt. But the debt of Scotland is special. For Burns exalted our race, he hallowed Scotland and the Scottish tongue. Before his time we had for a long period been scarcely recognised, we had been falling out of the recollection of the world. From the time of the union of the Crowns, and still more from the time of the legislative union, Scotland had lapsed into obscurity. Except for an occasional riot or a Jacobite rising, her existence was almost forgotten. She had, indeed,



her Robertsons and her Humes writing history to general admiration, but no trace of Scottish authorship was discoverable in their works; indeed, every flavour of national idiom was carefully excluded. The Scottish dialect, as Burns called it, was in danger of perishing. Burns seemed at this juncture to start to his feet and re-assert Scotland's claim to national existence; his Scottish notes rang through the world, and he thus preserved the Scottish language for ever; for mankind will never allow to die that idiom in which his songs and poems are enshrined. This is a part of Scotland's debt to Burns.

"We are assembled in our high enthusiasm under circumstances which are somewhat paradoxical. For with all the appearance of joy, we celebrate not a festival, but a tragedy. It is not the sunrise, but the sunset, that we commemorate. It is not the birth of a new power into the world, the subtle germ of a fame that is to survive and inspire the generations of men; but it is perhaps more fitting that we celebrate the end and not the beginning. For the coming of these figures is silent; it is their disappearance that we know. At this instant that I speak there may be born into the world the equal of a Newton or a Cæsar, but half of us would be dead before he had revealed himself. Their death is different. It may be gloomy and disastrous; it may come at a moment of shame or neglect; but by that

time the man has carved his name somewhere on the Temple of Fame. There are exceptions, of course; cases where the end comes before the slightest, or any but the slightest, recognition—Chatterton choking in his garret, hunger of body and soul all unsatisfied; Millet selling his pictures for a song; nay, Shakespeare himself. But, as a rule, death in the case of genius closes the first act of a public drama; criticism and analysis may then begin their unbiassed work free from jealousy or friendship or personal consideration for the living. Then comes the third act, if third act there be.

“It is a death, not a birth, that we celebrate. This day a century ago, in poverty, delirium, and distress, there was passing the soul of Robert Burns. To him death comes in clouds and darkness, the end of a long agony of body and soul; he is harassed with debt, his bodily constitution is ruined, his spirit is broken, his wife is daily expecting her confinement. He has lost almost all that rendered his life happy—much of friendship, credit, and esteem. Some score years before, one of the most charming of English writers, as he lay dying, was asked if his mind was at ease, and with his last breath Oliver Goldsmith owned that it was not. So it was with Robert Burns. His delirium dwelt on the horrors of a jail; he uttered curses on the tradesman who was pursuing him for debt.

‘What business,’ said he to his physician in a moment of consciousness, ‘what business has a physician to waste his time upon me? I am a poor pigeon not worth plucking. Alas! I have not feathers enough to carry me to my grave.’ For a year or more his health had been failing. He had a poet’s body as well as a poet’s mind—nervous, feverish, impressionable; and his constitution, which, if nursed and regulated, might have carried him to the limit of life, was unequal to the storm and stress of dissipation and a preying mind. In the previous autumn he had been seized with a rheumatic attack; his digestion had given way; he was sunk in melancholy and gloom. In his last April he wrote to his friend Thomson: ‘By Babel’s streams, etc. Almost ever since I wrote you last, I have only known existence by the pressure of the heavy hand of Sickness, and have counted time by the repercussions of pain! Rheumatism, cold, and fever, have formed, to me, a terrible Trinity in Unity, which makes me close my eyes in misery, and open them without hope.’ It was sought to revive him by sea bathing, and he went to stay at Brow Well. There he remained three weeks, but was under no delusion as to his state. ‘Well, madam,’ he said to Mrs. Riddell on arriving, ‘have you any commands for the other world?’ He sat that evening with his old friend, and spoke manfully of his approaching death, of the

fate of his children, and his fame ; sometimes indulging in bitter-sweet pleasantry, but never losing the consciousness of his condition. In three weeks he wearied of the fruitless hunt for health, and he returned home to die. He was only just in time. When he re-entered his home on the 18th he could no longer stand ; he was soon delirious ; in three days he was dead. 'On the fourth day,' we are told, 'when his attendant held a cordial to his lips, he swallowed it eagerly, rose almost wholly up, spread out his hands, sprang forward nigh the whole length of the bed, fell on his face, and expired.' I suppose there are many who can read the account of these last months with composure. They are more fortunate than I. There is nothing much more melancholy in all biography. The brilliant poet, the delight of all society, from the highest to the lowest, sits brooding in silence over the drama of his spent life : the early innocent home, the plough and the savour of fresh-turned earth ; the silent communion with Nature and his own heart, the brief hour of splendour, the dark hour of neglect, the mad struggle for forgetfulness, the bitterness of vanished homage, the gnawing doubt of fame, the distressful future of his wife and children — an endless witch-dance of thought without clue or remedy, all perplexing, all soon to end while he is yet young, as men reckon youth ; though none know so well as he that his

youth is gone, his race is run, his message is delivered. His death revived the flagging interest and pride that had been felt for him. As usual, men began to realise what they had lost when it was too late. When it was known that he was dying the townspeople had shown anxiety and distress. They recalled his fame and forgot his fall. One man was heard to ask, with a touch of quaint simplicity, 'Who do you think will be our poet now?' The district set itself to prepare a public funeral for the poet who died penniless among them. A vast concourse followed him to his grave. The awkward squad, as he had foreseen and deprecated, fired volleys over his coffin. The streets were lined with soldiers, among them one who, within sixteen years, was to be Prime Minister. And while the procession wended its gloomy way, as if no element of tragedy were to be wanting, his widow's hour of travail arrived and she gave birth to the hapless child that had caused the father so much misgiving. In this place and on this day it all seems present to us—the house of anguish, the thronged churchyard, the weeping neighbours. We feel ourselves part of the mourning crowd. We hear those dropping volleys and that muffled drum; we bow our heads as the coffin passes, and acknowledge with tears the inevitable doom. Pass, heavy hearse, with thy weary freight of shattered hopes and exhausted frame; pass, with

thy simple pomp of fatherless bairns and sad moralising friends; pass, with the sting of death to the victory of the grave; pass, with the perishable, and leave us the eternal. It is rare to be fortunate in life; it is infinitely rarer to be fortunate in death. 'Happy in the occasion of his death,' as Tacitus said of Agricola, is not a common epitaph. It is comparatively easy to know how to live, but it is beyond all option and choice to compass the more difficult art of knowing when and how to die. We can generally by looking back choose a moment in a man's life when he had been fortunate had he dropped down dead. And so the question arises naturally to-day, Was Burns fortunate in his death—that death which we commemorate? There can, I fancy, be only one answer: it was well that he died when he did; it might even have been better for himself had he died a little earlier; for Burns was 'done,' to quote an awful expression in Scotland, which one never hears without a pang.

"To-day is not merely the melancholy anniversary of death, but the rich and incomparable fulfilment of prophecy. For this is the moment to which Burns looked when he said to his wife: 'Don't be afraid; I'll be more respected a hundred years after I am dead than I am at present!' To-day the hundred years are completed, and we can judge of the prediction. On that point we

must all be unanimous. Burns had honour in his lifetime, but his fame has rolled like a snowball since his death, and it rolls on. There is, indeed, no parallel to it in the world; it sets the calculations of compound interest at defiance. He is not merely the watchword of a nation that carries and implants Burns-worship all over the globe as birds carry seeds, but he has become the champion and patron saint of Democracy. He bears the banner of the essential equality of man. His birthday is celebrated—a hundred and thirty-seven years after its occurrence—more universally than that of any human being. He reigns over a greater dominion than any empire that the world has ever seen.”

Another oration to the honour of Burns was delivered the same evening in St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow. Lord Rosebery then said:

“What the direct connection of Burns with Glasgow may be I am not exactly sure; but, at any rate, I am confident of this, that in the great metropolis of the West there is a clear claim that we should celebrate the genius of Robert Burns. I have celebrated it already elsewhere. I cannot, perhaps, deny that the day has been a day of labour, but it has been a labour of love. It is, and it must be, a source of joy and pride to us to see our champion Scotsman receive the honour and admiration and affection of humanity; to see, as I have seen this morning, the long processions

bringing homage and tribute to the conquering dead. But these have only been signs and symptoms of the world-wide passion of reverence and devotion. That generous and immortal soul pervades the universe to-day. In the humming city and in the crowd of man; in the backwood and in the swamp; where the sentinel paces the bleak frontier, and where the sailor smokes his evening pipe; and above all, where the farmer and his men pursue their summer toil, whether under the Stars and Stripes or under the Union Jack—the thought and sympathy of men are directed to Robert Burns. I have sometimes asked myself, if a roll-call of fame were read over at the beginning of every century, how many men of eminence would answer a second time to their names. But of our poet there is no doubt or question. The *adsum* of Burns rings out clear and unchallenged. There are few before him on the list, and we cannot now conceive a list without him. He towers high, and yet he lived in an age when the average was sublime.

“ . . . I should like to go a step further and affirm that we have something to be grateful for even in the weaknesses of men like Burns. Mankind is helped in its progress almost as much by the study of imperfection as by the contemplation of perfection. Had we nothing before us in our futile and halting lives but saints and the ideal, we might well fail altogether. We grope blindly



along the catacombs of the world, we climb the dark ladder of life, we feel our way to futurity, but we can scarcely see an inch around or before us. We stumble and falter and fall, our hands and knees are bruised and sore, and we look up for light and guidance. Could we see nothing but distant unapproachable impeccability, we might well sink prostrate in the hopelessness of emulation and the weariness of despair. Is it not then, when all seems blank and lightless and lifeless, when strength and courage flag, and when perfection seems as remote as a star—is it not then that imperfection helps us? When we see that the greatest and choicest images of God have had their weaknesses like ours, their temptations, their hours of darkness, their bloody sweat, are we not encouraged by their lapses and catastrophes to find energy for one more effort, one more struggle? Where they failed we feel it a less dishonour to fail; their errors and sorrows make, as it were, an easier ascent from infinite imperfection to infinite perfection. Man, after all, is not ripened by virtue alone. Were it so, this world were a paradise of angels. No! Like the growth of the earth, he is the fruit of all the seasons, the accident of a thousand accidents, a living mystery, moving through the seen to the unseen. He is sown in dishonour; he is matured under all the varieties of heat and cold; in mist and wrath, in snow and vapours, in the melancholy

of autumn, in the torpor of winter, as well as in the rapture and fragrance of summer, or the balmy affluence of the spring—its breath, its sunshine, its dew. And at the end he is reaped—the product, not of one climate, but of all; not of good alone, but of evil; not of joy alone, but of sorrow—perhaps mellowed and ripened, perhaps stricken and withered and sour. How, then, shall we judge any one? How, at any rate, shall we judge a giant, great in gifts and great in temptation, great in strength and great in weakness? Let us glory in his strength and be comforted in his weakness. And when we thank Heaven for the inestimable gift of Burns, we do not need to remember wherein he was imperfect, we cannot bring ourselves to regret that he was made of the same clay as ourselves.”

## WALLACE.

AT Stirling, on September 13, 1897, the sixth centenary of the Battle of Stirling was celebrated. Lord Rosebery, proposing the toast “The Immortal Memory of Sir William Wallace,” said:—

“There are, I think, two classes of my fellow-countrymen who would gladly be in the position in which I find myself. One is the class of minute archæological historians, who would find a savage, an almost devilish, delight in winnowing the true from the false in the legends that

surround Sir William Wallace, and in distinguishing all that is legendary from the few golden facts which remain. But I think that you will agree with me this would not be the occasion for such a discourse, and, were it the occasion, I am not the man. After all, these points are not always of very first-rate importance. There is, however, one to which I will allude. It is sometimes, I believe, the subject of controversy as to whether Wallace was a Scotsman at all. I regard that as a point of the most infinitesimal importance. It may be a subject of interest to many to know what is the birthplace or the district in which a person is brought up, when that person has achieved a certain eminence; but there are greater figures than these, who embody and absorb a nation and whom a nation has absorbed and embodied, but whose exact place of birth is a matter of no importance at all. We all know that Catherine II. of Russia was a German princess. We all know that the first Napoleon was of Italian origin and born in Corsica. But I do not suppose there is anybody who has read a page of history who will deny that Catherine is one of the greatest of Russians and that Napoleon is incomparably the greatest of Frenchmen.

“There is another class who would have rejoiced to fill my place, but I am not sure either that they would have been the right persons,—I mean the class of passionate and indiscriminating

patriots to whom everything, true or false, connected with the memory of a national hero is dear, and who, without the faintest effort or stress of deglutition, can swallow every legend and every tradition that is associated with their favourite hero. Sir, those patriots would soar into heights to which I cannot aspire, and I venture to think that in so soaring they are not always performing a wise or patriotic task ; because I firmly believe that the stronger, and the broader, and the safer the base for your enthusiasm, the better it is for that enthusiasm ; and that exaggeration, in matters of enthusiasm, is apt to lead to ridicule and to reaction. The authentic and received facts about Sir William Wallace are, indeed, extremely few, but this, in my judgment—and I hope you will accept that judgment—so far from diminishing the merit of that great man, seems to me a conclusive proof of his greatness. That with so small a substratum of historical events he should have left so great an impression upon his countrymen would in itself prove him to be one of the greatest of Scotsmen. But the facts, whether few or many, are thunderbolts in themselves.

“ Whatever his talents may have been, there is something greater in great men than their talents ; for the most consummate talents in themselves will not make a great man. There is in them, besides their talent, their spirit, their character, that magnetic fluid, as it were, that enables them to

influence vast bodies of their fellow-men, which makes them a binding and stimulating power outside the circle of their own personal fascination. That Wallace had this power we have abundant evidence. He was the first to rise and to face the oppressor. It was he who set the heather on fire. It was he who inspired the men and the events which followed. For, after all, what Wallace in his own person effected and achieved is as nothing to what he created and bequeathed—the fixed resolve of undying patriotism, the passionate, unquenchable determination of freedom, the men who were to emulate and imitate himself. Without him, in face of the formidable foe they had to face, the Scots might never have rallied for defence at all. Bruce might never have stood forth, and Bannockburn might not have been fought. Scotland might have become a remote and oppressed or neglected district, without a name, or a history, or a friend; and the centuries of which we are so proud, centuries so full of energy and passion and dramatic history, might have passed silently and heedlessly over a dark and unknown province.

“Wallace was in truth the champion who stood forth and prevented this, who asserted Scotland as an independent country, who made or remade the Scots as a nation. It is for this that we Scotsmen must put him in the highest place. It is for this that we venerate his name now that

the dark and bloody memories of his time are memories and nothing more. It is for this that we honour him when his foes are our nearest and dearest friends. And can we not condense the truth about Wallace even more compactly than this? There are junctures in the affairs of men when what is wanted is a Man—not treasures, not fleets, not legions, but a Man—the man of the moment, the man of the occasion, the man of destiny, whose spirit attracts and unites and inspires, whose capacity is congenial to the crisis, whose powers are equal to the convulsion—the child and the outcome of the storm. The type of the man is the same, though you find it under different names and different forms in different ages. It is the same whether you call it Cæsar, or Luther, or Washington, or Mirabeau, or Cavour. The crisis is a travail, and the birth of the man ends or assuages it.

“We recognise in Wallace one of these men—a man of fate, given to Scotland in the storms of the thirteenth century. It is that fact—the fact of his destiny and his fatefulness—that succeeding generations have instinctively recognised. It is that fact in reality that we are commemorating to-day. There are some who have doubts and difficulties with regard to celebrations of this kind. There are some who cast doubt on the wisdom of celebrating with enthusiasm men and events of so remote a period in our history. How, they think,

can you kindle enthusiasm about men or events of six centuries ago? I shall not trouble this assembly with answering such persons, except in the stanza which Burns wrote about the Solemn League and Covenant; of which there are two versions, which, with your permission, I will combine. Do you remember it?

‘The Solemn League and Covenant  
 Cost Scotland blood, cost Scotland tears;  
 But sacred Freedom, too, was theirs.  
 If thou’rt a slave, indulge thy sneers.’

But there is another class who urge, with more reason perhaps, that it is not timely or politic or even friendly to celebrate a victory in which the defeated foes were Englishmen. In my opinion it is no disparagement to our loyalty or our affection for England that we are celebrating the memory of the battle of Stirling and of Sir William Wallace. In the course of the long and bloody wars between the two countries England has many victories to record; but in the splendid record of her triumphs all over the world it is not worth while for her to celebrate the memory of such battles as Flodden or Dunbar. To us, however, the memory of this victory and of the man by whom it was gained does not represent the defeat of an English army, but the dawn of our national existence and the assertion of our national independence. Let us all, then, Englishmen and Scotsmen together, rejoice in this anniversary

and in the memory of this hero, for he at Stirling made Scotland great; and if Scotland were not great the Empire of all the Britons would not stand where it does."

#### ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

LORD ROSEBERY presided over a gathering in the Music Hall, Edinburgh, on December 10, 1896, and thus spoke of Robert Louis Stevenson:

"How, then, can I, in her presence, and in the presence of those friends who knew him so well, pretend to take a prominent part on this occasion? My part was a perfectly simple one. I wrote to the papers a genuine inquiry. I could not but believe that in this age of memorials and testimonials some stone or cairn had been put up to the memory of Robert Louis Stevenson. I should have been confident that such a memorial had been put up but for one trifling, though capital, circumstance—I had never been asked for a subscription; and therefore I came to the conclusion that there were grave doubts as to whether any such movement had taken place.

"To-day is not the moment—we have not the time, and it would require a literary capacity to which I make no pretence—to-day is not the opportunity to enter into any review of the works of Stevenson. But there are two or three points



to which, as an outside reader, I must call your attention before I sit down. The first is the style of the man himself—it was a tool carefully finished and prepared by himself in order the better to work out the business to which his genius led him. I daresay many of you may think that style is a light, accidental art of inspiration which comes easily to a gifted writer. But what does Stevenson say himself? ‘Whenever a book or a passage particularly pleased me, in which a thing was said or an effect rendered with propriety, in which there was either some conspicuous force or some happy distinction in the style, I must sit down at once and set myself to ape that quality. I was unsuccessful, and I knew it; and tried again, and was again unsuccessful, and always unsuccessful. But at least in these vain bouts I got some practice in rhythm, in harmony, in construction, and in the co-ordination of parts. I have thus played the sedulous ape to Hazlitt, to Lamb, to Wordsworth, to Sir Thomas Browne, to Defoe, to Hawthorne, to Montaigne, to Baudelaire, and to Oberman.’ And to these he adds afterwards, in a later passage, Ruskin, Browning, Morris, Keats, Swinburne, Chaucer, Webster, Congreve, and Thackeray; and he sums it all up by saying, ‘*that*, like it or not, is the way to write.’ If a dullard were to pursue that practice which Stevenson enjoins, he would at

the end of it be probably only, as at the beginning, a 'sedulous ape.' But with Stevenson there was the genius to mould what he had acquired by this painful practice. Mr. Fox said of Mr. Pitt that he himself (Mr. Fox) had always a command of words, but that Mr. Pitt had always a command of the right words; and that is a quality which strikes us so in the style of Stevenson.

"I do not know whether his method was easy or laborious. I strongly suspect it may have been laborious; but, whichever it was, he never was satisfied with any word which did not fully embody the idea that he had in his mind, and therefore you have in his style something suggestive, something musical, something pregnant, a splendid vehicle for whatever he had to say. He was not satisfied with style; he infused into his style a spirit which, for want of a better word, I can only call a spirit of irony of the most exquisite kind. He, as you know, adopted a style of diction which reminds us sometimes more of Addison's *Spectator* or Steele's *Tatler* than of the easier and more emotional language of these later days. But as he put into these dignified sentences this spirit which, for want of a better word, I must call irony, he relieved what otherwise might have been heavy. Now, I think you will all recognise what I mean when I speak of this spirit of irony. You will

find it in, I think, every page of his works. I do not mean that of the savage and gruesome parable which has added a household word to the English language, and which is called 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde' or 'Mr. Hyde and Dr. Jekyll'; but I will take one instance from one of the works of his highest imagination, 'The New Arabian Nights.' He takes Rudolf out of 'The Mysteries of Paris' and puts him down in London as a plump and respectable Prince of Bohemia, bent on adventure, but comfortably situated, hovering always between the sublime and the ridiculous, till the author at last makes up his mind for the ridiculous and settles him down in a cigar divan. But no one can read the account of Florizel, Prince of Bohemia, without recognising the essential quality of irony which makes Stevenson's style so potent. In some of his books he develops an even more bitter power of the same kind. In 'The Dynamiter' you will find that in a form sometimes in which neither Swift nor Thackeray could be excelled. The picture of the scheming dynamiter, full of the high impulse of his mission, and constantly baffled by the cruel fate of circumstances in his efforts for an exhaustive explosion, is perhaps one of the most powerful instances of sardonic treatment to be met with in the whole history of English literature.

"There are two places in the world where Stevenson might fitly be commemorated: one is

Edinburgh and one is Samoa. I suppose that in Samoa some sort of memorial is sure to be raised. But, gathering as I do Stevenson's tastes only from a perusal of his works, there seem to me to have been two passions in his life—one for Scotland, and in Scotland for Edinburgh, and one for the sea. It seems to me that, if some memorial could be raised which should appeal to his passion both for Edinburgh and for the sea, we should have done the best thing in carrying out what might have been his wishes in such a connection. But whether that be so or not, of one thing I am certain—that none of us here, if I may judge from the crowding of this hall and the attitude of this audience, are willing that the time shall pass without some adequate memorial being raised. That is, after all, the materially important point for which we are met—that we should not go down to posterity as a generation that was unaware of the treasure in our midst; and I trust that before long it will be our happiness in Edinburgh to see some memorial of Robert Louis Stevenson which shall add to the historical interest of our city and to the many shrines of learning and of genius by which it is adorned.”

#### CROMWELL

THE Cromwell Tercentenary was celebrated on November 14, 1899. In the morning, at half-past

seven, Mr. Hamo Thorneycroft's statue, erected in the garden of Westminster Hall, was unveiled. The process was in no way ceremonial. Workmen untied the ropes and pulled down the coverings, whereupon the 10-ft. bronze figure, standing on its 12-ft. pedestal of Portland stone, was revealed to the passers-by. Cromwell is shown bare-headed, in military attire, with a Bible in his left and a sword in his right hand. Many persons visited and admired the statue during the day. In the evening the Tercentenary was celebrated by a national meeting in the Queen's Hall, Langham Place. Every seat in the vast building was occupied, the gathering being largely composed of ladies. Lord Welby, Chairman of the London County Council, presided.

Lord Rosebery said :

“Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,—I am very glad to be here to-night. We are all, I imagine, glad to be here to-night, even if we are not proud to be here to-night. But, after all, this is no great occasion for pride; for we commemorate the erection of the first statue of Cromwell in London—a statue that ought to have been erected long ago—and which has even now met with some not unimportant difficulties. I don't know if you remember the history of the inception of this statue. It was promised by Mr. Herbert Gladstone—as First Commissioner of

Works under the late Government—and then, under pressure in the House of Commons, that promise was withdrawn, and immediately on that promise being withdrawn, an individual, who, I understand, felt that the immortal memory should not be made a football for contending factions in the House of Commons, wrote to offer to bear the cost of that memorial, and the Government of the day accepted that offer, and it was ratified by the Government that is now in power. Well, since that time a new opposition has sprung up. It is slender in numbers, but I do not pretend to say that it does not represent a considerable volume of prejudice, even of passion. But so far as it has gone it has not assumed a very serious complexion. It has, indeed, carried by a majority in the House of Lords, when the House of Lords was not crowded, a resolution denouncing, as far as I recollect, the present position of the statue, and though the Government loyally stood to their pledges, they were unfortunately defeated by a majority of six to four. Well, I for one do not complain of that opposition.

“ But there are two features in connection with it to which I would call attention for a moment. The first is that it is not very logical, because, in the very heart of the House of Commons—that sacred shrine of the Constitution, to which the presence, I understand, of Oliver Cromwell was supposed by the majority of the House of Lords

to be deleterious—in the very heart of the House of Commons there has been placed by the present Government, not by arrangement with the late Government, or under any pressure whatever, a bust of Oliver Cromwell. I don't quite understand what is the difference between a statue in the open air outside Parliament and a bust in the very heart and centre of Parliament itself. And secondly, I would urge this, that if this opposition had been raised it would have been more graceful and more fair had it been urged some four years ago. The statue was promised, and the sculptor was commissioned, somewhere about June, 1895, for I remember very well it preceded almost immediately the fall of the late Government. Not that I associate the two facts in the slightest degree. Well, four years ago the commission was given. But it is not till the pedestal has actually been erected, and till the statue is rumbling on its way to occupy the pedestal, that the opposition lifts up its voice, and the House of Lords commits itself to its vote. I think that was hardly—in the language of the vernacular—'playing the game,' and I trust we shall hear no more of this subject.

“There is an evil fate that attends the statues of Cromwell. Scotland was prepared to erect a statue to Oliver Cromwell. She was not very devoted to him. He had inflicted a considerable defeat upon her forces, and yet, so great was their gratitude for the good government which

came from this unwelcome source, that they ordered a statue of Cromwell to be erected on a site which is now occupied by the statue of his successor, Charles II. Unfortunately the statue was not completed, or more than half rough hewn, at the time of the Protector's death, and therefore it lay an almost shapeless mass, as of a figure in a shroud, at Leith, until it was put up in some obscurer part of Edinburgh, and ultimately has gone no man knows whither. We, at any rate, are more fortunate. We have a statue, I think, so far as I have seen it in the Academy, worthy of the subject and worthy of the genius of the sculptor. I am glad that the sculptor is here, to listen to your applause. Sir, you have insinuated, or asserted, that I was going to give a description of Oliver Cromwell to-night. That is exactly what I shall not attempt to do; for to do so in a speech would inevitably be both to fall short of my object and also altogether to mistake the character of a speech. Were I going to read you an essay, it might be possible to make some such attempt. But the character of a speech must naturally be comparatively shallow, and must not attempt more than it can well comprise; and in order to make my survey, in its very inception imperfect, there are two great acts of the Protector's career upon which I propose to offer no—or at any rate, none but the very fewest and sparsest observations.



“ The first is his policy towards Ireland. Now, with regard to that, I am bound to say this, that it admits of explanation, but it hardly admits of excuse, and I am one of those who feel that were I an Irishman, I, at any rate, should not be a contributory to a statue of Oliver Cromwell. I am not sure that even as a Scotsman I may not have to bear some little censure for being present on this occasion. But to our Irish friends I would only say this, that as we do not interfere with the statues they put up in Dublin, they might refrain from interfering in the statues we are putting up here. It is true that the policy of Cromwell towards Ireland was ruthless and cruel in the extreme. But two things are forgotten, not—I guard myself by saying—by way of palliation, but by way of explanation. The first is that there was great provocation; and, in the second place, it must also be remembered that the Puritans, of whom Cromwell was the leader, were imbued deeply, for reasons it would now be too long to explain, with the lessons of the Old Testament. He believed that they were the chosen people of God, who had the right to deal with their enemies as the Israelites dealt with the Amalekites. That was an explanation of the policy, not the toleration of the policy towards Ireland.

“ Nor will I say anything of the execution of Charles I. That was an act which I think

was barely justified by the circumstances. But one or two facts are generally forgotten, if they were ever known, by the critics of the memory of Cromwell, who yet thought it was no willing act on the part of Cromwell.

“You must recollect that he had found out by painful experience that Charles held no measures with his opponents, and that he was not to be trusted, and, what is now better known, that it is not possible for a feudal monarch to be a constitutional ruler. It seems to me that in the struggle better means might have been adopted. It was not merely a crime—if a crime—but a political blunder. There is only one remark I would make further, and it is this—that you have permitted without fear the memory of a regicide to be honoured in this country. What kind of man was this Cromwell that we seek to honour to-night? You will get as many answers as there are people in this hall. Every one has his own theory, and they are apt to be very jarring theories. There is, of course, the popular, but, perhaps, illiterate view, which sometimes expresses that he was a ‘damned psalm-singing humbug,’ who cut off the head of his king, and I think that to a considerable number of people who talk about Cromwell the knowledge of Cromwell is limited to that simple view.

“I do not know if that is the opinion of the majority of the House of Lords. But, at any

rate, let me collect three testimonies of Cromwell. Well, Macaulay said that he was 'the greatest Prince that ever ruled England.' The greatest living authority on that period, Mr. Samuel Rawson Gardner, sums him up in the words: 'With all his conscientious and spiritual yearnings, in the world of action he was what Shakespeare was in the world of art, the greatest and most powerful Englishman of all time.' But there is one testimony that I reserve to the last, the testimony of Southey, the great man of letters of his day, not Conservative, remember, but Tory. Speaking of Cromwell, he says that no man was 'so worthy of the station which he filled.' Well, I will balance these testimonies against the majority of the House of Lords.

"But if I am asked on what grounds I personally admire him, I would say that in the first place he was a great soldier, in the second place a great ruler, and in the third place a great maintainer of British influence and British power abroad. Take him as a soldier. I am, of course, not competent to give any technical opinion of Cromwell's merits as a soldier; but I believe that the experts now pronounce the opinion that Cromwell was one of the great soldiers of his day, and of all days. But, at any rate, we who are not soldiers can understand certain particular features of Cromwell's military career which are patent to us all. In the first place it was mar-

vellously short : it was begun at so late a period of life—I think he was forty-two when he entered the army, and fifty-one when he sheathed his sword. Well, that seems to me a most remarkable feature. I think that no man ever entered the army so late who rose to so great a position, except, perhaps, that still more singular instance, from the time in which he lived, of Lord Lynedoch, who entered the army at forty-six, and lived a Field-Marshal in the present century. But there was this peculiarity about Cromwell, that he won every battle which he fought, and we at any rate can judge of this also. With what political enthusiasm he managed to inspire his soldiers, and with what extraordinary instinct he was able to detect the weakest point in the enemy's battle! No one, I think, who has read the accounts of the battles of Cromwell can but think that he was a born soldier, and that he had the military capacity in its highest sense and highest degree.

“Let me take him now for a moment as a ruler. I have not called him a statesman—deliberately—because Cromwell had no opportunity of showing his qualities as a statesman. His reign was too brief. His life was too short. He died at an age when a man would be considered almost young as a Prime Minister in these days. And there is more than this to be recollected with respect to him. He was always ruling on behalf of a minority. Perfectly true

was it that he was fighting the battle of freedom, perfectly true that he was fighting the battle of toleration, and equally and indisputably true was it that the majority of the nation was not favourable to his policy, and he had to fight against their instincts and their prejudices. That accounted for the difficulties he had to face in the course of his career. He had Parliaments to dissolve, to weed, to sift—Parliaments in which he even had to guard the doors in order that no member of the Opposition should gain an entrance.

“What was Cromwell’s position? He was in reality a destructive agent appointed, as it were, to put an end to a feudal monarchy, and to be the introducer of a new state of things, which did not rest on the will of the people, but on the will of the army; and when we consider this we shall feel that Cromwell did accomplish extraordinary things. In Scotland, where he was no welcome intruder—Scotland (though it may be no great compliment, and I am sorry to have to say it), he governed better than it had ever been governed before, and better than it was governed for a long time afterwards. He certainly effected the union of Scotland and England, and what was practically far more important, effected a measure which gave a freedom of trade, which was regarded with so much prejudice, that it was one of the causes of the

opposition accorded to him in England. Those are considerable features in his career. But there is one more to which I have made allusion, and it is that of his policy as a ruler, a point on which we cannot lay too great an emphasis. He was the first ruler who really understood and practised toleration.

“It is quite true that some Episcopalians were not allowed to practise their faith so freely as they might have desired; but I think, sir, in that case there was a political reason, and it was the Royalist, and not the Episcopalian, who was forbidden to influence the people at that period. But we know he was capable of an act of tolerance which seems almost incredible in those days, and not even in these days universal, for he was the first Prince who reigned in England who welcomed and admitted Jews; and I am glad to note, in passing, that the heads of that community, such as Lord Rothschild, Sir Samuel Montagu, and Mr. Benjamin Cohen, are here on the platform to-night to show by their presence their appreciation of that act of beneficence.

“It is a peculiarity of great men that they have a tendency to wreck the thrones on which they sit. Take the case of Frederick the Great, who lived the life of a soldier, State-steward, and a bureaucrat in one. He makes every detail, province, and department of Government to centre in himself, and gradually absorbs everything.

Nothing could be done without his sanction and knowledge. He makes himself the mainspring of the machine, and when he withdraws the machinery collapses, and has to be constructed afresh. Take again the case of Napoleon. He differs from Frederick in that he does not find a throne, but has to construct one. Once on it, it seemed to be his object to make it impossible for any one else to sit upon it. He combined activity with skill, and he was a man with a mind embracing the largest questions and the smallest details. He absorbs all. Everything seems to get light and guidance from him. Had he died as Emperor his disappearance would have caused, not a vacancy, but a gulf in which almost the apparatus of government must have disappeared. So with Cromwell in a different sense. He, too, has his throne. It rests on some sixty thousand armed men; but if it loses their support it falls, because it is antagonistic to the nation at large, and is held by Cromwell on a personal tenure. He does not even seem to have troubled about naming a successor,—and why? Because he knew he could not bequeath the tenure to his successor. The real founder of dynasties is one who produces not merely thrones, but institutions; hence few dynasties are founded. The founder is the only potent institution, and he is essentially mortal.

“I take Cromwell as a raiser and maintainer

of the power of the Empire of England. I do not, however, propose to-night to address you on the ways in which he made the name of this country honoured and respected, because it would take me too long, and, indeed, it would not be easy to define. But there is one clear ground of policy on which he fixed the attention of Europe. He was in essence a defender of the faith. You know what he did with regard to the Waldenses, those persecuted Protestants, the massacres and horrors perpetrated on whom remain for ever a dark feature of European history. Cromwell spoke. He did not interfere by arms—though I have seen his action on that occasion cited as a precedent for religious interference by arms—he did not interfere by arms, but he wrote—he wrote appeals and dispatches—and by the force of diplomacy, backed up by a great army and a supreme reputation, achieved his object, and what remained of the Waldenses were saved. When Europe saw that Cromwell was in earnest, Europe had no hesitation as to the course which it had to adopt.

“And, indeed, it is very remarkable. It is not, I think, wholly explicable, the extraordinary deference—I had almost said the adoration—that Europe paid to Cromwell. Spain and France contended for his alliance. The two great Catholic countries contending for the honour of the alliance of the defender of the Protestant faith! The great



Roman Catholic monarch, Louis XIV., put on mourning at his death. Cardinal Mazarin, one of the princes of the Roman Catholic Church, earnestly, almost humbly, sought his alliance for his country; and—last of all the proofs that I will adduce of the power and honour in which Cromwell was held—let me quote a letter from the great Condé, the greatest general on the continent of Europe at a time when the continent of Europe produced many great generals. ‘I am exceedingly delighted,’ he said, ‘with the justice that has been paid to your Highness’s merit and virtue. It is in that only that England can find her safety and rejoice, and I consider the people of the three kingdoms in the height of their glory at seeing their goods and their lives entrusted at last to the management of so great a man.’ That is no Republican testimony, that is no Protestant testimony; but it is the testimony of a great Roman Catholic French Prince. I would ask what is the secret of this extraordinary power? As I said before, you will all of you probably give one answer or another, many of them likely to conflict. There is one answer which I suppose everybody here almost would give, which is that the secret of Cromwell’s strength rested in his religious faith.

“I discard that answer because it would be begging the question. No; my answer is this—that he was a ractical mystic, the most formidable

and terrible of all combinations—the man who combines the inspiration, apparently derived, and, in my judgment, really derived, from close communion with the supernatural and the celestial. The man who has that inspiration, associated with the energy of a mighty man of action—such a man as that lives in communion on a Sinai of his own, and he appears to come down to this world below armed with no less than the terrors and the decrees of the Almighty Himself. Let me take him first as the man of action, and present to you the popular picture of Cromwell as he comes down to us in the records and the portraits of contemporary writers such as Sir Philip Warwick. I will give you first that portrait as a man of action, and then I will give you a glimpse of him from the other side. ‘How does he appear to us? He comes climbing down to us through the ages in his great wading-boots, his countenance swollen and reddish, his voice sharp and untunable, his eloquence full of fervour, with a country-made suit, with a hat with no band, with doubtful linen, and a speck of blood upon it. He tramps over England, he tramps over Scotland, he tramps over Ireland, his sword in his right hand and his Bible in the other; and then he tramps back to London, whence he puts forth that heavy foot into Europe, and all Europe bows before him. When he is not scattering enemies and battering castles he is scattering Parliaments. He seems to be the

very spirit of destruction, an Angel of Vengeance, permitted to run for a season, to efface what had to be effaced, and then to disappear. And then there comes the end. Waves of death go out against that man. There is a terrible storm, and he lies dying in Whitehall, groaning out that his work is done, that he will not drink or sleep, for he wishes to make what haste he can to be gone; and the sun, as it rises on his great day, the 3rd of December, the day of Dunbar and Worcester, finds Cromwell speechless, and as it sets it leaves him dead.' That is the practical, ordinary view of Cromwell as we get him from contemporary portraits. And yet there is the other side. For with all this vigorous and characteristic personality there seems something impersonal about Cromwell. Outside the battle-field he never seems a free agent, but rather the instrument of forces outside or above him. The crises of nations, like the crises of nature, have their thunderbolts, and Cromwell was one of these. He seems to be propelled or ejected into the world in the agony of a great catastrophe, and to disappear along with it.

"On the field of battle he is a great captain, ready, resourceful, and overwhelming. Off the field he seems to be the creature of invisible energies marching without constant volition, at their bidding and under their spell. It is a strange mixture of a strong, practical nature with a sort of unearthly fatalism, with a kind of super-

natural mission. That strange combination it is, in my judgment, that marks the strength of Cromwell. This mysterious symbolism is said to have struck the Eastern Jews so much that they sent a deputation of their number to England to ask whether he were the Messiah indeed. Well, that is not exactly the combination—for indeed it could not be represented in bronze or any other known metal—that Mr. Thorneycroft has given us in his statue. But he has given us the nearest equivalent to it. He has given us Cromwell with the sword in one hand and with the Bible in the other. I suppose our critics will say that there is no question whatever about the sword, but that there is a great deal of doubt about the genuineness of that Bible. Indeed, after all, the whole question, the whole debate, the whole controversy as to Cromwell, really in the end, when you come to look at it, hinges on this question: Was he a hypocrite or was he not? Well, that is why I told you that any answer resting his success on his religious faith would be begging the question, and therefore I must discard it. It is a question, however, that can never be satisfactorily answered until the secrets of all hearts are revealed. But it is a secret, in the last resort, between Cromwell and his God.

“Those who hate his memory for other reasons are determined to believe that he was a hypocrite. But, at any rate, we who are here do not believe

he was a hypocrite, or we should not be here. I think those who call Cromwell a hypocrite can never have read his letters to his children. These were not State documents. They were not meant to be put forth as Blue Books: remember that happy age had no Blue Books. They were not meant to put the Government of the Protector in a favourable light. They were genuine outpourings of a sincere soul. Let me take another incident in Cromwell's life that I think is not familiar to those who call him a hypocrite. The pious Quaker George Fox—who was not then in the position of eminence which Quakers occupy now in our country, but was harried, and imprisoned, and persecuted, an outcast among men—demanded an audience of the great Protector. He had not come to beg for clemency to his people; he had not come, as others do, to ask for any personal favour. What had he come for? He came to testify to the great man, to preach to the great man; and in his leather jerkin he preached to him. I think the account of this little interview, which I will not read at length, but will summarise it, is one of the most interesting and touching episodes in the whole of Cromwell's career.

“What did George Fox say when he came in? Nothing apologetic. He uttered a blessing: ‘Peace be within this house.’ Some sovereigns might have been annoyed at this condescension

from a man who was constantly in the grasp of the law, and had only recently left prison. How did Cromwell receive it? 'Thank you, George,' he said. 'I am come,' said the other, 'to exhort thee to keep in the fear of God, that thou mayest receive wisdom from Him,' and so forth. 'He listened to me very affectionately,' continued Fox. 'I had much fearless discourse with him about God and His Apostles of old times, and of His ministers of new; about death and the unfathomable universe and the light from above; and he would often interrupt me by saying, "That is good—that is very good," and he carried himself with much moderation towards me. As people were coming in, he caught me by the hand, and, with tears in his eyes, said, "Come again to my house, for if thou and I were but an hour a day together we should be nearer one to the other."' What had Cromwell got to gain by being civil to this poor man, by listening to what many would have thought his rhodomontade? Perhaps even it was his duty to hand him over to justice. But he saw the sincerity of the man bursting through his exterior. He welcomed him. He honoured him. He honoured him, and he clasped him to his heart.

"Let me tell you another little story you have not heard before. It is not much in itself, but it is curious for the directness with which it comes. It was told me by a friend of mine, who is a bishop of the Established Church, and by no

means one of the oldest of the bishops—he is my own age. But it is curious. He was told this by a gentleman, who had it from a doctor. The doctor had heard it from the Sir Charles Slingsby of his day, who had heard it from the nurse. Well, five people is not a long time, and I trust you will all live long enough to be carried over an equal period of the coming age. He heard it from his nurse, who was the girl mentioned in the story. The day before Marston Moor Cromwell rode in with his staff to Knaresborough to dine, and when at Knaresborough he disappeared, and they searched for him for two hours. When they failed altogether to find him, this little girl, who afterwards became the nurse, remembered a lonely room at the top of the tower which no one ever went to, and it was the only possible place where the Protector could be found; and there, looking through the keyhole—for the door was locked—they saw the Protector on his knees before his Bible, wrestling, as he would have said himself, in prayer as he had wrestled for the two hours he had spent in Knaresborough. Was there anything to be gained by that? Was there any attempt at display in locking himself into a ruined and deserted chamber in order that he might implore the blessing of the God of Battles on the contest he was to engage in next day? I can see, at any rate, nothing to be gained by it, and I think those who know that story must

either regard him as no hypocrite at all, or as so consummate a hypocrite that his hypocrisy had become as much a part of his being as the air which he breathed.

“ But, sir, I will give a reason, a more practical reason, for my belief that Cromwell was not a hypocrite. Had he been a hypocrite he could not have been an enormous success, or wielded the enormous forces that he did. I believe that had Cromwell been a hypocrite, he would have been found out, and he could not have formed that army which he commanded, which was indubitably the greatest army in Europe at the time. He became early aware of the immense force of that religious fervour that came to his army, but he did not utilise this discovery by making hypocrites of his army. He utilised it by selecting those men who he knew were of good repute with their neighbours, earnest, steady, God-fearing men, who would be able to sustain the onslaught of the brilliant army commanded by the king and his cousin. He told his friend, the illustrious Hampden—I rather think we have the pleasure of seeing the descendant of Hampden here to-night—he said that the men Hampden was leading were no match for the chivalry of England who followed the king. With these men he won his battles, and put down the ‘chivalry of England.’ Are we to believe, then, that these men were merely canting hypocrites? Surely not. I believe



that would be to misunderstand the nature of the forces that sway mankind.

“It is not infrequently hinted of Cromwell that his actions were not Christian as we of this nineteenth century understand it. But, as I have said, his religion was that of the Puritans, who delighted in daily readings of the Old Testament. The newer criticism would have had no patron in Cromwell. Indeed, I believe that its professors would have done but ill at his hands. He himself lived with an absolutely child-like faith in the atmosphere and with the persons of the Old Testament — Joshua, Samuel, and Elijah. His favourite psalm was, he told us, the one hundred and sixty-eighth; but it always seems that there is another psalm, the one hundred and forty-ninth, that closely reproduces the Christianity, the ideas, and the spirit of Cromwell. But was it, indeed, a splendid demonstration, a masculine and honest career, or, as Cowley says, ‘an ill-sight’? On that point, at any rate, my mind is clear. I go so far as to say that, great and opulent and powerful as we are, so far from banishing his memory, we could find employment for a few Cromwells now.

“The Cromwell of the nineteenth or of the twentieth century would not naturally be the Cromwell of the seventeenth, for great men are coloured by the age in which they live. He would not, at any rate, be a Cromwell in his

externals. He would not decapitate; he would not rise in revolution nor speak in Puritanic language, but he would retain his essential qualities as general, as ruler, as statesman; he would be strenuous, he would be sincere, he would not compromise that principle; his faith would lie in God and in Freedom, and in the influence of Great Britain as asserting both. In that faith he lived, by those lines he governed. Imperfectly, no doubt—as one must be more or less imperfect—imperfectly, no doubt, but honestly in that faith, by those principles he lived and governed and died.

“Sir, I hope we as a nation are animated in our patriotism by no lower ideal. I speak of the nation as a whole, for I know there are some individuals to whom this is cant—to whom this theory is cant and the worst of cant. I know it, and am sorry for them; but what I believe is that the vast majority of our people are inspired by a nobler creed; that their Imperialism, as it is called, is not the lust of dominion, nor the pride of power, but rather the ideal of Oliver Cromwell. But if that be so, a statue more or less matters but very little; and so long as his influence pervades the nation, the memory of Cromwell is not likely to suffer disparagement from the want of an effigy. But if it were so, he has a surer memorial still. For every one, at any rate every one I should think who is worthy of anything,

has in his heart of hearts a Pantheon of his historical demi-gods, a shrine of those who are demi-gods for them—and yet not even of demi-gods, for they would be too far aloof from mankind—a shrine in which lie the sacred memories of the past, and of the noblest of born men. In that Pantheon, in many English hearts, and those not the worst, whether the effigy of Cromwell be situate outside or inside Parliament, or whether it be invisible altogether—in that Pantheon, in many English hearts, will be found eternally engraved the monuments and memory of the Great Protector.”

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## APPENDIX A

### COPY OF A CIRCULAR DESPATCH TO HER MAJESTY'S REPRESENTATIVES ABROAD RE- SPECTING THE AFFAIRS OF GREECE.

*The Earl of Rosebery to Her Majesty's Representatives  
abroad.*

MY LORD,

Sir,

FOREIGN OFFICE, *May 6, 1886.*

Her Majesty's Government have learnt with deep regret that the efforts which have been made by them, in conjunction with the other Great Powers, to obtain explicit assurances of an immediate reduction of the armaments of Greece have not as yet been successful.

It is not necessary that I should dwell upon the sympathy for Greece and the interest in her welfare which have constantly been felt in this country, and which have found their expression in the policy pursued by successive Administrations. The British Government were the first to propose that Greece should be represented at the Congress of Berlin in 1878; they gave a willing assent to the Resolution brought forward in the Congress by the French and Italian Plenipotentiaries in favour of a rectification of the Greek frontier, and they were active in urging and supporting the claims of Greece in the arduous negotiations which terminated in the acquisition, in 1881, by the Hellenic Kingdom, on the mediation of the Powers, of the rich Province of Thessaly.

The British Government frankly avowed at the time that the settlement which was arrived at in those negotiations was not quite so favourable to Greece as they could have wished. But it gave her a large and valuable accession of territory, with a

population, on the whole, well affected to her rule. It was the best solution that could be obtained without a struggle which was certain to be exhausting to both the contending parties, and of which the issue could not be otherwise than hazardous to Greece. Great Britain joined, therefore, with the other Powers in pressing its acceptance upon the Hellenic Government. That Government, in reply, stated that Greece desired peace, and was grateful to Europe for its efforts in favour of a pacific solution of the question. They recommended to the justice and consideration of the Great Powers the populations of Hellenic race left outside the new frontiers, and they intimated their acceptance of the territories assigned to them without further demur or condition.

Great Britain and the other mediating Powers thereupon urged the Porte to adhere definitively, and without delay, to the proposed arrangement. It was embodied in the Convention between the great Powers and Turkey of the 24th May, 1881, as the result of the mediation contemplated by Article XXIV of the Treaty of Berlin, and as intended to give a definite solution to the question. It was further recorded in a Convention between Turkey and Greece.

In these negotiations the British Government took a prominent and responsible part.

Her Majesty's Government have been unable to perceive any justification in subsequent events for reopening the question, or for casting doubt on the validity of these solemn and recent engagements.

When, in September last, the population of Eastern Roumelia declared itself with singular unanimity in favour of union with the Principality of Bulgaria, the efforts of the Great Powers were directed to the maintenance of European peace, and to the preservation, in its spirit and essence, of the settlement arrived at under the negotiations contemplated by the Treaty of Berlin.

They were, indeed, unable to prevent the outbreak of a contest between Servia and Bulgaria, in spite of their earnest remonstrances; a contest in which the attacking party proved unsuccessful, and did not receive, as, indeed, it could not expect, any sympathy from other countries.

That war has happily been brought to a close without spreading further, and an arrangement has been come to for the future government of Eastern Roumelia, after careful discussion between the Great Powers and the Porte, which, while maintaining with strictness the stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin, promises to be acceptable to the inhabitants, and to secure their future tranquillity and well-being.

It is unnecessary here to examine whether the close relations between that province and the Principality of Bulgaria can be deemed indirectly antagonistic to designs of Greek aggrandisement in the distant future; but Her Majesty's Government entirely deny that the new arrangement can be held to involve any danger to the security of Greece herself, or to the prosperity of the other populations of Hellenic race.

But if such a danger existed, the policy which Greece has pursued is certainly not of a nature to avert it. Her natural condition demands a long period of peace devoted to the development of her resources and the consolidation of her institutions. By displaying in the East the spectacle of a well-ordered State pursuing the path of material and constitutional progress, with light taxation and diminishing debt, she would have attracted the active sympathy of the Powers, ever ready to welcome any promise of stability and order in that region.

But her course on this occasion has encouraged her enemies and disheartened her friends. In a paroxysm of irritation at the possible enlargement of a neighbouring and friendly Christian State, she has rushed to arms and made herself not the calming and exemplary, but the menacing, element in the condition of the East. At a ruinous sacrifice she has raised an army wholly disproportionate to her population on the one hand, and on the other wholly inadequate to cope with the largely superior forces of an Empire whose soldiers have a traditional reputation, an Empire with which she is at peace, and which has offered her no imaginable cause of offence. This she has done in the face of repeated remonstrances from all the Powers who have taken a friendly interest in her cause, and who have warned her of the risks which she is incurring, and of the absence of all justification for such a policy. Her attitude is imposing upon



the Porte immense sacrifices in the maintenance of armies designed to meet and overcome a possible Greek attack. The agriculture of Turkey is in many places almost at a standstill from the drain on the population caused by the maintenance of this defensive army. The financial position of the Ottoman Empire cannot but be exceedingly grave. The state of things produced by the Greek Government is no less exhausting to that Empire than to Greece.

It cannot be expected that the Turkish Government should consent to remain for an indefinite period in this condition of armed expectation. They have on several occasions addressed the Governments of the Great Powers on the subject, and had it not been for the strenuous appeals of those Powers to the Porte to maintain a pacific and conciliatory attitude, matters would long before this have been brought to a crisis by the presentation of a direct demand on the part of Turkey for Greek disarmament. It has been to save the Hellenic Government from this contingency, to maintain the faith of European engagements, and to avert the risk of a war, the consequences of which, however incalculable in other directions, could not fail to be calamitous to Greece, that the friendly pressure of Her Majesty's Government and the other Powers has been exercised.

The course they have pursued has not been hasty, and has abounded in consideration for the susceptibilities of the Hellenic Government.

On the 9th October last a verbal communication was made in identical terms by the Representatives of the Great Powers at Athens, urging upon the Hellenic Cabinet the necessity of prudence and moderation, and pointing out the dangers to which Greece was exposing herself by her military preparations.

On the 22nd of the same month the same Representatives addressed to M. Delyanni a collective note, inclosing a copy of the Declaration agreed upon by the Representatives of the Powers at Constantinople, and urging the Greek Government to refrain from any steps calculated to compromise the general peace.

To these communications M. Delyanni replied by statements

that the movement at Philippopoli had disturbed the settlement effected by the Treaty of Berlin, and had rendered necessary fresh arrangements for the protection of the Greek nationality.

On the 11th January the Representatives presented a collective note inviting the Greek Government to disarm simultaneously with Servia and Bulgaria, and informing them that the Porte would in that case also demobilise its forces.

To this M. Delyanni replied by a refusal.

On the 25th January, after a friendly warning from Her Majesty's Government, which was again unsuccessful, the Representatives delivered a collective note stating that, in the absence of any just ground for war on the part of Greece against Turkey, and in view of the injury which would be caused by it to the commerce of other nations, a naval attack by Greece on Turkey would not be permitted.

M. Delyanni replied by a protest against any interference with the liberty of action of the Greek naval forces.

No modification took place in the attitude of the Greek Government, nor was there any relaxation in the progress of their military preparations.

A Decree was issued on the 26th March, calling out two more classes of the reserves.

On the 13th April the Representatives communicated to M. Delyanni the conclusion of the arrangement with regard to Eastern Roumelia, with the expression of a hope that Greece would comply with the unanimous wish of Europe for the maintenance of peace.

M. Delyanni answered on the 17th that Greece had hitherto done nothing to disturb the general peace, but that the Hellenic Government could not give up the desire to obtain the frontier indicated by the Conference of Berlin.

At the same time the negotiations were reported to be in progress for the raising of a fresh loan of 90,000,000 fr. ; it was stated that the troops quartered at Athens were about to be dispatched to the Thessalian frontier, and intelligence was received of a skirmish, fortunately of no importance, having occurred between the Turkish and Greek forces.

Under these circumstances, Her Majesty's Government, who

with the other Powers had recently received an earnest appeal from the Turkish Government to procure the disarmament of Greece, instructed Her Majesty's Minister at Athens to join with the Representatives of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Russia in the presentation of a collective note calling upon the Greek Government to place the Hellenic forces on a peace footing without delay, and to give assurances within eight days that orders had been issued to that effect.

Before this instruction had been acted upon the French Minister at Athens communicated to M. Delyanni a telegram from M. de Freycinet strongly urging the Greek Government to comply with the wishes of the Powers. M. Delyanni replied in a private note stating that the Greek Government had decided to adhere to the advice of the French Government, and that he reserved to himself to make an official communication to that effect on the arrival of the Minister of War from Thessaly on Tuesday, the 27th.

Copies of this letter and of M. de Freycinet's telegram were sent by M. Delyanni to each of the other Representatives, who were unanimously of opinion that the assurances thus given were not of a nature to enable them to defer acting on their instructions. Their proceedings were approved by their respective Governments.

The collective note was therefore presented on the 26th ultimo. The reply of M. Delyanni, dated the 29th, referred to the letter which he had addressed to the French Minister on the 25th, and which he had already communicated to the Representatives. M. Delyanni added that the Hellenic Government, having adhered to the advice of France, had thereby given a solemn assurance that Greece, in compliance with the wishes of the Great Powers, would not disturb the peace; that a principal consequence of this adhesion was that Greece would not keep under the flag the actual effective strength of the army, and that, consequently, her Government would proceed to the gradual reduction of that effective strength in the period dictated by the prudence indispensable for such an operation.

Her Majesty's Government have no wish, in a matter of such

gravity, to lay stress upon questions of form. They would have been very willing to have overlooked or to have regarded as unintentional any apparent want of courtesy or frankness in replying to a collective request for direct and formal assurances by a reference to an answer previously given to the Representative of another country to the effect that Greece had accepted the advice given by his Government, without any explicit statement of the meaning to be attached to that phrase. Nor would it perhaps be wise to attach too much importance to the reported utterances and circulars of the Greek Minister which were calculated to remove any peaceful impression that his note might have afforded. But, putting aside any such objections, it is clear on examination that this reply does not in substance contain a sufficient answer to the collective note of the 26th April, and that the assurances given in it are too vague to justify the Powers in advising Turkey to disarm. The Turkish and Greek armies would consequently be left face to face on the frontier for an indefinite period, with the constant risk of a collision. In fact, the answer leaves the present perilous situation unchanged and unmodified.

It has therefore been unanimously recognised by the Governments who joined in the collective note that the reply cannot be accepted as satisfactory. A suggestion was made by me that the Greek Government should, of their own accord, supplement it by written explanations of a definite character as to the progress of disarmament, which I would have endeavoured to induce the other Governments to accept as sufficient, and to keep secret, if so desired, for a short period. M. Delyanni, however, refused to avail himself of this opportunity. He contends, as I understand, that the collective note of the 26th restrains the hitherto uncontrolled liberty of action of the Greek Government, which therefore cannot disarm; and, further, that a small State cannot yield to pressure, as a Great Power might, without loss of dignity. To this it is sufficient to reply that the Greek Government has not enjoyed liberty of action, in that sense, since the note of the 25th January; and that no doctrine can be conceived more fatal to those principles of self-respect and moral equality which form the basis of international relations than the theory that a small

State has not the same freedom to act rightly and do its duty—nay, even to acknowledge itself in the wrong—that is enjoyed by a great Power.

Under these circumstances, the Representatives have been instructed to address a further note to M. Delyanni, taking note of the peaceful assurances of the Greek Government, but stating that these are not sufficiently precise to effect the objects in view, and asking for further explanations.

If no satisfactory answer should be received to this last communication, it will become necessary for Her Majesty's Government to consider with the other Powers with whom they are acting the means of exercising material pressure upon the Hellenic Government to induce compliance with their reasonable demands. Her Majesty's Government believe that in the employment of such measures they are adopting a course more friendly and favourable to Greece than that of leaving her to face single-handed a conflict with Turkey. But whether this be so or not, the first duty of Her Majesty's Government is to co-operate with the other European Powers for the maintenance of the general peace. The welfare of Greece and of the Hellenic races outside her frontier has not ceased to be the object of that friendly solicitude of which this country has given so many proofs; but they feel bound, for that very reason, to oppose a policy of unjust aggression, not less unjustifiable because pursued by a small State, which threatens disaster to Greece and a wanton disturbance of European peace.

I am, etc.,

(Signed) ROSEBERY.

## APPENDIX B

CONVENTION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF  
GREAT BRITAIN AND SPAIN RESPECTING  
THE COMMERCIAL RELATIONS OF THE TWO  
COUNTRIES.

*Signed at Madrid, April 26, 1886.*

The Conventions between France and Spain of the 6th February, 1882, and between Germany and Spain of the 12th July, 1883, alluded to herein, will be laid before Parliament as soon as translations of them have been prepared.

The Government of Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the Government of Her Majesty the Queen Regent of Spain, being desirous of facilitating the commercial relations of their respective countries, have named as their Representatives for that purpose :

The Government of Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Sir F. Clare Ford, Her Britannic Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Madrid, etc., etc.

The Government of Her Majesty the Queen Regent of Spain, his Excellency Señor Don Segismundo Moret y Prendergast, Minister of State, etc., etc.

Who, being duly authorised by their respective Governments, have agreed upon the following Articles :—

ARTICLE I.—The Government of Her Majesty the Queen Regent of Spain will grant to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and to Her Britannic Majesty's Colonies and foreign possessions, most-favoured-nation treatment in all that concerns commerce, navigation, and Consular rights and privileges in Spain, and in the Spanish Colonies and foreign possessions, co-extensive in amount of benefit with that accorded

to France and Germany under the Treaties of the 6th February, 1882, and the 12th July, 1883.

The provisions of this Convention shall come into operation on the 1st July next, unless by mutual consent any other date may be fixed, and on condition that on that date the alcoholic scale, according to which duties are levied on Spanish wines on their introduction into the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, is modified in accordance with the terms of the following Article.

ARTICLE II.—The Government of Her Britannic Majesty will continue to grant to Spain, her Colonies and foreign possessions, most-favoured-nation treatment in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and in Her Britannic Majesty's Colonies and foreign possessions, in all that concerns commerce, navigation, and Consular rights and privileges.

They will, in addition, apply to Parliament for the necessary authority to provide that the limit of the lower half of the alcoholic scale shall extend up to but not exceed 30 degrees of proof spirit.

ARTICLE III.—The present Convention has been drawn up subject to the sanction of the Legislatures of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of Spain respectively. When approved, it shall remain in force until the 30th June, 1892; and in case neither of the High Contracting Parties should have notified, twelve months before the said date, the intention of terminating it, the present Convention shall remain binding until the expiration of one year from the day on which either of the two High Contracting Parties shall have denounced it.

Done in duplicate at Madrid, this 26th day of April, 1886.

(L.S.) F. CLARE FORD.

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