

THE LIFE AND SPEECHES
OF THE
MARQUIS OF SALISBURY, K.G.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, LIMITED,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

THE
LIFE AND SPEECHES
OF THE
MARQUIS OF SALISBURY, K.G.

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" Sanctus haberi
Justitiæque tenax factis dictisque mereris,
Agnosco procerem." *Juvenal.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

London:
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON,
CROWN BUILDINGS, 188, FLEET STREET.

1885.

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LIFE AND SPEECHES
OF
LORD SALISBURY.

CHAPTER V. (*continued*).

1874—1880.

ON the 13th of June the Berlin Congress met, and a month afterwards the treaty was signed which, taken into connection with the Anglo-Turkish Convention, completely checkmated the designs of Russia in the East and guaranteed the maintenance of the interests of England. The acquisition of Cyprus remains as a standing proof of the successful diplomacy of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury, the effects of which five years of Liberal rule have not been able entirely to efface. The return of the plenipotentiaries was a real triumph. In Lord Beaconsfield's historic words they had brought

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back "peace with honour," and the English people did not show themselves ungrateful. The Premier was careful, both at Dover and in London, to claim for Lord Salisbury an equal share with himself in bringing about this happy result. To the crowd assembled in Whitehall the Ministers addressed a few words of thanks rendered almost inaudible by the salvoes of applause with which they were received. Lord Salisbury is understood to have said, when an interval of comparative silence was at last secured, "I thank you heartily, and gather from this great assembly that you will always continue to support a Government which supports the honour of England. The encouragement which you have given our foreign policy will strengthen us in maintaining that foreign policy as the best for England." The favour of the Sovereign was signally shown by her conferring the highest honour it is in her power to give—the Order of the Garter—on the successful and patriotic Ministers. In forwarding a copy of the Treaty of Berlin to the Home Government, Lord Salisbury took the opportunity of pointing out in detail how almost all the radical faults of the Treaty of San Stefano had been removed. On the 18th of July, the Treaty of

Berlin was formally laid before Parliament, and Ministers had to encounter the objections of the Opposition and the captious criticisms of Lord Derby. This noble earl, annoyed at the remarkable success which had attended the manly diplomacy of his successor at the Foreign Office, indulged in some more of those revelations of what had passed in the Cabinet while he was a member of that body, for which he had been reprovèd before. It fell to the lot of Lord Salisbury, who followed him, once more to point out the extreme impropriety of such disclosures, even when they were substantially correct, which in this instance he maintained they certainly were not. Having answered Lord Derby's objections, Lord Salisbury turned to the Anglo-Turkish Convention, which had especially excited the late Foreign Secretary's wrath. "With respect to that question," he said, "we have had the advantage, which we have frequently enjoyed in recent times, of revelations from the dark interior of the Cabinet. In fact, whenever my noble friend speaks he has an instalment of revelations to make. This is the third speech which my noble friend has delivered since he left the Cabinet, and every one of them has contained a fresh

instalment of the fatal tale. The same objection was made to Dr. Oates when he brought forward successive fragments of his disclosure. When taunted with the fact, his answer was that he did not know how much the public would endure. But, my lords, I would venture to point out that there is a great inconvenience in these revelations from the interior of the Cabinet. Of course my noble friend must treat his obligations in the spirit which pleases himself; but I do not know that I should like to announce, as broadly and palpably as my noble friend has to the world, that any person who hereafter serves with him in the Cabinet must be prepared to have everything that passes, or is supposed to pass there, produced ultimately, in spite of the rule which Privy Councillors have hitherto observed. But in the present case, the statement which my noble friend has made to the effect that a resolution had been come to in the Cabinet to take the Island of Cyprus and a position on the coast of Syria by a secret expedition, with or without the consent of the Sultan, and that that was the ground upon which he left the Cabinet, is a statement which, as far as my memory goes, is not correct. I am not relying on my own

memory. If I had been, I should have some hesitation in putting it forward, because my noble friend's memory is one of considerable power; but on behalf of my noble friend the Prime Minister, and on behalf of my other colleagues, I beg to state that the statement made by the noble earl the late Foreign Secretary is not correct. It is obvious that these revelations as to conversations that have passed, and of which no record is made, must in the nature of things be exposed to error, especially in an assembly which very seldom takes a definite and clear decision until the time for action arrives. All kinds of contingencies are spoken of, all possible policies are discussed, and it is quite possible that my noble friend may have heard some project discussed by this member of the Cabinet or that. For my part, I cannot charge my memory with what my noble friend alludes to; but certain it is that no such resolution as that which he has spoken of was in their recollection taken by the Cabinet. . . . The noble earl has discussed with considerable severity the policy of annexing the Island of Cyprus, and has suggested all kinds of difficulties and dangers. The noble earl has shown that fertility which I think his

mind is apt to display in finding reasons for doing nothing in the matter. He has dwelt upon a great variety of objections which it is always easy to put together; but as the noble earl was going through them it occurred to me to think what would be the nature of a speech we could suppose him to have made upon some project for the extension of territory in India, had he lived a hundred years ago. The noble earl has told us that, as the soil was not being developed, it was absurd to take an island in which English labourers could not live. Well, suppose the question of making one of these acquisitions in India was brought on a hundred years ago, how ingenious would have been the difficulties which my noble friend would have raised; how he would have magnified the adversaries England would possibly have to contend with; and how he would have put together an ingenious conjunction of imaginary dangers. How he would have gloated over the possible opposition of France. It is singularly easy for any mind which has the faculty of destructive criticism to such an extent as my noble friend possesses to conjure up reasons for doing nothing; but if these reasons had prevailed with our ances-

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tors, not only the Empire of India but the Empire of England would not have existed. My noble friend has sufficiently shown, by the language which he has used, and the gloomy vaticinations as to the fate of India in which he has indulged, that his sympathies are not very strong with those who built up that empire. My noble friend would have confined the enterprise and power of England to this single island. Perhaps he might by a great effort have consented to our acquiring the Isle of Man! But all those splendid, bold, and even hazardous enterprises by which the power of this country has been built up, and on which the fame of England reposes, would have fallen beneath the touch of his chilly and negative criticism." With this stern and well-deserved rebuke, Lord Derby passes out of these pages. He very shortly afterwards definitely joined the Liberal party, and during Mr. Gladstone's second administration held for some period the seals of the Colonial Office. In this position he had full opportunities for carrying his theories into practice, with considerable injury to his party and signal disgrace to his country.

Turning to a more pleasing topic, we must next notice the banquet which was given to

the plenipotentiaries in the Duke of Wellington's Riding School by the leading Conservatives of both Houses of Parliament on the 27th of July. After a brilliant speech by Lord Beaconsfield, Lord Malmesbury proposed the health of Lord Salisbury, who, in his reply, after alluding to the abuse and misrepresentation with which the Government had been assailed, turned to the question of Cyprus, and said, "I do not know if you observed it, but it struck me with a thrill of gratulation when I saw that, in taking possession of Cyprus, not one hand, not one voice, was lifted up to resist the transfer, and the proclamation of Queen Victoria's name was everywhere received with enthusiasm; while other nations, perhaps militarily more powerful than ourselves, have to struggle with the deep reluctance of the people to undergo the blessings they profess to offer. What is the reason of the difference? It is that we, at all events, in the cause of civilization have won our spurs before the world. We have shown in governing India that where English rule and English influence extend, peace and order revive, prosperity and wealth increase; and therefore it is that the prospect of English rule was welcomed by

men of every race and every creed. Have we a right to throw away, to hide under a bushel, to conceal in a corner, such influence as this merely lest we should at some distant time, and in some inconceivable circumstances, add to our responsibilities? I am told that in the task of aiding and counselling the Ottoman Empire to bring the blessings of civilization to some of the fairest portions of the earth, we shall be hampered by the jealousies of other powers. I utterly refuse to believe it. When they find what our policy really is, that we are there merely to extend to others the benefits we ourselves enjoy; when they find that we welcome their competition, that we invite every trade, that we grudge success to no nationality, that the one object that we have in view is that peace and order should be restored, and that races and creeds which for centuries back have lived in feud, should henceforth live in amity and goodwill; then I believe that all idea of jealousy will vanish, and that they will heartily co-operate with us in our civilizing mission. At all events, we will not recoil from such a task because it may seem to add to our responsibilities or increase our labours; and if we are able in ever so small a degree

to accomplish these results, we at least shall have no cause to repent of the labours we have undertaken, and you will have no cause to be ashamed of us."

Nor were these the only honours bestowed by a grateful country on the ambassadors who had brought back "peace with honour." On the 31st of August, the freedom of the City was conferred on them, and a grand banquet given in their honour at the Mansion House. In his speech to Lord Salisbury the Chamberlain of the City dwelt upon his hereditary connection with the City of London. "The citizens of London," he said, "claim you both by descent, as they will from this day forward by redemption. Your lordship's grandfather was a merchant trading successfully in this city; and had your lordship remained among us, instead of seeking fame and fortune elsewhere, you might have been—who knows?—Lord Mayor of London. You, my Lord Salisbury, will not be displeased if I remind you that you claim descent from no less than three aldermen of this city, the last of whom, Sir Crisp Gascoyne, was the first Lord Mayor to occupy, in 1752, the present Mansion House." Nothing could exceed the heartiness and enthusiasm with

which the Ministers were greeted in the City, but in Parliament they had to encounter the violent opposition of their Liberal antagonists. Every variety of inuendo, every species of criticism, fair and unfair, was resorted to; the vocabulary of abuse was ransacked for fresh epithets to hurl at the Government; the words of Ministers were misquoted, their acts misrepresented; the time of Parliament was taken up with frivolous questions and futile motions, directed against a Ministry which had just secured an honourable treaty which had raised the prestige and position of England, and had restored peace to Eastern Europe without shedding a drop of English blood, and with a most moderate expenditure of English money. Notwithstanding this persistent opposition the session of 1878 did not close before some valuable measures had been passed into law. The work of establishing a national system of education in Ireland was forwarded by the passing of the Intermediate Education Act; for Scotland, Acts relating to education had also received the royal assent. Ministers had shown by the Public Health and the Factories and Workshops Acts that they were as keen as ever on sanitary questions,

while the agricultural interest was considerably benefited by the new law relating to highways, and by the Act for the suppression of the cattle-disease. But it is not for its legislation that the session of 1878 will be remembered, but rather for the patriotic support which the vast majority of the members of both Houses, including many belonging to the Liberal party, gave to the Ministers during a period of almost unparalleled difficulty. It will also be remembered that the leaders of the Opposition could not refrain, even at such a time as that, from allowing party tactics to take the place of patriotism.

The Eastern Question left a legacy of trouble behind it. Russia, in view of the possibility of war with England, had sent an embassy to Cabul, which the Ameer of Afghanistan had received with every mark of respect, though he had persistently refused to allow an English ambassador to reside at Cabul, and had declined the Viceroy's invitation to attend the great durbar at Delhi. The danger of the establishment of Russian influence in Afghanistan was very serious, and it was felt that no time must be lost in preventing such a menace to our Indian Empire. Accordingly a mission, headed by

Sir Neville Chamberlain, was sent to Shere Ali ; but no sooner had it crossed the Afghan frontier than it was met by a point-blank prohibition from the Ameer to proceed any further. Such an insult could hardly be passed over, and for a while even the Liberal press in England applauded the determination of the Government to demand redress from Shere Ali, and to take precautions against the intrigues of Russia in Afghanistan. But patriotism has never been a prominent feature in the policy of the Liberal party, and it was not long before an "Afghan Committee" was formed for the purpose of harassing and thwarting the Government, and misrepresenting their aims and intentions to the English people. The Afghans were represented as a peace-loving, unaggressive people ; the idea of a Russian attack upon India was ridiculed, and the policy of masterly inaction lauded to the skies. The war was declared to be the most wanton and wicked undertaken in modern times, and once more the whole machinery of agitation and misrepresentation was set in motion. Undeterred by this interested clamour the Government calmly pursued the course which the situation demanded, and did not shrink from summon-

ing Parliament to explain the causes of the war and obtain the sanction of the House to raise the supplies necessary for the prosecution of the operations in Afghanistan.

Parliament accordingly met on December 5th, and the discussion of the Afghan policy of the Government commenced at once. The Opposition at once attempted to make capital out of a supposed discrepancy between an answer given by Lord Salisbury, when Indian Secretary, to a question of the Duke of Argyll's on the appointment of a resident envoy at Cabul, and the policy which the Government was pursuing. It is needless to say that Lord Salisbury's answer to this charge of disingenuousness was complete, though that fact did not prevent its being brought forward again and again by those opponents whose favourite weapon is always a lie that is part of the truth. The following passage from Lord Salisbury's speech in the Lords on December 5th will enable our readers to judge for themselves how far this insulting accusation was deserved. Lord Granville had distinctly charged him with having misled the House on the subject, whereupon Lord Salisbury immediately rose and said, "As I understood the charge, it was that at a time

when I knew that Sir Lewis Pelly had been commissioned to go to Cabul, I denied that any envoy had been sent to Cabul at all. The Duke of Argyll said, 'No doubt it would be very convenient to have a resident at Cabul, if you could get a prudent man in his place; but it was notorious that for a long time past the present Ameer had set his face against having such an officer in his Court. Rumour said that the Government of India had determined upon a change of policy, and had resolved to insist upon the Ameer having a resident British envoy at his Court.' What we wanted was to have officers on the frontier who might see what was going on. I need hardly explain to the House why we should wish to know what was going on in Afghanistan. It is sufficient to say that the year before Khiva was occupied. Without going further, I am sure the House will understand why we desired to know what was going on in Khokand and in the Ameer's territories without having any intention whatever of interfering in the internal government of Afghanistan or overshadowing the Ameer in his own Court. I dwell upon this point because the difference of asking for an agent at Herat and at Cabul is immense." Lord Lytton had in his nego-

tiations been careful to ask for a British envoy at Herat; and with this understanding their lordships would see that his reply to the Duke of Argyll was perfectly correct.

“The circumstances at the time,” he went on to say, “were difficult in the extreme. Russia was in arms; great irritation prevailed; no one knew whether the war would not spread much further than its original area; and whatever the policy of her Majesty’s Government might be, and whatever duties it might be called upon to perform, this, at least, was our duty: not to bias in any way the policy of the country, nor to add to its difficulties and dangers by any imprudent language of our own. It was, therefore, our duty not to say much of that which I say now, and which is said in the papers before the House. Consequently, I told the noble duke that I could not give him much positive, but only negative, information. That negative information was that we had not tried to force an envoy on the Ameer at Cabul, and that we had not suggested Sir Lewis Pelly as an envoy at Cabul. Now, I want to know why the noble earl opposite insinuates that I said anything contrary to the most perfect truth in the reply I made to the noble duke. The noble earl talked of

my having stated that there had been ^{no} change of policy as regards Afghanistan. ^{SoC} ^{POC} I must charitably suppose that the noble Earl spoke without having taken the trouble to read the speech to which he referred. There is no such statement in that speech."

But as this explanation, full and complete as it was, did not seem to satisfy the captiousness of the Opposition, Lord Salisbury returned to the subject again on the 10th of December. "The Duke of Argyll," he said, "asked me a certain question which I thought it proper and expedient should be answered. He asked me whether certain troops were assembled to force a resident upon the Ameer; he spoke of a bridge of boats, erected to facilitate operations; he wished to know whether there was any departure from a policy which had been adopted by many Indian statesmen, and whether any attempt was being made to force on the Ameer a resident at the Court at Cabul, 'resident' being a word well understood in India. To that question I gave a negative answer. He asked me for positive information, I told him I could not give him positive information, and, because under these circumstances the noble lord opposite appeared to have misunderstood

what I intended to say, the noble marquis (Lord Ripon) and others are pleased to accuse me of disingenuousness. I imagined every one in this House knew there were many subjects on which the mouth of a Minister of the Crown is sealed. If I had explained fully what our policy then was I must have explained the reasons on which it was founded; I must have depicted the Ameer, as he had been depicted to me, as a faithless, treacherous, intriguing man, whose loyalty we had vainly attempted to secure. The noble lord has forgotten that anything said here by a Minister of the Crown is said not merely to this House of Lords and the English people, but to the whole world—to the Czar of Russia, to the Shah of Persia, and to the Ameer of Afghanistan; and if you insist that no answer shall be given except such as contains a complete revelation of the policy of the Government, the only inference I draw is that in the future no answer at all shall be given to a question of that kind." He believed that the Ameer had no aversion to the idea of receiving residents, though it was quite true that he pretended to have such an aversion. As to the causes of his anger, he had stated them himself. "One cause was the very impartial

conduct of Sir John Lawrence when the Ameer was struggling for his life. He had a profound conviction that it was not the duty of the British Government to interfere with the claimants for the Afghan throne; but, instead of leaving them alone to the vicissitudes of war, he resented each candidate as he came uppermost. We have been told that the Ameer sees English books and newspapers. Perhaps he is versed in English literature; if so, I can readily suppose that he must have looked upon Sir John Lawrence as an Oriental Vicar of Bray." . . . It was not the military invasion of India, but the diplomatic invasion of Afghanistan that we had to guard against. We had to take measures to prevent Russia working in the East with Afghanistan as her base, as she had worked in Europe with Bulgaria and Bosnia. To prevent such an evil remonstrances to St. Petersburg were useless. It could only be done by English agents on the spot, who might watch the unauthorized diplomacy of Russia.

"Well, then," he continued, "I am told we ought to have gone to war with Russia. Why on earth ought we to have gone to war with Russia? Our complaint against the

Ameer was that he had not received our embassy. His excuse for not receiving our embassy was, first, that the Russians would make it a ground for coming themselves; and, secondly, that Christians could not live safely at Cabul. The mission of Russia made fragments of both these excuses. It was obvious that he did not fear the Russians coming, and that Christians could live safely at Cabul. From that moment his excuses disappear. And now, by his own showing, without any reason, out of pure hostility and disloyalty, because he was conspiring with others, because he did not wish light to be cast upon his proceedings, he refuses to receive our envoy into his territory. It is natural for every man who has done mischief to object to light being thrown on what he has been doing. The excuses raised by the Ameer remind me of the conditions which spiritualist professors lay down with regard to their claims—namely, that darkness is absolutely essential to the success of their operations." He concluded by reminding his hearers of what would be the result of an adverse vote on the Afghan question in words to which later events have given a prophetic significance. "If this matter is taken out of

our hands, it must be placed in the hands of others, and you know what policy they will pursue. It must be placed in the hands of those who have found India a burden, of those who contemplate the superiority of America over this country with acquiescence and complacency, in the hands of those who even now advise us to take back our army, and allow the Ameer to gain in diplomacy the victory which he has been unable to gain in arms, and pursue beyond the border his intrigues and his disloyal designs."

The debate, which showed how thoroughly party prejudices had blinded the Opposition to the welfare of their country, concluded with a majority of 136 for the Government, 201 against 65; while in the House of Commons an amendment blaming them for the war in Afghanistan was rejected by a majority of 101. On the 17th of December, Parliament was adjourned till the middle of the following February.

By this time the Afghan war seemed to have come to an end, the Ameer's troops had met with a succession of defeats, and Shere Ali himself was a fugitive in Central Asia. But troubles had broken out in South Africa, and the disaster of Isandlana had shown that

the task of subduing the Zulus was by no means so easy as people had supposed. Even the Opposition were compelled to confess that the Government were not responsible for the Zulu war, but they endeavoured, *more suo*, to make party capital out of the fact that the Government had not considered Sir Bartle Frere's hasty action in declaring war against Cetewayo sufficient reason for peremptorily recalling him, and, out of doors, impassioned orators were never tired of declaring that the disasters of South Africa were due to the "Imperial" policy of her Majesty's Ministers. These events, moreover, served the purpose of the obstructionists in the House of Commons, who, headed by Mr. Parnell and Mr. Chamberlain, seemed determined to make legislation by a Conservative Government impossible. It must, however, in fairness be said that Lord Hartington refused to lend his sanction to these questionable tactics, for which he received the sneers of Mr. Chamberlain, who described him as the late leader of the Opposition.

With all this obstruction it is hardly surprising that the net results of the session were not great. The Army Discipline Bill,

an important measure of codification, was passed after almost interminable debates; the difficult question of university education in Ireland was settled, for the time at least, by the foundation of a central examining body, known as the Royal University of Ireland; a Corrupt Practices Act, and a measure dealing with the public health were placed in the Statute-book; by another Bill the office of Public Prosecutor was established; and a Public Works' Loans Act regulated the borrowing powers of various local bodies. But Ministers were compelled reluctantly to abandon many important Bills, such as those for reorganizing county government, and for establishing the liability of employers for accidents occasioned to their workmen.

The interest of the session centred in the House of Commons, where the organization of obstruction was a new thing, and one which it was clear would necessitate a revision of the time-honoured rules of debate in the Lower House. Sir Stafford Northcote made an attempt in this direction, but receiving very little support from the leaders of the Opposition, he was obliged to abandon his scheme of reform and be contented with a very small change in the rules, which did not

do much to check the growing evil which was rapidly paralyzing the Legislature.

Lord Salisbury did not take any very prominent part in the debates of this session. He was frequently interrogated as to the carrying out of the Treaty of Berlin by members of the Opposition, who were hoping against hope that that memorable settlement of the Eastern difficulty would prove a failure. But with the Afghan and Zulu wars the Foreign Secretary had no especial connection, though sharing to the full the responsibility for the measures which the Cabinet deemed it necessary to take.

But his silence in Parliament was redeemed by two brilliant speeches which he made outside the walls of Parliament. The first was on the 30th of April, on the occasion of the biennial dinner of the Middlesex Conservative Association. After having expressed his gratitude for the support which the Government had received from London and Middlesex throughout the crisis of the Eastern Question in 1878, during which time Ministers had to deal with an Opposition such as no Ministry had had to deal with before, he said he did not wish to cast any reproach upon those who in the autumn of

1876 maintained the agitation about the Bulgarian atrocities.

“ They may have been misled, they may have exaggerated the evil; but their action was the outcome of the purest feelings by which human beings can be animated. But their outcry, which was directed to the limited object of obtaining reforms from the Turkish Government, was seized upon and diverted by men who, twenty years ago, plunged the nation into war in order to maintain the Ottoman Empire. Twenty years ago the Ministry of that day induced the country to spend one hundred millions, and vast numbers of valuable lives, in order to sustain the Turkish Empire. That policy, at their bidding, was accepted as the policy of the nation. It was enshrined in treaties; it was maintained by Parliamentary votes. They gave no sign that they had abandoned it. In 1871 they confirmed it by a solemn treaty. But in the autumn of 1876, when accounts, possibly exaggerated, but certainly sincere, of terrible and most condemnable doings had excited the feelings of the people of this country, they saw an opportunity of damaging their political opponents; and they did not hesitate to sacrifice, at a mo-

ment's notice, that which they had induced the country by its blood to sanction. Whatever their motives may have been, a sharper curve, to use an American phrase, was never executed by politicians."

It might be said that the Government ought not to have been influenced by the Opposition. Nor were they; but the Opposition had influenced those with whom the Government had to deal. They desired to prevent a disastrous and terrible war, and exerted their utmost influence on the Turkish Government to induce it to abandon its unreformed administration, and to fall into the lines of European civilization. But what was the answer which they were met with? "We were told that we were a Government which no longer represented the people of England; that those who did represent the people of England had declared that the Turks must be turned out bag and baggage, and that it was of no use for the Turks to follow our advice because they were already foredoomed. That was the effect of the Bulgarian agitation upon our power over their counsels. I do not like to follow the argument further; but I desire to say that upon others also—upon others on whom in a still greater degree de-

pended the termination of that critical period—the belief that the policy of the Crimean war had been abandoned by those who were its authors exercised an influence which is written upon the pages of history in blood.

“Well, the war came—a war waged in obedience to a philanthropic outcry from this country. And what was the result? Any one who has followed the history of the past three years, who has counted up the lives that were lost on the field of battle, and who has studied the reports of our representatives abroad, will agree that if all the misery inflicted by these Bulgarian atrocities had been repeated every year for thirty years, it would not have equalled the miseries which this philanthropic war has entailed upon the human race. When the Government found they could not prevent the war, their attention was directed to the object of protecting British interests, and in that they flatter themselves they have succeeded.

“I know,” he continued, “I am treading upon delicate ground. I can only speak with reserve; but I think I may beg of you also to exercise a little reserve in believing all that you see in the public prints. I have always regarded Baron Reuter as one of the most

remarkable men of his generation. The way in which he gets at the secrets of my office is something perfectly inconceivable, but still infallibility is not granted to any human being, and even Baron Reuter may occasionally make mistakes. If you have ever seen, or should you ever see, in his reports anything which indicates to you that her Majesty's Government are disposed to depart in any particular from the Berlin Treaty, I say to you, do not believe it. For the sake of peace we gave up a great deal, but we can give up no more. If I say that, it is simply in deference to Baron Reuter and others. I have no ground for believing that any person—or at least any person of importance—intends to depart from the Berlin Treaty. As far as I know, the great powers of Europe, without exception, are fully resolved on its execution." Mr. Bright had recently stated that the Government had delivered up the people of Eastern Roumelia to the cruel power and government of the Turk. That assertion was marked by Mr. Bright's customary recklessness. The Government had not delivered up Eastern Roumelia to the Turkish Government. "The arrangement of the Berlin Treaty was this: that political and military

supremacy over Eastern Roumelia, for strategical purposes, was given to the Sultan, in order that he might defend his dominions, and especially Constantinople and the coast of the Ægean, in which we have an especial interest; but the internal government was entirely to be delivered into the hands of the Eastern Roumelians themselves, and an arrangement—I believe the wisest that under the circumstances could be come to—has been carried out by Sir H. D. Wolff and his colleagues with great energy and ability. Without passing a comparison upon minute details, the position of Eastern Roumelia towards the Sultan will not be very different from that which our own colonies occupy towards the Queen—that is to say, that they will govern themselves in all matters of internal administration, but that in all matters of foreign policy or strategical defence they will depend upon and be subject to the Sultan. I believe that the Turkish Government, deriving lessons from past events, is very anxious to avoid any cause of offence that might prevent the people of Eastern Roumelia from submitting contentedly to its rule. In short, the fate of the Eastern Roumelians lies in their own hands. If they

accept loyally and freely the Treaty of Berlin, and take advantage of the full administrative autonomy which is granted to them, they will enjoy a freedom which other nations in this continent might well envy. If, to follow a fancy, or to satisfy a formula, they refuse these liberal institutions, repression must follow, and their blood be upon their own heads. But I do not believe that any such alternative will happen. I believe that you will find that the Christian community—for it is in the main Christian—of Eastern Roumelia, under a Christian governor, and guaranteed by Christian powers, but yielding to the Sultan its strategical and political government will be among the best governed and the happiest communities in Europe."

Speaking generally of Turkey, Lord Salisbury said he believed that there had never been a Sultan more resolved to carry out the reforms which were necessary to the existence of his empire; and he was supported by a Christian Foreign Secretary animated by the same spirit. He was supported by a Grand Vizier, who had been borrowed from another Mohammedan nation, and who, from the knowledge and ability which he had shown, deserved the recognition and the

acknowledgment of Europe. "If these men can reform the system which they have found; if they can introduce good government; if they can secure life and property; and if in addition they can obtain a good financial system for their empire, I believe that, in spite of the terrible shocks which it has received, the Turkish power may yet for the advantage of Europe survive. If they neglect these opportunities, if they refuse, from any prejudice, to undertake the reforms which are necessary, a more terrible catastrophe may result. The rivalries of many nations, which by its existence are adjourned, would by its fall come up for settlement."

Referring to the coming election, Lord Salisbury asked them to remember what was the kind of party with which they had to deal. If a Liberal party came into power, it would not, like the Conservative party, be one animated by a single feeling, directed to a single policy. "The Liberal party," he said, "is a confederation of parties, and in the enterprises which the confederacy undertakes, each confederate expects that the results will be to himself and not to his neighbour. While they are in opposition they certainly take advantage of the privileges of that position.

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They abstain from giving any definite pledges. One gentleman, distinguished in their organization, has recently warned them that for the next election they are to have no distinct opinions. They are to be united, however, by a common bond, and that is the desire of turning the present Government out of office. But there may be people to whom it may seem to be of some importance to know what are the measures which the Liberal party, if it got into power, would introduce, and by what manner of men it would be led. While they are in opposition it is very convenient to push forward Lord Hartington. He is a man whose moderation and judgment most people will recognize; but while they recognize those qualities they will also recognize that upon points on which he has differed at first from his extreme supporters he has yielded in the end. I think you will find that when the test really comes the leader of the Liberal party will be Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Gladstone, I need hardly say, does not lean upon the old Whigs for his support. He leans upon gentlemen like Mr. Chamberlain, who, no doubt with ability and conscientiousness of conviction, press forward demands which are fatal to the ancient institutions of this country. I will

only ask you to observe their attitude as to one question—the question of disestablishment. It would appear that all the more earnest and determined members of the party are in favour of disestablishment; and yet the whip of that party recommends that they should talk as little as possible on the subject. He even goes the length of asserting, and the assertion must have required a considerable effort on his part, that in going to Midlothian for his future seat, Mr. Gladstone never thought of disestablishment. I will only say this, that premonitory symptoms of disestablishment have appeared; that the Liberal party is divided; that the Liberal party is in opposition; and that Mr. Gladstone wants a seat. Everything forebodes a severe attack of that disease. I only wish to press home upon your minds that, deeply as foreign politics interest you at this moment, and mightily as you exert yourselves to maintain against those who would destroy them the honour and the traditional principles of this country, there are other things to be remembered. Look where we will, the Constitution of England does not suffer by comparison. Look where we will, we see extremes in politics being tried—extreme democracy.

in one direction, and a most terrible and intense autocracy in another. But among them all this country pursues her steady and undisturbed way—often imitated, but always unapproachable. We congratulate ourselves on the support we have received in Parliament in our efforts to sustain the traditions of the country alike at home and abroad. It is not to Parliament, however, that we must ultimately look. It is in your hands—in the hands of the constituencies—that the decision will eventually be; and I am certain that that decision will be wisely given, because I am convinced that the people are not insensible to the principles upon which the grandeur of this country rests.”

At a Conservative dinner in the City of London on the 9th of July, Lord Salisbury again spoke of the conduct and aims of the Opposition. After defending the domestic policy of the Government, he went on to say that from Lord Hartington, who was a moderate and liberal man, the country would have nothing to fear; but he doubted whether Lord Hartington had much real authority over the party he was supposed to lead. “You have seen,” he continued, “within the last few days what is the nature of the support

which he commands. You have had legislation stopped during the present session. You have had the forms of Parliament abused. You have had Parliament itself reduced to ridicule. And this has been done by men who are nominally under Lord Hartington's standard, but who disobey his commands. These gentlemen below the gangway, be they Irish revolutionists or English revolutionists, stand to Lord Hartington very much in the position in which two or three years ago the Circassian auxiliaries stood to the Turkish Government. The Turkish Government had the advantage of all that the Circassian auxiliaries did; it profited by all their excesses; but when it was reproached with those excesses the Turkish Government could show with perfect truth that it was not responsible for what the Circassians did. It is exactly the same with our Parliamentary Circassians. Lord Hartington profits by what they do, but he is genuinely disgusted by the way in which they do it." That was all very well while people were in opposition. But what would Lord Hartington do if he came into power? "Mind," he said, "I am putting it merely as a hypothesis. I do not believe myself in Lord Hartington coming

into power. If it should happen that a storm should arise which should overthrow the present Government, a darker and more dangerous spirit will rule that storm. But, supposing a Liberal Government to be in power, it cannot rule by its own majority. Do you think that these Circassians will not insist upon being paid? Do you think they will serve for love? They will be paid, not in any vulgar lucre; they will be paid by measures dangerous to the Constitution in Ireland and England. That is the real difference between the Conservative party and those who are opposed to it. We are a united party. We have no need to conciliate any separate sections of the party to which we belong. But any Liberal party that is in power must be in power on the principle of giving places to the moderate men, and measures to the extravagant men of the party."

At the close of the session the English people had good reason for believing that the Afghan question was settled. The Treaty of Gandamek, which secured a scientific frontier for British India, and the predominance of English influence in Afghanistan, had been signed in May; Yakoob Khan had been

recognized as Ameer, and Sir Louis Cavagnari had been received in Cabul as President or Envoy. But in September the situation was entirely changed by the terrible news of the massacre of the Envoy and his attendants by a fanatical mob, whose excesses the Ameer was either unable or unwilling to restrain. This outrage was immediately followed by the march of General Roberts, who, after some severe fighting, succeeded in capturing Cabul. Summary justice was dealt out to the authors of the massacre, as far as they could be discovered, while the Ameer voluntarily abdicated the position he had shown himself so incapable of filling.

It was just after these events that Lord Salisbury delivered in Manchester one of the finest speeches he has ever made, in reply to the criticisms of ministerial policy which Lord Hartington and Sir William Harcourt had been unsparingly indulging in in the earlier days of October. Lord Salisbury began by observing that at the beginning of 1878 the key-note of the Opposition was to defend all that Russia did, and to denounce every measure that her Majesty's Government took to restrain anticipated aggression; but now the tune was changed, and the

Government were blamed for not resisting enough.

“They had suddenly been taken with a great affection for a document in which I have a paternal interest—the circular which it was my duty to issue on the day I assumed the office I at present hold. I find that Lord Hartington and Sir William Harcourt were unknown but enthusiastic admirers of the composition; but they carefully concealed their love at the time. They allowed Mr. Gladstone to expend upon it the limitless resources of his sophistry, they allowed Mr. Bright to call it infamous, and they never hinted for a moment that it was the one thing they admired. However, now at last their affection, though late, is declared. I am quite sure that neither Lord Hartington nor Sir William Harcourt would willingly misquote anything, but I feel convinced, from their entire and blank ignorance of what that document contained, that they had omitted to read it before their recent speeches.” Turning to the question of Cyprus, he said, “There has been a great deal of absurd criticism upon the occupation of Cyprus. Some ingenious people think that they have entirely disposed of the policy of the Queen’s

Government by finding out that, in a very rainy year, fever prevailed upon its coasts. Fever prevailed in Malta, on the coasts of Greece and of Africa, and it prevailed throughout the Mediterranean in that year; but the occupation of Cyprus was merely following out the traditional policy of the English Government for a long time past. When the interest of Europe was centred in the conflicts that were waged in Spain, England occupied Gibraltar. When the interest of Europe was centred in the conflicts that were being waged in Italy, England occupied Malta; and now that there is a chance that the interests of Europe will be centred in Asia Minor or in Egypt, England has occupied Cyprus. There is nothing new in the policy; we do not claim to have anything new in our policy. Our claim is that we follow the tradition that has been handed down to us, with but one very disastrous interruption, for a long succession of Governments."

Coming to the famous circular on the Treaty of San Stefano, he maintained that the only point in that circular which had not been complied with was the cession of Bessarabia by Roumania. "With respect to the Black Sea generally, we have entirely

carried out the views which were expressed in the circular. Two great dangers were indicated. One, that the Greek coast of the Black Sea would be absorbed in the new Bulgaria; the other that the harbour of Batoum would be created a dangerous arsenal. By the Treaty of Berlin the greatest amount of the Greek coast, including the important harbour of Bourgas, was handed back to Turkey, and the harbour of Batoum was declared to be a commercial harbour. An arsenal, therefore, could not be erected there without a breach of the treaty. But after all these were secondary points. The head and front of the offendings of the Treaty of San Stefano was what was called 'the big Bulgaria,' a vast Slav province extending to Salonica on the one side, and to Adrianople, and at the time of the arrangements as to Servia and Montenegro, stretching a Slav principality across from the Black Sea to the Adriatic. It was absurd to suppose that if, as this Treaty of San Stefano provided, Russia would have dominant influence in the modelling and starting of the principality, that Russia would not have been the dominant power at Adrianople and at Salonica. It was absurd to suppose that if such an arrange-

ment had lasted that Constantinople could have been independent. If you tell me the circular has been abandoned, I ask you, what have we done? We have pushed this Bulgaria back from Salonica; we have pushed it back from Adrianople; we have pushed it behind the Balkans, and left the Balkans in the military possession of Turkey as a bulwark for the protection of Constantinople. I know that there are some people who say that because Turkey has not already occupied four or five practicable passes in the Balkans there is no reality in this provision of the Treaty of Berlin. People only go to great expense for the purpose of defence when they have a reasonable prospect of aggression to resist. In the present circumstances of the Russian Empire I do not think that Turkey has any reasonable prospect of having to resist Russian aggression. England for twenty years had the right to place her garrisons all over the principality of Beloochistan. She never did it, but nobody ever doubted her right to do it; nobody ever doubted the value of the provision; and when causes arose which made it necessary to occupy the town of Quetta, then the value of the treaty sprang into activity, and Quetta was occupied."

There had been a good deal of criticism because the Turkish Empire was not reforming as rapidly as we might wish ; but after as exhausting a war as any country had ever endured, the introduction of reforms might be delayed for a time without infringing the good faith of the sovereign who delayed it. "But," he explained, "I do not wish for a moment to deny that there is in the internal condition of Turkey much that we must regret. I fear that in high places feebleness and fanaticism are allowed an influence which ought to be denied them, and that Turkey may be entering upon a path of resolute resistance to reform which can only ultimately end in her ruin. But what I think should be carefully considered by the English people is, that however important it is that Turkey should be reformed, and though they will rightly require of their Government that every exertion should be made in order to carry out these reforms, yet the question of a reformed or unreformed Turkey does not affect the necessity of keeping Russia from Constantinople and from the Ægean. In past times we have not inquired what the government of a country was in deciding to protect great strategic positions which it was neces-

sary for the interests of England and Europe should be kept from an overwhelming power. The constitution of Poland was about as detestable as any constitution could be, yet Poland was followed by the sympathy and exertions of liberal Europe for half a century, not for her own merits, but because she was a bulwark against the advance of a power that was feared. Spain again—when Napoleon invaded Spain, the Government of Spain was the most detestable of the governments which the corruption of the last century left to us; yet we never hesitated for a moment to spend the blood and treasure of this country in defending Spain against Napoleon, and we were never hindered by the thought that her Government was bad.”

There was another evil to be corrected, and that was the stretching of a Slav principality practically from sea to sea, and for that purpose was employed a power of a very different stamp from the Turk. Europe delegated to Austria the duty of putting an end to that arrangement. “If you do not trust the Turk who is on the rampart of the fortress, at least you must trust the Austrian sentinel who is at the door. The Government have been blamed because they have not used homogeneous nationalities to resist.

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the advance of Russia. My reply to the recommendation to use homogeneous nationalities to prevent the advance of Russia south of the Balkans is similar to the reply which the Mayor of Ivry gave to Henry IV. when he apologized to him for not giving up the keys of the town. The first apology was that there were no keys. There are no homogeneous nationalities to set up. They are mixed inextricably together—Mussulmans, Greeks, and Slavs—and no ingenuity could set up a homogeneous nationality in order to impede invasion from the north. But even if the homogeneous nationality existed, it is a mere chimera to imagine that such an instrument would serve your purpose. You may admire a horse very much, but if you are going to ride it what you would ask is not whether the horse is beautiful, but whether it will carry you. And if the weight which you have to put on is considerable, no amount of beauty will compensate for its weakness. That is the state of the case with respect to the nationalities of the Balkan Peninsula; with all that they had to appeal to our sympathies, they had no organization, no administrative traditions, no tried cohesion; they were mere infants or embryos; they had not

grown into a State. Until they had grown into a State it is idle to suppose that they could resist the advance of a monarchy now in its fourth century of conquest. But if you wish not for theories, but facts, look at the case of Roumania. In Roumania there was every motive to resist the passage of the Russian armies. The Roumanians had no Sclavonic sympathies, they had an independent guarantee by Europe; and yet we know that they not only—I do not blame them; their weakness left them no other choice—did not resist the passage of the Russian armies, but in the most difficult moment of the war, they came to the assistance of Russia. . . . If the Turk falls, remember that Austria is now at Novi-Bazar, and has advanced to the latitude of the Balkans, and that no advance of Russia beyond the Balkans or beyond the Danube can now be made unless the resistance of Austria is conquered. I believe that in the strength and independence of Austria lie the best hopes of European stability and peace. What has happened within the last few weeks justifies us in hoping that Austria, if attacked, would not be alone. The newspapers say—I know not whether they say rightly—that a

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defensive alliance has been established between Germany and Austria. I will not pronounce any opinion as to the accuracy of that information; but I will only say this to you, and all who value the peace of Europe and the independence of nations, I may say without profanity, that it is 'good tidings of great joy.'"

Referring to events in Afghanistan, Lord Salisbury maintained that the Government had in reality no choice but to pursue the course into which they had been led. "Some people talk of our splendid frontier as presented by the Suliman Mountains. A mountain frontier is a splendid thing I quite admit, but on one condition, and that is, that the mountain, or at least the crest of the mountain, belongs to you. But if the mountain from the top to the bottom, where it melts into the valley, belongs to some one else, and that some one else happens to be the person against whom you wish to protect yourself, that mountain position is the worst frontier you can possibly have. That was the state of things with respect to Afghanistan. When we came into office we found that wherever the enormous territories that own her Majesty's rule bordered on the territories of

any other power, and, in fact, wherever they did not, the powers cheerfully received the representatives of her Majesty at their courts. There was not one exception—barbarous or semi-civilized—wherever the English Government desired that its representatives should be received, save in the solitary instance of Afghanistan. Well, in that exception from the practice of all nations there was no doubt something startling in itself. But if Afghanistan had been simply isolated, it would have been merely an exhibition of churlishness, and we might have left the ruler of Afghanistan to sulk as much as he liked. But it was obviously capable of another interpretation. It was possible that all the time he refused to receive our emissaries, he was receiving the emissaries of others. It was possible that all the time intrigues were going on, and the result would ultimately have been to place Afghanistan practically in the hands of a foreign potentate, and those mountains constituting an adverse and hostile frontier, and frowning down upon the plains of India, would have been in the power of at least a rival, and possibly a hostile, empire. We very early came across indications which convinced us that the unfavourable view of Shere Ali's

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character was the correct one, and we were also sure that if it was not correct, we should easily ascertain the truth by asking him to do as every other potentate in the world does, and to receive an officer at his court. Unfortunately our orders were delayed. The Government of India was in the hands of a very able man, but a man not wholly sympathetic with ourselves, and the result was that a year and a half passed away before our orders could be executed, and during that time a great change came upon the political horizon. When our orders were issued everything spoke peace; when at last they were executed the Servian invasion by Russia had commenced, and a strong probability of the Russo-Turkish War was patent to the world. I cannot help believing that if what we recommended had been done at once, the Ameer would have accepted our embassy, and all the evils which followed would have been averted; but that unfortunate delay destroyed and ruined everything. The opportunity was past, for the Ameer thought he saw a prospect of Russia and England coming to blows, and he thought it possible to defy us. . . . What sort of man was it whom we were blamed for not trusting? It was a man

who had by solemn oaths allowed his own son to come and pay him a visit, and who then, breaking all those oaths, threw him into prison, and, but for the interposition of the Indian Government, would have put him to a cruel death. That, however, was the man with whom we had to deal. I cannot conceive of any English authority who imagines that it would have been our duty to have allowed this chief, possessing a strategic position so dangerous to India, to have received the embassy of an empire at that time hostile to, or at least in diplomatic conflict with, our own, and to refuse to receive ours altogether. If we had done so, Afghanistan would have been at the disposal of the embassy which he had received, and we, in the sight of Asia, should have acknowledged that our power was unable to cope either with Afghanistan or Russia. Well, you know what happened. The war occurred, the Afghans were conquered; and when we came to negotiate terms of peace, we were disposed, as we had been before, to prefer Candahar, or some other place, as the position which our embassy should take. Yakoob Khan insisted that we should send it to Cabul, for at Cabul he could fully protect it

himself. Whether the assurances which Yakoob Khan gave us that he could protect our envoy have been belied simply by his incapacity or some other worse quality, it is too early to decide; and as the Government have not yet received full information from General Roberts or from the Viceroy, we cannot at present indicate the precise policy in all its details which it will be our duty to pursue. But the policy in its main lines has not altered. It is defence, not dominion, that we seek."

With reference to home affairs, Lord Salisbury said that the close of the present Parliament could not be far off, but the Government had retained to the end of a long term the unabated confidence of both Houses. "Strangely enough this made a matter of blame to us. Mr. Goschen is angry with us because we have not spent our majority. Now, spending a majority means carrying matters so far that you not only trampled down all the objections of the minority, but you even disgust your own friends. The brilliant orators who adorn the Opposition are fertile in criticism, but when it comes to positive suggestion they are singularly dull. I am not surprised that it should be so. When

the Liberal party select a policy, they have to do it on much the same ground as some neighbouring nations select a Government. They have to select, not a policy which unites them most, but the policy which divides them least. . . .”

Turning to Ireland, he maintained that if any Liberal leader said that he was prepared to concede what the Irish agitators demanded, the Liberal party would have small chance in any English constituency. “But what the Liberal leaders may not do, Liberal followers may very expediently do, and there may be constituencies where the members of the Liberal party, following Lord Hartington, no doubt guided by the authorized organs of the Liberal union, will yet, for the purpose of obtaining the Irish vote, make a compromise which is equivalent to surrendering the question of Home Rule. When the matter came on for division in the House of Commons, which do you think of those two influences would prevail? If you are in any doubt I would ask you to consult the records of the last session with respect to the Army Bill. Precisely the same state of things occurred. The Liberal leaders intrenched themselves in one position, and their Liberal

followers took up another; but when the division bell rang the Liberal leaders disposed of their objections and voted in the same lobby as their Liberal followers." The Irish legislation of the late Government had been allowed to work uninterrupted, but what had been the result? "Have their promises been fulfilled? Is Ireland more contented than she was? Is it not rather the case that the separatist movement has obtained proportions to which it never reached before, and that, encouraged by the principles that were sanctioned in the Irish Land Act, doctrines which have never before been seriously raised in any civilized state are propounded from Irish platforms?"

The advent of a Liberal Ministry to power would be understood by every state in Europe as meaning that the policy of the present Government was to be undone. "We may judge of the way in which they would have dealt with the Eastern Question by the way in which they dealt with the sudden claim of Russia to abrogate the Black Sea clauses in 1871. We may conclude that they would have allowed Russia to occupy Constantinople, that they would then have exacted from her an abstract statement that it is very

wrong for a power to occupy a town without being allowed to do so by the other powers, and then they would have confirmed her in the possession of what she had gained. That is precisely what they did in 1871, and I see no reason for believing that they would not have done it in 1878. With respect to Afghanistan, Lord Hartington tells us that we must retire behind our frontier. But if General Roberts went out by the Khyber Pass, evacuating all that British valour during the past year has gained, I venture to predict that somebody else would walk in by the passes of the Hindoo Koosh, and that Afghanistan would become in peace a difficulty, in war a danger of the first magnitude to the Indian Empire. We have had other remedies proposed. Sir William Harcourt tells us that we should have relied on a friendly Afghanistan—we should have relied for the dearest interests of our Indian Empire on the proposed friendship of the most perfidious nation that has ever existed on the earth. I have heard, though I have not seen it, that a very venerable organ of Whig opinion has recently announced that the proper defence of English interests in Afghanistan is to be confined to the action of the English fleet.

I feel sure that the electors of this country will not be blind to the gravity of the issue which events have placed before them. If they neglect the teaching of the past they may have more exasperating legislation, separating class from class and encouraging new enterprises against property and order. They may have more abdication of the proper position of England, and more trusting to isolation, and to the friendship or to the goodwill of the powers before whom they kneel. All over the world we shall have masterly inactivity, except only if there should be some ancient institution to overthrow at home. I feel sure that the electors of this country will prefer the legislation which combines classes rather than that which separates them, that they will prefer to hold high the standard of English traditions and English honour, and that they will prefer to maintain a firm front at home in order that, with the co-operation of worthy allies, we may be able to maintain peace and right abroad."

This great speech at Manchester is interesting, not merely for its eloquence, its cogent logic, its luminous defence of the Ministry against the reckless attacks of their opponents, whose inability to thwart by constitutional

means the policy of the Government made them all the more bitter in their opposition, but this speech for the defence was practically the last public address which Lord Salisbury was to deliver to his fellow-countrymen in his capacity of Minister for Foreign Affairs. The winter of 1879 brought on a severe chill which was attended with serious and even alarming symptoms, and at one time it seemed as if England was in danger of losing one of her most eminent statesmen. Happily Lord Salisbury's fine constitution enabled him to rally successfully, though his health was not restored without a somewhat prolonged sojourn in the south of France. When he returned to England a change had indeed come over this country.

The winter of 1879 witnessed that passionate pilgrimage to Midlothian which has cost England so many valuable lives and so much treasure, has degraded her in the eyes of Europe, and shamed her to herself. In market-places, in public halls, at railway stations, in season and out of season, Mr. Gladstone poured out the vials of his wrath on the heads of those Ministers who, during a period of difficulty and danger, had guarded the affairs of England with honour to them-

selves and to their country. England's enemies, Fenians, Boers, and Russians rejoiced, while the great and friendly powers of the Continent looked aghast at the spectacle of an aged statesman using his splendid talents to injure his fatherland and disturb the traditional policy of a long line of illustrious Ministers.

Parliament met in February, but members were hardly in the vein for hard work; they were thinking far more of their constituents and the forthcoming election than of the business of the day, and a general feeling of relief was experienced when it was announced that Parliament was to be dissolved in March, and that the dissolution would be immediately followed by a general election.

The election of 1880 will be referred to by future historians and philosophers as a proof of the ingratitude and credulity of a democracy, and it will indeed be a difficult task to acquit the English people of at least culpable and criminal folly. That the great and successful administration of Lord Beaconsfield should have been overthrown by those whom it had most benefited, that the rhetorical stock-in-trade of demagogues and party politicians should have found ready listeners

and devoted disciples, that the interested ~~not~~ self-seeking politics of an embittered ~~Opposi-~~tion should have been accepted as a new gospel by hundreds of honest operatives and hard-headed men of business is enough to shake one's faith in a widely extended franchise and government by the masses.

Bad seasons, depression of trade, bank failures, were all attributed to the machinations of the Tory Ministers. Had Lord Beaconsfield been an Ahriman, an all-mighty and omnipresent spirit of evil, he could not have been credited with more power or more malignity. All differences between Whigs and Radicals, Liberals and Home Rulers were sunk in one passionate desire to turn the Government out. The Whig duke contributed his thousands to the electioneering fund, the Radical wire-puller strained his complaisant caucus to renewed efforts, the moderation of Lord Hartington was dangled before the eyes of the Whigs, while the extreme section were told that some of the sweets of office should be allotted to their leaders, the Ritualist was bid remember the Public Worship Act, the Dissenter was promised a Burial Bill. The new golden age was to begin when once a Liberal Govern-

ment was again in power; trade and commerce would revive, wars be unknown, our foreign policy would be peace, our home policy progress. Such were some of the baits which the people of England greedily swallowed, and which resulted in the downfall of the Conservative Administration. On the 1st of April, 1880—the most terrible All-Fools' Day in our history—the verdict was given for Mr. Gladstone. *Sic populo placuit.* What service was it to point out that the prophets were prophesying falsely, but to meet with the cynical response that the people loved to have it so? What matter that the appeal to argument and to history were in favour of the Ministers when the nation was intoxicated with the rhetoric of Midlothian?

Fate seemed to fight against the Government. Their most eloquent and influential members were Peers, and so debarred by law from taking any part in the electoral campaign. The remedial legislation which had marked the earlier years of the administration was forgotten, and time had somewhat blurred the memory of the Treaty of Berlin. Organization had been neglected, and the elections at Liverpool and Southwark had induced that

feeling of easy security which it is the most fatal madness for any political party to indulge in, while in the other camp everything was prepared for the great struggle which to many a Liberal was a matter of life or death.

Of all the Conservative Ministers, Lord Salisbury had the honour, after Lord Beaconsfield, of being the best abused by Mr. Gladstone and his associates. He was held up to public reprobation as having been one of the chief advocates of a policy of aggression, as responsible for every drop of blood shed in South Africa or Afghanistan, as entertaining dark designs against the liberties of Parliament, as the exponent of the mysterious doctrines conveniently summed up under the vague title of Imperialism. Knowing that he was powerless to refute these charges, many an obscure Radical candidate, many an ignorant Radical journalist disseminated the grossest calumnies concerning the Foreign Minister. The political *gobemouches* swallowed them wholesale.

It was under these circumstances that the Liberal party once more gave a Government to England. Acting upon recent precedents, the Conservative Ministry very wisely determined to forestall the decision of the newly-

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elected House of Commons, and on the 21st of April Lord Salisbury and his colleagues journeyed to Windsor and delivered up to their Sovereign the seals of those offices which had assuredly received no injury at their hands.

CHAPTER VI.

1880—1881.

PARLIAMENT was formally opened on the 29th of April, but the delay occasioned by the advent of a new Government to power, and the necessary re-elections of Ministers, postponed the Queen's Speech and the business of the session until the 20th of May. But before that date the Government had committed at least two serious blunders, important enough at the time, but almost forgotten now amid the long catalogue of mistakes and misfortunes which are connected with Mr. Gladstone's second administration. Our task does not compel us to linger over the details of the Bradlaugh case, and this unsavoury subject can be dismissed with the brief remark that, after almost incredible vacillation, the Ministry attempted in 1883 to settle the question by bringing in an Affirmation Bill, which was rejected by a majority of three by the

most Radical House of Commons that ever sat.

The Karolyi affair was a very different matter. During his electioneering campaign in Midlothian, Mr. Gladstone, enraged by a report, which proved to be totally unfounded, that the Emperor of Austria had expressed a hope that a Conservative majority would be returned, made a savage and undeserved attack upon the policy of Austria, intermingling his denunciations of the past with threats for the future. When it was known that the perfervid orator of Midlothian was to be the Prime Minister of England, Austrian susceptibilities were not unnaturally aroused, and Mr. Gladstone was obliged to write a formal apology to Count Karolyi, which certainly lacked nothing in completeness and humiliation. But, apologies notwithstanding, the Continental powers looked with dismay on the return to office of the leader of the Bulgarian agitation, the defender of Russian aggression, the avowed opponent of the traditional policy of English people. It was only natural when Parliament met that Mr. Gladstone's letter should provoke discussion. In the House of Lords Lord Salisbury administered a severe and well-deserved rebuke to

the Premier for allowing his sentimentalism to imperil the friendliness which had subsisted under the late Government between England and Austria, and asserted that any departure from the established policy in this respect would be fraught with danger to this country, whose aims in Eastern Europe had been and should continue to be identical with those of Austria.

But questions of foreign policy were not those which provoked most discussion during the session of 1880. The English people, it must be allowed, were somewhat weary of having their gaze concentrated on Bulgaria, South Africa, and Afghanistan, and there was a general desire that the new Government should be permitted an opportunity of making themselves acquainted with the international relations of the country they had been called upon to govern before they were compelled to discuss the details of the policy they intended to pursue. Few of the newly-appointed members of the House of Commons had any very definite conceptions of foreign policy, and most of those who sat on the Ministerial side were chiefly anxious to assist the Government in redeeming some of those pledges which had been scattered with profusion

through the country on the eve of the general election.

The legislation of the session was naturally influenced by the remembrance of these pledges and by that gratitude which is largely composed of a keen sense of favours to come. The Nonconformists, who had lent their chapels for Liberal meetings, and who had denounced from their pulpits those who should vote for Conservative candidates, received their reward in the Burials Bill—a measure equally opposed to logic and to justice, but consented to by the House of Lords as a *dira necessitas*, the rejection of which might bring a worse measure into existence. The farmers, who had thrown off their allegiance to the Conservative party, and, harassed by a succession of bad seasons and by the increasing difficulty of contending against foreign competition, had cast in their lot with that party which had been consistently hostile to the agricultural interest, were paid for their votes by a Hares and Rabbits Bill, a measure of little practical value, and chiefly important as illustrating the contempt with which the Radical party regarded freedom of contract. The working man was rewarded for his adherence to the Liberal party by the Employers'

Liability Act—a tentative measure, but probably the most beneficial which the second Gladstone Administration has produced. But there was another and a far more “ugly customer” demanding payment in tones which the Government could not refuse to listen to.

The strong and determined government of Ireland during the late Administration, and the real grasp of the situation in that unhappy country which Lord Beaconsfield had shown in his famous letter to the Duke of Marlborough, had enraged the anti-English party beyond measure. Under the skilful leadership of Mr. Parnell, the Home Rule party had gained immensely in strength and organization. It was not merely that he had largely increased the number of his followers in Parliament, or that he exercised a practical directorship over three-fourths of Ireland, but many a Liberal member for an English constituency knew only too well that he owed his seat to the Irish vote which had been given in the general election against “Benjamin Disraeli.” The distress in Ireland was avowedly severe, though it is difficult to say how far it was exaggerated and even fostered by interested agitators, and the Government acted wisely in taking up the work of their

predecessors and bringing in a measure of relief. But the leaders of the Land League were little likely to be contented with a Bill which would do much to upset their plans, which were based rather upon hatred of the landlords than love of the peasants.

In an evil hour for his reputation as a statesman, Mr. Forster, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, consented to adopt a Bill enabling tenants who had been evicted for non-payment of rent to obtain compensation from the landlords they had defrauded. It is notoriously easy for a Government to pass any measure they set their hearts upon through a House of Commons in its first session. The Opposition is usually disorganized, and the new members have too recent a recollection of the discomforts and expenses of a contested election to desire to contribute to a dissolution. The Home Rulers and their Radical allies rejoiced, while the Whigs were content to swallow the pill, though they were not sufficient masters of their countenances to altogether disguise the unpleasant qualms it occasioned them.

The Bill, after long and stormy debates, finally passed the Commons by a majority of 67, the normal Government and Home Rule

majority combined being over 130. Under these circumstances there could be little doubt as to its fate in the House of Lords. The veteran Whig, Earl Grey, moved its rejection; the Marquis of Lansdowne, who had resigned his office rather than agree to the Bill, made an effective speech against it, and the only independent Liberal Peer who supported it was Lord Derby, whose constitutional timidity prevented him from taking the responsibility of voting against a Government which had received the support of a majority in the Commons. To the first night's debate Lord Salisbury contributed a vigorous denunciation of the measure, everything in connection with which he declared to be mysterious and enigmatical. "Nothing can be more puzzling than its original genesis. We do not know who suggested it, who produced it, or who approved of it. In its course through Parliament it was never possible to predict from day to day what new form it would assume. Now that we have it, it is full of expressions which the boldest man does not venture to interpret." Proceeding to a detailed criticism of the measure, he showed that it was founded on dangerous and destructive principles, that it pushed these principles to an unwarrantable

extent, that it was inconsistent with itself, and that if passed it would be productive of little good to Ireland, and would form a precedent for further confiscatory legislation. He concluded by animadverting sharply on the craven counsels which Lord Derby had given to his fellow-Peers. "My lords," he said, "I decline, in deciding how I shall give my vote, to ask with the noble earl what will be thought of the action of the House of Lords out-of-doors. We have a higher responsibility to keep in view. I do not believe that the reputation, the character, or the influence of any man or body of men is to be preserved by perpetually thinking of what may be thought of their conduct out-of-doors. The motto for the House of Lords should be, 'Be just and fear not;' and be sure that if you fear you will not long be just. The landlords of Ireland may be a small class comparatively; but, after all, they are a class, many of whom assumed their present responsibilities and incurred the dangers which they are now running at the hands of a Liberal Government, because they trusted to the word of Parliament, and invested their money in Irish land on what they thought was Parliamentary security. To these men you are bound in

honour. You may rely on this, that if you do not defend them nobody else will. Let us do what is just and right to all classes ; and we may safely leave our authority, our influence, and our mediatorial power to the good sense and consideration of our countrymen."

These brave and fearless words had great weight even on the Liberal side of the House, and the result of the first attempt of the new Government to legislate for Ireland on confiscatory principles was the rejection of their measure by the Lords by a majority of 282 to 41. It was noticed at the time that if every Conservative Peer had abstained from voting there would still have been a majority (composed entirely of the ordinary supporters of the Government) against this unjust and dangerous Bill.

Determined to reward the various sections of their supporters, the Government kept Parliament sitting until the middle of September, the business of the House of Commons being agreeably varied by frequent "scenes," in which the Home Rulers and the Radicals played a conspicuous part.

The recess in these days gives little rest to the hard-worked statesman. No sooner is Parliament prorogued than he is supposed to

be at the service of every constituency. Meetings and demonstrations are not considered complete without the presence of at least one Minister or ex-Minister. Clubs have to be opened, statues unveiled, associations inaugurated, candidates introduced, and on each occasion the services of an eminent statesman are demanded. Public life has become more and more exacting, and politics are rapidly tending to become a profession. It is only natural that more extra-Parliamentary speeches should be expected from the Opposition than from the Government. Criticism is notoriously easier than defence, while the duties and responsibilities of office must impose a check on the activity and ardour of the Ministry.

Lord Salisbury felt that it would not do for the Conservative party to tamely accept the defeat of the 1st of April, and to wring its hands in despair. The policy of the new Government he knew to be fraught with danger to England, both at home and abroad, and on three occasions during the autumn of 1880 he came forward as the critic of the Ministry, and the upholder of constitutional principles. It was surely time for some one to criticize, when the feebleness and vacil-

lation of the Government were allowing the leaders of the Land League to play the dictator in Ireland, and were preparing the way for that reign of terror which culminated in the tragedy of Phoenix Park.

Speaking at Taunton on the 26th of October, Lord Salisbury exhorted the Government to assemble Parliament and pass a measure to strengthen the hands of the Executive in Ireland. "A simple suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, or the assumption, I care not in what form, by the Executive Government of powers which Parliament would very freely grant them, would, I believe, at once suppress the movement, the vitality and force of which depend simply on the belief of the poor peasantry in the impunity of its leaders, and which would disappear the moment that those leaders were shown to be at the mercy of the Government. But it appears that the Government are prevented from taking this course by one or two strong excuses which are constantly urged for the present disorder of the Irish peasantry. For example, we are incessantly told, not only by the leaders of the Land League, but by Liberal members of Parliament speaking in England, that we should be tender in dealing with these

outrages, because, at some distant period in the past, Ireland was the subject of great misgovernment.

“ Well, other countries have been the subject of great misgovernment in the past, but that fact is not advanced, and is no excuse for the destruction of life and property at the present time. I believe the Duke of Cumberland misbehaved himself very much after Culloden, but I have never heard that the Highland tenants of the present day break the law in consequence. I believe in this very county where I stand Judge Jeffreys did a great many things which it would be impossible to defend, but I should be sorry to think that in going home to-night I should be less safe on that account, and run the risk of getting a bullet from some discontented descendants of one of Judge Jeffreys' victims. Property cannot be secured, nor can the healthy growth which is a necessity to every free community be maintained if contracts are to be cancelled by the bullet.”

Things grew steadily worse and worse in Ireland, and on the 19th of November Lord Salisbury made another appeal to the Government to act with promptitude and vigour. He maintained, as he had at Taunton, that

the ordinary law was not sufficient to cope with the Land League. "The truth is," he said, "there is something of superstition in the language that is held with respect to the application of the ordinary law. The ordinary law is the system of judge and jury applied to the detection and punishment of crime ; but that presupposes that the juries are free to convict, and that the witnesses are free to give evidence. It is mere imbecility to think that you can use and derive available results from the working of a machine whose motive power has been taken away. The whole social system is reduced to anarchy, on the top of which is a cumbersome hypocrisy which calls itself the ordinary law ; but its only effect, if there be any effect, is to restrain and hinder those who would defend themselves. It has no efficacy in restraining or hindering those by whom these outrages are perpetrated and promoted.

"I must conclude, therefore, that, unconsciously to themselves, some other consideration must have enlisted the Birmingham members of the Cabinet on the side of outrage and disorder. Crime and outrage, though very disagreeable to the persons who live in the midst of them, have a Parliamentary value. A Land Bill, especially if it con-

tained confiscatory clauses, would fall very flat if there were no disturbance in Ireland. The longer the disturbance continues the fiercer it becomes, and the more cause there will seem to be for exceptional legislation next session; and if there are members of the Government, as I suspect there are, who have some pet project, some darling theory, to promote, they will wish for that state of things which will furnish the argument that will best serve to establish their theories. On the other hand, if the landlords are delivered over for the winter to the tender mercies of the Land League, it may be hoped that they will be more pliable next spring, and will offer their fleeces more readily to the shearer that may desire to shear them. In other words, the present state of Ireland, all the anarchy and all the crimes committed in that country are so many arguments for future legislation. Every person who is shot, or carded, or branded, or tarred and feathered, contributes to bring revolutionary principles with regard to the land of Ireland within the range of practical politics. His example will have its effect, as the Clerkenwell outrage had, on the mind of Mr. Gladstone."

But so far as the Government and their

supporters were concerned, Lord Salisbury was speaking to deaf ears, and the terrible catalogue of outrage and crime went on increasing in volume and atrocity. In his speech at Woodstock on the 30th of November, the Conservative statesman could only re-state what he had stated before, that the philanthropic dawdling which folded its arms and complacently asserted that "Force was no remedy," was bringing Ireland to complete ruin. The Woodstock dinner, however, deserves notice as showing the cordial relations which existed between Lord Salisbury and the members of what was called "the Fourth Party," who were represented in some quarters as mutineers against the recognized leaders of the Conservative party.

During December outrages continued to increase at an appalling rate, and the Government were at length aroused to the necessity of taking immediate action, if Ireland was to be prevented from drifting into a condition of absolute anarchy. The announcement that Parliament was to meet on the 7th of January, and that a measure to strengthen the hands of the Executive would be brought forward without delay, created a feeling of universal satisfaction. The Coercion Bill was not

passed through the House of Commons without "scenes" unparalleled in our history. On one occasion the House sat continuously for forty-one hours, and it was only by the vigorous but technically illegal, action of the Speaker that the organized obstruction of the Irish party was eventually overcome and the Bill sent up to the Lords. Thus the extraordinary spectacle was witnessed of a Government deliberately neglecting the urgent warnings of those who had preceded them in office, taking credit to themselves for refusing to renew the Peace Preservation Act, and, nine months later, being compelled to bring in a most drastic measure of coercion, which proved to be utterly powerless to destroy the organization which was responsible for the crimes and outrages.

Nor was it only in Ireland that the policy of Mr. Gladstone was bringing disgrace and disaster upon the country. Anxious to justify their persistent opposition to the measures which the Conservative Government had taken for the protection of the Indian frontier, the Liberal Ministry determined to lose no time in "scuttling" out of Afghanistan. Those who protested against this suicidal policy were derided as Jingoës and alarmists,

and the danger to India from Russian advance in Central Asia was denied. The subservient House of Commons naturally declared its full confidence in the Ministerial policy, but in the Lords the Government were defeated by 165 to 79.

The debate on the abandonment of Candahar will always be remembered if only for the fact that it was the last occasion upon which the voice of Lord Beaconsfield was heard within the walls of Parliament. But the high level of the whole debate and the eloquence of many of the speakers gives it an importance not dependent upon a melancholy reminiscence. Lord Salisbury's contribution to the debate was by no means insignificant, though his speech will hardly compare as a masterpiece of oratory with some of those which have made his name illustrious as one of the greatest orators of the century. It may be, that the chilling thought, that nothing that was said or done in the House of Lords would induce the Government to swerve from their determination to desert Afghanistan, had a depressing effect upon his mind which impaired his powers of expression. But, towards the end, his native vigour and power of argument and sarcasm, showed them-

selves, and the conclusion of his speech is a brilliant summing up of the case against the abandonment of Candahar. After discussing the geographical and strategical importance of Candahar, and showing how real were the dangers of Russian aggression, Lord Salisbury concluded thus: "Some people appear to lay much stress upon the moral effect which our evacuation of Candahar will have upon the people of Afghanistan. There is a strange idea prevalent with regard to the Afghan character, which hardly coincides with that which is entertained by those who have lived in that country. That is an idea that they are highly impressionable, and that they are very easily touched and gained upon by any striking act of self-restraint, and that if they see you retiring behind your frontier, their first impulse will be to fall into ecstasies at this great act of moral and virtuous renunciation, and will swear to each other that henceforth nothing shall induce them to listen to the bribers or to fear the intimidation of Russia. I am afraid that that scarcely coincides with what experience has taught us with regard to the Asiatic character. I am afraid that in Asia allegiance is merely the recognition of superior strength, and that

the Afghans will, on the whole, ask themselves when they are determining to whom their allegiance shall be given, which is the stronger power—which is the power that can protect their friends and punish their enemies—and I am afraid that they will conclude that the stronger power is that which advances and never retreats, and not the power which retreats and preaches all the way.

“Of course there are several ways of putting a retreat. I recollect during the American War, when the Federals were compelled to execute that disagreeable operation, their generals always spoke of this action as a strategic movement to the rear. Her Majesty’s Government choose to describe it as a high moral act of renunciation. But these are all delicacies of civilization. The Afghan has to judge by experience of his own country and race, and his experience is that the people who stand are the stronger, and the weak are the people who give way.

“I fear that when you have undertaken to execute this manœuvre, on which so much reliance is placed, of coming back to Candahar, when you hear the Russians are at Herat—and I suppose commencing, by the way, to construct a railway at the same time; and

perhaps after much discussion at home and discussion in Parliament, and possibly a general election intervening—I fear that when the salutary movement is resolved upon, you will have to meet something even more dangerous than the Russian armies and the alienation of Afghan allegiance and obedience; you will have to meet the general belief in that country of the decay of our own national power. Depend upon it, Candahar is no trivial or unimportant city. Its strategic value and its great historic importance make it the object of the attention of the whole nation; and the power that is seen to give it up will, in the words of a great living statesman, be thought to be ‘a power that has lived.’ The noble earl (Lord Derby) spoke very contemptuously of those who fear to be thought afraid. The rulers of India, who are attempting the stupendous task of governing 250,000,000 men by 250,000, do well to fear that they should be thought afraid. Why, their reputation for courage and strength, if it be not a substitute for the possession of that strength, is, at all events, a safety and protection against unnumbered evils, which must accompany the repression of disorder in such an empire as your Indian

Empire. But think for a moment—when you cast a fatal doubt on this reputation for strength, which is so essential, if not to your existence, at all events to your tranquillity—what is the particular crisis at which this is done? Are your armies in all parts of the world so strong and so successful that you can afford, at this particular time, to have it said, that, struck down by a terrible blow in Africa, who are compelled to abandon the conquest you have made and leave Afghan territory to those whom you conquered?

“My lords, if you regard financial considerations, or, for the sake of deferring to the fantastical opinions of a particular clique of politicians or religionists who are not unrepresented in the present Government, if you take a course such as this, you at the present time suffer a doubt to be cast in the minds of millions of the Asiatic population on the strength and power of your military force, and you will have sacrificed that position, that reputation for tenacity and for resolution, on which your splendid empire was originally based, and by which alone I venture to say it can be held.”

“The terrible blow in Africa,” to which Lord Salisbury alluded, was of course the

defeat of Sir George Colley at Majuba Hill on the 27th of February, news of which had just reached England. It is not necessary to go into that miserable and disgraceful chapter of our history which is connected with the Transvaal. Suffice to say that this bankrupt republic of slave-holding freebooters had been annexed by England during Lord Beaconsfield's tenure of office; that the act had been forced upon the nation by the policy towards the natives, particularly the Zulus, which the Boers had adopted; that English rule had restored the administrative and financial system, and had naturally attracted a considerable number of settlers to the new colony; and that the Liberal party, with one or two unimportant exceptions, had thoroughly agreed that the policy was a wise and a necessary one.

But it so happened that Mr. Gladstone, during his electioneering tour in Midlothian, in his search for stones to hurl at his opponents, had hit upon the idea of denouncing, in all the vituperative language that he is so great a master of, the iniquity of crushing out this ideal republic of Bible-loving, simple-minded Dutch farmers. His words produced terrible results. There was, as might have

been expected, a party among the Boers who viewed the new reign of justice and order with anything but favourable eyes. They looked longingly back to the good old days when the natives were treated as outside the pale of humanity, forcibly deprived of their land, and either massacred or reduced to a state of slavery. The hopes of these Boers then were naturally excited by the Midlothian speeches, and when the news arrived that Mr. Gladstone had become Prime Minister of England, they felt sure that they had only got "to ring the chapel-bell" sufficiently loud to ensure attention being paid to their demands. At first the Government used very brave and patriotic language. In the Queen's Speech, read before Parliament on the 7th of January, it was announced that "a rising in the Transvaal had imposed upon her Majesty the duty of taking military measures with a view to the prompt vindication of her authority," and the acts of Government seemed to correspond with their professions. But the defeat of Majuba Hill alarmed them, and, partly influenced by a foolish humanitarianism, partly actuated by a desire to undo the work of the Beaconsfield Ministry, partly afraid of the cost which a prolonged war in South Africa

might entail, they deliberately turned their backs upon their principles and their promises, and by a surrender, unparalleled in our history since the disgraceful Convention of Kloster-Seven, granted the Boers everything they had demanded.

The indignation which was felt throughout England, save in a few select Radical circles, found vent in debates in both Houses of Parliament. Once more the big battalions of the Government triumphed over the logic and the patriotism of the Opposition in the Commons, and in the House of Lords it was not thought advisable to pass an empty vote of censure on a Government which refused to be taught by the lessons of experience and of history, and cared for nothing but a docile following in the Lower House. Nevertheless, the Peers determined to place on record their condemnation of the action of the Ministry in South Africa, and a debate took place on the 30th of March, originating in an unanswerable indictment by Lord Cairns, who brought all his unrivalled forensic powers to bear against the unhappy Ministers, whose feeble logic, miserable subterfuges, and helpless vacillation were mercilessly exposed and held up to scorn. The attempts of Lord Kimberley and

Lord Selborne to answer this terrible indictment only served to prove still more clearly how impossible it was to refute these charges, and they were obliged to content themselves with appealing to the "conscience of the nation," a conscience which was so dormant that it had required two severe defeats to awaken it.

Lord Salisbury wound up the debate with a vigorous speech, in which he had no difficulty in showing that this appeal to conscience was even more than ordinarily out of place on the present occasion, and that every really conscientious reason showed the necessity of vindicating the honour of British arms in the Transvaal. "You can make no worse provision for the future than to lower and depreciate our military power, and to diminish the belief which is entertained to its overwhelming force. You induced Dutchmen and Englishmen in the Transvaal to take your side. You informed them in the strongest language that your protection would never pass away from the country. You induced them to stand by you and expose themselves to the vengeance of their enemies, and you now abandon them with nothing to secure them but a paper guarantee. It is the same wretched story

as that which we have recently had about Candahar.

“Well, if there should be any material outbreak of this difference of opinion to which Ministerial speakers have so pointedly alluded, and if the races of the Cape should be ranged against each other, and the authority of the Crown should be in any degree called in question, will it be a light thing that the Government have told them by the strong teaching of example, that when they trust to the English Government the probability is that they will be betrayed? And will the impression you have given to the other side be more favourable? I fear that the course you have now taken at the price of abandoning a great native population, while it may extricate you from your difficult complications, will leave behind a distrust in your fidelity to your engagements which will be fatal to our future dominion in South Africa.”

While this protest was being delivered against the cowardly policy of effacement and retreat, the great statesman, who had done so much to repair the blunders and retrieve the disgraces of the first Gladstone Administration, lay on his death-bed, and on the 19th of April the strong, heroic soul of

Benjamin Disraeli passed away. The blow was felt by every patriotic Englishman, though a few Radicals, true to their nature and their breeding, pursued with rancour the name of the great statesman even after his death, and would have denied him the national tribute of a monument in Westminster Abbey, which even his life-long rival and opponent was willing to grant. To the Conservative party the loss of Lord Beaconsfield at that crisis could not fail to be most serious. He who had created the new Tory party, who had remained faithful to their fortunes through long years of misfortune, who had trained and educated them to accept the natural changes which time had brought about, who had led them to victory, and whose policy as Prime Minister had been fraught with such momentous issues, was now gone for ever. Who could take his place? Who bend his mighty bow?

The air was thick with rumours. As in 1874, so in 1881, circumstantial reports were circulated of a split in the Tory camp, and the Radical journals ceased for a moment their familiar task of belauding Mr. Gladstone and chronicling the daily life of their hero, to attempt the more difficult feat of stirring up

strife among the Conservative leaders and sowing dissension in the ranks of the Opposition. Happily, there was never any doubt as to the course which events would take. Sir Stafford Northcote's position as leader of the Opposition in the Commons was undisputed, and, though some of the more fiery and enthusiastic spirits chafed under his mild rule, it was generally felt that his unwearied patience and unfailing courtesy, combined with financial and administrative ability of no ordinary kind, gave him a claim to consideration which no Conservative could desire to ignore. So the immediate question was narrowed to the selection of a leader of the party in the Lords, who should share with Sir Stafford Northcote the arduous duty of directing and controlling the policy of her Majesty's Opposition. There could be no real hesitation in the matter. The Conservative party in the Upper House contained many men of first-rate reputation as statesmen and orators. We need not enumerate the names of those who were fitted for the office of leader, for in the opinion of every one there was a Peer who in ability, in energy, in statesmanship, and in oratory towered far above the rest. The meeting at Lord Aber-

gavenny's house only ratified the universal feeling among Conservatives, and the 104 Peers who, on the proposition of the Duke of Richmond, seconded by Lord Cairns, unanimously selected Lord Salisbury, were conferring an honour alike on themselves and on the party to which they belonged.

With the meeting on the 9th of May a new chapter in Lord Salisbury's life commences. We have traced his career as the youthful member of Parliament; we have noticed the gradual rise of Lord Robert Cecil to importance as one of the leading members of the Conservative party; we have marked his first entrance into official life in the Ministry of the Earl of Derby; we have seen how his conscientious scruples compelled him for a while to sever his connection with his political friends; we have witnessed his return to office and the wonderful gifts which he brought to the conduct of the affairs of this country in India, and to the maintenance of the honour and interests of England in the Councils of Europe; we have seen him sharing in the downfall of his great chief, but though cast down, not disheartened, and still ready to assert the rights and privileges of his order and to protest with all the force and eloquence

of which he was capable against such national crimes as the abandonment of Candahar and the desertion of the Transvaal. He was now to show that he could lead a great party, that he could reconcile differences of opinion, that he knew when to yield and when to refuse to yield, and withal to encourage an Opposition in a hopeless minority in the House of Commons, and to estimate at their true value the malicious innuendos and unconcealed attacks of false friends and unscrupulous enemies. That Lord Salisbury has succeeded far beyond expectation is the judgment of even hostile critics; that he has led the party with vigour and with prudence is evidenced by the hold which he has obtained even over those who were at first inclined to dispute the advisability of his selection; that he will before long be called upon to direct the fortunes of England, and add fresh lustre to his honoured name is the wish of all who have the welfare of their country at heart.

CHAPTER VII.

1881—1885.

LORD SALISBURY'S powers as leader of the Conservative party in the House of Lords were quickly put to the test. The Government having with the greatest difficulty carried their Coercion Bill, felt themselves bound to redeem their pledge that what they were pleased to call remedial legislation (in plain language, concession to agitation) should immediately follow. Accordingly they introduced an Irish Land Bill which, while violating every principle of political economy, utterly failed to conciliate the Parnellite party. After protracted debates in the Commons the measure at length reached the Lords, who, acting upon Lord Salisbury's advice, gave it a second reading, but considerably amended it in Committee. It is noticeable that one of the chief opponents of the Bill was the Duke of Argyll, who, though ready enough to

apologize for the foreign and Indian policy of Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet, felt himself obliged to leave the Ministry when the sacred right of freedom of contract was being tampered with.

The amendments of the Lords were at first received with a cry of "No surrender!" by the Liberal majority in the Commons, but finding that the Peers were really in earnest, Mr. Gladstone decided to "climb down," and in the end a compromise was effected, by which some of the most obnoxious features of the measure, including the famous Parnell clause, were eliminated. The result was satisfactory in itself, and still more as showing that a firm and resolute attitude on the part of the Upper House could compel even the most autocratic Minister to reconsider his position.

The only other point worth noticing before concluding the history of this long and wearisome session, which lasted from the 7th of January to the 27th of August, is the successful resistance made by Lord Salisbury to an attempt of the Government to repeat on a small scale the policy of Fox's India Bill. The Commissions which had been appointed to reform the Universities had done their

work. They had effected great changes, many of them, without doubt, necessary and salutary enough, though it was noticed that room was left for the perpetration of even a larger number of jobs than under the old system, and further experience has shown that the statutes of the Commissioners have been worked most conscientiously in the Liberal interest. The Government at the close of the session of 1881 sent up a Bill to the Lords providing for the establishment of a permanent Committee of the Privy Council with full powers to allow or disallow any statutes made by the Universities or the colleges for their own government. It is obvious that the *personnel* of this Committee was a most important question, and when it was found that, in addition to certain official members, it was intended that two persons should be nominated by the Government, it became clear that the whole duty of the Committee would resolve itself into doing all in its power to further Liberal principles and assist the Radical wire-pullers in the Universities to perpetrate at their pleasure any number of those jobs for which Oxford at least was even then becoming notorious. Lord Salisbury, as it may be imagined, had very

little difficulty in inducing the Lords to reject so miserable an attempt to place our great national seats of learning at the mercy of certain nominees of an already discredited Government.

The close of the session brought but a short interval of rest to the Conservative leader. On the 11th of October the National Union of Conservative Associations, which has done so much for the organization of the Conservative party, held its annual conference at Newcastle, which was attended both by Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote, and the opportunity was taken of holding a series of meetings. The great question of the hour was Ireland, which seemed to be no nearer a satisfactory condition than before the passing of the Land Act. Concessions only provoked fresh demands, and the Coercion Bill was ineffectual in checking outrages. At the banquet on the 11th of July, which was attended by delegates from all parts of the kingdom, Lord Salisbury attacked in vigorous language the policy which the Government had pursued, and were still pursuing, towards Ireland.

"It is right," he said, "that you should remember that the policy which under Mr.

Gladstone's auspices has ruled over Ireland is not an old traditional policy that he has continued, it is new, absolutely new. Up to the death of Lord Palmerston there was a policy towards Ireland common to all parties and to all generations of English statesmen. They may have applied it in different degrees and in different measure, but they recognized the duty of upholding the law and respecting the rights of property. In 1868 Mr. Gladstone was in the position of being out of office, and anxious to obtain electoral power wherewith to oust his adversary. At the same time there was discontent in Ireland, and a general election was impending. When these three events come together a prudent astrologer would warn you that anybody who had got any interest in Ireland should look out for evil days. Mr. Gladstone persuaded the people of England to adopt his new policy. The new policy consisted simply in this, in procuring the tranquillity of Ireland by offering to the occupants a portion of the property which had hitherto belonged to the owners.

“Ten years later, after it had been sufficiently tried and was well at work, there came a period of distress—there came again that malefic conjunction, Mr. Gladstone was

again out of office. A general election was again impending, and again there was discontent in Ireland. It is needless to say that again ideas were thrown out and new gifts of their landlords' property were to be made to the Irish tenantry. Mr. Gladstone has complained that Mr. Parnell deserted him. I think on the whole he is unjust to Mr. Parnell. It is impossible for me to forget the circumstances which preceded the election of 1880. I cannot forget the candidature of Lord Ramsay for Liverpool, when Lord Ramsay accepted the formula proposed to him by the Home Rule party, and when Lord Hartington, with full knowledge of that fact, cordially and heartily accepted that candidature. Well, Lord Ramsay is now a Minister of the Crown, and I presume that his opinions are not entirely repulsive to the Minister under whom he serves. There is no doubt that at the election the word was passed in every constituency to the Irish Home Rulers to vote for the Opposition, and when Mr. Gladstone complains that Mr. Parnell has deserted him, I think he forgets that it is mainly due to the organization over which Mr. Parnell presides that he is now Prime Minister of England."

After showing that the doctrine of plunder against which Mr. Gladstone so eloquently protested had been put into practice by Mr. Gladstone himself in the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, which the Lords had so wisely rejected in 1880, Lord Salisbury went on to say,—

“ If the confidence of the loyal classes in Ireland is to be maintained, and the views of those who look upon this agitation merely as a means of obtaining a larger share of public plunder are to be disappointed, something more than words will be needed. We have had brave words before. We have reason to ask ourselves whether, in the circumstances, the nation has backbone enough to struggle with, and to throw off the evil which invades it. This absolute failure to maintain public order, or to secure their honest rights to subjects of the Queen, is not only a serious injustice to them, and a dishonour to the Government, but it destroys and paralyzes any authority that we might wish to exercise abroad. Of what use is it, while this state of things continues in Ireland, for us to preach to other nations to administer pure justice, or to maintain order in the lands which own their rule? What right have we

to go lecturing the Sultan as to the state of things in Armenia or in Macedonia? At least in those countries I believe it is the Government only that plunders the people; the people are not allowed to plunder each other. Certainly, as long as this state of things exists, we have lost the power of speaking to other nations with authority with respect to matters that concern their internal government. We have lost the right to hold up the institutions of this country as a model for the world to follow—and we cannot be blind to the fact that it is not only in Ireland that this essential weakness of our Government is shown. The news from the Transvaal throws a terrible light upon the spirit that has ruled our councils. The Government is in the most pitiful of all conditions, because they have not only humiliated themselves without securing the result at which they aim—or, to put it in terse Oriental phrase, they have eaten dirt in vain. What the issue will be, of course it is impossible to prophesy, though I do not think it is difficult to conjecture. In order to obtain the kind of peace and tranquillity they seek, it will be necessary to make more concessions, to give up the things which they have declared to be essential and impor-

tant—to eat more dirt. I feel myself very little doubt that that consistent form of political nutriment will be duly swallowed and digested. But is it not strange to reflect that these two difficulties, these two revolted nationalities, if I may so speak, which now beset Mr. Gladstone's path, hampering the measures of his Government, and discrediting its career and its action, owe their inspiration to his own words? It was in 1868, and further again in 1880, that he was compelled by the stress and exigency of his political position to stir up Irish passions, and he is now surprised that, when they have suppressed the Tories, they will not acknowledge that their work is done and retreat into obscurity. He has led them up to this point, at this point they have ceased to be useful to the Liberals; he gladly would dismiss the spirits he has raised, but they decline to go. But it is not merely that the discomfiture and difficulty of a political party is involved in this curious retribution. It is difficult not to feel that these are instances of a spirit which, in recent years, and under recent guidance, has come over the Liberal party. They have learnt to seek their political food, and the conditions of their political success, in fomenting discontent

among the various members and sections of this great empire, and among the various classes of which our community is composed. It was not so in old times. It was not so under Lord Palmerston and Lord Grey. They recognized that there were limits beyond which a Liberal Minister might not, consistently with patriotism, assume the functions of an agitator.

But we have seen the rise and the rule of a different spirit. We have seen during that Midlothian campaign, not only the allies of England disgusted by unjust vituperation, but, strangers till, appeals directed to the discontent of the people of India, seeking to raise in that community, so delicately situate, hostility and exasperation against the acts of the British Government. I remember one in which Mr. Gladstone bitterly dilated upon the injury and insult of passing an Arms Act—an Act to limit the use of firearms; and among other reasons for resenting that legislation, he stated that it had actually been proposed to limit the consumption of dynamite among the population. Our recent experience throws a lurid illustration upon the wisdom of that transaction, but we need not go further than the matters we have in hand. Knowing how

difficult, how new, how delicate was the position of the Crown in the Transvaal, he did not disdain to use his eloquence in order to excite people to tear up the bond they had executed, and turn against the Government they had accepted. Knowing that Ireland was the traditional and exceptional difficulty of the English Government, he did not in 1868, nor in 1880, disdain to face that dangerous agitation, with which now he cannot deal, and which now he cannot quell. This is a matter which appears to me to be one of the most dangerous symptoms of our later political condition. If our system of party government works so that it shall be necessary for one party, whenever it is in difficulty, to appeal to any discontent that may exist among any class, or in any section of so highly artificial and multifarious an empire as ours, it is not difficult to see that the empire will be put to a terrible strain for its very existence. This at least is an evil, which the presence of you here this day encourages me to hope will be resisted and prevented—because this lends weakness to our councils, this destroys our natural cohesion, this will reduce us from the position of a united nation to a mere bundle of con-

flicting classes of nationalities, bound together only by the slender tie of a decaying tradition. But this is the great justification of the Conservative effort which is being made at this time. This is the spirit that you have to meet. You have to counteract those attempts to propagate a policy and to preach a doctrine of disintegration. You have to teach the people of this country that the great empire to which we belong is more precious than the grievances—the temporary grievances—of any class. You have to remember that, under the shadow of this great empire, industry works in security, and commerce thrives, and that this empire only can be maintained upon the basis of respecting rights and upholding existing institutions.”

The next evening the two Conservative leaders addressed what it has become the custom to call a mass meeting. Lord Salisbury dealt chiefly with the mistakes and follies committed by the Ministry in Afghanistan and the Transvaal, and showed how a golden thread of pusillanimity and sentimentalism ran through the whole policy of the Government. The “Fair Trade” movement, which is probably destined to have a very great effect upon the financial policy of

this country, was just commencing, and Lord Salisbury's carefully chosen and well-weighted words on this important subject are worth quoting. He charged the original free-traders with having made a gigantic mistake in supposing that other nations would immediately follow the example of England, and revolutionize their fiscal system.

"I think we have a right to ask," he continued, "without pledging ourselves to any opinion, until the facts are known, that there should be a thorough investigation into the question, whether we are now pursuing the right course for the purpose of inducing those other governments in some degree to lower the terrible wall of tariffs, which is shutting out the productions of our industry from the markets of the world. But if you make a suggestion of this kind you are immediately told, 'This is reciprocity and retaliation, and behind it lurks the shadow of protection.' Reciprocity and retaliation! But what are these commercial treaties if they do not involve the principle of reciprocity? There is no doubt that by abandoning duties, which are useful to you for revenue purposes, you confer a great benefit on foreign countries. Why should you not ask for a price in exchange

for that benefit—why should you not obtain for your own industries a benefit corresponding to that which you are conferring upon them? I do not know, until inquiry has been made, and opportunities gained of ascertaining, whether it presses either upon the food of our people, or the raw material of our industry, both of which must be held sacred. But in spite of any formulas, in spite of any cry of free trade, if I saw that, by raising a duty upon luxuries, or by threatening to raise it, I could exercise a pressure upon foreign powers, and induce them to lower their tariffs, I should pitch orthodoxy to the winds, and exercise that pressure.”

One sentence in this speech will strike us after three years more of Liberal rule with terrible force. Referring to the question of the Transvaal, Lord Salisbury said, “In many years to come, in every contest which this Government has to wage, military, diplomatic, or domestic, the strain of that defeat will be upon them, and they will feel that they are fighting under the shadow of Majuba Hill.”

With that spasmodic energy which is the ordinary accompaniment of constitutional irresolution the Government now determined to do something, and the country was at

once pleased and surprised to hear that her Majesty's Ministers had at length summoned up courage to arrest Mr. Parnell and his chief allies, and to proclaim the Land League. But those who had studied the natural history of the Gladstone Administrations prophesied that this apparently vigorous policy would be productive of no advantage, and would be followed by the inevitable reaction towards concession. A strange fatality appeared to hang over this luckless Government, that whenever they did the right thing it was done at the wrong time. Repression of the Land League in 1880 would have saved Ireland from much misery and outrage; the arrest of the Nationalist leaders in 1880 would have paralyzed the action of the disloyal party. Such action in 1881 only served to increase crime and terrorism, and led directly to the culminating outrage—the tragedy of the Phoenix Park.

The Land Act—that final message of peace—failed to pacify Ireland, though it was worked entirely in the interests of the tenant, and its provisions were construed in a sense never contemplated by its authors. The Coercion Act filled the goals with "suspects" whom it was dangerous to release and impossible to bring to trial with any hope of

conviction, but was unable to suppress the secret societies which have always been the curse of Ireland, or to detect the perpetrators of the outrages, which increased in daring and in atrocity.

When Parliament reassembled in February, 1882, it was clear that the Government policy in Ireland had completely broken down. The Radicals joined with the Home Rulers in protesting against the continuance of Mr. Forster in office, and demanded the immediate release of the suspects, the repeal of the Coercion Act, and the passing of a Bill to enable tenants to defraud their landlords of the arrears of rent due to them. The Conservatives, on the other hand, contended that the Land Act had produced most disastrous results; that the Sub-Commissioners openly sided with the tenants against the landlords; that many of them were totally ignorant of agricultural matters; that the solicitor to the Commission was a Land Leaguer; and that in a pamphlet issued with official authority the Land League, which had been suppressed by the Government as a dangerous and illegal combination, was spoken of as "the most widespread, the most powerful, and, in its effects, we believe, the most enduring organi-

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zation of our time," while Mr. Parnell and his fellow-prisoners were regarded as martyrs in the cause of freedom.

In his speech at the opening of Parliament, Lord Salisbury, after referring to foreign affairs, turned to the paragraphs in the Queen's Speech relating to Ireland, and complained of their singularly jejune and unsatisfactory character. "One would have imagined," he said, "that the things which were going on in Ireland were matters of no serious interest, that there were no formidable difficulties presenting themselves to her Majesty's Government, and that all was very much in an ordinary condition. The Government, in fact, seems scarcely to be aware that since this House last parted a great transformation scene has taken place. When we left, we did so having passed a Bill with respect to which we received the most earnest and the most confident assurances, that it would have no detrimental effect on the property of the landlords in Ireland. The Lord Privy Seal told us that it would not take any money from the landlords. The noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack told us that the landlords would not be injured but benefited by the measure. Similar language was used in

the other House, and, in fact, the whole of the debates upon the Bill were conducted upon this understanding—that no considerable or general reduction of rents would be the consequence of this Bill. . . . I have no doubt of the sincerity of the noble lords who used those arguments. They, no doubt, believed what they said; but they seem to have taken little, if any, trouble to acquaint themselves with the opinions of other members of the Government, because I find that while they were thus asserting that a general reduction of rents would not be the result of the Bill, their own law officer, the Solicitor-General for Ireland, appearing as the Government candidate on the hustings, made diametrically opposite assertions. I find he said this, 'Was the Land Act passed because rents were too low? No. It was passed because the fact had been forced on the attention of the Legislature of Great Britain that the vast bulk of land in this country was excessively over-rented. If the present rents had been fair, there would have been no need for the Act; it was simply because it was demonstrated that rents throughout the country were too large, that it had become necessary to pass the Land Act at all.'

“ Now, if that statement is not diametrically opposite to the assurances upon which we passed the Bill, there is no meaning in the English language. That is not the only point with regard to which we have a right to complain. We have to complain further that in the execution of the Act, her Majesty’s Government paid no heed to the assurances which induced the House to pass the Bill. The Bill was notoriously one containing provisions vesting large and despotic and uncontrolled powers in Commissioners, and on the appointment of suitable men to these offices the successful working of the Bill depended. If the Government had meant that the Bill should be an impartial one; if they believed that it would fulfil the assurances which were given as to its character in both Houses of Parliament, they would have appointed impartial men to administer it. Instead of that they appointed men, like Professor Baldwin, who had already deeply pledged themselves on the side adverse to the landlords, and whose conduct had been the subject of animadversion in this House, and, moreover, not mainly on this side of the House. In some cases they appointed tenant-farmers from the very districts where justice was to be administered,

and in one case they actually appointed a man who stood by the side of the Solicitor-General when he was uttering the sentiments I have just read. It is impossible under these circumstances to contend that they made impartial appointments; and if the action of the Bill has been to falsify all that they undertook, and all they assured the House upon the subject, the result has flowed from the recklessness and partisanship with which these appointments have been made. My lords, if you could have been told in this House that one of the Chief Commissioners would commence the administration of his duties by announcing that it was the mission of the Commissioners to provide that existing tenants should live and thrive on their lands, and if it had been announced to you, as Professor Baldwin subsequently decided, that it was the capacity of the tenant, and not the capacity of the land, that was to be the measure of the rent, I apprehend that your decision would have been different from what it has been. You were kept in the dark as to the real nature of the Bill, and the ruin of large numbers of Irish landlords has been the result.

“ My lords, there is another disenchantment

which this state of things has borne upon us—another disappointment of the promises and assurances by which we were over-persuaded last July and August. We were told that the Bill was to bring peace to Ireland. What is the condition of things at this moment? Rents are not paid. Attempts to pay them are visited with outrages of the most formidable kind, and attempts to collect them are hindered by murder. Throughout large parts of the country the law of the Land League reigns undisputed, and all attempts to execute the law, unless sustained by armed force, are absolutely vain. It cannot be laid to the charge of her Majesty's Government that they have not made attempts of a kind, however ill-judged or ill-directed, to restrain this evil. One of the Ministers of the Crown stated during the recess that coercion was natural to the Tories. If it is not natural to the Liberals, I can only say that they acclimatize to it very readily. Since the Revolution, I imagine Parliament has never met under such circumstances as are existing now.

“ Has there been a time when the representatives of the people have been detained in prison by the authority of a Minister of the Crown, under a suspension of the Habeas

Corpus Act, at the time when Parliament met? Has there ever been such a thing as 60,000 men being found necessary to keep up the faint vestiges of order now remaining in Ireland? Has it ever been the case that the Government, without authority, without warrant of law—trusting, I suppose, to the passing of a Bill of Indemnity by Parliament, which Parliament will no doubt most readily grant—has seized newspapers by its own authority, and not only in Ireland, but also in this country, and in such a manner that it could not have been known before seizure what they contained? Yet, notwithstanding all this coercion, a terribly grave state of things prevails of which this coercion is a symptom. . . . I had hoped that in the unexampled state of things in Ireland—a state of things which I believe is unexampled in the history of that country, and in that of other civilized nations in the world—a state of things which would not have been allowed to exist for six months—I do not say under strong monarchies like Austria or Germany, but in the free Republics of France and America—some steps would have been taken by her Majesty's Government to prevent the utter ruin of the landlords. . . .

“ Any further delay in an attempt to restore order in that country, even if it were pleaded for by the Government, would, I am satisfied, not be permitted by Parliament or by the country. We have had too much delay in this matter already. If vigorous measures had been taken eighteen months ago, this conflagration of lawlessness and anarchy would never have spread, as it has done, throughout the length and breadth of the land. Parliament feels, and the country feels, that the longer we wait the further the evil will go and the more unmanageable it will become, unless it is grappled with at once, not by mere perseverance in the feeble course which has been pursued, but by means of vigorous measures, suited to an abnormal and terrible situation, which, if permitted to exist much longer, will attain such proportions that no Government whatever will be able to grapple with it.

“ Capital is more and more leaving the country, the seeds of just resentment are being sown in the breasts of those classes of Irishmen who have hitherto been loyal and steady to the Crown of England, and a profound contempt is arising for the powers of the Government and for the majesty of the law,

which is taking the place of that hatred of the law which the Irish peasant used to feel ; and if there is any more delay in reasserting the power of the law, these evils will have passed the point at which it is possible for them to be cured. I am convinced that, in spite of the feeble utterances of the speech from the Throne, Parliament and the country will resolutely demand that the Government shall make due provision to meet the calamities of which the policy and the doctrines the Government preach have been the cause."

On the 17th of February Lord Donoughmore moved for a Committee to inquire into the working of the Land Act, and this motion being carried by ninety-six to fifty-three, gave Mr. Gladstone an opportunity of rallying his forces by proposing in the Commons a vote of censure on the Lords. The net result of this ebullition of temper on the part of the Premier was the waste of much valuable time and the consequent delay of important measures. Undeterred by Mr. Gladstone's threats and the majority he was able to command in the Lower House, the Lord's Committee went on quietly with their work, and succeeded in eliciting much curious and valuable information respecting the working of the Land Act

by the Ministerial nominees, and in checking the erratic course they had been pursuing.

Ministers, anxious only to preserve their majority in the House of Commons, were content to let unfortunate Ireland, which they were governing on novel principles, drift from bad to worse. Drawn one way by the more patriotic section of their followers, who demanded firmer and more rigorous measures, and another by the Radical section, who clamoured for more concessions and less coercion, the Government decided to do nothing, but to wait till events should point out which course it would be best in the interests of their party to follow.

The Easter recess came and nothing had been done, but as the Coercion Act expired in September, it was clear that the Government must employ that period of rest in making up their minds as to the policy they were to pursue. They certainly could not complain that they were ignorant of the wishes and the policy of the Opposition, nor could they hide the fact that the Conservative leaders had frequently promised them their full support, if, even at the eleventh hour, they would vigorously apply themselves to the task of restoring order to Ireland.

A series of meetings was held in Liverpool from the 11th to the 13th of April, in which Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote took part. Speaking on the condition of Ireland, Lord Salisbury maintained that it amounted to nothing less than a social and political revolution, and expressed his conviction that the only chance of establishing peace and order in Ireland was by bringing the ownership of land into single hands—in other words, the increase of peasant proprietorship. At the same time he appealed once more to the Government to face the necessity of restoring the ordinary state of society in Ireland.

In his second speech he dwelt especially upon the condition of Parliament, a subject of peculiar interest at the time, as the Government had been spending the greater part of the session in revolutionizing the procedure in the House of Commons, and endeavouring to force on their unwilling followers what was known as the *clôture* system.

Lord Salisbury contended that, in the truest and largest sense of the word, both Houses of Parliament were representative institutions, and pointed out how different is the position they occupy at the present day to that which

they held thirty years ago. "This great meeting," he said, "is a proof of it. The people are taking a more direct influence in, and assuming a more direct control of, their own affairs. The telegraph and the railway have brought the ambassadors that we have abroad more closely into connection with the Government at home, and there has been consequently some slight falling off in the importance and the authority of these distant functionaries. They are still representatives, but they are representatives of a power that can look more closely, more immediately, more constantly into its own affairs. Something of the same kind has been taking place with respect to the two assemblies that sit at Westminster. They are still, and they must necessarily remain, of the highest possible importance, but their importance has been diminished by the fact that the people throughout the country, assembling in meetings like this, can give an impulse to the policy of the nation, which is in some degree independent of the action of the representatives at Westminster. In that sense—and I do not think it is a subject at all to be deplored in this sense—the direct action of the people is superseding the indirect action

of its representatives. But so far as we are dependent on the Lower House of Parliament, it is proved by all experience, and by the most evident reason, that it would not be safe for the people to trust their affairs entirely to the management of one assembly elected once every seven years. Why, you know how this present House of Commons was elected. It was elected in a great storm of popular excitement, raised by means which I will not stop to characterize. . . . A House of Commons, enslaved by the caucus, and muzzled by the *clôture*, would be a very different body from that which has hitherto been the glory of English history. A triennial, or even an annual Parliament would be the only substitute for a second chamber.

“The difference between a Conservative vote and a Radical vote is that when you come to a Radical decision, that is to say, when you have determined to destroy an institution, you have taken a step which you cannot retrace. Even when you have cut down a upas-tree, you may find you have made some mistake. No one can accuse the House of Lords of having ever attempted to set up any opinion as supreme in this country, but the opinion of the nation itself.

The cause of the animosity with which the House of Lords is occasionally pursued is because it is thought it may perform its primary duty. When people have got together a scratch and accidental majority—a majority based on no truth, bound together by no true logical doctrine of cohesion—such a majority as it is greatly feared might in the case of a dissolution never appear again, an intense desire is nourished that, before that unique majority has disappeared, it should deal some telling, some crushing, some irreparable blow, that no future Conservative Government could undo, and it is greatly feared that, when this proposal is made, the House of Lords may possibly say, ‘No, this was not the ground on which this last election was conducted; we will not allow this thing to be done until the nation has been allowed to speak.’ In so acting, I hold that the House of Lords will perform its true duty as a second chamber, its highest function as the last representative of the people in this country.”

In his speech to the Junior Conservative Club on the 14th of April, he dwelt chiefly upon the changes which had come over the Liberal party and the general condition of

political life, while questions of the gravest and most fundamental importance were being handled, and men were discussing on party lines matters which past generations had agreed to consider outside the area of political controversy. "In the past, for instance, we have had our controversies in matters of religion, in which men have deeply differed on various points, many of them of great importance, yet it is easy to see that all these differences, important, essential as they may be, are falling into comparative insignificance before the great and solemn issue on which the nation and the world are entering—whether we as nations shall bow before a supernatural authority or not. That will be to those who are young among us very possibly a matter of one of the deepest controversies in which their mature years will be engaged, and though there are in the ranks of those who are politically opposed to us, as we all know, many men who are as keenly attached to our faith as we are, yet it is impossible for us to conceal—it is a bare matter of fact—that it is to that side in politics that those who challenge the supernatural government of the world turn for countenance and support. Such a circumstance, sad as it is, is not one

on which I wish further to dwell, except to deduce from it that it imposes upon us an additional and a double responsibility in the maintenance of our own opinions.

“Turning to less lofty matters, it is impossible not to see that in respect to personal freedom the issues of politics are shifting. The Liberal party is less every day the party that supports liberty. Abroad the phenomenon is known very well. The tendency of thought which thinks only of equality and has allowed liberty to slip entirely out of sight, has become one of the recognized phenomena of politics, and what is called ‘authoritative democracy’ appears to be the cause which commands the greatest amount of assent from the party of progress. The same tendency is visibly invading the thought of the Liberal party of our time. There is more and more a tendency to concentrate authority in a central power, to disregard the claims of individuals, to bring everybody into school under the State, to make all mankind pass their life in one long period of inspection.”

An indication as to the line which their Irish policy was to pursue had, as we have seen, been anxiously waited for by the

Government. A change of front was inevitable, and they still halted between coercion and concession. At length it seemed that a path was pointed out which would lead both to the pacification of Ireland and, what was of far greater importance in their eyes, the strengthening of the Liberal party. An arrangement, which will always be known in history as the Treaty of Kilmainham, was made between the English Government and the men who had been described by the Prime Minister himself as "steeped to the lips in treason." The high contracting parties agreed that Mr. Parnell and his associates were to be released from prison, that the Coercion Act was to be dropped, and that an Arrears Bill, conferring further boons on Irish tenants at the expense of their landlords, should be immediately introduced. Mr. Parnell on his side promised that "the organization which had been used to get up Boycotting and outrages should now be used to put them down," and that he and his followers would "co-operate cordially for the future with the Liberal party in forwarding Liberal measures." Such was the arrangement which an English Cabinet thought fit to make with imprisoned traitors. Terribly true

had been Lord Salisbury's prophecy that the shadow of Majuba Hill would be over the whole of their policy. The impression occasioned by the announcement of this new departure can best be described in the words of a brilliant writer not unfriendly to the Liberal Ministry:—

“Seldom in the history of Parliament, seldom certainly in our own time, has a Ministerial declaration so important and so unexpected been given from the Treasury bench. Perhaps the nearest parallel we can find to it is when Sir Robert Peel announced that his Government had abandoned the principles of Protection and come round to the views of the Anti-Corn-Law League. The news was certainly of a nature calculated to take away the breath of those unprepared for it. Ever since their accession to power the Government had been pursuing a certain line of policy with respect to Ireland. Suddenly, after having carried that policy out in the most extreme manner, the Government changed its front without warning, and inaugurated a diametrically opposite line of policy.” Not only so, but there was every element of meanness about the manner in which they made this great change—the

mercenary bargain with the Parnellites, the disavowal of the compact, and the attempt to shift the responsibility of maintaining peace from themselves to the "uncrowned King of Ireland" and his agents.

Mr. Forster and Lord Cowper, grievously as they had blundered in their government of Ireland, had too much honesty to accept the Kilmainham Treaty, and immediately withdrew from office. But the Ministers cared little for this. Secure in the fact that the Home Rulers had promised to unite with the Liberal party, they looked forward to passing by increased majorities measures which would restore their popularity in England, and irretrievably damage the Conservative party. The disgrace of the Treaty of Kilmainham, and the greater disgrace of having been found out, weighed very little against the satisfaction of having so largely increased their majority, and inflicting such a damaging blow upon the Opposition.

From this dream they were destined to have a terrible awakening. Mr. Forster's place was taken by Lord Frederick Cavendish, an amiable young nobleman who had held office in various Liberal Administrations, who was a younger brother of Lord Hartington,

and connected by marriage with the Prime Minister. He arrived in Dublin on the 6th of May, and on the evening of the same day, he and Mr. Burke, the Under-Secretary, were foully murdered in the Phoenix Park. Such a fearful atrocity at once changed the whole policy of the Government. Servile as was the Liberal majority in the Lower House, the Ministry could not have continued in office if they had not consented to bring in immediately a strong Coercion Bill, which, despite the most strenuous opposition on the part of the Irish members, was passed through both Houses. Still infatuated by the idea of conciliation, the Government determined to proceed with the Arrears Bill, though it necessitated the abandonment of many other important measures.

When the Bill reached the Upper House, the Lords, not without hesitation, gave it a second reading, relying on the fact that the Government considered it absolutely necessary for the pacification of Ireland. In Committee many valuable alterations were made at the instance of Lord Salisbury and the Conservative party, and in this form the Bill was returned to the Commons. A contest between the two Houses seemed imminent. The

stereotyped resolutions were passed by the caucuses in various towns, and public feeling regarded a change of Government or a dissolution as highly probable. But a compromise was quickly arrived at by which the Lords gained most of the important points they had stood out for. Lord Salisbury himself was of opinion that too much had been relinquished, and advocated a more decided resistance, but on this point he was overruled by his followers. Looking back from the standpoint of the present day, one cannot help regretting that his advice was not followed. A dissolution in 1882 must at all events have greatly lessened the Liberal majority, even if it had not placed the Conservatives in office. How much misery and disgrace England might have been spared if only Lord Salisbury had assumed the reins of power in 1882!

When Parliament adjourned in August little had been accomplished, and the Government announced that the Houses would be reassembled in October for the purpose of revolutionizing the procedure in the House of Commons. On this point it is sufficient to say that, although the Government carried their measures, they have proved utterly ineffectual. The *clôture*, which excited so much

feeling at the time, has practically remained a dead letter, and the system of "devolution" by Grand Committees has been abandoned.

Meanwhile, there were few signs that the new Irish policy was working the wonderful results that were predicted. The outrages during the last half of 1882 were larger in number and more atrocious than at any former period. The Home Rulers loudly proclaimed that they felt no gratitude to the Government for their "remedial legislation," and the new Chief Secretary, Mr. Trevelyan, was attacked with as much animosity as Mr. Forster himself. The outlook was not a bright one in the sister-isle, while at the same time new troubles were springing up in other quarters. The purchase of the Suez Canal shares and the acquisition of Cyprus were proclamations to Europe that English interests in Egypt and the Levant were of paramount importance; and even Mr. Gladstone, anxious as he was to undo the work of the Beaconsfield Administration, had not sold the Canal shares or abandoned Cyprus. Our interest in Egypt was two-fold. It was on the high road to India, and the risk of the Canal getting into the hands of other nations was too great for even a light-hearted Liberal Ministry to incur.

Besides that, English capitalists had lent large sums of money to the Egyptian Government, and Egyptian bonds had become a recognized form of investment. Gradually we had, in concert with France, established a control over the finances of Egypt, and though it was always protested that our interference was limited to fiscal matters, it was found in practice that it was impossible to restrict it within such narrow bounds, and in 1877 it was through the representations of England and France, that the Khedive Ismail had been deposed by the Sultan, and his son Tewfik placed on the throne. The powers could hardly refuse to support their nominee even if other interests had not made the establishment of good government in Egypt of paramount importance to England at least. A strange movement, headed by Arabi Bey, a colonel in the Khedive's service, began to be heard of in 1881. Had the English Government possessed the requisite vigour the danger might have been suppressed without the loss of a single life or the expenditure of a single sovereign. As it was, Ministers adopted their usual policy of procrastination and hesitation. Unable to make up their minds whether Arabi was a patriot or a military adventurer—a ques-

tion which might be interesting to the historian of Egypt, but was of no importance to the practical politician—they let things drift until this so-called national party acquired dimensions which made it a menace alike to the Khedive and his foreign supporters. Arabi became practically dictator of the country, and his avowed policy was “Egypt for the Egyptians.” Warnings continually reached the English Government that the situation had become in the highest degree dangerous, and that a massacre of the European inhabitants of Alexandria might take place any day. But still nothing was done.

At length the blow fell. On the 11th of June a riot broke out in Alexandria; the English Consul was wounded, and a number of Europeans murdered. It seemed as if foreign control in Egypt was at an end; for even this insult failed to rouse Mr. Gladstone, and it seemed highly probable that a Kilmainham Treaty would be concluded with the victorious Arabi. But public opinion prevented Ministers from adopting their customary policy. A meeting was held in Willis’s Rooms on the 29th of June, which was attended by the leaders of the Opposition and many influential men belonging to both parties.

Resolutions were passed declaring that the Government ought not to make any arrangement which was inconsistent with their pledges, with the traditional policy of this country, or with British interests; and that effectual provision should be made for the lives and property of British subjects in Egypt. Lord Salisbury in supporting the first resolution laid stress on the fact that the arrangement with France known as the Dual Control was intended to apply simply to financial matters, and in no wise to interfere with other English interests in Egypt. At the same time he attached great importance to the maintenance of friendly relations with France, as necessary for the success of our policy and the prosperity of Egypt. He complained of the manner in which Ministers had refused to give any intimation to Parliament as to their policy or their intentions, and blamed them severely for the negligence they had shown in not suppressing the movement before.

At length it became apparent even to her Majesty's Government that the fortifying of Alexandria by the military party, who held the Khedive in absolute thralldom, could not be allowed to continue. Admiral Seymour, who was commanding the British

squadron in the harbour, sent an ultimatum demanding the surrender of the forts for the purpose of dismantling them. His demands being refused, the forts were bombarded, and, after a short resistance, they were abandoned by the rebels. Most unfortunately, Admiral Seymour, hampered by the vacillation of the English Government, neglected to land troops to maintain order, and, in consequence, Alexandria was handed over for two days to pillage by the scum of the Egyptian population, and it was not until the town had been almost reduced to ashes, and more than 2000 Europeans massacred, that English troops were landed.

With the bombardment of Alexandria, Ministers were committed to a definite policy in Egypt. The French had refused to take any active part, and England was left mistress of the situation. Even a Government with Mr. Gladstone as Prime Minister could not turn back now. The resignation of Mr. Bright showed that the peace-at-any-price party were in a minority in the Cabinet, and that the fact had at last been realized that Arabi was the leader of a revolt which had for its object the destruction of European, and particularly English, influence and con-

trol in Egypt. "Egypt for the Egyptians" was a very taking cry, and one that appealed to the sentimental humanitarianism of Liberal Ministers; but "Egypt for a military adventurer" meant imminent danger to the Suez Canal, the obstruction of our highway to India, and the ruin of hundreds of English subjects who had invested their capital in Egyptian securities. It is not necessary to describe in detail the brilliant little campaign of Tel-el-Kebir, which crushed the military revolt, saved the Canal, and established the English supremacy in Egypt. By the close of the year Arabi was in exile, and British troops occupied Cairo and Alexandria. But the Government seemed alarmed at their own boldness. They were never tired of reiterating that the occupation of Egypt was merely temporary, that their desire was to recall the troops at the earliest possible moment, and that England had no intention of doing anything without the co-operation of the other powers. It was noted with interest at the time, and is well worth recording, that the Liberal Government were compelled to follow closely the policy of Lord Beaconsfield in many important particulars, and that the success of the campaign was due in great measure to their imitation of his policy. He

had called out the Reserves in 1878, amid a chorus of disapproval from the Liberal party; Mr. Gladstone in 1882 called out the Reserves. He summoned troops from India during the crisis after the Treaty of San Stefano; Indian troops were now employed in Egypt by those who had denounced their employment in 1878. Cyprus, which had been derided by Liberal orators, from Mr. Gladstone to Sir William Harcourt, as an useless acquisition and an island given over to pestilence, was now used as a rendezvous for troops, and a sanatorium for the sick and wounded from Egypt. Whenever the Government were content to follow in the footsteps of their predecessors they were successful; when they struck out new paths for themselves they brought nothing but disgrace and disaster upon England. But in one important respect Mr. Gladstone and his fellow-Ministers had an immense advantage over the Conservative Government. They had not to encounter the factious attacks and captious criticism of an unscrupulous Opposition. The Conservative leaders showed that they regarded their country before their party, and were anxious not to harass and thwart the Government, but to lead them, or, if need be, force them, into paths which would conduce to their own honour and that of the

country whose destinies were entrusted to them, and to enable them to disregard the fatal counsels of the so-called peace party.

The views of the Opposition were very clearly expressed by Lord Salisbury in a speech which he addressed on the 7th of August to the London and Westminster Working-men's Conservative Association. After comparing the conduct of Sir Bartle Frere in Zululand with that of Admiral Seymour at Alexandria, he said, "My belief is that if towards the beginning of the year, ten or fifteen thousand Indian troops had been sent to Cyprus we should never have heard of any rebellion of Arabi against his sovereign, Alexandria would still have been a flourishing city, vast masses of British industry and British commerce would have been untouched, and many valuable lives would have been spared. If Mr. Bright had been absent from the Cabinet, and if the spirit which he represents had been absent from the Cabinet too, very much blood which has been spilt would have been saved. There is no more certain provocative of war, or of acts which must lead to war, than an impression on the part of your enemy that, either owing to your weakness, to your prin-

ciples, or to your domestic embarrassments, you are not ready to strike a good blow to defend yourself. These are the principles which I will venture to say the Conservative party not only preach in opposition, but which they practise when in office. We, too, had a great crisis to meet. With us, too, the thunder-cloud of war was hanging over Europe, and there was a universal expectation that fresh blood would have to be shed. But we spoke in time. We allowed foreign governments to know in time what would be the necessary consequence of any acts by which British interests or British honour should be injured; and the result was that no irrevocable steps of defiance were taken, and we issued from that crisis with honour but without war. Now we have only one duty as far as external affairs are concerned. Let us give to the Government every support and every encouragement in our power, so to use the great resources of the British Empire which are at their command that our prestige may be restored in the East, and that the interest which has been so sorely injured may blossom and flourish again."

In November Lord Salisbury visited Edinburgh, and delivered a series of eloquent

speeches. Speaking on the Egyptian question, he showed how the unfortunate pledges which were delivered during the Midlothian campaign hampered the Government when they came into office, and how their persistent hostility to Turkey, and their indecision and vacillation had prevented the peaceful solution of the Egyptian question. With regard to the campaign, he said, "The first thing that strikes you when you look at it as a whole is wonder that Arabi Pasha, with his force and with his opportunities, should have defied as he did the power of such a country as Great Britain. How is that mystery to be solved? If any nation suffers itself to get into war with a weaker nation which is sufficiently civilized to know the great difference that exists between them, you may depend upon it that there is something in the conduct of that stronger nation which induces the weaker nation to believe that the larger country will never exert its strength. We have heard a great deal about prestige. I detest the word. It does not really express what we mean. I should rather say 'military credit.' Military credit stands in precisely the same position as financial credit. The use of it is to represent a military power, and to effect the objects

of a military power without the necessity of recourse to arms. You know that the man possessed of great financial credit can perform great operations by the mere knowledge of the wealth of which he is master, and that it is not necessary to sell him up, and ascertain if he can pay 20s. in the pound, in order to have the benefit of all the wealth he can command. It is the same with a military nation that is careful to preserve its military credit. If it does so, it may, without shedding one drop of blood or incurring one penny of expenditure, effect all the objects which, without that military credit, can only result in much waste of blood and treasure.

“ Now, we were in the position of a financial operator who had raised his own credit by doubtful and dangerous operations. We had squandered our military credit at Majuba Hill, where we took up the position of a power that was willing to submit to any insult that might be placed upon it. We had proclaimed to the world that we were not ready to fight for our military renown, and the tradition of our ancestors was lost to us. It was a false proclamation, a proclamation that the Ministry had no mandate from the nation to make, and which the nation at the first opportunity

forced them to disavow. But the disavowal has cost blood and treasure which, if they had been more careful of the reputation of this country, need never have been expended. Three years ago those who maintained such doctrines and insisted on the necessity of the maintenance of your military credit as one of the most precious inheritances of the nation, were denounced as 'Jingoes.' But these Jingoes are justified now. They have her Majesty's Government for converts. They have forced her Majesty's Government to demonstrate by action that which is their principal contention, that if you suffer military credit to be obscured the fault must be wiped out in blood.

"I feel how inadequate I am to deal with a question like this in a place such as this. I know it has been occupied by a much greater artist; and I feel that there has been a loss to the world of splendid specimens of political denunciation, because the misdeeds of the Ministry of 1882 are, unfortunately, not subject to the criticism of the orator of 1880. What magnificent lessons, what splendid periods of eloquence we have lost! Just think that if Mr. Gladstone, when the spirit of 1880 was upon him, could have had to deal with the case of a Ministry professing

the deepest respect for the concert of Europe, and the deepest anxiety to obey its will—a Ministry which, with these professions on its lips, assembled a conference and kept it for months in vain debate, and, under cover of its discussions, prepared armaments, asked for leave to invade a country, and then, when a refusal was given and the armaments were ready, calmly showed the conference to the door, and took, in despite of Europe's will, the country which they had asked the leave of Europe to take—if the orator of 1880 had had such a theme to dwell upon, what would he have said of disingenuousness and subtlety? Or, take another case: supposing that unequalled orator had had before him the case of a Government who sent a large fleet into a port where they had no international right to go, and, when that fleet was there, had demanded that certain arrangements should be made on land which they had no international right to demand, and when these demands were not satisfied had forthwith enforced that by the bombardment of a great commercial port, would you not have heard about political brigandage? What sermons you would have had to listen to with respect to the equality of all nations, of the weakest

and the strongest, before the law of Europe ; what denunciations would you not have heard of those who could for the sake of British interests expose such a city to such a catastrophe, and carry fire and sword among a defenceless people ! That great artist drew a picture of Sir Frederick Roberts. I cannot help wishing that he had to draw a portrait of Sir Beauchamp Seymour ; but allow me to say in passing that, if my poor pencil could be employed, it would be drawn in nothing but the most flattering colours.

“ I think if we can imagine anything so impossible as the orator of 1880 having to describe and comment on the events of 1882, that he would have noticed one of the most remarkable coincidences which the history of this country furnishes. It is a very curious fact that we have only had one member of the Society of Friends—commonly called on the Statute-book ‘ Quakers ’—so that I may use the name without offence—in the Cabinet, we have only had one Quaker ; and only once in the history of the world, so far at least as this hemisphere is concerned, if I am not mistaken, has a great commercial city of the first class been subject to bombardment. It is a remarkable fact that when the order was

given to bombard that commercial city that Quaker was in the Cabinet. At any rate, grave as these events have been, I think they will furnish some good fruit at least for the future. I hope we have taken a new departure in Liberal politics. I trust that for the future any Minister who cares about British interests, and thinks it right to go to war in their defence, will not be subject to denunciation on the part of the Liberal party for doing so. I am quite aware British interests were treated with scant respect in 1880. I am quite aware Mr. Gladstone denounced as monstrous the idea that we could claim to control a country simply because it lay on our route to India. But if ever there was a war—I do not know what to call it—I believe it was not a war; but if ever there were sanguinary operations undertaken for the sake of British interests, undoubtedly these recent operations in Egypt have deserved the character. . . .

“After this precedent it will be impossible for any Liberal Government to limit, as they have done in the past, the rights of national self-defence. With respect to the end of that war we have yet to wait. We do not know what the present negotiations may bring

forth. We must suspend our judgment until we see what the result will be. I confess that I should be inclined to look on all these circumstances to which I have alluded with a very indulgent eye, if the result of the negotiations which are pending should be to extend the strength, the power, and the predominant influence of Great Britain, for I am old-fashioned enough to believe in that empire and believe in its greatness. I believe that wherever it has been extended it has conferred unnumbered benefits upon those who have been brought within its sway, and that the extension of the empire, so far from being the desire of selfishness or acquisitiveness, as it has been represented to be—deserving to be compared to acts of plunder in private life—is in reality a desire, not only to extend the commerce, and to strengthen the power of the Government here at home, but to give to others those blessings of freedom and order which we have always prized among ourselves.

“Let us therefore in the negotiations which are before us not be ashamed of our empire. We are now the predominant power in Egypt. The valour of our troops has made us so. Let us observe with rigid fidelity every

engagement we have made with the amiable and respectable prince who rules in Egypt ; but as regards the other powers of Europe, let us follow our position to its logical result. We are the predominant power. Why should we cease to be so ? Why should we allow diplomacy to fritter away what the valour of our soldiers has won ! ”

This wise and patriotic advice was entirely thrown away on her Majesty's Ministers, who appeared to be anxious to neutralize as completely as possible the effects of Tel-el-Kebir, and talked of nothing but the evacuation of Egypt. The meeting of Parliament on the 15th of February, 1883, gave the Opposition the opportunity of trying to elicit from the Government some definite statement as to their policy in Egypt and in Ireland, and pointing out the danger to which their vacillation was exposing the country. In the debate on the Queen's Speech, Lord Salisbury criticized the ambiguous character of that document, and the contradictory statements regarding their policy which Ministers had been making during the recess.

“ We learn,” he said, “ from the speech that her Majesty's Government have suppressed with rapidity and completeness a

formidable rebellion in Egypt. Then we are told that 'the withdrawal of the British troops is proceeding as expeditiously as a prudent consideration of the circumstances will admit.' But the great anxiety of the world is to know whether the British troops are to be withdrawn altogether, and when; and upon neither of those questions does the speech give us the slightest hint as to the intentions of her Majesty's Government. The Government are able to say that they have submitted to the friendly consideration of the powers the mysterious arrangement by which the stability of the Khedive and the prosperity and happiness of the Egyptian people are to be secured. But we have not a hint that any one of those powers has expressed its approval of the arrangement proposed. . . . Hitherto we have spoken of the announcements of the Queen's Speech. If the present practice is followed we shall have to drop the phrase and speak of the innuendoes of the Queen's Speech. . . . The policy of dealing by innuendoes with unimportant measures might be passed over without remark; but with respect to the burning questions of the day, I cannot help thinking that it is singularly misplaced. First take Egypt.

“With respect to that country we have undoubtedly, since Parliament met last year, witnessed a great transformation scene. For the first six months the policy of the Government was instinct with the doctrines connected with the name of that distinguished gentleman, Mr. Bright, who has left the Government. For the last six months they have returned to an earlier and a sounder model; but their repentance does not entirely wash away their sin. It does not efface the effects of their temporary concession to the policy of weakness, vacillation, and self-effacement. The result of their action, or want of action at the proper time, has been that the mechanism has been destroyed by which the results they now look for should be attained. Had they interfered in time, the Khedive’s Government would have remained upright, and the future conduct of Egypt might not have been difficult. But all the powers that the Khedive’s Government possessed of itself have been swept away, and for the future all the power of Egypt must be derived from the protective influence of the British Government. . . . But if we rightly understand the policy of her Majesty’s Government—at present we have it only from non-official sources—they intend to rely for

the future predominance of England in Egypt only on the prestige derived from the success of the arms of my noble and gallant friend (Lord Wolseley). I do not dispute the greatness of that prestige. I do not dispute that our army has dealt a good lesson to Egypt and the Eastern world, but the recollection of the power of it will speedily fade away. Remember this, that you failed before in your endeavour to maintain the Government of Egypt, whether by your own fault or not, though you had not only your own military prestige, proved in every quarter of the world, to sustain you, but the prestige of France as well. . . . The time is come when it would be of great diplomatic importance, and of great assistance to the conduct of England in the future, that her position with respect to Egypt should be fully and rigidly defined. We hear from one member of the Government that the troops are not to stay in Egypt. We hear from another member that they are to stay until certain objects are achieved, which we know cannot be achieved at an early period. We hear from Mr. Chamberlain that, considering the interests it has, it is impossible for England to look with apathy on anarchy in Egypt; and from Mr.

Courtney we hear an inspired panegyric on anarchy, which he appears to regard as the highest blessing that can be bestowed upon a nation. That seems to show that you have no definite policy; and those who look forward to the time when their own influence and power will be restored again, are encouraged to make their preparations for that period, and to keep alive every source of discontent and disturbance that may be at their command."

Turning to the Irish question, Lord Salisbury complained of the same ambiguity in the speeches of Ministers. "Why we have had a regular tournament all the winter between various members of her Majesty's Government; a tournament in which Lord Hartington has challenged all comers. It was begun by the Secretary for the Colonies, who avowed that his great nostrum for Irish evils was spending a million or two on emigration. Lord Hartington hastened to assure the world that that was a delusion, and was utterly opposed to the feelings and prejudices of the Irish people. Then there was the serious question of the extension of local government in that country. . . . I think Mr. Herbert Gladstone said he was in favour of Home Rule; Mr. Ashley would not grant

Home Rule, but would give every extension of the parliamentary and municipal franchise; while Mr. Courtney, as I have said, pronounced a perfectly Pindaric eulogium on the advantages of anarchy. Mr. Chamberlain again—I should be sorry to misquote him, because it is so strange in a member of the Government to give utterance to such words—said, ‘As long as Ireland is without any institution of local government worthy of the name, so long the seeds of discontent and disloyalty will remain, only to burst into luxurious growth at the first favourable season.’ Unfortunately we have not had many utterances from Mr. Gladstone in this recess. His constituents in Midlothian have, to their great grief, failed to receive a defence of his policy; but we progress rapidly in these times, and new ways of communication are constantly discovered by distinguished men. Mr. Gladstone, having abandoned the senate and the platform, has taken refuge behind the tea-table, and there he informs M. Clémenceau that ‘the curse of Ireland is centralization.’ He adds, ‘What I hope and desire, what I labour for and have at heart, is to decentralize authority there. We have disestablished the Church, and have relieved the tenant-class of many grievances,

and are now going to produce a state of things which will make the humblest Irishman realize that he is a governing agency, and that the government is to be carried on by him and for him.' I do not like the idea of the humblest Irishman as a governing agency.

"Now these are the opinions of Mr. Herbert Gladstone, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Chamberlain; what does Lord Hartington say? He says, 'It is supposed by some that by changes in the system of local self-government we can restore contentment to the country. It would be madness, in my opinion, to give Ireland more extended self-government, unless we can receive from the Irish people some assurance that this boon would not be used for the purpose of agitation.' Now it is not for me to reconcile these divergent opinions; it is enough to say that Mr. Chamberlain's and Mr. Gladstone's views are regarded by Lord Hartington as madness. What I do wish to impress upon the House and upon her Majesty's Government is, that this is no mere question of inconsistency. It is not an ordinary party device of comparing the present with the former opinions of an adversary. It is a question whether, in a

crisis of singular importance in Irish history, the Government have presented to the Irish people a plain and distinct policy in which they are all agreed, or whether, by their expressed disagreement, they are not encouraging the Irish people to further efforts in agitation. Two or three years ago we used to hear a great deal of the concert of Europe. That has entirely disappeared from the speeches of the advocates of the Government, we have ceased to hope for such great things, and only ask now for the concert of Downing Street. We ask only that Downing Street shall be at one with itself, because we cannot but feel that these strange divergences of opinion are not the result of accident, but are a necessary part of party strategy. If this difference of opinion had concerned merely Egypt, I might have thought that predominant diplomatic considerations had driven the Government to it; but in respect to Ireland, it is impossible not to feel that the speeches on one side or another are addressed successively to the two wings of the Liberal party.

“When the Radicals begin to think that the pledges of 1880 are not being fulfilled, Mr. Chamberlain is sent down to pacify them;

and when the Whigs begin to think that those pledges are taken too seriously, Lord Hartington is commissioned to set the matter right. I can well imagine that in so divided a flock what is called in American parlance 'sitting on a gate' may be a judicious art, and a necessary resort of party tactics; but, however necessary it may be for party cohesion, and to secure the obedience of confiding Radicals, I venture to say that no course can be pursued more dangerous to the interests of the Empire."

The history of the session of 1883 may be briefly summed up, as it has little direct connection with the subject of this work. The Government only succeeded in passing two measures of any importance, the Corrupt Practices Bill and the Agricultural Holdings Bill. On the latter measure the annual contest between the two Houses occurred, with the usual result that a compromise was arrived at. What Mr. Gladstone's views are with regard to the constitutional position of the House of Lords it is impossible to say, for with the true spirit of an autocrat he has equally resented any attempt on the part of either branch of the Legislature with his pet schemes; but this much is certain, that the

determined attitude taken up by Lord Salisbury, and his constant claim that the Upper House should not merely possess in theory a joint right of legislation with the Lower, but should not be afraid to exercise this power, has done much to prevent hasty and irrevocable legislation during the last five years. The Government suffered a severe defeat in their attempt to settle the Bradlaugh difficulty by introducing an Affirmation Bill, which was rejected in the House of Commons on the second reading by a majority of three; while the fruits of their "conciliatory" policy towards Ireland were made manifest in the dynamite outrages, which added a new terror to English life. In South Africa, too, the surrender of Majuba Hill had failed to produce the expected results—the Convention of Pretoria was openly disregarded, and eventually Mr. Gladstone consented to abandon those shadowy claims of suzerainty which he laid so much stress upon at the time of the Pretoria Convention.

Public attention, save when it was directed for the time to home affairs by some attempted destruction of life and property by dynamiters, was concentrated upon Egypt, where the vacillation and ineptitude of the

English Government were rapidly reducing the country to a state of confusion. The fiction that the Khedive was sovereign of the country, and that the English occupation was merely temporary, was kept up in the face of astonished Europe. An attempt to settle the Suez Canal with an entire disregard for English interests aroused such a storm of disapprobation that the Government were compelled to withdraw their proposal. Meanwhile a cloud no bigger than a man's hand had arisen in the southern districts of Egypt, which were known under the general name of the Soudan.

The Soudan had been conquered at various times by Egypt, and under Ismail the dominion of the Khedive stretched nominally to the equator, and embraced immense and thinly populated territories, which, under the rule of Sir Samuel Baker and of General Gordon, had enjoyed the benefits of an orderly government and freedom from the horrors of the slave trade. But many of the wild tribes of the Soudan were little impressed by the advantages of civilization, and when Gordon was recalled his place was taken by Egyptian officials, who governed the country after the fashion of the worst type of Roman proconsuls,

and thought only of enriching themselves and sending substantial presents to their patrons at Cairo. In this state of affairs it only required an outburst of religious fanaticism and a leader to unite the Soudanese in an attempt to throw off the Egyptian yoke. Arabi's revolution was their opportunity, and a leader was ready in the person of Mohammed Achmet, who announced himself as the long-expected Mahdi or prophet whom all devout Mussulmans had looked for so earnestly. The Egyptian Government at first made light of this movement, but when the Mahdi had defeated one or two small expeditions that had been sent against him, and had captured the important town of El Obeid, the gravity of the crisis became apparent. Two obvious courses were open to the Egyptian Ministry: they might either determine to crush the insurrection and win back the revolted provinces, or they might decide to relinquish a portion of the Soudan, at least temporarily, to the victorious prophet, and content themselves with garrisoning the frontier towns.

In their perplexity they naturally expected that the English, who were masters of the country, would decide the matter for them. But her Majesty's Ministers still kept up the

absurd fiction that Egypt was independent, and that the British troops were going to leave almost immediately. They gave a certain amount of advice, but never insisted that their advice should be followed. The result was what might have been foreseen. Hicks Pasha, an English officer in the Khedive's service, was despatched at the head of an expedition to reconquer Kordofan. He appealed in vain to the British representative either to send reinforcements or to veto the expedition. Acting under instructions from the English Government, Sir Edward Malet refused to interfere, and Hicks Pasha and his army were massacred on the 5th of November at Kashgate. This disaster was, unhappily, only the first of many of a similar kind which the hesitating and meaningless policy of the English Government entailed both upon Egypt and England. And Mr. Gladstone and his fellow-Ministers had no excuse for their conduct. They knew that they had a loyal and patriotic Opposition to deal with, who would have readily sacrificed any mere party success to the welfare of their country, and who were willing, even anxious, to support the Government if they would but inaugurate a policy which would conduce to

the honour of England and the well-being of Egypt. A miserable dread of alienating the extreme Radical section of their followers, and of separating that heterogeneous mass known as the Liberal party into its component parts, prevented the Government following the dictates of wisdom and patriotism. The year passed away and nothing was done to justify to astounded and indignant Europe the English occupation of Egypt. The garrisons in the Soudan were besieged, hemmed in by countless foes, the wretched Egyptian soldiers were entirely unfit to cope with the fanatical hordes under the command of the Mahdi and his lieutenant, Osman Digma, and the English Government refused to listen to the urgent appeals for help which arose from Khartoum, from Sinkat, and from Tokar.

Long before this, on the 28th of March, Lord Salisbury, speaking at Birmingham, had strongly animadverted upon the miserable want of any settled policy which the Government had shown throughout their tenure of office, and he rightly attributed it to the fact that the Ministry was a coalition of men of very different principles. "An effort has been made," he said, "to give the Radicals and the Whigs alike a share in the policy of what

is called the Liberal party. The result is a movement of perpetual zigzag. It is rather like one of those Dutch clocks which we used to see in our infancy, where there was an old woman who came out at one door, and an old man who came out at another. When the old man came out it was fine weather, when the old woman came out it was the reverse. I would not for a moment attempt to indicate who is the old man. But you may say the mechanism of our political system at present is this—when it is going to be fine Lord Hartington appears, and when Mr. Joseph Chamberlain is seen then you may look out for a squall. The failure of her Majesty's Government, which in many respects I consider to have been great, is due not to the inability of the men, for they are many of them men of great capacity, but to the fact that they were attempting an impossible task, to combine two opposite tendencies in the same policy. Unfortunately Mr. Bright's policy, which may be summed up in his celebrated phrase, that 'force is no remedy,' has always been allowed to come first, and has been adhered to until circumstances have made it inevitable that it should be abandoned. I remember an observation of Mr. Bright's

about two years ago, when he told his audience that the effect of the advent of Mr. Gladstone to power was that there was 'a great calm.' Well, look at Ireland. What do you think of the calm? Look at Egypt. What do you think of the calm? And look at those wretched blacks, those allies of ours, who stood by us in the evil day, but who have been slaughtered by the brutal enemy to whom we have abandoned them. What do you think of the calm? If Mr. Bright's own policy were pursued to the utmost, dishonourable and disastrous as we should think it, at least we should know what we had to expect; but the peculiarity of these policies is that you never from one day to another can tell which side of the Government policy is to prevail—which section of the Cabinet is the master. The consequence is that all confidence is gone."

In a speech on the following day Lord Salisbury, while denying that it was the duty of an Opposition to formulate a complete policy, called attention to the question of the dwellings of the poorer classes, and pointed out that an extension of Sir Richard Cross's Artisans' Dwellings Act might be desirable, and that a Conservative Government would

pay serious attention to the pressing demands for the relief of the growing burden of local taxation.

Mr. Chamberlain, challenged in his own stronghold by the Conservative leader, replied after his kind. Even his strongest admirer would hardly claim for the President of the Board of Trade any very deep or intimate knowledge of English history, but it must be allowed that Mr. Chamberlain possesses that peculiar courage which enables him to use expressions concerning his opponents which others occupying his position would hardly care to indulge in. On this occasion he was not slow to retort. Whether he considered it "the retort courteous," it is of course impossible to decide. At all events, the words are worth preserving if only as a specimen of the method of warfare adopted by a member of a Liberal Cabinet. Referring to Lord Salisbury's remarks on the Irish question, Mr. Chamberlain said, "Lord Salisbury cares nothing for the bulk of the Irish nation. He has no sympathy for the poor tenants who for years, under the threat of eviction and the pressure of starvation, have paid the unjust rents levied on their improvements, and extorted from their desperate toil and hopeless

poverty. I say that on this matter, as on many others, Lord Salisbury constitutes himself the spokesman of a class—of the class to which he belongs, ‘who toil not, neither do they spin,’ whose fortunes, as in his case, have originated in grants, made in times long ago, for the services which courtiers rendered kings, and have since grown and increased while they have slept, by levying an unearned share on all that other men have done by toil and labour to add to the general wealth and prosperity of the country of which they form a part.” It is only necessary to remark on this strange ebullition that when Mr. Chamberlain shall have rendered a tenth part of the services which Burleigh and his son performed for England in the days of Elizabeth and James I., the country will be only too happy to confer such rewards upon him as shall enable his descendants for many generations to abstain from toiling and spinning. It might also be questioned whether Lord Salisbury in his private and public capacity has not laboured as earnestly in his country’s service as even the ex-Mayor of Birmingham and his fellow-member.

But *non ragionam di lor, ma guarda e passa*. Lord Salisbury contented himself with

expressing, at the annual dinner of the Constitutional Union, his wonder that a man holding Mr. Chamberlain's peculiar views could continue to sit in the same Cabinet with those to whom such doctrines must be repugnant. He went on to say, "There is a persistent fallacy which possesses popular minds that men of large wealth are people who are specially interested in the rights of property. Nothing could be more misleading. A rich man means a man who, under pressure of opinion and the habits of the day, makes a considerable expenditure, which if he were deprived of, would not in the slightest degree affect his personal comfort. A man of moderate means is in the position that if any considerable reduction of his income takes place, his personal existence is at once affected. The rich man has every opportunity of providing against trouble, of making himself safe; he can take requisite precautions, and, at all events, he has a large margin from which he can lose, before his personal interests and feelings are touched. It is a feeling of the most general, and to my mind of the most perilous and deadly, kind, to believe that you can safely trust to the rich man to guard those interests of property which

essentially belong to all classes of the community."

In a speech at Watford, in December, Lord Salisbury remarked again on the curious phenomenon of a Cabinet Minister constantly expressing opinions on most important subjects totally at variance with the avowed policy and aims of the Ministry; and he asked whether an entirely new theory of Parliamentary government was to prevail. "We have," he said, "a Cabinet which, as a Cabinet, looks upon manhood suffrage as dangerous, and utterly resists the disestablishment of the English Church. We have a Minister in that Cabinet, wielding the authority of the Cabinet, and standing in his position by virtue of the countenance they give him. We have him declaring that any other solution than that of manhood suffrage will be depriving millions of their right, and that the property of the Church of England belongs to every section of the nation. Now, it is perfectly true that this is the legal position of affairs. The Queen has, of course, the right to call in any one she wills to her councils. It is perfectly legal that Mr. Chamberlain should be a member of the same Government as Lord Granville and the Marquis of

Hartington. I believe it would be quite legal if Mr. Davitt and Mr. Bradlaugh were also members of the present Cabinet. But remember you live under a system of unwritten law. Your Parliamentary Constitution of which you are so proud, is contained in no 'constitution,' and written in no statutes. It rests upon long traditions and understandings faithfully observed, and the basis of that Parliamentary government is that, while men who are outside the Cabinet are responsible only for themselves, and for their own words and for their own deeds, members of a Cabinet are responsible for each other—that is, Parliamentary government, that is the essence of it."

But it was not only on the platform that Lord Salisbury was instructing his fellow-countrymen, and recalling constitutional principles which had made England great and free to the minds of those who were threatened by an aggressive and autocratic Radicalism. In the October number of the *Quarterly Review* a powerful article on "Disintegration" appeared, which attracted great attention, and was very generally attributed to Lord Salisbury's pen. After pointing out that the leading principle of the

Gladstonian Government was apparently to weaken and disintegrate the British Empire at home and abroad, the writer went on to describe what he believed ought to be the main principles of Conservative policy:—

“The object of our party,” he contended, “is not, and ought not to be, simply to keep things as they are. In the first place, the enterprise is impossible. In the next place, there is much in our present mode of thought and action which it is highly undesirable to conserve. What we require is the administration of public affairs, whether in the legislative or the executive department, in that spirit of the old constitution which held the nation together as a whole, and levelled its united force at objects of national import, instead of splitting it up into a bundle of unfriendly and distrustful fragments.”

He proceeded to show how the temper of the time menaced the security of our empire: “Half a century ago, the first feeling of all Englishmen was for England. Now, the sympathies of a powerful party are instinctively given to whatever is against England. It may be Boers or Baboos, or Russians or Afghans, or only French speculators, the treatment these all receive in their contro-

versies with England is the same; whatever else may fail them, they can always count on the sympathies of the political party, from whom, during the last half-century, the rulers of England have been mainly chosen." He applied this principle to Ireland and to domestic matters, and showed how internal dissensions were daily becoming more rancorous, common sentiments and mutual sympathies becoming fewer and fewer, common action and common aspirations feebler; while, owing to the preaching of the Radical party, classes, if not in actual conflict, were at least watching each other with vigilant distrust. The hope that the Whig section of the Liberal party would prevent the ascendancy of Radical principles could hardly be entertained, as they appeared neither to have the courage to abandon their Whig professions nor part from their Radical allies.

But it was not only in the sphere of party politics that Lord Salisbury employed his powerful pen. He, who had been calumniated by Mr. Chamberlain as caring for nothing but the interests of his class, had been the first to call attention, as we have seen, to the question of the dwellings of the poor. A pamphlet with the somewhat sensa-

tional title, "The Bitter Cry of Outcast London," had aroused public attention to this very important subject, and Lord Salisbury, anxious that popular sympathy should take a practical form, contributed an article to the November number of the *National Review* on "Labourers' and Artisans' Dwellings," which showed at once the deep interest and the wide knowledge of the subject he possessed. After saying that the dwellings in rural districts were improving, though not so fast as could be desired, he urged that the housing of the poor in London and the other great towns was the more important and difficult question. Thousands of families were paying two shillings to five shillings a week for a single room, as much as agricultural labourers paid for a cottage and garden in the country. Peabody's Trustees and Industrial Dwellings Societies such as that which had established Shaftesbury Park, were doing good work for the higher class of artisans, but they hardly touched the poorer class. He expressed his belief that the first step should be an inquiry into the extent of the existing misery, and the finding out how far the earnings of the very poorest can go towards paying for decent lodgings. He suggested that a good example,

which would stimulate others, might be set by Government providing for the lower *employés* in the post office, police, and customs. He also recommended compulsory sanitary inspection of all speculative buildings in London and the suburbs, loans to the Peabody Trustees, and especially the development of Miss Octavia Hill's system, and concluded by impressing on his readers the value of voluntary work. "You can hunt the poor about from place to place, oust them out of one place and drive them to another; but you will never reach the poor except through people who care about them and watch over them."

Nor did Lord Salisbury content himself with merely calling the attention of his fellow-countrymen to this most important subject in the pages of the *National Review*. On the 22nd of February, 1884, in his place in the House of Lords, he rose to move the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the housing of the poor. The motion was supported by the Prince of Wales, and assented to by the Government. A strong Commission was appointed, including men of such diverse opinions as the Prince of Wales and Sir Charles Dilke, Cardinal Manning and

the Bishop of Bedford, Lord Salisbury and Mr. Jesse Collings. The result of the Commission will, it may be hoped, be to dispel many false ideas on the subject, and unite all parties together for the furtherance of this most necessary work.

In his speech in moving for the Commission, Lord Salisbury began by answering objections that had been urged to further investigation, and then proceeded to enumerate the different heads of inquiry. First, there was the sanitary question, a matter of primary importance in which great steps had been taken of late years, though very much still remained to be done. Then came the actual condition of the houses of the poor, many of which were in the most lamentable repair. The construction and position of the dwellings, ventilation, and kindred subjects demanded careful investigation. He remarked on the immense difficulties in the way of clearing unhealthy areas connected with the compensation which had to be given to the ground-landlords, leaseholders, and actual tenants, and protested against any proposals which should savour of confiscation. "With respect to this matter of compensation I would venture to say to those politicians, who-

ever they may be, who desire to put a portion of the cost of these sanitary reforms upon the ground-landlord, or the leaseholder, or any other person having an interest in the locality, if they intend to go upon the principle of taking away compensation, let them have the courage of their opinions. I would address them in the words employed by Martin Luther, '*Pecca fortiter.*' If they mean to meet this great evil by any kind of confiscation, let them get all the advantage out of confiscation that they can by taking the property with the unceremonious facility of a Turkish Pasha or a Burmese officer. To confiscate, to take off something to which the owner has a right, and only by that to gain sixpence or a shilling in the price per foot, that seems to me a most improvident proceeding. If they wish to get the whole advantage they must confiscate more largely, they must confiscate the whole. There is no use incurring all those penalties, which an unfailing Nemesis inflicts upon the authors of public plunder, unless they get sufficient amount of booty to indemnify them for the operation."

He proceeded to point out another great difficulty—the danger lest the improvement of

one neighbourhood should injuriously affect others. The great and peculiar evil, he maintained, was overcrowding, and unless precautions were taken, knocking down unhealthy houses and clearing unhealthy areas would only increase the overcrowding in spaces that remained.

“The people who are turned out of these unhealthy dwellings must find places somewhere, and all the remedies proposed seem to me to fail in this point—that they absolutely increase the principal evil instead of diminishing it. . . . That is really the most important matter on which, it seems to me, the Commission should inquire. If we have this overcrowding, unless you can meet it, it will neutralize all your efforts ; and you can do nothing to meet it unless you possess sufficient knowledge of the precise character of the evil. What is wanted is to know where and what are the localities in which the overcrowding exists, and how many of those who are thus crowded together are forced to dwell in that locality. As everybody knows who has followed this discussion at all, the great thing in London is that, with respect to a certain class of the population at least, you cannot move them to a distance from their

industry, or they will cease to be able to pursue it. The result is that the obvious remedy of taking these people into the country only applies to a limited portion of those whose difficulties you have to meet. And therefore we want to know, what is that portion, what is the number of persons who could not pursue their industry, living at a distance from London, where they might obtain some reasonable accommodation, and in what particular localities do they congregate? If you once had that information fully obtained and laid before Parliament and the country, I believe it would be possible, in the first instance, to apply, with greater clearness and effect, the remedy which would carry away those who can live out of London, to see how far cheap trains carrying people out of London might be employed, and what building operations are requisite, where they are required, and to what extent they must be carried out. That is really the gist and kernel of the whole matter. That is the difficulty we have to meet. Are large building operations requisite? and if requisite, where are they to be carried on, and at whose cost? I do not affect to answer these questions now. If I could answer them I

should not ask your Lordships to seek for a Royal Commission. It is because enormous difficulties attach to all these questions, that I think investigation, and speedy investigation, is necessary.

“My Lords, I have carefully avoided any words indicating that I think any man or class of men is to blame for the existing state of things. Of course, I do not and will not say that there are not persons who are to blame, but I say that any attempt to escape from the urgency of the problem by throwing the blame on any class of men is futile wholly. It is absurd to say the ground-landlord is to blame. If he has got houses which come within the operation of the law, the law is strong enough to assert itself, and to force him to do his duty. But if he is not within the grasp of the law, he is not exposed to any blame. The ground-landlord, or the mere temporary and intermediate owner of a house, like every one else, has to sell the goods he possesses in the open market for the price he can obtain for them, and it is ridiculous to blame him for obtaining the best price he can. Then I have heard persons say that the blame of the overcrowding is due to some strange operation on the part of the large landed proprietors in the

country, who have artificially diminished the populations on their estates, and driven them into the towns. In the first place I would submit, if that operation has been carried on, it is much more likely to be carried on by small landed proprietors than large proprietors, because the persons who would be most ready to save themselves unnecessary expense, would be necessarily those whose incomes were too narrow to admit of superfluity.

“Therefore, such an evil, if evil existed, would be one far more likely to attach to small estates than large ones. But an examination of the census figures—I shall not trouble your Lordships with them, as they are not entertaining reading; but to any one who will go through them as I have done, and examine the returns from the counties that are in the immediate neighbourhood of London, will see that the houses, so far from diminishing, have gone on increasing during the last decade. Not only in the towns, but in the Parliamentary counties—which is the best mode of reaching the rural population—by taking the census for 1881 you will find that there is a considerable increase of house-room over the amount existing in 1871.

“There is therefore no ground for saying that

any act on the part of owners of land in diminishing the country population accounts for overcrowding in towns. My Lords, there is a much more obvious and gloomy cause in the great disasters which have fallen on agriculture, partly the result of inclement seasons, and partly the result of the persistent foreign competition, fully sufficient to account for the diminution of prosperity in the agricultural industry, and the consequent desertion of it by large numbers of persons. One of the most difficult questions is, by whom shall the work be done? My Lords, I do not attempt to solve this question; but I see before me my noble friend (Lord Wemyss), whom I think I can call the head of the Property and Liberty Defence Association. The sight of him reminds me that, for any proposals of this kind, I may have to defend myself against the charge of Socialism.

“Now, my Lords, I may at once say that I do not favour any wild schemes of State interference. I am as earnest as any man in this House, that, while we approach great public evils, and desire to remedy them, we should scrupulously observe that honesty which is the condition of continued and abiding prosperity for the industries of this

country. But, while I will maintain that doctrine as earnestly as my noble friend, I yet would ask the House to avoid that kind of political cowardice which declines to consider and examine a problem, lest its urgency should afterwards seem to be a temptation to provide unlawful and illegitimate methods for its remedy. The evils that we have to deal with are very serious. After all, even my noble friend may press as earnestly as he will upon us the necessity of leaving every Englishman to work out his own destiny, and not attempt to aid him at the expense of the State; but, on the other side, he must always bear in mind that there are no absolute truths or principles in politics. We must never forget that there is a moral as well as a material contagion, which exists by virtue of the moral and material laws under which we live, and which forbid us to be indifferent, even as a matter of interest, to the well-being in every respect of all the classes who form part of the community. If there be material evil, disease will follow, and the contagion of that disease will not be confined to those amongst whom it arises, but will spread over the rest of the community. And what is true of material evil, is true of moral evil too. If

there are circumstances which produce great moral injury, the contagion will not be confined to the class of those with whom the moral effects arise, but will spread their evil consequences over the whole of the community to which these classes belong.

“ After all, whatever political arrangements we may adopt, whatever the political constitution of our State may be, the foundation of all its prosperity and welfare must be that the mass of the people shall be honest and manly and shall have common sense. How are you to expect that these conditions will exist amongst people subjected to the frightful influences which the present overcrowding of our poor produces ? I do not know if any of your Lordships have read the remarkable letter of Mr. Williams in the *Times* of to-day, giving an account of the terrible overcrowding which the investigations of the School Board have found in various parts of London. The instances are numbered not by tens, but by hundreds, where there are six or seven of a family living in a single room. My Lords, these conditions are not conditions of a physical or material deterioration only ; but they are conditions deleterious and ruinous to the moral progress and development of the race

to which we belong. How can you hope that any of the home influences, which, after all, are the preserving and refining influences which keep men good amidst the various temptations of life—how are you to hope that these influences are to flourish in such a state as this? We pay great attention to the education of the people; but how are we to hope that popular education will flourish, when men after the education is over are dismissed to their homes where they cannot undertake any study, and where anything like literary interest is impossible, owing to the great mental and physical depression of mind and body under which they exist? Constant efforts are made by our legislators to deal with the great plague of intemperance, which is the moral scourge of the present generation; but how are you to hope that men will be kept out of the public-house, when the home, which is the only alternative to the public-house, presents such horrible and loathsome features? My Lords, I hope Parliament will never transgress the laws of public honesty, but I equally hope that Parliament will not be deterred by fear of being tempted to transgress those laws, or, still more, by the fear of being accused of intending to transgress those laws, from fear.

lessly facing, and examining, and attempting to fathom those appalling problems, which involve the deepest moral, material, and spiritual interests of our fellow-countrymen."

But it was difficult to attract, or at all events to concentrate, public attention upon home affairs when the situation in Egypt was daily becoming more and more critical. At the commencement of the year the English Government determined to change its attitude with regard to affairs in the Soudan. Up to this time it had been persistently contended by Lord Granville that England had no concern in the Soudan, and that the utmost she could do was to offer advice to the Egyptian Government, which it was perfectly obvious would not be attended to. Now Lord Granville suddenly announced that the advice of the English Government must be followed, and in this case their advice was that the Soudan should be evacuated. Nothing could have been easier than to give advice of this kind, nothing more difficult than to carry it out. The Egyptian garrisons at Khartoum, Sinkat, Tokar, and other towns that still remained faithful to the Khedive would most gladly have evacuated the Soudan, but un-

fortunately they were completely hemmed in by the fanatical hordes that followed the standard of the Mahdi. In their perplexity the Government only too gladly accepted the suggestion that General Gordon should be sent out to Khartoum to treat with the Mahdi and secure the safety of the beleaguered garrisons. With regard to Tokar and Sinkat, which are situated near the Red Sea, and to which, therefore, English troops might have been sent with little trouble and expense, the Government were unable to make up their minds, and while this process was going on, news arrived that an attempt made by Egyptian troops under the command of Baker Pasha had been defeated with severe loss, that Sinkat had been captured and its garrison massacred. It was under these circumstances that Parliament met on the 5th of February.

In the Lower House an amendment to the Address was moved, but the recent news seemed to have struck Ministers dumb, and, without any defence of the Government policy, the debate collapsed. It was renewed shortly afterwards by a vote of censure proposed by Sir Stafford Northcote, which, despite the pressure of the whip and the wire-puller, and

the terrorism of the Caucus, was only rejected by a majority of forty-nine.

In the Lords, on the Address, Lord Salisbury made a vigorous onslaught on the policy, or rather want of policy, of the Government in Egyptian matters. He contrasted the absurdly optimistic tone of the Queen's Speech with the news that had just reached England, and he refused to allow that England had no responsibility in the Soudan. He had no difficulty in showing that the Government were trying to shift their responsibility on to a puppet whose actions were directed by themselves, and which had neither will nor power of its own. It was, as ever, the weakness and vacillation of the English Government which were bringing these disasters upon Egypt. "We have the same phenomena, a danger neglected at first and allowed to go on from week to week, and from month to month. We have had vacillation and delay in the application of the necessary remedies; and now when the matter seems to be approaching almost to a point of desperation, we are told that it is not the English Government, but the Egyptian Government, which is to blame. It is the Egyptian Government, which has led and forced this poor, meek, submissive

English Government to suffer all these things which have taken place.

“ My Lords, I cannot help thinking that this picture of the relations between the two Governments will not be accepted in the world generally as an accurate representation of their position towards each other. As the Speech stands, England appears simply in the position of a counsellor, a mere spectator, standing aside and giving disinterested advice. The advice appears to have been that the Khedive should consent to the dismemberment and cutting off of, I believe, the largest part of the country over which he rules ; and the English Government, standing by in the character of an adviser in this matter, has condescended to go a little further than tendering advice. It will give the Egyptians a little assistance. It is a matter of ‘ scuttling out,’ and the English Government, under present auspices, may be said to be experts in scuttling out. Therefore they have magnanimously and generously come forward to help the Government of the Khedive to scuttle out of the Soudan. For that purpose they have selected, with a strange disregard of the fitness of things, the most gallant soldier they can find. They appear to know no other way

of retreating from the Soudan than by sending a man whose life has been spent not in retreating, but in advancing, and in striking hard blows against the enemy. . . . My impression is that if for such a purpose the employment of an Englishman was necessary at all, there are many other Englishmen who might have been found who would have been just as good for that purpose as General Gordon, and that it was not necessary in order to effect that object to endanger a most valuable life, and to a certain extent to endanger a most untarnished reputation, in performing an act which will certainly reflect no credit upon the Government by which it is undertaken."

On the 12th of February, Lord Salisbury brought forward a vote of censure on the Government with reference to their action in Egypt, and the Lords, by a majority of 181 to 81, supported him in his contention that the lamentable events in the Soudan were due in great measure to the vacillating and inconsistent policy pursued by her Majesty's Government. After lamenting the discredit which such occurrences as the annihilation of Hicks Pasha's army, the defeat of Baker, and the massacre of the Sinkat garrison had cast upon England, he said, "The defence of the

Government lies with respect to those events in the Western Soudan in this—that in all their instructions they have perpetually stated that they were not responsible for the expedition of General Hicks, and that their representatives were to give no advice upon the subject. Even if they had taken, from first to last, a steady and consistent policy, it would have been no defence for the result which their policy has brought about. Those who have the absolute power of preventing lamentable events, and, knowing what is taking place, refuse to exercise that power, are responsible for what happens. You find scattered through these Blue-Books again and again the phrase, ‘her Majesty’s Government are not responsible for the expedition of General Hicks;’ it occurs with a sameness of repudiation that reminds you of the burden of a popular song. But suppose that the manager of a mine, seeing those who are under his guardianship and in his employment were performing some operations of certain danger, were simply to say again and again, ‘I never gave advice, I am not responsible,’ what view do your Lordships think a Court of Law would take of the conduct of such a manager? Precisely that which I take here, that if they

had consistently adhered to their principle of repudiating responsibility in reference to the Soudan, her Majesty's Government would have been in no better position than such a manager as I have spoken of. But they have not done so. The gravest part of the indictment against them is that they have followed no one particular policy, but that they followed three distinct policies."

First they accepted the Soudan as an integral part of the Egyptian Empire by not attempting to stop the operations there—that was a sound policy at the time; after the departure of Lord Dufferin they went over to a policy of indifference—the policy of the Epicurean gods. Finally, at the beginning of last month the Government stepped in with a command to abandon all the territory south of Wady Halfa. When it would have been an easy matter to have relieved Tokar and Sinkat, and troops could have been sent with little trouble from India or from Aden, from Cyprus or from Malta, the Government refused to do anything, though repeatedly warned that the garrisons could not hold out many days. "If they had wished to sign the death-warrants of these garrisons they could not have acted with more signal imprudence."

In conclusion he said, "These things carry us back to matters within our recollection. We can remember when those who now hold office were very strong on the question of responsibilities. We can remember when they insisted on every platform that those who were then in power were responsible for every act of the Turkish Government, over which they had no material hold or control whatever. Now, having absolute material hold and control over the action of the Egyptian Government, they try to persuade us that these terrible calamities, which they allowed the Egyptian Government and the gallant defenders of these fortresses to incur, do not involve their own responsibility at all. We can remember on another occasion, when the honour of England was at stake, and her arms had been tarnished, the Government of this country refused to do what every other Government that ever existed here would have done—they refused to avenge the defeat, lest it should involve blood-guiltiness. Is there not blood-guiltiness here? In this resolute renunciation of responsibility, in this abandonment of gallant men to an inevitable doom, in the giving up of a thousand women and children to all the horrors of an Ori-

ental victory—is there no blood-guiltiness here?

“ My Lords, it is on all these things that I ask your verdict. I am told that it is of little avail. Perhaps we may hope to infuse some vigour and some energy where there were none before—to awaken the Government to a sense of their real responsibility; to induce them to cast aside the screen of a sham Egyptian responsibility behind which they have hitherto skulked. But we may not be able to do so. It may not be possible for us to affect the philosophy to which they have pledged themselves, and the promises by which they are bound. If it is so—if we cannot induce them to reconsider their course, at least a duty remains for us to perform. They may take refuge behind their constitutional powers. They may shelter themselves behind the Caucus. Weak in argument, but strong in wire-pulling, they may defy the opinion of England and of the civilized world. But at least, my Lords, we will discharge our responsibility. We will place on record the convictions of this House, and of that large and influential section of the community whose opinions are reflected here. We will not allow this miserable apathy, this timid

repudiation of responsibility to pass without a protest of indignation. We will, at all events, not be accomplices in the completion of this dishonour."

The Government, of course, cared nothing for the censure of the Lords, but their decreased majority in the Commons and the general dissatisfaction of the country compelled them to do something. What they eventually did, is best described in Lord Salisbury's words in a speech he delivered during the Easter recess at Manchester. After commenting on the cruel neglect with which the Government were treating General Gordon, he showed that they had invariably been too late whenever they took a decided step. Having got over the fear of the Caucus, they were beginning to fear the country, and to see the necessity of recovering their lost prestige. "So at once an expedition was planned, and forces were sent out with a great flourish of trumpets to Suakim to relieve Sinkat and Tokar, but then, unfortunately, Sinkat was destroyed and Tokar gave itself up before the relieving forces could arrive to their succour. This was a terrible blow. What was the relieving force to do? It could not possibly go back again; that

would have been too ridiculous. But fortunately some spy informed them that Osman, the leader of the people whom they call rebels—I cannot understand why, because the country has been given over to them—had avowed his intention of driving the English into the sea. This was quite enough. There was a valuable after-thought. Orders were given at once to attack Osman Digma, and in order to wipe out all possible ridicule for the mistakes which the Government had committed, some six thousand or more of these unhappy savages were mown down by our Gatling guns, and we were forced to retreat without having done anything, without any practical result, except having achieved this appalling slaughter.”

Such was no exaggerated picture of what the Government did in the Eastern Soudan. Never, perhaps, in the history of modern England has there been a more wanton and useless shedding of blood than at El Teb and Tamanieb. Directly these hard-fought victories were won, General Graham was ordered to retire, though he pleaded to be allowed to open up the road to Berber and, if possible, communicate with Gordon in Khartoum. Osman Digma's power was unbroken by his

two defeats, while the precipitate retreat of the English troops almost entirely destroyed the effect of the slaughter which, under the most peace-loving of governments, they had achieved.

But it was on Khartoum that the attention of England was fixed, where the spectacle was seen of a hero holding out, almost single-handed, against myriads of foes, and deserted by the Government at whose request he had undertaken his perilous mission. The Opposition in both Houses of Parliament were persisting in endeavouring to extract from the Government some declaration of their policy in Egypt, and to induce them to take some measures for Gordon's safety; but all they could elicit from Mr. Gladstone was a complaint that the time of Parliament was being wasted in discussing Egyptian affairs when there were important legislative measures which the Government desired to push forward, and an assertion that General Gordon was quite at liberty to leave Khartoum whenever he thought proper. In the light of subsequent events some words uttered by Lord Salisbury in the Upper House on the 4th of April have acquired a terrible significance. After showing that all the disasters and mis-

takes in Egypt were due to the fatal habit of procrastination and irresolution which possessed the Government, he said, "General Gordon was sent to his present position in Khartoum because the Government had put off the decision to abandon the Soudan until it was too late to withdraw or to relieve the garrisons. He was sent there in the almost hopeless design of persuading the Mahdi, by some methods of unknown persuasion, to release the prey already within his grasp." The garrison of Sinkat had been massacred because the expedition to Suakim was sent out too late. "Are these circumstances encouraging to us when we are asked to trust that, on the inspiration of the moment when the danger comes, her Majesty's Government will find some means of relieving General Gordon? I fear that the history of the past will be repeated in the future; that again just when it is too late, the critical resolution will be taken; some terrible news will come that the position of General Gordon is absolutely a forlorn and helpless one; and then, under the pressure of public wrath and Parliamentary censure, some desperate resolution of sending an expedition will be formed, too late to achieve the object which it is desired to gain,

too late to rescue this devoted man whom we have sent forward to his fate, in time only to cast another slur upon the statesmanship of England and the resolution of the statesmen who guide England's councils." This sad prophecy was fulfilled only too literally. Appeals and reproaches came from Gordon in vain ; but when in May the Opposition brought forward a vote of censure in the Commons, which was only defeated by a majority of twenty-eight, the Government determined to despatch a relief expedition, which left England in August, and arrived too late to save the life of the truest hero of the nineteenth century.

But Mr. Gladstone was engrossed in other matters. It was necessary to unite the Liberals by passing some important measure, and if a collision with the House of Lords could be occasioned at the same time, so much the better for the Liberal party. The extension of household suffrage to the counties had been accepted in principle by both parties, and it was clear that when it was introduced it must involve a large measure of redistribution of seats. The Conservatives had always contended that the two reforms must be undertaken together, or, at all events, that

some distinct pledge should be given that the Franchise Bill should not come into operation until after the redistribution of seats had been effected. For some inscrutable reason, Mr. Gladstone decided to separate the two portions of his Reform Bill, contrary to logic, precedent, and common sense, and being supported by a docile majority in the Commons, he was able to pass the mutilated measure through the Lower House. But the Lords were determined not to fall into the trap so ingeniously set for them, and in their resolution they were supported by the entire strength of the Conservative party as well as by much independent public opinion. The line taken up by Lord Salisbury and his adherents in this matter has naturally been persistently misrepresented by his opponents. What his real views were will be best seen from his own speeches on the subject.

On the second reading of the Bill in the Lords, Lord Cairns moved an amendment to the effect that the House, 'while concurring in the extension of the franchise, could not consent to a measure which was not accompanied by provisions for so apportioning the right to return members as to ensure a true and fair representation of the people, or by

any adequate security that the Franchise Bill should not come into operation except as part of an entire scheme.' In the second night's debate Lord Salisbury spoke. He began by denying that the Conservative party in the Upper House, or outside had any objection to the extension of the franchise. They were, as ready as their opponents to grant it. The point at issue between the Government and the Opposition was an entirely different one. The Government were attempting to deal with the question piecemeal, and such a measure was utterly unprecedented in the history of the country. "Never before has any Government dealt—never before, at all events, has any Government succeeded in dealing—with the question of the extension of the franchise without dealing at the same time with the question of redistribution, and never before have we been asked to admit a number of new voters within the pale of the constitution, without provision being made for redistribution of the power so conferred upon them. We have been told that such a perfect measure has never been passed; but that is a mere play upon words. What is a perfect measure? You can deal with the representation of England without

affecting the representation of Scotland, and you can deal with the representation of Scotland without affecting that of Ireland; but you cannot extend the franchise without redistribution. Extension of the franchise and redistribution are absolutely bound together, and they mutually affect each other. Now, what are the practical results that are to flow from this measure? The noble and learned earl who has just sat down treats the matter as though it were one merely of large or small constituencies, and as though it does not matter two straws whether, after the passing of this Extension of the Franchise Bill, we went to an election on the old constituencies or the new. It is instructive to consider the effect that that remark of the noble and learned earl may have upon the supporters of the Government, and it throws considerable light upon the absence of any great zeal on their part with regard to the question of redistribution. I am bound to say that, if the views of the noble earl and of the noble lord opposite on this point are shared by their colleagues, that it is not necessary to push the question of redistribution next year—the only year which remains to the other House in which they can pass a Redistribu-

tion Bill—we may form a very good estimate of what the conduct of the supporters of the Government is likely to be, especially if the Government themselves are inclined to stand by, and do not attempt to prevent their followers from going into the lobby to negative the promises which they have made. Therefore the fact that the noble and learned earl does not regard it as a matter of great importance that a Redistribution Bill should be passed next year is one that ought not to be lightly passed over.

“But the question is not one of mere theory. The hour is far too late for me to attempt to enter into details, but the fact remains, that from the first creation of our Parliamentary system there has been a broad and strong distinction between counties and boroughs, and between the rural and the urban parts of the country. We may not always be able to define that distinction with precision, and we may not be able always to say where the one begins and the other ends—that is, the character of natural, as contrasted with artificial, distinctions. But the distinction between them is real, and is bound up with our everyday life in town and country, and has existed in our constitution from the

first. This Bill deals with those constituencies, which have up to this moment been rural constituencies, and it projects into them a vast mass of purely urban electors, and the result of that projection will be that, in a very considerable number of cases, the balance of power will remain, not with the rural, but with the urban electors, and that upon all points on which the interests of the one class are opposed to those of the other, the effect of the Bill will be to efface the opinion of the rural portions of the counties and to prevent them from having due representation. I do not think that justice demands that this should be done in the interests of the urban portions of the country, because they are more largely—most abundantly and even superfluously—represented than their mere numbers of electors can justify. Therefore you are going to give them this additional representation at the expense of, and to the destruction of, the rural element. Another result of your action will be this. There has always been great difficulty in highly developed representative systems to secure the adequate representation of minorities. In early times there were always a great variety of interests represented, and the result was that the

minorities always found themselves adequately represented. But this Bill altogether overlooks the representation of minorities. By minorities I do not mean the rich or the landowners merely, but the middle classes. Lord Hartington, speaking on the 25th of March last, saved me a great deal of trouble upon this point, because he said this measure would terminate the supremacy of the tenant-farmers in county constituencies. The tenant-farmers, therefore, as an electoral class will cease to exist politically. Well, is not the interest of the tenant-farmers, who have done more than any other class to give England its character for solidity, worthy to be protected? It is not only in England that these two great objections apply. It is not only in England that minorities of special portions of the population will be effaced. No doubt your Lordships have heard and studied the very interesting speech made by my noble friend the noble marquis, who so often represents the affairs of Ireland in this House with such ability. He pointed out that the effects which here would be anomalous and injurious, in Ireland would be fatal to the existence of a great class, and that a class upon which the supremacy of England

and the integrity of the empire largely depends. He showed, if I remember his figures aright, that whereas there is a loyal minority of something like a million and a half, if this Bill passes as it is now, ninety-five or ninety-six per cent. of the representation of Ireland will pass into hands to which the epithet loyal cannot be applied. My Lords, it is a commonplace of discussion on these questions to tell us that our prophecies in the past were gloomy, and that they have not been fulfilled. In reference to England that may seem in some measure true. If it is true, it is a very happy tribute to the qualities of our countrymen. But in respect to Ireland, it is unfortunately not true. In this House we warned you ten years ago of what would be the result of giving these ballots to Ireland. We warned you, and we did the best to carry our warning into effect, that the passing of that measure would take power out of the hand of those who love the English connection and put it in the hands of those who did not love it. Have we been right, or have we been wrong? Has not the result amply testified the very gloomiest warnings that we uttered ten years ago? The same warnings that we ventured then, we now utter

to you. This measure, in its present incomplete and inchoate form, has, among other things, this disadvantage, that it seriously menaces the integrity of the empire. I have pointed out—sketchily, I am afraid, but quite as lengthily as I could venture to do now—the danger that we apprehend from the passing of the measure in this form. How are we to meet those dangers? Noble Lords opposite tell us that they intend to pass a Redistribution Bill, and that they are able to fulfil their intentions. But before referring to them, allow me to say one sentence in regard to a small school of opinion existing between the two great parties in this House—the school of opinion characteristically represented by the noble earl who sits on the cross benches. He is of opinion that we can pass this Bill, that we can put in a clause which will prevent its having effect until a redistribution scheme is carried, and that in that way we shall conjure the dangers to which I have referred. My Lords, we have had considerable experience in this House of what comes of amendments of that nature. We know perfectly well—the noble earl opposite will not contradict them—that the Government—we know it from the Colonial

Secretary that the Government entirely declines to admit any such clause into their Bill. We know it from what the noble earl the Colonial Secretary has said. We know it from the emphatic language of the Prime Minister. He said that any such proviso would end in giving ashes instead of fruit to the population we are intending to enfranchise. Well, the considerations that I wish to address to that small school of opinion to which I have referred, is that, whatever happens, their action will end in the failure of the Bill. And do they really believe that when it comes for discussion in the country, any one of those demagogues of whom we hear so much, and of whom so many persons profess to be afraid, will draw a distinction between the House of Lords destroying the Bill by a resolution, and the House of Lords destroying it by adhering to an amendment which the Government have beforehand announced that they are absolutely resolved to reject? It is idle to suppose that any distinction whatever will be drawn between these two methods of proceeding. . . . But the main controversy is, are the Government able to guarantee to us, by their mere promise, that the Redistribution Bill shall pass along with this Enfranchisement Bill?

“My Lords, the question of their willingness is, of course, one that I cannot and should not for a moment dream of contesting. Nobody on this side of the House has suggested, and I trust that they will not, that there is anything but the most perfect honesty in the intentions which they express of carrying a Redistribution Bill next year. We have always found them loyal adversaries, and I am quite sure none of us suspect them of any backward or concealed thoughts in this respect. The only question is, have they the power to fulfil the promise which they make ?

“Well, we all know that they have not had much power over their proceedings for the last four years. Why should we think so now? We are told that it is a matter of absolute impossibility—that was the word used with great emphasis by the Lord Chancellor—to pass a measure of redistribution and a measure of enfranchisement in the same year; but this measure of enfranchisement has taken twenty-three sittings, and I believe that there is no doubt that more than half of those were occupied in discussing in one form or another whether redistribution should or should not be mixed up with it. Therefore, if the two had been brought in together,

there would have been an addition of eleven sittings to the work of redistribution. Eleven sittings, when the Government take all the nights, as they do at this time, means less than three weeks, so that, to arrive at this result, it is absolutely impossible to pass a Redistribution Bill plus the three weeks, but that it is the easiest thing in the world to pass a Redistribution Bill without these three weeks. They make all the difference between absolute impossibility and absolute certainty. But the noble lord (Lord Derby), I thought in a cruel and heartless spirit, talked of two autumns that he, sitting very comfortably in this House, was willing to throw on the shoulders of the other House. He must be anxious for promotion in the ranks of the Government. At all events, these two autumns he so generously gives us might at least have furnished us with the three weeks that make all the difference between uncertainty and absolute impossibility. My Lords, it really is not necessary to argue. Every one acquainted with the present condition of parties in the House of Commons knows the power that has been obtained by a particular section connected with the neighbouring isle, as well as the general course of business and habits

of the House, makes it certain no Government, not even the most powerful, can insure as a matter of absolute certainty that a Redistribution Bill should be passed before the dissolution. But even if it were passed, should we be any better? My Lords, what we want is, not only a Redistribution Bill, but a Redistribution Bill that we can handle; something that, if manifestly unjust, we should be able to modify. How should we be able to modify it if we had this pistol put to our heads, 'Unless you pass this Bill, you shall have no Bill at all, and you go to the country with a new enfranchisement on the old constituencies?' We shall have no power over such a Bill, and, therefore, not even if they were absolutely able to promise, they could not, if they once allowed this measure to pass out of their and our hands, engage to us that we should have a free hand in modifying the details of redistribution. But, my Lords, when we are told that terrible evils are to result from the course of events, we are tempted to ask whose fault is it. If those horrible things are to come in consequence of this Bill not passing, why does not some member of the Government get up and say, we will put a clause into the Bill which shall prevent this

measure coming into operation until the Redistribution Bill is passed? If they did that the difficulty would be at an end; if they refused to do that, on them and not on us the responsibility of any consequences will rest. My Lords, I ask myself what cause is there, what reason is stated why we should not take the course it is proposed to do—what harm should we do? Well, we shall disappoint, we are told, two millions of people who have made up their minds that this thing is their right. Well, if they have made up their minds, they have done so in a very short time, because we heard nothing of this imperative necessity last year. The noble earl—so many noble earls have spoken, that I know not exactly how to distinguish him, but I will call him the noble earl, the patron of Midlothian (Earl of Rosebery)—told us that this measure was not merely one of expediency—that it was a matter of justice, and he went on to say that the franchise was the birth-right of these two million persons, their birth-right, born of the votes of the House of Commons and the pledges of the election of 1880. I did not know before this that birth-rights were born. But be this as it may, I wish to point out that it has become a birth-

right within a very recent period. We do not desire, we have not the slightest wish, to deny this birthright to those who claim it, and all that can result from our action is delay—delay which will have the very wholesome and salutary effect of enabling the proper complement to this measure to be passed. Then we are told that delay is such a frightful thing, that it will bring down unnumbered curses on our heads. If that be so, if such haste is required in this matter, why have the Government been doing nothing with regard to it during the last four years? A noble lord opposite has answered that question in a manner that is certainly creditable to his candour. He says, 'You could not expect a Government with a large majority to bring in a Bill which would render it necessary to dissolve Parliament.' Then it appears that we are not in the presence of any great conscientious scruples, that we are not fighting for eternal birthrights, or splendid principles. It was merely a question of Parliamentary tactics and a recognition of the fact that a Government who has a majority does not wish for a dissolution—it was merely this that made two million people wait who are pining for their votes.

“And yet we are told, because in the interest of good legislation we seek to maintain the precedents from which no one has ever before departed, that we shall bring down the skies, and shake the constitution of England to the centre. That has been the gist and burden of the speeches made on the other side of the House. We have heard nothing but references to the interests of this House, and the dangers to this House, and the terrible calamities that are impending over us. . . . It was well said by my noble friend near me that if we are not misrepresented we shall not be misunderstood. Misunderstanding, if it comes, will come in consequence of the deliberate, persistent, careful efforts of those taking the side of her Majesty’s Government. Well, they say, ‘This misunderstanding is a terrible thing. Your motives may be perfectly pure, your action perfectly constitutional, but if you are misunderstood all is over.’ But if there is an organized body whose business it is to see that we shall be misunderstood, I do not see under what conditions our legislative functions can be carried on. I have been a long time in this House, but on every important question on which this House has proposed to exercise an

independent judgment, we have always had this ghastly array of misunderstanding and popular indignation placed before us. It is but—I was going to use the word threats—it is but a mere Liberal contrivance, this constant representation of the dangers to the House of Lords. My Lords, we have heard much about the dangers this House is running. I heard with the greatest pleasure the speech of the noble duke opposite with respect to the position of this House. We have, as he says, great privileges, and those privileges are balanced by large disabilities; but by an outcome and balance of those two considerations I feel sure that upon the view of our privileges as presented to us by noble lords opposite, no man who values his manhood and his self-respect, and no man who values his intellectual freedom would wish to retain the privileges of the House upon the terms upon which they offer them to us. Just consider what the position is in regard to which all these grandiloquent threats are hurled at our heads. We have to deal with a proposal absolutely unprecedented—a proposal which affects the whole future of the legislation of this country. It threatens to efface some of the most important classes of the country,

and it threatens to crush minorities, and it is here for the first time we ask to know the whole plan, and we ask, if we may not know the whole plan, at least that such delay may be granted that the people may be consulted upon the question. We are told that even this moderate exercise of independence is sufficient to call down destruction on our heads. I do not believe a word of it; but if it were true, I should say that if the powers entrusted to this House were fettered by conditions so humiliating, no man of honour could accept them. I will not at this hour detain your Lordships further, though the subject is endless. I will only say this, that the arguments which are addressed to us having reference to existing agitations or to impending processions and demonstrations, seem to me the idlest of all. We know perfectly that demonstrations and expressions of anger can be produced to order. We know that there are plenty of Radicals in this country, and if it pleases them to walk up and down the roads and spend their Sunday in the parks and to do other things from which they may derive wholesome exercise, we know that that gives no indication whatever of the real opinion of the majority of the constituencies, which is

the only opinion for which we care. A noble lord reproached us, saying that we wished to force a dissolution; but he reproached us wrongfully. Apart from this question we had no wish to force a dissolution. If I could separate the patriotic from the party view, I should say—though it is a ghastly thing to say—that matters were going on charmingly in Egypt. The longer the Government have that matter in hand, the more hopeless will be the muddle they will make of it, the more completely they will discredit themselves. As a mere party matter, we have no desire to force a dissolution, but we do—with reference to this great revolution in the machinery for electing the members of the House of Commons—we do urge upon the Government, not only the prudence, but the justice of consulting the people. We do urge upon them that they have no right to make these vast constitutional changes without formally consulting the opinions of those by whose authority they really in the long-run make them, and whose interests will be affected.

“I know what the answer to this will be. We shall be accused of desiring to keep these electors off the franchise. We shall be accused of distrusting those whom it is pro-

posed to add to the franchise. I repudiate all such charges. They are utterly unjustified by anything we have done, or by any opinions we have expressed. We are taking the course which is the true safeguard of the liberties of the people, and of the institutions of the country, in the presence of vast proposals wholly unprecedented, in the presence of a proposal for a change which is admitted to be so tremendous that it exceeds the effects of the Revolution of 1688. In the presence of such vast proposals we appeal to the people. We have no fear of the humiliation with which we are threatened. We do not shrink from bowing to the opinion of the people, whatever that opinion may be. If it is their judgment that there should be enfranchisement without redistribution, I should be very much surprised, but I should not attempt to dispute their decision. But now that the people have in no real sense been consulted, when they had at the last election no notion of what was coming upon them, I feel that we are bound, as guardians of their interests, to call upon the Government to appeal to the people, and by the result of that appeal we will abide."

Lord Cairns' amendment was carried by a majority of fifty-nine, and the Government at

once announced their intention of abandoning the Franchise Bill, and reintroducing it at an autumn session. Lord Salisbury's demand for an appeal to the people was rejected. A dissolution, Ministers knew only too well, must result in a very considerable decrease in the number of their followers, even if it did not give their opponents an actual majority. They preferred to wait until they had thoroughly manipulated the constituencies in the Liberal interest. Meanwhile they had recourse to their favourite weapons of agitation and misrepresentation, which served the double purpose of distracting for a while popular attention from the hideous muddle in Egypt, and of uniting the Liberal sections together and providing them with a cry. For three or four months the newspapers contained little else but accounts of meetings and demonstrations, the House of Lords was denounced, and Lord Salisbury was the best-abused man in the three kingdoms. But to the immense astonishment of their opponents, the Conservatives showed that they could meet agitation with agitation, demonstration with demonstration, invective and misrepresentation with argument and appeal to facts. The Conservative leaders came forward most

energetically and addressed vast masses of their fellow-countrymen, and by the middle of October, despite the attempts of their opponents to misrepresent their position, they had made it clear to the country that what the Conservative party was fighting for was not any selfish or factious advantage, nor the privileges of a class, but the liberties of the people which were threatened by an arrogant Minister and a tyrannical Caucus. At length the Radical party, finding their sophistries exposed, descended to open violence, and the Aston Riots will be long remembered, with their accompaniment of forgery, as a proof of what an unscrupulous agitation against argument and justice must inevitably lead to.

Lord Salisbury showed no signs of shrinking from the battle. In the City, at Manchester, at Sheffield, and in Scotland, he spoke with his accustomed clearness and vigour, and perhaps the most noticeable feature of the whole of that period of "storm and stress" was the great increase of popularity which the Conservative leader gained. Even his opponents were forced to acknowledge the brilliance of his wit, the loftiness of his oratory, and the clearness of his logic; while his followers felt that they possessed in

Lord Salisbury a leader of whose genius they might well be proud, and who would at no very distant date lead them to victory. The controversy has passed away, and the future historian will perhaps marvel at the noise which it occasioned. Most of the speeches, and their name was Legion, are interred in the pages of the *Times* and other journals, and their rest will never be disturbed; but Lord Salisbury's speech to the deputations from the various Conservative Associations of London and Middlesex deserves for many reasons to be rescued from oblivion. It is a clear and unanswerable statement of the Conservative position, and though not perhaps superior as an oratorical effort to his later speeches at the Pomona Gardens, Manchester, or at Sheffield, yet it struck a key-note which re-echoed through the country during the recess, and contributed in no small degree to the discomfiture and surrender of the Government, and it is, therefore, thought advisable to give this important speech *verbatim*. After the different deputations had been introduced by the Lord Mayor, Lord Salisbury said,—

“ My Lord Mayor, ladies, and gentlemen, I listened to the resolutions which were read

one after another from the various deputations which constitute this very remarkable, significant, and representative meeting, and I could not help wondering why it was that the truths which seemed to be so obvious had not made their impression upon her Majesty's Government. Why, having this great work to do, did they deliberately depart from the practice of all which had gone before them and raise up gratuitous difficulties in their way? It was not from any ignorance on their part of the importance of redistribution as an integral portion of reform. I need only quote that sentence of Mr. Bright's which has been quoted again and again, but which I should like to see prefixed as a sort of text to every Conservative sermon. 'Repudiate without mercy any Bill that any Government whatever may introduce, whatever its seeming concessions may be, if it does not redistribute the seats that are obtained from the extinction of small boroughs amongst the large towns.' But their knowledge was not such ancient history as that. Mr. Bright seems to imagine that he has entirely explained away his utterance given publicly in 1859 by reciting a private note which he says he wrote to Lord

Beaconsfield in 1867, and he concludes in the most self-satisfied way that he has entirely explained his previous declaration. But his colleague on the platform was not less conscious of the necessity of a redistribution of seats. Only on Saturday Lord Hartington is reported to have said, 'We admit the inconvenience which will arise if a dissolution should take place.' If a dissolution should take place, as if Mr. Chamberlain and the wire-pullers were not perfectly resolved on that matter! 'We admit the inconvenience which will arise if any dissolution should take place with the extended numbers of the existing constituencies. We know that that will be no fair representation of the people.' Well, at least Lord Hartington knew perfectly well what he was about. Then, what was the motive which induced them to undertake this eccentric and abnormal plan of reform? Well, we had some difficulty in measuring it at first. We were told that it was the extraordinary block in the House of Commons, as if blocks in the House of Commons had never existed before the year 1884. But, fortunately, as the controversy went on candour increased. It is one of the advan-

tages of the thorough discussion which I hope this question will receive between this and November that all false pretences and all hollow pretexts will be dissipated, and the cause which logically and constitutionally is in the right will be triumphantly established. You know that Mr. Gladstone at the Foreign Office told us that it was necessary that some pressure should be applied to the House of Commons, that he could not hope to pass his Redistribution Bill unless it was put before them in such a manner that they were to understand that if they had no Redistribution Bill they should have to go to the existing constituencies with the new franchise. That speech of Mr. Gladstone's at the Foreign Office has been apologized for and slurred over. People intimate that he was not exactly possessed of his usual presence of mind when he made it, and that indeed must have been the case, or otherwise how could he deliberately impute to me words which I never uttered, and not only impute them, but make them the basis of a long, and elaborate, and most injurious indictment? He could not have made that statement if his memory had been in its usual condition. But now Lord Hartington

comes forward and explains to us that it was not merely some spontaneous exuberance of Mr. Gladstone's indignation that produced this explanation. It was the deliberate purpose of the Government to establish a machine for controlling and coercing the judgment of the House of Commons and of the House of Lords. Lord Hartington on Saturday said, 'We know that the passing of any really rational or fair Redistribution Bill is an impossibility unless Parliament and all shades of political opinion are acting under some pressure and compulsion, and that compulsion to the House of Commons and to the House of Lords was to be applied by the creature of Parliament, the Prime Minister of the day. Such a pretension has never before been made in our history. The most encroaching monarchs have never made it. It has never been pretended that any man, however high his pretensions and great his authority, should have the power given to him of applying pressure and compulsion to Parliament in the discharge of its legislative duties. Well, it is a tremendous claim. Let us look what grounds have we for believing that such a power, so unexampled, so without parallel in English

history, will be exercised with equity and with justice. Mr. Gladstone—I do not wish to use any harsh language in the matter, but this lies on the surface of current history—Mr. Gladstone has been pre-eminent among statesmen for the rigour with which he has used a victory when he has obtained it; for the determination with which he has pressed to the utmost limit any advantage he has obtained over those opposed to him. It is not, therefore, to his hands that we should like to trust ourselves, without condition and without defence. And if we look to his past conduct, to the past conduct of the Liberal party, or to the professions which they now put forward in respect to this very question of redistribution, it does not exalt our confidence. I should like to remind you of a little incident in the last redistribution that took place—the redistribution of 1868—which throws a flood of light on Mr. Bright's views of justice in this matter. There is a certain suburb of Birmingham which is named Aston. It runs in the counties of North Warwickshire and East Worcestershire. At the last redistribution the commissioners—impartially selected men—recommended that this, which was a suburb

of Birmingham, and was in continuity with it, and was simply part of the town, should be made part of the borough of Birmingham. The matter came before the House of Commons. The Liberal party, though the Opposition, were in a majority. Distinctly because this suburb of Aston might have the effect of influencing in the direction which he wished the counties of North Warwickshire and East Worcestershire, distinctly because it belonged to a community in which the ideas that he admired prevailed, Mr. Bright insisted that the recommendation of the commissioners should be discarded, and that Aston—though it was really part of Birmingham—should be thrown into North Warwickshire and East Worcestershire, for the purpose of controlling, by a population which he hoped was devoted to him and imbued with his ideas, a population that he had reason to think was adverse to him. He was supported by the Liberal party, and a majority reversed the decision of the commissioners. Now, we do not often have a case which shows the precise spirit in which the leading statesman of the dominant party will approach a question of that kind; but that particular case of Aston might be multi-

plied a hundred times. It involves the whole question of the separation of interests in this country. It involves the whole question of keeping alive those rural communities which have existed from the first beginning of our Parliamentary system. It involves, above all, the avoidance of arrangements devised to give exceptional power to populations which are impregnated with the political doctrines of the Ministry of the day. Now, we may be quite sure that if Parliament is to be under compulsion and pressure—that means to say, if they are forced to accept any redistribution scheme which the Government offers them—this precedent and model of Aston will be followed in every county in the kingdom. But we need not go to instances of the past. Let us look to what we know of Mr. Gladstone's own professions upon this question of redistribution. He has not told us much. Most of his assertions of principle are very little better than platitudes. But one thing he has told us, and that is that the communities which are at a distance from London are to be better represented than the communities which are close. Now at first sight that seemed like one of those fantastic theories which sometimes cross the brain

of a man of genius, but when you look a little closer there is method in the madness. Let us first look at the distant counties which are to be enfranchised. I will confine myself to this island. We get into hot water directly we get into Ireland. But confining ourselves to this island only, there is Cornwall. I suppose that is a distant county. That has been uniformly Liberal since the Reform Bill. Then there are the Highlands of Scotland. I suppose that Scotland is a distant county. Well, in Scotland the increase of Liberalism, especially among the distant counties, has, to our misfortune, been very considerable. Twenty years ago we had fifteen Scotch county members. Now we have only six out of thirty-two. Wales, again, that is a distant county—one of the counties to be specially favoured under this scheme. Well, in Wales twenty years ago we had a majority. Now we have only two out of thirty seats. So that those places which Mr. Gladstone wished, by special exception from the numerical principle to give a decided advantage to, were places in which his own particular politics were violently on the increase. Well, the circumstance is to be favoured, because it is Gladstonian. Now, let us look at the centre,

which is to receive no favour. Twenty and thirty years ago we had not a single Conservative member in the metropolis. In 1874, dealing with the constituencies which existed then for the sake of comparison, we should have had—but for the minority seat which is an artificial arrangement in this city—we should have had half the members for the metropolis. So that you see what the centre is which is to be treated with marked disfavour so far as the Gladstone scheme is concerned. Do you think that is wholly accidental? I find it difficult to bring myself to such a conclusion. And it seems to me that that is a guiding line, and that that is a principle which will animate the people when they come to consider the Ministerial redistribution scheme. I heard my right hon. friend say—and I cannot help stealing the phrase from him—that it would be a redistribution scheme by results. It will be favourable, so far as it can decently be done, to those parts of the country where Liberal principles obtain, and unfavourable to those parts where Conservatism is at present in the ascendant. And to show you how embarrassing is this problem of redistribution, how strongly it presses on statesmen, how

incomplete any measure of reform is without it, I should like to compare the representation of the communities represented in this room with the representation of that favoured county where Mr. Gladstone lives to which I have just referred—the principality of Wales. Whereas the principality represents some 1,400,000 inhabitants, we in this room represent some 5,000,000. Is it possible with that fact before you, to go forward with a Reform Bill that shall not include redistribution? Is it possible that, knowing that Mr. Gladstone has laid down a principle that will uplift Wales and depress the metropolis, we should feel confidence and allow him to draw up his own Redistribution Bill? And we have heard something of blank cheques; but this is not merely a blank cheque—this is a blank disposal of all that we possess for all time, given into the hands of a man who, by the previous conduct of his party and by his own previous utterances, has given us every reason to mistrust him. I meet with the statement that it is very unconstitutional for the House of Lords to indicate when her Majesty's Government may in their wisdom please to dissolve Parliament. Well, I should have said, as a matter of constitu-

tional law, that the person who dissolves Parliament is her Majesty the Queen, and that that is one of the few cases in which necessarily, by the hypothesis of the Minister being in issue, or being supposed to be in issue with the people, it is precisely one of the cases in which the Sovereign cannot abandon her will absolutely to the guidance of her advisers. But now there is the question, how far it is legitimate for the House of Lords to press for a dissolution. Well, I think that any such claim on the part of the House of Lords simply would not be justified by the Constitution. But the House of Lords has a right to say this—'We do not approve of the measure you bring before us. If you like to accept its rejection, well and good; if you object to its rejection your remedy is to appeal to the people.' And we do not think that under the Constitution there is any other remedy than that. But with respect to the right, not only in the House of Lords but in all of us, of pressing for a dissolution of Parliament, I admit that if it was to be done in respect to ordinary measures of controversy, or the ordinary legislation on which we have to decide, it would be matter of considerable inconvenience if we were

to interfere with the discretion which is ordinarily reposed in the advisers of the Crown. But the fallacy, the fundamental fallacy of all the reasonings of Ministerial arguers upon this point is that they ignore the fact that it is not a common question of legislation, it is a vital question, it is a question of the revision of the Constitution. And in neither of the other popularly governed countries is the revision of the Constitution treated even so lightly as we desire and are content to treat it. Look what they do in France. In France they have, curiously enough, the contemporaneous phenomenon of a Liberal Minister who is trying to alter the constitution of the country in the hopes that it may affect agreeably the constitution of the next assembly that he has to meet. I presume that that is a characteristic of Liberal Ministers all over the world. That whenever they don't know how to get a majority in any other way they try to revise the Constitution; but it cannot be done by a simple Bill in France as it can in England. There is an elaborate process of revision. A congress must be called under certain guarantees, and guarantees of a tolerably stringent character. It is not treated in an

ordinary manner, and the very fullest recognition is given to the right of the second Chamber to make its own opinions heard and felt in the conduct of that revision. Well, but we pass from France, with which we have only a certain point of analogy, and go to our kith and kin on the other side of the Atlantic, who, full of English traditions, but cut off by circumstances from Monarchy, set up a Republic according to their own judgment for themselves. What did they do? They surrounded the question of the revision of the Constitution with the most minute and elaborate guarantees. It can only be proposed, in the first instance, by a two-thirds majority in both of the Houses of the Legislature, and when it has been proposed that is not sufficient. It has to be submitted to each State of the country, and passed there by three-fourths of the States. That is the amount of security which the Anglo-Saxon mind, by circumstances cast loose from tradition, has judged to be absolutely necessary in the conduct of a popular Government. And now, because the House of Lords interposes, and says that by a vote of a House of Commons, in the fifth year of its existence, passed at the bidding of a

dictatorial Minister—and thrown into an unprecedented form—because the House of Lords demurs to such a measure passing into law without the people having been consulted, you are told that they have been guilty of some strange and intolerable arrogance. Just consider for a moment what the authority of the House of Commons is. I wish to speak of the House of Commons with the highest respect, and there is no doubt that, for ordinary purposes, dealing with ordinary Bills, its authority is full and unquestioned to the term of its natural career; but when it lays hands upon the Constitution for the purpose of revising it, a very different state of things arises, and then you cannot turn away your attention from the fact that it is a House of Commons on the decline—that it has already existed longer than the average of Parliaments which have been since the Reform Bill of 1832—the average is four years and two months, and we have passed that—and that its action is discredited and disavowed by every election that takes place in those constituencies which this Bill is intended to affect. You tell me that this Bill has been passed by the representatives of the people. In a legal

sense they are the representatives of the people—in a legal sense every Act of Parliament is submitted to the unfettered will of the Sovereign, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons; but if you pass from a legal to an actual sense they are not the representatives of the people, they are the representatives of what the people were five years ago. And between that day and this there is an absolute gulf, so completely has the whole surface of the political world changed, so entirely different are all the objects of political controversy and interest, so utterly have passed away the burning questions upon which the last election was decided. Now Mr. Bright tries to dispose of the House of Lords by saying that it is a Tory caucus. He tries to give you the impression that it was a Tory caucus under Lord Aberdeen and Lord Palmerston, for he mentions their names. But my memory, I think, is as fresh as Mr. Bright's. I can perfectly remember what took place in the House of Lords, for instance. We will not deal with Lord Aberdeen's Government. We will deal with Lord Palmerston's. There were two great questions which shook the Ministry and closely divided the House of Commons.

They were two of the most burning questions of the day. They were the questions of the Chinese War and the Danish War. The decision of one of them forced Lord Palmerston to dissolve. The decision of the other in his favour was regarded as the great victory of his Administration. How did the House of Lords, this Tory caucus, vote? On both occasions the Lords assembled at Westminster voted in favour of Lord Palmerston. The truth is, that until Mr. Gladstone became a leading figure—became the leader of the Liberal party—there was no talk about this permanent majority in the House of Lords, and my belief is that if ever Mr. Gladstone ceases to be the leader of the Liberal party there will then be no longer that decided Tory majority in the House of Lords. For whatever else you may say about his legislation, at least there can be no doubt of this, that he has applied principles to the rights of property of his fellow-subjects which we never heard of in this England of ours before. Whether they were right or wrong, they were absolutely new, and they seemed to lead not only to gross injustice in the present, but to an illimitable horizon of spoliation in the future, and therefore it is that in

the legislative body which has special charge of those interests and those rights, and to watch over the conservance and the protection of those rights of our fellow-citizens—that in them that alarm at Mr. Gladstone's proceedings has spread and increased with every year. I told you when Lord Palmerston was in office he was able on great critical questions to obtain a majority in the House of Lords. Since that time fifty-one Liberal peers have been created against only thirty-one Conservatives, and yet the normal majority is between fifty and seventy against the Government in the House of Lords. Is it surprising that the Lords have felt something of that apprehension which has spread to every class and interest and industry in this country? Look around, where will you find men who count on a secure and certain future in the history of trade? Everywhere you will hear of industry languishing, of commerce unable to find profitable channels, of the hearts of men of business failing them for fear, of banks refusing to receive money on deposit because they do not know where to invest it—every sign of the presence over the community of a great apprehension, of the disappearance of that old security which made

property in England seem as solid as the rocks upon which England herself was founded. That time has passed away. Men will not invest as they formerly would; men are not employed as they formerly were; capitalists do not gain profit; the working classes are ceasing in many places to gain livelihoods. Is it surprising that this apprehension, which has reached so many classes of their countrymen, should deeply infect the Peers as well, and that the shadow of Mr. Gladstone's formidable individuality should be thrown alike upon the judgment and the apprehensions of English Peers as upon the industry, the commerce, and the labour upon which this country depends? Well, Mr. Bright tells us that he does not go into the question whether the House of Lords has done right or wrong; he seems to abuse the House of Lords, and to desire to prove that they are a very disreputable body of men, who hold a title which he wishes to discredit. But I venture to say, and I submit it to the judgment of those who wish to consider this controversy impartially, that the merits of the House of Lords have nothing whatever to do with the case. The question is not what the House of Lords are, or how they got

there, but whether they did right or wrong. It would be no excuse for them if they had not done their duty, to say they have some doubts about the validity of their title to be there. That distinguished assembly over which my right hon. friend the Lord Mayor presides in the City of London, have at least this in common with the House of Lords, that they have been doomed by a distinguished statesman. The decree has gone forth from the lips of Sir William Harcourt that the one shall cease to exist as the decree has gone forth from the lips of Mr. Bright that the House of Lords shall cease to exist; and I think it is quite possible that both assemblies will continue to exist to do useful work for a very long time. If the Corporation were to refuse to assemble to-morrow and to perform their ordinary duties, would it be any excuse for them to say, 'Oh, we are condemned by Sir W. Harcourt, or by any other statesmen, and it is perfectly impossible that we can go on performing our duties.' Well, if the House of Lords had not performed what, I think, I have shown to you to be the elementary duty of a second Chamber, to prevent the first Chamber from using its power to filch a perpetuity of political predominance for one

party in the State, if the House of Lords had refused to do its duty, on the ground that some Radicals thought that the country had an objection to the principles on which it is formed, would it not have been guilty of the most cowardly and craven action that you can positively conceive? It is a question which we shall be ready to argue when the time comes—the question as to the constitution of the second Chamber, and what is the best way in which it shall be upheld, and whatever its present theoretical difficulties, you will not in practice much improve upon the House of Lords. That has nothing to do with the question we have in hand. The question is, if the House of Lords does its duty, could it have acted otherwise than we have done? What is it after all that we have done? We have seen this strange and sinister spectacle of a Minister claiming to resist by the compulsion of the House of Commons the action of the House of Lords. We have seen him applying that principle, not to ordinary principles of legislation, but to the most vital matter in which a deliberative assembly can be engaged—the reform of the Constitution. We have seen him tampering with the very springs of political

power. We have seen him do that in a manner unexampled and without precedent, and the House of Lords said to him, 'You shall not exercise this unprecedented power; you shall not claim this right of compulsion; you shall not model the constitution according to your will and the interests of the dominant party of the day.' We are prepared to resist your power unless you will be able to assure us and prove to us that the people by whom alone you exist, by whose mandate you hold power, sanctions this strange exercise of power, and we utterly repudiate the idea that in assuming that attitude we shall be misconstrued by our countrymen. I am sure that they will feel that in this, as in so many other cases, liberty has had to fear chiefly from the hands of its professed friends. We have been maintaining the essential conditions on which popular government reposes, and we have been upholding the true and ancient principles of English liberty."

Parliament reassembled on the 23rd of October under very different conditions from what the Government had hoped. They had fully expected that the result of three months' agitation would have been the complete collapse of the House of Lords, "brought face

to face with an indignant people," that the Opposition would be crushed, the Franchise Bill passed rapidly through both Houses, and that Christmas would witness the entire victory of Ministers. Alas for the vanity of human expectations! The recess had served to strengthen the Conservative party, to make clear who were the real friends of the people, to prove the great popularity which the House of Lords enjoyed, and to emphasize the essential differences of opinion which existed in the Liberal camp. It was obvious directly Parliament met, that, unless Ministers were prepared to dissolve Parliament or resign office, they must agree with their adversaries quickly. The election of 1874 was a warning against dissolution, and a marvellous tenacity in clinging to office has been the marked characteristic of all Liberal Governments. Accordingly, despite Mr. Chamberlain's brave assertion that not an inch would be conceded to the Lords, not only did Ministers consent to introduce the Redistribution Bill before the Franchise Bill had passed the Upper House, but they agreed to modify the Seats Bill in accordance with the wishes of the Conservative leaders. Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote met Mr. Gladstone and

two other Ministers, and helped to produce a measure of Redistribution which, even in the opinion of Radicals themselves, was much more satisfactory than the original Ministerial scheme, and the Premier paid a high tribute to the ability, loyalty, and good faith which Lord Salisbury had shown throughout the whole transaction. The stand which had been made by the Peers was thoroughly successful; it ensured the country against a partial and unsatisfactory Reform Bill; it showed the impotence of the Caucus against the wishes of the people, and it broke the prescription of Ministerial despotism.

The relief expedition was meanwhile slowly travelling up the Nile, and the country was waiting hopefully for the news that Gordon had been rescued and the Mahdi defeated, when the terrible announcement reached England that Lord Salisbury's prediction had been fulfilled, and that Lord Wolseley was too late to save the hero and those whom he was protecting from treachery and massacre.

The measure of the Government was indeed full. For barely five years had they directed the destinies of England, and they had been years of almost unparalleled misfortune and dis-

grace. To parody the words of Horace Walpole, we were forced to ask every morning what fresh disaster there was, lest we should miss one. Millions of money had been wasted, thousands of lives sacrificed to the irresolution and impolicy of the Cabinet. England will long remember that it was during the second Gladstone Administration that she lost such men as Lord Frederick Cavendish, Sir George Colley, Captain Gill, and Professor Palmer; Colonel Burnaby, General Earle, and Sir Herbert Stewart, and greatest of all, General Gordon; but they will not have died in vain if thereby their fellow-countrymen have been taught to distrust Midlothian promises, and to discard political sentimentalism.

When Parliament met on the 19th of February, 1885, the fall of the Gladstone Government seemed at hand. Sir Stafford Northcote in the Commons and Lord Salisbury in the Lords gave notice of votes of censure. In the Lower House the Government just escaped defeat by a narrow majority, while in the Upper House Lord Salisbury's motion was carried by 189 to 68. His speech on this occasion forms an unanswerable indictment against the Ministry, as well as a valuable summary of the relations be-

tween this country and Egypt during the last four years. The lame attempts of Lord Northbrook and other Ministers to reply to it only served to show the utter weakness of the case, and to contrast the feeble policy of divided counsels with the resolute purpose of a patriotic statesman. After such a speech and such replies the existence of the Government becomes impossible. Their flimsy pretences have been exposed, the subterfuges under which they tried to conceal themselves have been torn away, and they are seen to be incapable of guiding with credit or success the fortunes of the pettiest state in Europe, much less a mighty empire during one of the critical periods of her history.

This book cannot conclude more fittingly than with the speech of Lord Salisbury on the 26th of February—a speech which showed that England had at least one statesman to whom she might look in her hour of need.

The words of Lord Salisbury's motion of censure were, "That this House, having taken into consideration the statements that have been made on behalf of her Majesty's Government, is of opinion that the deplorable failure of the Soudan Expedition to obtain its object has been due to the undecided councils of

the Government and to the culpable delay attending the commencement of operations; that the policy of abandoning the whole of the Soudan after the conclusion of military operations will be dangerous to Egypt and inconsistent with the interests of the empire," and in rising to move its adoption, he said, "The motion which I have the honour to lay before your Lordships has a double aspect—it passes judgment on the past, and expresses an opinion with regard to the policy of the future. Some people receive with considerable impatience the idea that, at the present crisis of our country's destiny, we should examine into the past, and spend our time in judging of that which cannot be recalled. But I think that such objections are unreasonable. We depend, in one of the greatest crises through which our country has ever passed, on the wisdom and decision of those who guide our counsels, and we can only judge of what dependence is rightly to be placed by examining their conduct in the past, and seeing whether what they have done justifies us in continuing that confidence in the difficulties which are to come. Now, whatever else may be said of the conduct of her Majesty's Government, I think those who

examine it carefully will find that it follows a certain rule and system, and that in that sense, if in no other, it is consistent. Their conduct at the beginning of the Egyptian affair has been analogous to their conduct at the end; throughout there has been an unwillingness to come to any requisite decision till the last moment. There has been an absolute terror of fixing upon any settled course, and the result has been that, when the time came that external pressure forced a decision on some definite course, the moment for satisfactory action had already passed, and the measures that were taken were taken in haste, with little preparation, and often with little fitness for the emergencies with which they had to cope. The conduct of the Government has been an alternation of periods of slumber and periods of rush. The rush, however vehement, has been too unprepared and too unintelligent to repair the damage which the period of slumber has effected. I do not wish to go far back into the Egyptian Question, but it is necessary to point out the uniformity of the character and conduct of the Government. The first commencement of our trouble was the height to which Arabi's rebellion was allowed to go.

The Government knew very well the danger of Arabi while he was yet a small man and had little influence. They were perfectly aware of the mischief he was brewing, but they not only declined to act themselves, but, unless they have been greatly maligned, they prevented the local authorities from acting. They also prevented Arabi from being removed, as he should have been, from the confines of Egypt, by which, had it been done, all the evil would have been averted. While this enterprise was going on the Government reposed in absolute security, and took no effective measure till the pressure of public opinion forced upon them the movement of the fleet into the harbour of Alexandria. That was a very fair illustration of the vice which characterized their policy. That movement was made suddenly, with no preparation, and forced us into what followed. The fleet was moved in; as a matter of course Arabi resisted, and the fleet, as was inevitable, suddenly replied; and then it was found that there were no forces to land and back up the action that was taken. The result of that imprudence was that not only was the Khedive's throne shaken and the fidelity of his army utterly destroyed, but the town and

fortifications of Alexandria were grievously injured, and that tremendous debt for the injury to Alexandria was incurred which still remains as a burden upon Egyptian finance, and a hindrance to all negotiations for the settlement of foreign claims. That was the first specimen of their period of slumber, followed by a sudden and unprepared rush. Then came the question of the Soudan. It was no new question, for before the battle of Tel-el-Kebir the Mahdi was already in arms. It was a matter with which anybody who undertook to deal with the destiny of Egypt ought to have been familiar and ready with a decision. But none was at hand, and matters were allowed to drift. The Government, plunged in absolute torpor, seemed to have but one care—that they should escape the nominal responsibility, though real responsibility must inevitably attach to their action. Their despatches, one after another, during that period, merely repeated the old burden, that the Government had no responsibility. The result was that the unhappy Hicks went into the Soudan wretchedly equipped, with an army beneath the number he ought to have had, and composed of men turned out as worthless from the Egyptian army. The

inevitable result followed—a result at which her Majesty's Government had no reason to be surprised, for they were warned of the danger by their own confidential agents, yet absolutely declined to interfere. They hoped by disclaiming responsibility to escape the consequences of their own neglect. Hicks' army was totally destroyed, and not a man escaped to tell the tale, and then the Government awoke from the period of slumber, and the period of rush began. They adopted two measures, both of them as inadequate and inapplicable to the circumstances as it was possible to conceive, and both big with future trouble. In the first place they announced suddenly to the world and to Egypt that Egypt must abandon the Soudan. It was impossible to have conceived a more stupendous political blunder. It was a proclamation to our enemies that they should enjoy impunity, and to our friends that they would be handed over without mercy to those who claimed to overcome them. But that announcement was made, and from that moment the fate of the garrisons scattered over the Soudan was sealed. The fate of the garrison of Khartoum was brought home to them forcibly, but did they

take any reasonable measures for its relief? Did they send any troops on which they could rely to defend the garrison? No, they adopted the absurd and Quixotic plan of taking advantage of the chivalry and devotion of one of the noblest spirits our age has seen, by sending him forward on the impossible and hopeless errand of accomplishing by mere words and promises that which they had not the courage to do by force of arms. From that commencement, the abandonment of the Soudan to the mission of General Gordon, all our subsequent troubles arose. But that was not all, for among those garrisons in the Soudan were those of Sinkat and Tokar, which, so far back as November, 1883, were severely pressed by the Mahdi's lieutenants, and their danger was announced to the Government as extreme. But for three months they took no notice of that danger. They allowed the matter to be left to General Baker and a body of Egyptians, whose worthlessness was denounced in every page of the correspondence that was laid before them. Of course General Baker with such a force was inevitably defeated; but it was not until April or May—I think not till a vote of censure was announced—that the Government

determined on making an effort to do that which they ought to have done, and which, if they had not been asleep, they would have done, three months before—namely, to relieve the garrisons of Sinkat and Tokar. And when the resolution came at last—when the necessity dawned upon their minds—they plunged into it with their usual imprudence and want of plan. They sent men down to Suakim apparently with no idea as to what those men were to do, and before they could take effective measures Sinkat had fallen and the garrison of Tokar, giving up in despair, had surrendered themselves. Then the aimlessness of the Government was revealed. Having landed their forces they would not expose themselves to the ridicule of taking them away without doing anything, so they slaughtered 6000 Arabs, and then came away absolutely without any result for the blood of their friends and their enemies shed. They came away guilty of all this bloodshed, because they had plunged into the enterprise without any definite view or any fixed plan by which they proposed to guide themselves. Now, my Lords, these three things, the case of the bombardment of Alexandria, the abandonment of the Soudan, and the mission of General

Graham's force—they are all on the same plan, and they all show that remarkable characteristic of torpor during the time that action was needed, and of impulsive, hasty, and ill-considered action when the moment for action had passed by. Their future conduct was modelled on their conduct in the past. So far was it modelled that we were able to put it to the test which establishes a scientific law. The proof of scientific law is when you can prophesy from previous experience what will happen in the future. It is exactly what took place in the present instance. We had had these three instances of the mode of working of her Majesty's Government before us. We knew the laws that guided their action, as astronomers, observing the motions of a comet, can discover by their observations the future path which that comet is to travel; and we prophesied what would happen in the case of General Gordon. My right hon. friend Sir Stafford Northcote prophesied it in the House of Commons, and was met by a burst of fury from the Prime Minister such as that assembly has seldom seen. He was told that Egypt was of much less importance than, I think, Sutherland or Caithness, that everything

wrong was the result of deficits imputed to him in the finances of some ten years ago, and he was generally denounced because he interfered with the beneficent legislation on the subject of capable citizens, and so forth, by introducing the subject of Egypt as many as seventeen times. That did not prevent his prophecies being correct, and I ventured to repeat them in this House. I do not like to quote my own words; it is egotistical; but as proof of what I call the accuracy of the scientific law, I should like to refer to what I said on the 4th of April, when we were discussing the prospect of the relief of General Gordon. The Government were maintaining that he was perfectly safe, and that it was very unreasonable for us to raise the question in Parliament. What I said was this: 'Are these circumstances encouraging to us, when we are asked to trust to the inspiration of the moment, that when the danger comes the Government will find some means of relieving General Gordon? I feel that the history of the past will be again repeated, and just again when it is too late the critical resolution will be taken. The same news will come that the position of Gordon is forlorn and helpless, and then some desperate resolution of send-

ing an expedition will be formed too late to achieve its object.' I quote these words to show that we had ascertained the orbits of those eccentric comets who sit on the Treasury Bench. Now, the terrible responsibility and blame which rests upon them does so because they were warned in March and April of the danger of General Gordon; they had received every intimation which men could reasonably look for that his danger would be extreme, and delayed it from March and April right down to the 15th of August before they took a single measure. What were they doing all that time? It is very difficult to conceive. Some people have said, but I think it is an unreasonable supposition, that the cause of the tardiness of her Majesty's Government was the accession to the Cabinet of the noble earl the Secretary for the Colonies (Earl of Derby). I have quoted, partly with the object of defending the noble lord from that charge, for I have quoted to show that the Government were almost as bad before he joined them as they were after. What happened during these eventful months? I suppose one day some memoirs will tell our grandchildren, but we shall never know. Some people think there were divisions in the

Cabinet, and that, after division and division the decision was put off in order that the Cabinet should not be broken up. I am rather inclined to think that it was due to the peculiar position of the Prime Minister. He came in as the apostle of the Midlothian campaign, loaded with the doctrines and the follies of that pilgrimage. We have seen it on each occasion, after each one of these mishaps when the Government has been forced by events and the common sense of the nation to take some more active steps. We have seen how his extreme supporters in that campaign have reproached him as he deserted their opinions and disappointed their ardent hopes. I think that he always felt the danger of that reproach, and the debt he had incurred to those supporters, and felt a dread lest they should break away and put off again and again till the last practical moment any action which might bring him into open conflict with the doctrines by which his present eminence was gained. At all events, this is clear, that throughout those six months the Government knew perfectly well the danger in which General Gordon was placed. It has been said that General Gordon did not ask for troops. Well, I am surprised at that defence,

One of the characteristics of General Gordon was the extreme abnegation of his nature. It was not to be expected that he should send home a telegram to say, 'I am in great danger, therefore send me troops.' He would probably have cut off his right hand before he would have sent such a telegram. But he did send a telegram that the people of Khartoum were in danger, and that the Mahdi must win unless military succour was sent forward, and distinctly telling the Government—and this is the main point—that unless they would consent to his views the supremacy of the Mahdi was assured. This is what he said not later than the 29th of February, almost as soon as he first saw the nature of the problem with which he had been sent to deal. It is impossible that General Gordon could have spoken more clearly than he did, but Mr. Power, who was one of the three Englishmen in Khartoum, and who was sent down with Stewart on that ill-fated journey, on the 23rd of March sent a telegram saying, 'We are daily expecting British troops; we cannot bring ourselves to believe that we are to be abandoned by the Government. Our existence depends on England.' My Lords, is it conceivable that

after that—two months after that—in May, the Prime Minister should have said that the Government were waiting to have reasonable proof that Gordon was in danger? By that time Khartoum was surrounded, and the Governor of Berber had announced that his case was desperate, which was too surely proved by the massacre which took place in June. And yet in May Mr. Gladstone was waiting for reasonable proof that they were in danger. Apparently he did not get that proof till August. I may note in passing that I think the interpretation which the Government have placed upon the language of their trusted officers has been exceedingly ungenerous. They told us that they did not think it necessary to send an expedition to relieve Sinkat and Tokar because they could quote some language of hope from the despatches of General Baker, and in the same way they could quote some language of hope from the despatches of General Gordon. But a general sent forward on a dangerous expedition does not like to go whining for assistance, unless he is pressed by absolute peril. All those great qualities which go to make men heroes are such as are absolutely incompatible with such a course, and lead

them to shrink as from a great disgrace from any unnecessary appeal for exertion for their protection. It was the business of the Government not to interpret General Gordon's telegrams as if they had been statutory declarations, but to judge for themselves of the circumstances of the case, and to see that those who were surrounded, who were the only three Englishmen amongst this vast body of Mohammedans, who were already cut off from all communication with the civilized world by the occupation of every important town upon the river, were in real danger. I cannot understand what blindness fell over the eyes of some members of the Government. Lord Hartington, on the 13th of May, gave utterance to this expression: 'I say it would be an indelible disgrace if we should neglect any means at the disposal of this country for saving General Gordon.' And after that announcement by the Minister chiefly responsible, three months elapsed before any step was taken for doing that which he admitted the Government were bound to do under the penalty of indelible disgrace. It has been said that Gordon was destroyed by treachery, and that treachery would have happened at

any time when the British army came near Khartoum. What does that extraordinary theory mean? It means that the Mahdi had agreed with Farag Bey that it was much more comfortable to go on besieging, and that until Lord Wolseley made it dangerous they would go on besieging. I think those who started that unreasonable theory could hardly have been aware of the straits to which the Mahdi had been put. His army was suffering from fever, from cholera, from small-pox; there was great danger of dealing with his men, who were constantly threatening mutiny and desertion. Never was a force more hardly put to it to maintain its position than was this; and depend upon it, if he could have shortened that period of trial by an hour he would certainly have done so. But, supposing it was true that treachery was certain to do its work, what does that prove? Does it not show that sending Gordon to Khartoum was an act of extreme folly? I do not know any other instance in which a man has been sent to maintain such a position without a certain number of British troops. If the British troops had been there treachery would have been impossible, but sending Gordon by

himself to rely on the fidelity of Africans and Egyptians was an act of extreme rashness, and if the Government succeed in proving, which I do not think they can, that treachery was inevitable, they only pile up an additional reason for their condemnation. I confess it is very difficult to separate this question from the personal matters involved. It is very difficult to argue it on purely abstract grounds without turning for a moment to the character of the man who was engaged and the terrible position in which he was placed. When we consider all that he underwent, all that he sacrificed in order to serve the Government in a moment of extreme exigency, there is something infinitely pathetic in reflecting on his feelings, as day after day, week after week, month after month passed by—as he spared no exertions, no personal sacrifice, to perform the duties that were placed upon him—as he lengthened out the siege by inconceivable prodigies of ingenuity, of activity, of resource—and as, in spite of it all, in spite of the deep devotion to his country, which had prompted him to this great risk and undertaking, the conviction gradually grew upon him that his country had abandoned him. It is terrible to think

what he must have suffered when at last, as a desperate measure to save those he loved, he parted with the only two Englishmen with whom during those long months he had had any converse, and sent Stewart and Power down the river to escape from the fate which had become inevitable to himself. It is very painful to think of the reproaches to his country and to his country's Government that must have passed through the mind of that devoted man during those months of unmerited desertion. In Gordon's letter of the 14th of December he said: 'All is up. I expect a catastrophe in ten days' time; it would not have been so if our people had kept me better informed as to their intentions.' They had no intentions to inform him of. They were merely acting from hand to mouth to avert the Parliamentary censure with which they were threatened. They had no plan, they had no intentions to carry out. If they could have known their intentions, a great hero would have been saved to the British army, a great disgrace would not have fallen on the English Government. Now, by the light of this sad history, what are the prospects for the future? Was there ever a time when clearness of plan and

distinctness of policy were more required than they are now? I am not going to say that the policy of the Government is bad. It would be paying them an extravagant compliment if I said so. They have no policy. My right hon. friend Mr. Gibson epigrammatically described their policy when he said, 'They were going to Khartoum to please the Whigs, and were going to abandon Khartoum to please the Radicals.' Is there not something strange that at such a crisis of our country's fate, in both Houses of Parliament; in the press, in society, and everywhere you hear people asking what is their policy, and can get no answer? Here and there you get a distant echo of policy, something vague and ill-defined, like a distant sound to which you can attach no definite meaning. You sometimes for a moment see the phantom of a policy, but if you try to grasp it, it escapes you. We used to think the policy of the Government was the evacuation of the Soudan as soon as the military operations were over—a very bad policy—but even that does not seem to be their policy. They do not know whether they are going to evacuate the Soudan or not. They don't know who is to hold

the Soudan—it may be the Italians, it may be the Turks, or the Chinese. On one point only do they put down their foot, and that is, the Egyptians shall not keep it. We were told that they were going to smash the Mahdi, but now we are to make peace with the smashed Mahdi. If you smash the Mahdi thoroughly he will be of no use to you, and if you do not smash him thoroughly he may maintain at the bottom of his heart a certain resentment against the process of being smashed. It is probable that the Mahdi, in fulfilment of the claims of the religious position he occupies, will decline to have any dealings with the infidel; and if you crush him so entirely by force of arms, he will have lost all his position in the minds of his countrymen; and you will in his assistance or support not find any solution of the terrible problem with which you have to deal. In the same way with the railway. So far as I know, it is unprecedented to project a railway through an enemy's country, but it implies some views of policy. It appears that her Majesty's Government are going to make a railway, and then leave it to the first comers to do what they like with it. Now, it appears to me that in this

matter of our Egyptian policy, though I do not say we can lay down the precise steps by which our ends may be obtained—this must depend in a great measure on the judgment of the Ministry—still, it is time when we should conceive to ourselves what the ends of our policy are to be, and clearly define it and follow it up with consistency and persistency. Now, let us examine what are the interests of England in this matter. With Mediterranean politics as such we have no great interest to concern ourselves; but Egypt stands in a peculiar position. It is the road to India. The condition of Egypt can never be indifferent to us, and, more than that, we have a duty to insist—that our influence shall be predominant there. I do not care by what technical arrangements that result is to be obtained; but, with all due regard to the rights of the Suzerain, the influence of England in Egypt must be supreme. Now, the influence of England in Egypt is threatened from two sides. It is threatened from the north diplomatically. I do not think it is necessary that the powers should have taken up the position they have done, and I believe that with decent steering it might have been avoided; but, unfortu-

nately, we have to face inchoate schemes which will demand the utmost jealousy and vigilance of Parliament. I do not know what arrangement the Government has arrived at, but I greatly fear that it may include a multiple control, and to that I believe this country will be persistently and resolutely hostile. But we have to face a danger of another kind. We have forces of fanatical barbarians let loose upon the South of Egypt, and owing to the blunders that have been committed this danger has reached a terrible height. Unless we intend to give over Egypt to barbarism and anarchy we must contrive to check this inroad of barbarian fanaticism, which is personified in the character and action of the Mahdi. General Gordon never said a truer thing than that you do this by simply drawing a military line. If the insurgent Mohammedans reach the North of Egypt it will not be so much by their military force, as by the moral power of their example. We have therefore to check this advance of the Mahdi's power. Her Majesty's Government in the glimpses of policy which they occasionally afford us have alluded to the possibility of setting up a good Government in the Soudan. I quite

agree that a good Government is essential to us in the Soudan. It is the only dyke we can really erect to keep out this inundation of barbarism and fanatical forces. But her Majesty's Government speak as if a good Government were a Christmas present, which you can give a country and then take away. A good Government, like any other organization, must pass through the stages of infancy to maturity. There must be a long stage of infancy, during which that Government is unable to defend itself, and it requires during that period protection and security, which it can only derive from the action of an external power. It is that protection and security which England must give. She must not desert her task in the Soudan until there is that Government there which can protect Egypt, in which the interests of this country are vital. I do not say whether it should be done from the Nile or from Suakim. I see a noble lord, one of the greatest ornaments of this House, who has conducted an expedition, not of 250 miles, but of 400 miles, and that with success, over the same burning country, and his opinion, given last year, was that Suakim and Berber are the roads by which we should

advance. In that opinion I do not say I concur—that would be impertinent—but it is an opinion to which I humbly subscribe. I believe that by the Suakim and Berber route we may obtain a hold over that portion of the Soudan which may enable us to perform our primary duty—namely, to repress the forces of barbarism and fanaticism, to encourage that civilization which, if protected, will find such abundant root in that fertile country, and, above all, to restrain, check, and ultimately to destroy the slave trade, which has been the curse of Africa. All those advantages can be obtained if England will lay down a definite policy and will adhere to it, but consistency of policy is absolutely necessary. We have to assure our friends that we shall stand by them; we have to assure our enemies that we are permanently to be feared. The blunders of the last three years have placed us in the presence of terrible problems and difficulties. We have great sacrifices to make. This railway will be an enormous benefit to Africa, but do not let us conceal from ourselves that it is a task of no small magnitude. If you are to carry this railway forward you will not only have to smash the Mahdi, but Osman Digma also.

All this will involve great sacrifices, and the expenditure, not only of much money, but of more of the English blood of which the noblest has already been poured forth. And we are not so strong as we were. At first all nations sympathized with us, but now they look on us coldly, and even with hostility. Those who were our friends have become indifferent, those who were indifferent have become our adversaries; and if our misfortunes and disasters go on much longer we shall have Europe saying that they cannot trust us, that we are too weak, that our prestige is too low to justify us in undertaking this task. My Lords, those great dangers can only be faced by a consistent policy, which can only be conducted by a Ministry capable of unity of counsel and decision of purpose. I have shown you that from this Ministry we can expect no such results. They can only produce after their kind. They will only do what they have already done. You cannot look for unity of counsel from an Administration that is hopelessly divided. You cannot expect a resolute policy from those whose purpose is hopelessly halting. It is for this reason, my Lords, that I ask you to record your opinion that from a

Ministry in whom the first of all—the quality of decision of purpose—is wanting, you can hope no good in this crisis of our country's fate. And if you continue to trust them, if for any party reasons Parliament continues to abandon to their care the affairs which they have hitherto so hopelessly mismanaged, you must expect to go on from bad to worse; you must expect to lose the little prestige which you retain; you must expect to find in other portions of the world the results of the lower consideration that you occupy in the eyes of mankind; you must expect to be drawn on, degree by degree, step by step, under the cover of plausible excuses, under the cover of highly philanthropic sentiments, to irreparable disasters, and to disgrace that it will be impossible to efface."

THE END.

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