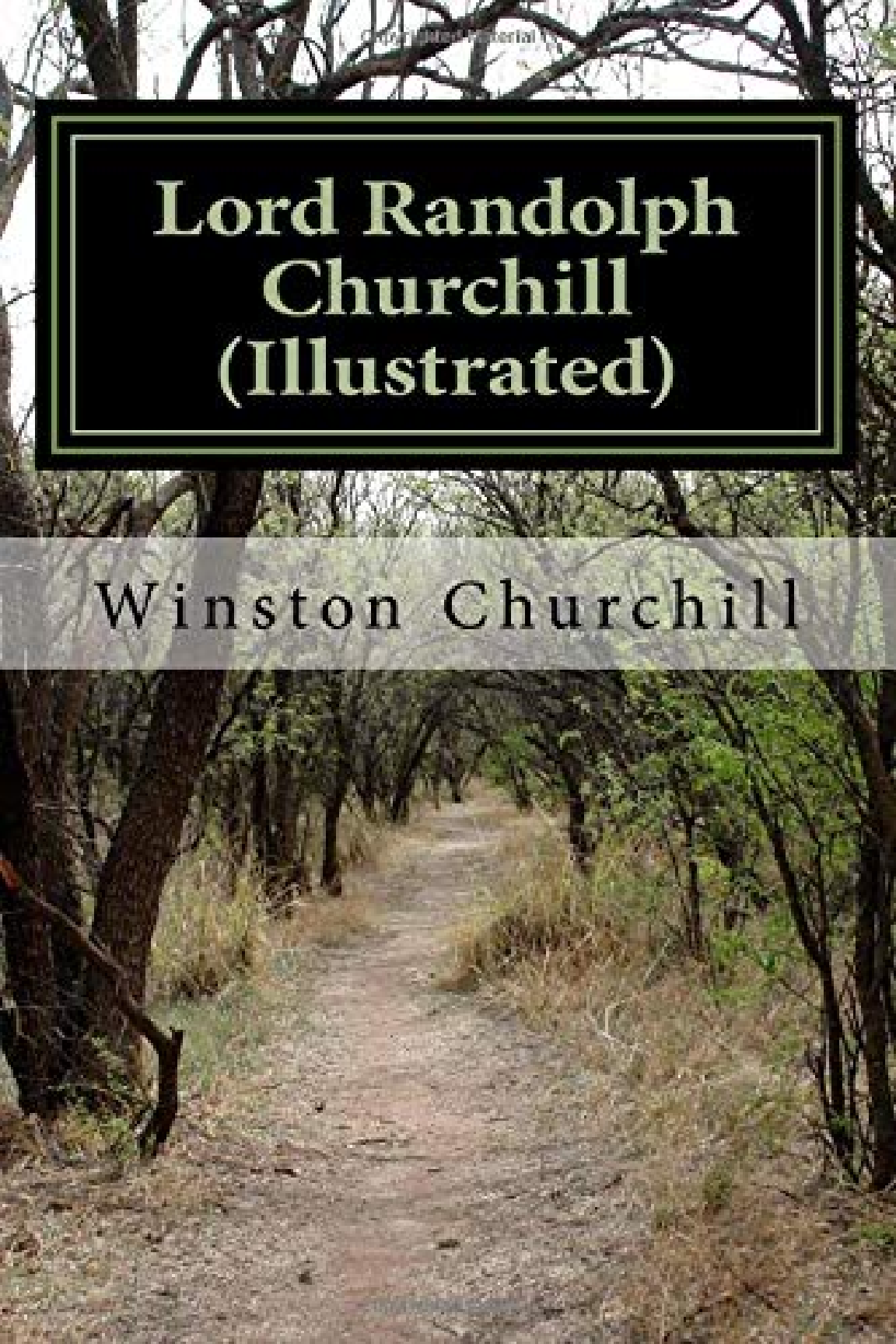

Lord Randolph Churchill (Illustrated)
Winston Churchill

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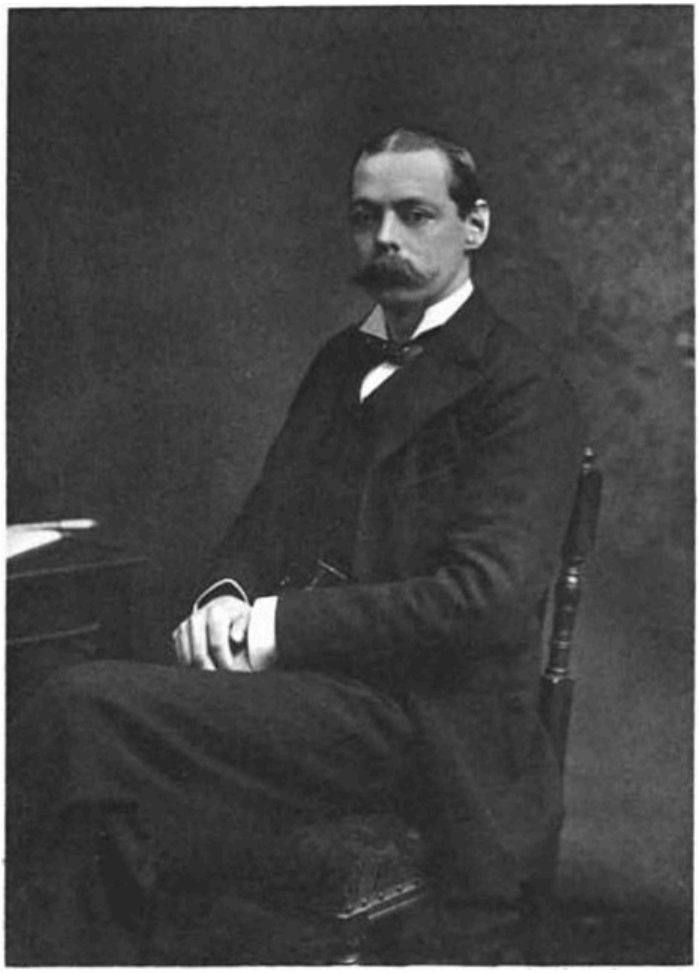
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LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL
VOL I.

Lord Randolph Churchill Volume I.
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Lord Randolph Churchill.
1883.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

BY
WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL, M.P.
AUTHOR OF
'THE STORY OF THE MALAKAND FIELD FORCE, 1897'
'THE RIVER WAR,' 'LONDON TO LADYSMITH VIA PRETORIA,' ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

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TO

CHARLES RICHARD JOHN SPENCER-CHURCHILL

DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH

THIS BOOK

IN ALL FAITHFUL FRIENDSHIP

IS INSCRIBED

Deed of Trust Regulating the Papers of the late Lord Randolph Churchill.

I, The Right Honourable Randolph Henry Spencer-Churchill, P.C., M.P., of 50 Grosvenor Square in the County of London by these Presents send Greeting Whereas I am possessed of various Political and State Documents Correspondence and Papers which are now contained in Tin boxes deposited in my name at the Westminster Branch of the London and Westminster Bank Limited and in Tin boxes and Drawers at No. 50 Grosvenor Square aforesaid Now I by These Presents do assign transfer and make over from and after the date of my decease the above mentioned political and State documents correspondence and papers unto George Richard Penn Viscount Curzon M.P., of 23 Upper Brook Street in the said County of London and Ernest William Beckett M.P., of 138 Piccadilly in the said County of London Upon Trust that they the said George Richard Penn Viscount Curzon and Ernest William Beckett shall from and after the date of my decease deal with and use the said Political and State documents correspondence and papers for any purpose which they in their absolute discretion may think well Provided that no such Political or State documents correspondence or paper relating either to the Department of the India Office or the Department of the

Foreign Office shall be printed published or used in any way either directly or indirectly without the written consent of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for either of the said Departments for the time being And I Hereby Declare that these presents are executed by me in triplicate one Copy whereof is deposited with the Right Honourable the Earl of Rosebery K.G., P.C., Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the second Copy is deposited at the Western Branch of the Bank of England, Burlington Gardens in the name of my Solicitor Mr. Theodore Lumley and the third Copy is retained by me

As Witness my hand and seal this eighth day of March One thousand eight hundred and ninety-three.

Signed Sealed and Delivered by the above named Randolph Henry Spencer-Churchill in the presence of	— Randolph S. Churchill.

Theodore Lumley,
Solicitor,
37 Conduit Street, Bond Street,
W.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

In the spring of 1893 Lord Randolph Churchill, feeling that he had slender expectations of long life, placed all his papers, private and official, under a trust-deed which consigned them at his death to the charge of two of his most intimate political friends, Viscount Curzon (now Earl Howe) and Mr. Ernest Beckett (now Lord Grimthorpe). As he made a practice of preserving almost every letter he received, the number of documents was sufficient to fill eleven considerable tin boxes. Subject to the conditions prescribed in the trust-deed in regard to matters affecting

the India Office or the Foreign Office—which have, of course, been strictly observed—these papers were placed in my hands by my father's literary executors in July 1902, for the purpose of my writing a full account of his life and work. I am deeply sensible of the confidence implied and of the honour conveyed in that commission, and during the three and a half years which have passed since I accepted it, I have diligently laboured—in spite of some political distractions—to discharge it to the best of my ability.

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach (having consulted with the late Lord Salisbury) and Lord Rosebery have expressed the opinion that the story of Lord Randolph Churchill's life may now be fully told without impropriety towards individuals or the public. Indeed, it is high time to do so. Lord Randolph's part in national affairs is not to be measured by long years of office. No great legislation stands in his name upon the statute book. He was a Chancellor of the Exchequer without a Budget, a Leader of the House of Commons but for a single session, a victor without the spoils. No tangible or enduring records—unless it be the Burma province—exist of his labours, and the great and decisive force which he exerted upon the history of the Conservative and Unionist party might be imperfectly realised by a later generation, unless it were explained, asserted, and confirmed by the evidence of those who came in contact or collision with his imperious and vivifying personality.

For a thing so commonly attempted, political biography is difficult. The style and ideas of the writer must throughout be subordinated to the necessity of embracing in the text those documentary proofs upon which the story depends. Letters, memoranda, and extracts from speeches, which inevitably and rightly interrupt the sequence of his narrative, must be pieced together upon some consistent and harmonious plan. It is not by the soft touches of a picture, but in hard mosaic or tessellated pavement, that a

man's life and fortunes must be presented in all their reality and romance. I have thought it my duty, so far as possible, to assemble once and for all the whole body of historical evidence required for the understanding of Lord Randolph Churchill's career. Scarcely anything of material consequence has been omitted, and such omissions as have been necessary are made for others' sakes and not his own. Scarcely any statement of importance lacks documentary proof. There is nothing more to tell. Wherever practicable I have endeavoured to employ his own words in the narration; and the public is now in a position to pronounce a complete, if not a final, judgment.

I have been fortunate in the abundance of the materials supplied me. In addition to Lord Randolph Churchill's tin boxes with their ample stores, there was at hand an invaluable series of scrap-books, containing every conceivable newspaper comment and cartoon, collected by his sister, Lady Wimborne, and covering the whole period of his active political life. But most of all I am indebted to those many friends, irrespective of political party, who either by allowing their letters to be printed, or by reading the proof-sheets, have enabled me to compile what may, without presumption, be called an authoritative account. I accept, of course, in the fullest sense, exclusive responsibility for whatever is written here; but to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, first of all, my grateful acknowledgments are due, for not only has he with the greatest care and pains thoroughly revised the whole book, but furnished me, besides, with extensive memoranda in respect of those chapters with the events of which he was specially concerned.

The biographer of an English statesman is often able to conduct his hero prosperously through the recognised educational experiences, and to instal him at an early age in some small office, whence his promotion in due course is assured. It is otherwise with the life of Lord Randolph

Churchill. No smooth path of patronage was opened to him. No glittering wheels of royal favour aided and accelerated his journey. Whatever power he acquired was grudgingly conceded and hastily snatched away. Like Disraeli, he had to fight every mile in all his marches. And this account will, I think, be found to explain in almost mechanical detail the steps and the forces by which he rose to the exercise of great personal authority, as well as the converse process by which he declined.

I have naturally been led to deal more fully with his public career than with his private life. With the exception of the first two chapters and the last, this story lies in a period of only ten years—from 1880 to 1890, and not less than half of its compass is concerned with the succession of fierce political crises which disturbed the years 1885 and 1886. The epoch is brief; but so crowded is it with incident and accident, so full of insights and sidelights upon the workings of party and constitutional machinery in modern times, that it deserves the closest examination. And I hope it may be attributed to the author's failings, and not to the actions and character of Lord Randolph Churchill, if the reader is not attracted by an authentic drama of the House of Commons.

WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL.

Blenheim Palace, Woodstock:
November 1, 1905.

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‘Heard are the voices,
Heard are the sages,
The worlds and the ages;
"Choose well; your choice is
Brief and yet endless.

Here eyes do regard you,
In Eternity’s stillness:
Here is all fulness,
Ye brave, to reward you;
Work and despair not."’
—*Goethe.*

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS

THE cumulative labours of Vanbrugh and ‘Capability’ Brown have succeeded at Blenheim in setting an Italian palace in an English park without apparent incongruity.

The combination of these different ideas, each singly attractive, produces a remarkable effect. The palace is severe in its symmetry and completeness. Nothing has been added to the original plan; nothing has been taken away. The approaches are formal; the wings are balanced; four equal towers maintain its corners; and the fantastic ornaments of one side are elaborately matched on the other. Natural simplicity and even confusion are, on the contrary, the characteristic of the park and gardens. Instead of that arrangement of gravel paths, of geometrical flower-beds, and of yews disciplined with grotesque exactness which the character of the house would seem to suggest, there spreads a rich and varied landscape. Green lawns and shining water, banks of laurel and fern, groves of oak and cedar, fountains and islands, are conjoined in artful disarray to offer on every side a promise of rest and shade. And yet there is no violent contrast, no abrupt dividing-line between the wildness and freshness of the garden and the pomp of the architecture.

The whole region is as rich in history as in charm; for the antiquity of Woodstock is not measured by a thousand years, and Blenheim is heir to all the memories of Woodstock. Here Kings—Saxon, Norman, and Plantagenet—have held their Courts. Ethelred the Unready, Alfred the Great, Queen Eleanor, the Black Prince, loom in vague majesty out of the past. Woodstock was notable before the Norman Conquest. It was already a borough when the Domesday Book was being compiled. The park was walled to keep the foreign wild beasts of Henry I. Fair Rosamond's Well still bubbles by the lake. From the gatehouse of the old manor the imprisoned Princess Elizabeth watched the years of Mary's persecution. In the tumults of the Civil Wars Woodstock House was held for King Charles by an intrepid officer through a long and bitter siege and ravaged by the victorious Roundheads at its close. And beyond the most distant of these events, in

the dim backward of time, the Roman generals administering the districts east and west of Akeman Street had built their winter villas in that pleasant, temperate retreat; so that Woodstock and its neighbourhood were venerable and famous long before John Churchill, in the early years of the eighteenth century, superimposed upon it the glory of his victories over the French.

1849

Randolph Henry Spencer-Churchill, commonly called Lord Randolph Churchill, was born in London on February 13, 1849. His father was the eldest son of the sixth Duke of Marlborough by his first wife, Lady Jane Stewart, daughter of George, eighth Earl of Galloway. The Marquess of Blandford, as he then was, had married on July 12, 1843, the Lady Frances Anne Emily Vane (of whom more hereafter), eldest daughter of the third Marquess of Londonderry, by whom he had five sons and six daughters. Of these sons three died in infancy, the elder of the survivors ultimately succeeded to the title, and the younger is the subject of this account.

1857
Æt. 8

In his father's lifetime Lord Blandford lived at Hensington House, an unpretentious building outside the circumference of the Blenheim Park wall and about half a mile from the palace. Here his numerous family were brought up. Their childhood must have been a very happy one, with such a fine and ample place for a playground, many dear playmates and parents who watched over them with unremitting care. The boy grew up with his brother and sisters, as little boys are wont to do; and when his father became, in 1857, seventh Duke of Marlborough, they all moved into the palace at the other end of the great

avenue, and this became for many years their home. Randolph was sent to Mr. Tabor's school at Cheam when he was eight years old. This was very young for one who had so much space and happiness at home; but he seems to have been most kindly treated and to have been quite content. He did not prove exceptionally clever at his letters, though he made steady progress at school. He had an excellent memory, and was fond of reading books of history, biography, and adventure. But much more pronounced than any liking for study were his passion for sport and his love of animals. By the time he was nine years old he rode well, and even at that early age he showed decision and determination in his ways. In those days the telegraph was some miles distant from Blenheim and the telegraph boy used to ride in with his messages upon a ragged, wiry little pony called 'The Mouse.' Once he had seen this pony, Lord Randolph wearied his father and family with requests to buy it and never rested till it was his own. After the pony was purchased, he trained it and called it his hunter. The next step was to go hunting.

1860
Æt.
11

On an autumn afternoon in 1859 he waylaid Colonel Thomas, the tenant of Woodstock House and an old and valued friend of the family, on his return from a day with the Heythrop hounds, and, riding up to him, persuaded him to ask his father's permission to take him out hunting. This was the beginning of a friendship between these two which lasted through life. To the next meet of the Heythrop they accordingly repaired together. The day was fortunate. Lord Randolph, carried to the front by 'The Mouse,' was in at the death in King's Wood, was presented with brush or pad, went through the ceremony of being 'blooded,' and returned home in great delight, with glowing cheeks well

besmeared with fox's blood. From that day he became passionately fond not merely of riding to hounds but of hunting as an art.

A glimpse of his later days at Cheam has been preserved by a schoolboy friend who, early in 1860, under the fostering wing of an elder brother, was entered as the youngest and newest of sixty-two boarders at the school. 'Randolph Churchill,' he writes, 'was then very near, and before he left I think he reached, the headship of the school. He and my brother were "chums," whereby I was brought into closer touch with him than otherwise would have been the case. His good-natured and somewhat magnificent patronage of my shivering novitiate has imprinted on my memory a few incidents characteristic of his personality. At any rate, he must have bulked large in my regard, as I have of him a far more vivid recollection than of any other boy, through the whole six years of my Cheam schooling.

'From the nature of the case my recollections are not of the class room. He was in "the first class," as the top form was styled; I was in "the sixth," or lowest. The general muster in the big schoolroom, or the recreations of the playground, were the scenes in which I chiefly saw him; and, of course, whatever of his doings I noticed, are glamoured by the small boy's reverence for the big. I cannot "place" him in either cricket or football; but there are some things with which he is in my memory so closely associated that I cannot even now see their like without recalling him in liveliest imagination. Thus I can never see children playing at "horses" without the instant recollection of the showy four-in-hand which Randolph Churchill "tooled" round the playground, or of which he was an interchangeable part. Besides himself the team and coachman consisted of Curzon, Suirdale (afterwards Lord Donoughmore), and the two brothers Gordon (one of whom is now Lord Aberdeen). The harness with which

they were caparisoned belonged, I remember, to the elder Gordon. But in my recollection Randolph Churchill shares with him pre-eminence in the quintette. There was a large magnificence about his Cheam days that impressed me with the idea that, no matter how well another boy might acquit himself, Randolph Churchill would always "go one better."

‘He was always ready with some surprise in the Sunday texts and exercises for which Mr. Tabor assembled us in big school on Sunday afternoons. I can never open the book of Ecclesiastes without recalling the breathless astonishment with which I heard him recite, with that vehemence he always showed in speech, those eight verses which tell us that "to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." For me Churchill achieved a wonder. No boy, and I should think hardly a man, is likely to have much more than an abstract and somewhat perfunctory interest in the Thirty-nine Articles. But I can never glance at the sombre sentences of the Article on Predestination and Election without the passages ringing with his declamation as he repeated the whole, *ore rotundo*, without hesitation or the tremor of an eyelash. At that time there was at Cheam one of those holy and blameless boys who come sometimes to sanctify the rough brutalities of schoolboy life. He was Mackworth Dolben, from Finedon, in Northants, where his memory is still kept green. He used once a week to assemble in his cubicle a few of us, with whom he would read the Bible and pray. He had enrolled my brother in the *coterie*, and through my brother, myself. Churchill was one of the little band; and I can see him now, kneeling down by the bed, with his face in his hands resting on the white coverlet, leading us in fervent prayer.

‘I have alluded to his vehemence of speech; but I should be wrong if I were thought to mean violence of language. He always at that time spoke open-mouthed, with a full

voice and great rapidity of utterance, as if his thoughts came faster than his words could follow; the impression conveyed being that he was determined to overbear all opposition and gain the mastery of argument.

1863
Æt.
14

'Once when I had disfigured an Ovid which I had borrowed from my brother, who came to reproach me in the playground, it was Churchill who convinced me of the enormity of my offence, and it is his eager and animated face that lives in my memory of the little scene. There was, I think, in my boyish mind (I was little more than eight, and I never saw him after he left Cheam) a distinct, if indefinite, sense of vigour, fluency, masterfulness, and good-nature in his character. Living, as boys do, in the present, I am sure that I had no idea of his after-fame.'

When Lord Randolph was in his fourteenth year he went in due course to Eton, where he was placed in the form known as 'Remove,' and in the house of the Rev. W. A. Carter. A year later he was moved into Mr. Frewer's house, and there continued while at Eton. His career henceforward was chequered, for he had already developed a will of his own and a considerable facility in expressing it. I submit to the reader the first extracts from the many letters which this story will contain:—

Lord Randolph to his Mother.

Eton College, Windsor, 1863.

I am very sorry I did not write you before, but I wrote one letter to you and I cannot find it anywhere, and I have not had a bit of time since, for I had to bring a hundred lines every day to Mr.—— for cutting my name on the new table in the new schools. Mr.—— is such a horrid man; I had one or two punishments for him yesterday and I put them in his pupil room and somebody must have taken them away for he said he never

saw them. He has been rude too; he called me a ‘little blackguard’ the other day just because I was sitting with my legs on the form, and he is always calling the fellows names. I shall never do any good with him, he is so unjust.

There is smallpox in the barracks and half Eton is being vaccinated. They offered to perform on me, but I declined. The Queen came to Windsor from Osborne on Thursday night and rushed off on Friday morning to Balmoral, which struck me as being rather eccentric. There has not been much going on here, though they have had a grand reformation of the rifle corps. They made everybody re-enlist and they had to take a sort of oath and sign their names to a lot of nonsense.

And another:—

To his Father.

Eton College: March 11, 1863.

It was not my fault that my letter did not reach you before, for I gave it to the servant the same day to post, and she forgot all about it. I have written to you about the reception on Saturday; I will now tell you about the fireworks on Monday and the wedding yesterday.

On Monday night we were all ordered to be present in the school-yard at nine o’clock. When we were all there we formed fours and marched up Windsor with a large body of police before us (which rather spoilt the fun) to clear the way. Then we got into the Home Park by the South Western Station, just under the windows of the State Rooms, and there we stood all the time the fireworks were going on. I luckily had the forethought to take my great-coat, or else I do not believe I should have got home, it was so dreadfully cold. The fireworks were very pretty, only there was such an awful lot of rockets and too few catherine-wheels and all that sort of fun.

The Princess Alexandra having never seen fireworks before, they were on Monday night instead of on Tuesday night, because she wanted to see them. We did not get home till nearly twelve o’clock. There was no illumination that night. Yesterday morning was a whole holiday without any early school or chapel. We were all mustered in the school-yard about eleven o’clock, and then marched up Windsor into the Castle by Henry the VIIIth’s gate.

There we had to stand for a tremendous time without anything coming. (It luckily was fine and not very cold.) At last the first procession came; it was the King of Denmark and all those people. We had a beautiful view of all the people. Then we had to wait about a quarter of an hour, and then came the Princess Royal. She was sitting on our side, and she bowed away as hard as she could go. (I think her neck must have been stiff.) And then came the Prince; he looked extremely gracious. I never saw him put his hat on, and he held it about an inch from his head, and kept bowing, always in the same place. And last of all came the Princess. And then there was such a row, in spite of the Queen's express commands that there was to be no cheering. I never heard such an awful noise in all my life. I think, if the Queen heard it, she must have had a headache for a long time afterwards. We were not allowed to go into the chapel, or into the courtyard by the chapel. A whole lot of us charged the policemen and soldiers to get in, but it was no use; they managed to keep us back that time. But we had our revenge afterwards. After they had come back we went back into college. Then at three o'clock we all came to see the Princess go away. She did not come till about a quarter past four in the afternoon—the Prince and Princess in an open carriage; and then came the squashing. We all rushed after the carriage. (I was right in the front of the charge; it was a second Balaclava.) Nothing stood before us; the policemen charged in a body, but they were knocked down. There was a chain put across the road, but we broke that; several old *genteel* ladies tried to stop me, but I snapped my fingers in their face and cried 'Hurrah!' and 'What larks!' I frightened some of them horribly. There was a wooden palisade put up at the station (it was the Great Western), but we broke it down; and there, to my unspeakable grief, I was bereaved of a portion of my clothing, viz. my hat. Somebody knocked it off. I could not stop to pick it up, I shrieked out a convulsive 'Oh, my hat!' and was then borne on. I got right down to the door of the carriage where the Prince of Wales was, wildly shouting 'Hurrah!' He bowed to me, I am perfectly certain; but I shrieked louder. I am sure, if the Princess did not possess very strong nerves, she would have been frightened; but all she did was to smile blandly. At last the train moved off while the band played 'God save the Queen.' I am sure I wonder there were no accidents, we were all so close to the

carriage. There I was, left in the station, 'hatless.' I met Lord Churchill there, who told me Lady Churchill was in waiting. I was introduced to lots of soldiers by one of the masters who caught me. And then I began to search for my hat; but it was in vain, for I never saw it again. I was told to get another one, for I had no other to wear. At last I got home, and in the evening we went out again to see the illumination. There was not much to see. I think I have given you a full account of the wedding and the reception.

Believe me ever to remain
Your affectionate son,
Randolph Churchill.

P.S.—My holidays begin on the 27th of March.

The letters which Lord Randolph received from his father during these Eton years were affectionate and pleasant, and were evidently intended to exert a considerable influence upon his education. Besides ordinary family news and the accounts of sport, of partridges and pheasants, of the health of dogs and ponies, of the exertions of the Heythrop hounds—always industrious, and sometimes successful—there was generally allusion to some more serious or public event, a political opinion, an account of an election at Woodstock, or a few sentences about Mr. Disraeli. Often the Duke would take pains to impart a lesson in conduct under the guise of information. 'Your aunt,' wrote this devout, yet not intolerant, man, 'who is with us now is most unhappy; for I fear she is a Roman Catholic at heart, and does not like to say so. If this be true, it would be much better for her to declare her mind; and then, of course, however we might be grieved, the matter would never be alluded to in conversation.' He encouraged his son always to confide in him; nothing mattered so much as what could not be told; and when it was necessary, as it often was, to reprove some schoolboy misdemeanour—pert speeches to masters, an overbearing manner, the unwarranted fagging of small companions, or the breaking of other people's windows—

he never founded his rebukes upon authority; but always upon reason, arguing the matter quite fairly with his son, pointing out to him the consequences of his actions, and appealing to his good sense, his self-respect, and the love and honour in which he held his parents. The care and patience thus displayed were not unrepaid, and both Lord Randolph and his elder brother, throughout lives strongly marked by an attitude of challenge towards men and things, preserved at all times an old-world reverence for their father.

Considering that mischief and a disposition to argue were the gravest crimes imputed to the boy, the paternal rebukes were frequently rather severe. They followed, if I may judge by old letters, a regular course. First, on receiving the bad report, the father would, with much deliberation, ask his son what he had to say in defence or in excuse. Lord Randolph would reply with a long, carefully-written letter of justification, defending himself with freedom and ingenuity. Next the Duke, now duly in possession of both sides of the case, would take up his largest pen and deliver majestic censure. ‘To tell you the truth,’ he wrote on one occasion, ‘I fear that you yourself are very impatient and resentful of any control; and while you stand upon some fancied right or injury, you fail to perceive what is your *duty*, and allow both your language and manner a most improper scope.’ The third stage of these estrangements would be a frank letter of submission and promises for future improvement, after which complete forgiveness and the return of sunshine.






Eton Oxford

These are simple chronicles, and I have tried, so far as possible, to use the actual words in which they have come to me; but it is well to notice how early a strong, masterful character develops. How much can parents really do? One would think that the future lay in their hands. They are at the beginning supreme. They control with authority, from which there is no appeal, all early impressions and actions and every avenue of experience. It would not be strange if they could shape and mould the child according to their fancies. Is it not, on the contrary, wonderful how comparatively powerless they so often are? The tiny child, scarcely out of the cradle, asserts his personality. This schoolboy, pausing unembarrassed on the threshold of life, has made up his mind already. Nothing will change him much. Lord Randolph's letters as a boy are his letters as a man. The same vigour of expression; the same simple, yet direct, language; the same odd, penetrating flashes; the same coolly independent judgments about people and laws, and readiness to criticise both as if it were a right; the same vein of humour and freedom from all affectation; the same

knack of giving nicknames, which often stuck and sometimes stung—all are there. His mind, indeed, gained knowledge and experience from instruction; but his essential character, changing hardly at all by contact with the world, unfolded with remorseless and unalterable persistency, as every seed brings forth in its proper season its own peculiar flower.

'He had,' wrote his mother a few months before her death, 'a wonderful faculty for making firm friends, who remained through life devoted to him. He was very constant and decided in his attachments, and outspoken—often imprudently—in his likes or dislikes. He was always pertinacious in his opinions. He never wavered in his plans, and, whether right or wrong, he carried them out. This enabled him to succeed in life, but also often brought him into trouble.... When I look back in sadness to his youth, and remember his ready wit, his warm affection, his bright spirits, and his energy in carrying out any undertaking, I feel how great was the want of foresight and intellect on my part in his training and management; for one of his most endearing qualities was extraordinary affection for his father and me, and his constant interest and pride in his family from his earliest days.... Alas!' she wrote in unmerited self-reproach, 'had I been a clever woman, I must have had more ability to curb and control his impulses, and I should have taught him patience and moderation. Yet at times he had extraordinary good judgment, and it was only on rare occasions that he took the bit between his teeth, and then there was no stopping him.'

Lord Randolph himself seems to have dreamed no dreams at Eton. He lived, with his faithful bull-dog, entirely in the present, obeying with spontaneity the varied impulses of a boisterous yet amiable nature. 'He was,' we are told, 'an easy lower boy to catch, for his whereabouts could be ascertained by his incessant peals of laughter.

There was not a boy in the school who laughed so much or whose laughter was so contagious. There was scarcely one who was so frolicsome. His preferred method of descending a staircase was to skate down it with a rush; and if he had to enter the room of another lower boy, he would sooner bound against the door and force it open with his shoulder than go through the stale formality of turning the handle.'[1] He is furthermore described as 'very fond of collisions with "cads"' when there was any event drawing crowds at Eton or Windsor; but 'he would single out antagonists much older or bigger than himself.'

Two other fleeting impressions have been preserved.[2] 'I can just remember young Churchill,' writes a well-known Eton authority, 'as a striking, whimsical personality, with full, large, round, astonished eyes and a determined bull-dog type of face. He was addicted to dressing loudly, and I vividly recollect his appearance one day in a daring violet-coloured waistcoat. Botham's Hotel was in those days a favourite resort for Etonians, in the way of succession to Coningsby's "Christopher," where the friends entertained each other at sumptuous breakfasts and luncheons. A special feature of this hostelry, as well as a powerful attraction to the younger boys, was a spacious fruit-garden, celebrated for the size and flavour of its strawberries. During a certain summer this Elysian enclosure was so pillaged as to cause the proprietor to complain to the headmaster, Mr. Balston. As a consequence Mr. Austen Leigh was despatched to watch, and, if possible, to catch the offenders *in flagrante delicto*. That representative of the highest Eton authority very soon flushed a large covey of juvenile depredators. All of them, however, got away, except Randolph Churchill, who jumped as far as he could towards the road with his pursuer close upon him. They both fell together into the ditch, Mr. Austen Leigh uppermost. Lord Randolph, seeing that any further attempt at escape would be useless,

crawled out, much scratched and bruised, into the middle of the road, where, incensed at his own discomfiture, he deliberately sat down, crossed his legs, glared at Mr. Leigh, and with all the vehemence of enraged fourteen, exclaimed, "You beast!" How he escaped the birch after this adventure tradition does not relate.'

'I can recall him at Eton,' wrote 'J. S.' in the *Realm* of March 1895, 'but only for one amazing moment. It was a summer evening, just before "lock-up," and the whole wall, the little old wall so fitted for the height of small boys, which separates the public road from the borders of Upper School, was thronged with youths, resting after the labours of the day. Even they felt the charm of the stillness. There was no drumming of heels on the wall, only chatter and occasional laughter. On the other side of the road, gathered at the top of Keate's Lane, where in those days was an iron bar for the "seat of the scornful," were the "Swells." Between these awe-inspiring *aristoi* and us urchins indiscriminate on the wall lay the empty road. Down the middle of that road alone, ringing discordant music from a Volunteer's bugle, marched a boy in jackets. It was Churchill, wending homeward to Frewer's. As I recall the "Swells" of that time, this progress of a boy in jackets, on his right a long line of his fellows, on his left, for one awful minute, that sublime group at the corner, I feel once more the breathless wonder at audacity so magnificent.'

I cannot set down with exactness the time when Lord Randolph's parents began to realise that their son possessed and was, underneath an exuberance of animal spirits, developing character and qualities of an unusual order; but, at any rate, before he left Eton they had begun to hope that some considerable career lay before him. Henceforth they neglected nothing that might stimulate his interest or his ambition. A degree at Oxford in history and law, suitable and extended tours on the Continent, frequent

contact with men of affairs, seemed the most obvious steps which were first required in preparation for political life. And meanwhile the family borough of Woodstock was watched by the Duke with a jealous and reflective eye. Its representation had lately caused him for various reasons many heart-burnings.

Woodstock possessed a Parliamentary history of such curious distinction that perhaps no other seat in England could rival the interest of its chequered fortunes. From the earliest beginnings of popular representation to the Reform Bill of 1832, it had returned, with some intermission, two members to the House of Commons; and among these William Lenthall, the famous Speaker, was its representative in the Long Parliament; William Eden, afterwards the first Lord Auckland and Governor-General of India, sat for it in the Parliament of 1774; Charles Abbot, also Speaker, in 1802; Sir John Gladstone, father of the famous Prime Minister, in 1820; and the great philanthropist, better known as the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, from 1826 to 1830. Down to the time of Queen Anne the members for Woodstock had most often been drawn from the old families of the neighbourhood; but after the delivery of the Manor of New Woodstock to John, first Duke of Marlborough, and the building of Blenheim, the seat practically became the property of the Churchills and its representatives were uniformly the nominees of the reigning Duke. This dominion, though always maintained, was not seldom challenged; and the bitter and unscrupulous contests which were fought when some Indian nabob or other wealthy champion made an effort to wrest the borough from the great local influences under whose shadow it reposed were an almost incredible source of profit to the electors.

In April 1844 Lord Randolph's father, then Marquess of Blandford, was elected member. Although always a staunch Conservative, he immediately developed

progressive tendencies in social and economic questions and became a steady supporter of Free Trade measures. This speedily brought him into collision with the Duke, whose interest in the Corn Laws was by no means theoretical; and since he remained altogether unyielding, he was forced in April 1845 to apply for the Chiltern Hundreds and to retire from Parliament. The vacancy was filled (May 1) by Viscount Loftus, a trusty Protectionist; and on his becoming Marquess of Ely, in December, Lord Alfred Churchill was brought forward without opposition in his stead. The question of the Corn Laws having been swept into the past by the decisions of Parliament in 1846, domestic differences were once more composed, and at the General Election of 1847 Lord Blandford was again elected, and continued to sit for the borough at the General Elections of July 1852 and March 1857, until in July 1857 he succeeded as seventh Duke of Marlborough.

1867
Æt.
18

Lord Alfred Churchill, his brother, now became again the member for Woodstock. For two years all had been smooth and satisfactory; but after the General Election of 1859, and during the year 1860, Lord Alfred began to manifest an increasing sympathy with the Whigs and Liberals, and finally became ranged with the supporters of Lord Palmerston. His vote in favour of Mr. Gladstone's famous Budget of 1860 was the first definite step and it instantly drew a strong protest from the Duke, who seems to have been less an admirer—after succeeding to great position and estate—both of political independence and of Free Trade measures. Lord Alfred explained that he considered his vote perfectly consistent with his character as a Conservative. 'I really should like to know,' replied his brother severely, 'by what change of terms a measure

can be called "Conservative" which substitutes direct for indirect taxation, which has been prepared by Mr. Cobden, proposed by Mr. Gladstone, and is the avowed policy of a Liberal Government.' The correspondence was not on either side so couched as to repair the differences which had opened between the brothers, and Lord Alfred's subsequent conduct produced a complete estrangement. The Duke, a stalwart Churchman, had long been warmly interested in the question of Church Rates. They were to him a pet and special subject and he had publicly expressed on various occasions a high Tory view. Lord Alfred now began to give Church Rates his careful attention, and, as the result of his studies, he proceeded to introduce into the House of Commons a Bill dealing with the whole subject in an extremely Liberal—not to say Radical—spirit. He expounded his plan with elaboration in a letter and forwarded it with his Bill to his brother as a suggested 'compromise' greatly to be desired in the public interest. This was decisive. The Duke replied that he understood an affront was intended, and that he hoped, whatever line of politics Lord Alfred might pursue in the future, he would not consider it necessary to consult him upon it. Through the medium of various persons it was presently arranged that, as no one could force Lord Alfred to retire, he should be free to act as he pleased till the General Election; and that at the election, as the Duke would once more be the master of the situation, another candidate should be brought forward. There the matter rested, to the extreme dissatisfaction of both parties. So embittered were the relations between the brothers that, when the departing Lord Alfred was entertained by his constituents in Woodstock in 1864, the Duke would not attend the dinner, but sent Lord Randolph in his place; and this schoolboy of fifteen, with impressive gravity and unfaltering utterance, delivered—or, rather, recited—the necessary speeches, and so made, under rather a lowering

sky, his first embarkation upon the uncertain waters of party politics.

In 1867 Lord Randolph left Eton in order to obtain some education from a private tutor before going to Oxford. In spite of these precautions his first attempt to pass the entrance examination was unsuccessful; and it was arranged that he should work for six months under the care of an accomplished clergyman, the Rev. Lionel Dawson Damer, who lived at Cheddington, near Aylesbury.

Lord Randolph to his Father.

Cheddington: March, 1867.

I wrote to you in my last that we did not intend to go to Oxford, but we changed our minds and went yesterday. It was a horrid day, snowing and blowing from the East, and dreadfully cold. As we were getting into the train we met Mr.—— to whom you offered the living at Waddesdon. He seemed really a charming man, so very gentlemanlike and quiet. I am sure you would like him very much. He tells me he had at first declined the living, but now, having seen it, he thought that if certain things were done he would accept it, if you had not offered it to anyone else already. He wants to get back into this neighbourhood, and really I should think he would be a capital person from all Mr. Damer says, and from what I saw. I asked Mr. Damer to go and call upon Dr. Scott. I thought he might find out something about me. Dr. Scott told him a different story from what he told you. He said that my papers as a whole gave the Dons the idea that I made tremendous guesses at everything, and that they thought they could not on that let me in. He said nothing about the essay at all. I do not think he is much to be relied on.

We also called upon Dr. Marsham. He was very civil and seemed to be pleased at our calling. He was very glad he said at your taking office, and said he would be able to offer me rooms in October, so I think we did no harm by calling, but that he thought it very civil. I only saw Dalmeny and Donoughmore, everyone else was out.

I think General Peel's speech very clear and intelligible. I suppose he will be a much greater loss than Lord Carnarvon or Lord Cranborne. How very troublesome the Fenians are! I

suppose you have complete information now about it all. I am afraid the Whigs are getting very disagreeable, but I hope their machinations will not succeed. I think Dizzy gave it to Gladstone well.

I am going out with the Harriers to-morrow.

Lord Randolph to his Father.

Cheddington: March, 1867.

I must say I think it very kind of Dr. Marsham letting us know so soon that he can give me a room, for he said nothing about a chance vacancy, so that I expect he has made some other arrangement.

I cannot tell you how delighted I was when you wrote and told me that you had accepted the office of Lord President of the Council. I think it is just the office that you would like best. Do you know who is to be Lord Steward? Do you at all expect a split in the Cabinet? I do hope you will be able to do something now, as it seems perhaps that the Conservatives have been placed in rather a humiliating position. I am so glad you are in the Cabinet; but Mr. Damer and I look forward to a change in the Cabinet policy.

There has been very little to do here. I assisted Mr. Damer at some penny readings the other night in the school here, as he had been thrown over by a clergyman he had asked to come and read. I read 'Reminiscences of Margot' and the 'Ingoldsby Legends.' They were very much applauded. Mr. Damer and I have got a charming plan, I think you will approve of it. He says that after the 20th of June, which is the Choral Festival at Aylesbury of which he has the management, he will be quite free, and we thought we might make a very pleasant trip abroad for two months, beginning about July to the end of August, if you did not mind. I should have passed the examination for Merton and just come back in time for the October term. Mr. Damer says he would like it very much. But should you mind?

Do you think you would be able to run down here some Saturday afternoon and stay Sunday? I am afraid you will have a tremendous lot to do now. I wish I could be your Secretary.

1868
Æt.



19

The Continental tour commended itself to the Duke, and Lord Randolph was allowed to roam through Switzerland and Italy at his pleasure for two or three months. On his return he matriculated and took up his residence at Merton, under the tutelage of Dr. Creighton, afterwards Bishop of London. It must have been with relief and satisfaction that he exchanged the rough bigotry of school life for the free and generous atmosphere of a famous University. At Eton he had gained neither distinction in games nor profit from studies. He had learned to row and swim, without aspiring to renown; and as for cricket and football, he heartily detested them both. But Oxford opened opportunities of all kinds. Its proximity to Blenheim enabled him to live practically at home. The happy companionship of his family and the sporting possibilities of a landed estate were both within easy and constant reach. His nature responded to the glory and romance of Oxford; and in its cloistered courts, so rich in youth and history, he found a scheme of life more varied, tolerant, and real than any he had ever known.

Meanwhile Lord Randolph had long outgrown ‘The Mouse’; and even while an Eton boy, upon a new and quickly distinguished animal called ‘Pillbox,’ with occasional mounts from his elder sisters, he had begun in his holidays to acquire some glory in the Oxfordshire fields. He is described at sixteen as ‘a very bold and good horseman, who also took the greatest interest in the hunting.’ Aided as he was by the light weight of youth and his native knowledge of the country, few in the hunt could beat him. His love of the art of venery grew into worship. At fifteen the ownership of two beagles, the gift of his father, transported him with delight. They proved the humble forerunners of a pack which is not yet forgotten in Oxfordshire. Within the next two years he became possessed of ‘two or three hounds, kept in some pigsties at

the back of the gardens, under the care of a somewhat ragged and disreputable "Boy Jim," whom he called his "whipper-in,"' and of an old retired keeper—one of the Duke's pensioners—who, with his wife, discharged the duties of 'feeder.' But it was not till he went to Merton, in the autumn of 1867, that he aspired to a higher state and created, in all the serious purpose of nine couple of hounds and the pomp of 'a whip well mounted and in livery,' the celebrated 'Blenheim Harriers.' September 21, 1867, is the first entry in his hunting-book, thenceforward kept with the utmost regularity throughout the three years of his Oxford life.

Date	Horses	Hounds	Weather	Meet	Hares Killed
Sept. 21, 1867	Lady Di	7½ couple	Cloudy, rain overhead	Bladon toll-bar	1

'*Remarks.*

'First time of taking out the hounds—rather wild and did not run together.... Found in Margett's grass field, and ran a ring with a bad scent. Jumped up in the middle of the pack, and ran a straight line across the Hensington Road and Taylor's Farm, where three of the hounds, getting away quietly (Resolute, Blameless, and Careful), ran into her. Others got wrong. Cheerful not up at the death. Did not find again, but went home at once. Fencer and Blue-cap lame next day. Ground very hard. Scent very bad.—R. H. S. C.'

And so on through many pages of neat, compact handwriting, with which, since these episodes are more diverting in the enterprise than in the chronicle, the reader need not be concerned. The reputation, the popularity, and the fields of the Blenheim Harriers grew steadily. 'I became,' wrote Colonel Thomas, 'very proud of the way in which he hunted his own hounds, as I never knew a more patient persevering Huntsman, with great determination, self-confidence, and quickness in taking any advantage that might occur.' 'Killed altogether last season,' writes Lord

Randolph contentfully at the end of February 1868, 'twenty-nine brace of hares and one fox. Season commencing September 8, 1868.'

The harriers required attention in the summer, and the eye of the Master was never long astray. The pack steadily improved in numbers and quality. Some were bred at the Blenheim kennels, others were purchased. One hound he bought from Lord Granville, who sent an amusing letter with him, explaining that he was called 'Radical.' Lord Randolph's correspondence at this time seems to have been chiefly concerned with these important matters. Here is a specimen letter:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Mr. Blake, one of his father's tenants.

Gloster Hotel, Cowes, Isle of Wight.

Dear Sir,—You were kind enough in the spring to say that if you could overcome Mrs. Blake's objections you would bring up a puppy for me. I have a very promising litter now by Dexter out of Crazy, that are quite old enough to go out 'to walk,' and should be so very much obliged to you if you would take care of one for me. I have altogether seven couple of puppies, and shall have great difficulty in finding walks for all of them. If you will let Mr. Napier know you will take one, he will send you one, and by doing so you will greatly oblige

Yours faithfully,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Lord Randolph soon became one of the best-known and best-liked figures in the county. He was tactful and considerate to the farmers, whose hospitality he enjoyed, and courteous and composed with his field. Many are the stories of merry lunches at farmhouses, of mournful tumbles into muddy brooks, of jaunts and jollities and every varied chance or mischance of the chase over all that pleasant countryside. Whenever the responsibilities of the harriers permitted and a horse was fresh and fit, he hunted besides with the Heythrop, the Bicester and other

neighbouring packs.

But the world did not always smile upon him. It is odd how often persons who in private life, and indeed on all other occasions, are the mildest and kindest of men, develop, when engaged in equestrian sport, an unwonted severity and even roughness of manner. Tom Duffield, the Master of the Old Berkshire Hounds, was, like so many good sportsmen, somewhat addicted to the use of firmer language in the hunting-field than the occasion always required. One day, early in the winter of 1868, when Lord Randolph was nearly twenty years old, he had the misfortune to ride too close to the Old Berkshire Hounds and to incur the displeasure of their Master, who rated him in a very violent fashion before the whole company. Lord Randolph was deeply offended. He went home at once; but, as he said nothing at the moment, the incident was for a while forgotten. Towards the end of the season, however, a hunt dinner was held in Oxford, to which Mr. Duffield and many of the Old Berkshire field were bidden, and at which Lord Randolph was called upon to propose the toast of 'Fox-hunting.' He described himself as an enthusiast for all forms of sport. Fox-hunting, he said, in his opinion, ranked first among field sports; but he was himself very fond of hare-hunting too. 'So keen am I that, if I cannot get fox-hunting and cannot get hare-hunting, I like an afternoon with a terrier hunting a rat in a barn; and if I can't get that,' he proceeded, looking round with much deliberation, 'rather than dawdle indoors, I'd go out with Tom Duffield and the Old Berkshire.' There was a minute of general consternation, which the orator complacently surveyed. Then the company, overcome by the audacity of the speaker, burst into laughter, led by Mr. Duffield himself. The story has become a local classic, and, surviving the worthy sportsman against whom it was directed, is still preserved among the farmers from Banbury to Bicester.





Lord Randolph & his Father Lord Randolph & his Mother.

For three successive seasons (1867-1869), with unimportant intervals occasionally filled by study, Lord Randolph harried the hares of Blenheim and enjoyed himself hugely. His brother, Lord Blandford, to whom he was much attached, was serving in the Blues. His sisters were growing up, and the eldest three were already 'out.' He became the autocrat of the family circle, and, like a wise ruler, took an intense interest in all that concerned his subjects. What balls they had been to, whom they had danced with, and all the similar incidents of a girl's life were the constant objects of his inquiries; and upon all points he expressed his approval or disapproval in the clearest possible terms. Although the Duke might still assert a disciplinary control, there is no doubt that his younger son was from this time forward increasingly petted and beloved by his mother and sisters, to whom in return he showed all the gay and affectionate sides of his nature. 'He was,' wrote his mother, 'the soul of wit and fun and cheerfulness in those happy days.' He made some good friends at Merton—not many in number, but staunch

and true. His Eton acquaintance with Lord Dalmeny (afterwards Lord Rosebery) ripened at Oxford into a life-long friendship. Dalmeny's rooms in the Canterbury quadrangle of Christ Church were within a stone's-throw of Merton. The two young men were close companions in the adventures and vicissitudes of undergraduate life and Lord Randolph used often to bring his friend over to Blenheim. Here they met on many occasions Mr. Disraeli, and the great Minister, who loved young people, would talk and joke with them by the hour together. He seems to have been delighted with both. His regrets were undisguised when, ten years later, Lord Rosebery threw himself into the tides of the Midlothian campaign. 'I remember,' wrote the Duchess of Marlborough, 'that he first told me (in 1869) that it rested with Randolph to become a distinguished man. From that time he was ever friendly to him, and he watched with interest his early efforts in Parliament, and always wrote to congratulate me when he approved them.'

1869
Æt.
20

Besides the harriers, Lord Randolph's greatest amusement at Oxford was chess; and he soon acquired, for an amateur, more than ordinary skill in the game. In conjunction with several friends he founded the University Chess Club; and on the first visit of Mr. Steinitz, the champion chess-player of the world, he conducted one of the boards at the blindfold exhibition. Although his play necessarily lacked the strength derivable from book knowledge and experience, it is described in this, as in other affairs, as being 'original, daring, and sometimes brilliant.' His game with Mr. Steinitz has been recorded; so that competent persons may judge of his quality for themselves:—

Game No. 1 (published in the *Chess Players' Quarterly Chronicle*, vol. ii., p. 110).

Allgaier Gambit.

White. Mr. Steinitz. (blindfold)	Black. Lord Randolph Churchill	White. Mr. Steinitz.	Black. Lord Randolph Churchill
1. P—K 4	P—K 4	18. B × R	Kt × B
2. P—K B 4	P × P	19. R—K sq	P—Q Kt 3 [d]
3. Kt—K B 3	P—K Kt 4	20. R × P (ch)	K—Q sq
4. P—K R 4	P—K Kt 5	21. B—Q B 4	B—Q Kt 2
5. Kt—K 5	Q—K 2 [a]	22. R—Kt 4	Kt—K Kt 3
6. P—Q 4	P—Q 3	23. P—R 5	Kt—K 2
7. Kt × Kt	P Q × P (ch)	24. R—K sq	Q Kt—Q B 3
8. Q—K 2	P—Q 4	25. P—Q 5 Kt—Q	Kt 5 [e]
9. Kt—K 5	Kt—K R 3 [b]	26. P—Q	B 6 B—Q B sq
10. Kt—Q	B 3 B—Q Kt 5	27. R—K	Kt 7 Kt—Q B 3
11. Q × Q	P × Q	28. P × Kt	Kt × P
12. B × P	Kt—K B 4	29. B—Q Kt 5	B—Q Kt 2
13. Castles	B × Kt	30. R—Q sq (ch)	K—K sq
14. P X B	Kt—Q 3	31. R × Q B P	K—B sq
15. P—Q B 4 [c]	P—K B 3	32. R—K B sq (ch)	K—Kt sq
16. P—Q B 5	P × Kt	33. B—Q B 4 (ch), and mates in a few moves.	
17. B × P	Kt—K B 2		

[a] This was once a common defence to the Allgaier opening, but it seems to entail the loss of the gambit pawn.

[b] B—R 3 would not have done, for White would then have exchanged queens, and played B—Q B 4, &c.

[c] This move loses White a piece, but he obtains for it a full equivalent.

[d] Black should have lost no time here in getting his pieces out; B —K 3, followed by K—Q 2 seems the best play.

[e] Kt—Q R 4 would be, perhaps, better; but in any case he must have the worst of it.

It is not worth while to dwell on college scrapes, though

of these some, at any rate, have been recorded. Thus we learn that Lord Randolph Churchill was fined ten shillings for the offence of smoking in his cap and gown; that he broke the windows of the Randolph hotel; that he was taken into custody by the police, with the rest of a noisy supper party, and charged with being drunk; that, infuriated by such an accusation, which was not sustained in court, he brought an action for perjury against the police witness; that the college authorities appealed to the Duke of Marlborough to stop the legal proceedings; that the Duke of Marlborough replied that, on the contrary, they had his entire concurrence; that learned counsel were brought by both parties from London; but that in the end the summons was dismissed and the officer exonerated of any wilful intention to deceive. We are also told that one day he was sent for by the Warden to be rebuked for some delinquency. It was winter, and the interview began with the Warden standing before the fireplace and the undergraduate in the middle of the room. By the time the next culprit arrived Lord Randolph was explaining his conduct with his back to the fire and the Warden was a somewhat embarrassed listener in a chilly corner. Such are the tales.

Until he was in his twentieth year Lord Randolph's studies seem to have been fitful. He had, indeed, enjoyed the ordinary education of an English gentleman. He had consumed a vast number of hours at Eton and elsewhere in making those intricate combinations of Latin words and syllables which are perhaps as useful or as harmless a form of mental training as youth can receive. He had—in addition to any acquaintance with classical learning which these exercises may be supposed to impart, and the wide but discursive reading of history and poetry that his tastes had prompted—a peculiar, exact, and intimate knowledge (made effective by an exceptional memory) of the Bible, Gibbon, and 'Jorrocks.' From these books—not so ill-

assorted as they sound—he could recite in an extraordinary manner whole pages at a time. In the strong, simple, homely words and phrases, sonorous sentences, and veins of rough spontaneous mirth which characterise the style and language of his rhetoric and writings, the influence of these three varied fountains, quaintly, yet not incongruously, intermingled, can be plainly seen.

Although it is much better for the brain, and for the practical purposes of life, to know and understand one book than to have read a hundred, such an educational outfit was no title to academic distinction; and after he had been three years at Merton Lord Randolph determined to work seriously for an honours degree in history and law. He forthwith proceeded to put away his 'toys,' as he called them; and the Blenheim Harriers were given up without delay. The county gentlemen and farmers who had followed their fortunes with pleasure, if not with profit, determined to mark their appreciation of the pack and its youthful Master by the customary British ceremony of a dinner. A banquet was accordingly held at the Bear hotel in Woodstock at which Lord Randolph was hospitably entertained and generally praised. He replied to the toast of his health simply and briefly, as one speaking in his own place to his friends and neighbours.

'Now that the harriers are gone,' he said, 'the future seems rather a blank. Perchance, in the course of time and events, I may find myself separated from these scenes of my youth. But you may rest assured that my Oxfordshire home and my Oxfordshire friends will ever be present and dear to my mind; and that, in whatever quarter of the world I may find myself, among whatever people, or pursuing whatever occupation, you, gentlemen, who have asked me here to dinner this evening, the happy hours I have spent among you, the fields and pastures of our well-known and favourite hunting grounds, and, last but not least, the old pack of harriers, will remain amongst those pleasant and

gratifying recollections of days that are gone by, upon which I shall at all times delight to dwell.'

After this he began to work in earnest. The time which intervened before the December examinations was all too short to repair the well-spent idleness of previous years. It was fortunate that in these busy months he came under the influence of that good and eminent man Dr. Creighton, who took the greatest interest in him and aided and encouraged his exertions by every means. 'He was always amenable to expostulation, when wisely administered,' wrote Bishop Creighton in a letter to Mr. Escott in 1895, 'and consulted me with freedom on all matters relating to the daily conduct of his life. At first he did not read much, having a habit of going to sleep in his chair after dinner, often for hours, which he only gradually overcame. But from the first I was interested to see his growing appreciation of the value of history, especially on its legal and constitutional side. He would take up a subject and talk about it till he had reached its bottom. As his interest grew he read more....'

The Bishop proceeds to relate an incident which seems to have impressed him. 'My attention was called to his marked ability for practical politics early in his career. Soon after he came to Merton he deemed it his duty to write a letter in defence of his father, who had been attacked on some question of Woodstock politics. Before sending the note he brought it to me. I was greatly impressed by its dignity and its dexterity—the former as the composition of a son about his father, the latter in the administration of a reproof without leaving a loophole of escape.' Dr. Creighton advised him not to enter into political controversy at his time of life. Lord Randolph's answer was: 'I have thought it over, and decided that point for myself. What I came to ask you was if you saw anything in the letter which you thought unbecoming.' On this Dr. Creighton admitted, 'If you are going to send a

letter at all, you could not send a better one.'

'That incident gave me,' writes the Bishop, 'a real insight into Churchill's character, and showed me his capacity for practical politics. He made up his own mind; having well reflected, he chose his ground of attack, and then took every pains about the form of expression. He sought no advice about what he was going to do, but was anxious to do it "as well as possible."'

1870
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Dr. Creighton to the Duchess of Marlborough.

November 14, 1870.

I only wish that greater numbers took the same interest that you and the Duke do in your son's proceedings at Oxford, and then its results might be greater than they are.

As regards Lord Randolph, I still think that he is wise in going in for examination now rather than in the summer. It is, of course, always difficult to predict the result of an examination; but I think that it would be very improbable, so far as my experience goes, that he should get any lower class than a second: some of his subjects he knows remarkably well—quite up to the standard of a first class—others he is not so much interested in. At present he is quite in earnest with his work, and has vigour and freshness in his treatment of it. He might no doubt, and probably would, be better prepared in six weeks' time; but the interval of six months would be too long, and would give him temptations to listlessness and idleness which might leave him in a worse position at the end of that time than he is now.

I shall, however, require from him a rigorous account of what he does in examination; and if I think he has not done himself justice, I shall advise him to remove his name before the end, and so put off his examination to the summer. Do not, however, suggest this to him as a possibility. It is bad for anyone to have an alternative before him, and it were better that I judged after the event than that he thought of it during the process. At present I certainly think he will get a second class at least.

Lord Randolph himself was hopeful:—

Lord Randolph to his Mother.

Merton College: Tuesday.

I hope you won't hope for too much when I tell you that yesterday and to-day I have been doing much better in my examination, which has been chiefly about what I have been reading this term; so I have been able to do it. I am very much afraid Saturday's work will go against me. A great deal depends on how I do to-morrow morning, which is the last day. There is no more writing work; it is what they call *viva voce* and that is the hardest. I hope that I will have a little luck and be asked what I know best and then perhaps it will come right, but even if it does the whole thing has been a dreadful scramble and I see now, too late, that I had much better have waited until June. However, I saw Creighton yesterday, and he was all against my scratching, and thinks I shall get through all right. I shall know by three or four o'clock to-morrow and shall telegraph. I am not very sanguine, but shall be dreadfully disappointed.

I shall not be able to come home until Saturday or Monday anyhow, as I must keep my term. Poor little Wasp died yesterday. I am very much distressed, for she was so nice and was the first dog I had you did not object to. I do not think I shall get another, they all seem to die.

Gladstone is safe to be beaten they say to-day. The Conservatives are beginning to pick up a little now, but we shall be in a shocking minority. I think Papa will be glad to get out of it though, and that is the only thing that consoles me. The papers seem to be in a dreadful fright for fear the Queen should send for Lord Granville. How spiteful they are!

Dr. Creighton's forecast was, however, justified by the result:—

Dr. Creighton to the Duchess of Marlborough,

December 15.

I must own I was sorry when I heard how narrowly Lord Randolph missed the first class: a few more questions answered, and a few omissions in some of his papers, and he would have secured it. He was, I am told by the examiners, the best man who was put in the second class; and the great hardship is, as your

Grace observes, that he should be in the same class with so many who are very greatly his inferior in knowledge and ability.

It is rather tantalising to think he came so near; if he had been further off I should have been more content. Still I am glad he went in for examination this time. I think he would only have idled the six months before the next examination.

On the whole I think he has learned a good deal during his time at Oxford, and I do not think he regrets his residence here. I am sorry to lose him.

After leaving Oxford Lord Randolph made (1870) another and much longer tour in Europe. He liked few things better than to prowl about at his leisure from one new place to another, seeing all the sights, the galleries, the monuments, the circuses, and above all the zoological gardens, with eyes that never lost their interest even for the smallest trifles. Through France, Italy, and Austria he rambled light-heartedly; and when, after an absence of nearly a year, he came back to Blenheim he had enlarged his fancy and extended his education in various directions beyond the limits of a University curriculum. Behold him now at twenty-three, a man grown, markedly reserved in his manner to acquaintances, utterly unguarded to his intimate friends, something of a dandy in his dress, an earnest sportsman, an omnivorous reader, moving with a jaunty step through what were in those days the very select circles of fashion and clubland, seeking the pleasures of the Turf and town.

This interlude was soon ended.

1873
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In August of 1873 Lord Randolph went to Cowes upon what proved to him a memorable visit. In honour of the arrival of the Czarewitch and the Czarevna the officers of the cruiser *Ariadne*, then lying as guard-ship in the Roads,

gave a ball, to which all the pleasure-seekers who frequent the Solent at this season of the year made haste to go in boats and launches from the shore and from the pleasure fleet. Here for the first time he met Miss Jerome, an American girl whose singular beauty and gifted vivacity had excited general attention. He was presented to her by a common friend. Waltzing made him giddy, and he detested dancing of all kinds; so that after a formal quadrille they sat and talked. She was living with her mother and eldest sister at Rosetta Cottage, a small house which they had taken for the summer, with a tiny garden facing the sea. Thither the next night, duly bidden, he repaired to dine. The dinner was good, the company gay and attractive, and with the two young ladies chatting and playing duets at the piano the evening passed very pleasantly. She was nineteen, and he scarcely twenty-four; and, if Montaigne is to be believed, this period of extreme youth is Love's golden moment. That very night Miss Jerome told her laughing and incredulous sister of a presentiment that their new friend was the man she would marry; and Lord Randolph confided to Colonel Edgecumbe, who was of the party, that he admired the two sisters and meant, if he could, to make 'the dark one' his wife.

Next day they met again 'by accident'—so runs the account I have received—and went for a walk. That evening he was once more a guest at Rosetta Cottage. That night—the third of their acquaintance—was a beautiful night, warm and still, with the lights of the yachts shining on the water and the sky bright with stars. After dinner they found themselves alone together in the garden, and—brief court-ship notwithstanding—he proposed and was accepted.

So far as the principals were concerned, everything was thus easily and swiftly settled, and the matter having become so earnest all further meetings were suspended until the Duke of Marlborough and Mr. Jerome, who was

in America, had been consulted. Lord Randolph returned to Blenheim shaken by alternating emotions of joy and despondency. He had never been in love before and the force and volume of the tide swept him altogether off his feet. At one moment he could scarcely believe that one so unworthy as he could have been preferred; the next he trembled lest all his hopes should be shattered by circumstances unforeseen. Nor indeed was his anxiety without reason; for many and serious obstacles had yet to be encountered and smoothed away. From Blenheim he wrote to his father.

To his Father.

Blenheim: Wednesday, August 20, 1873.

I must not any longer keep you in ignorance of a very important step I have taken—one which will undoubtedly influence very strongly all my future life.

I met, soon after my arrival at Cowes, a Miss Jeannette Jerome, the daughter of an American lady who has lived for some years in Paris and whose husband lives in New York. I passed most of my time at Cowes in her (Jeannette's) society, and before leaving asked her if she loved me well enough to marry me; and she told me she did. I do not think that if I were to write pages I could give you any idea of the strength of my feelings and affection and love for her; all I can say is that I love her better than life itself, and that my one hope and dream now is that matters may be so arranged that soon I may be united to her by ties that nothing but death itself could have the power to sever.

I know, of course, that you will be very much surprised, and find it difficult to understand how an attachment so strong could have arisen in so short a space of time; and really I feel it quite impossible for me to give any explanation of it that could appear reasonable to anyone practical and dispassionate. I must, however, ask you to believe it as you could the truest and most real statement that could possibly be made to you, and to believe also that upon a subject so important, and I may say so solemn, I could not write one word that was in the smallest degree exaggerated, or that might not be taken at its fullest meaning.

I hope you won't feel any annoyance with me for not having

consulted you before saying anything to her. I really meant to have done so; but on the night before I was leaving Cowes (Friday) my feelings of sorrow at parting from her were more than I could restrain, and I told her all. I did not say anything to her mother, but I believe that she did after I was gone; for she wrote to me just as I was starting (I did not, after all, leave Cowes till the Monday), and she said in her letter that her mother could not hear of it. That I am at a loss to understand.

I told Mama when I got here and should have written at once to tell you; but I was so wretched and miserable at leaving thus, I was quite incapable of writing quietly.

I now write to tell you of it all, and to ask you whether you will be able to increase my allowance to some extent to put me in the position to ask Mrs. Jerome to let me become her daughter's future husband. I enclose you her photograph, and will only say about her that she is as nice, as lovable, and amiable and charming in every way as she is beautiful, and that by her education and bringing-up she is in every way qualified to fill any position.

She had an elder sister, and one younger, who is not yet out. Mr. Jerome is a gentleman who is obliged to live in New York to look after his business. I do not know what it is. He is reputed to be very well off, and his daughters, I believe, have very good fortunes, but I do not know any thing for certain. He generally comes over for three or four months every year. Mrs. Jerome has lived in Paris for several years and has educated her daughters there. They go out in Society there and are very well known.

I have told you all I know about them at present. You have always been very good to me, and done as much and more for me always than I had any right to expect; and with any arrangement that you may at any time make for me I shall be perfectly contented and happy. I see before me now a very happy future, almost in one's grasp. In the last year or so I feel I have lost a great deal of what energy and ambition I possessed, and an idle and comparatively useless life has at times appeared to me to be the pleasantest; but if I were married to her whom I have told you about, if I had a companion, such as she would be, I feel sure, to take an interest in one's prospects and career, and to encourage me to exertions and to doing something towards making a name for myself, I think that I might become, with the help of

Providence, all and perhaps more than you had ever wished and hoped for me. On the other hand, if anything should occur to prevent my fondest hopes and wishes being realised (a possibility which I dare not and cannot bring myself to think of), how dreary and uninteresting would life become to me! No one goes through what I have lately gone through without its leaving a strong impress and bias on their character and future. Time might, of course, partially efface the impression and recollection of feelings so strong as those I have tried to describe to you, but in the interval the best years of one's life would be going, and one's energies and hopes would become blunted and deadened.

I will not allude to her. I believe and am convinced that she loves me as fully, and as strongly if possible, as I do her; and when two people feel towards each other what we do, it becomes, I know, a great responsibility for anyone to assist in either bringing about or thwarting a union so closely desired by each.

Good-bye. I have written to you all I have done, all I feel, and all I know.

Anxiously wishing for an answer from you,
I remain
Ever your most affectionate son,
Randolph.

The Duke was very seriously disturbed at the news of his son's intention and declined to commit himself to any expression of approval until he had made searching inquiry into the standing and circumstances of the Jerome family. He deplored the precipitancy with which the decision had been taken. 'It is not likely,' he wrote upon August 31, 'that at present you can look at anything except from your own point of view; but persons from the outside cannot but be struck with the unwisdom of your proceedings, and the uncontrolled state of your feelings, which completely paralyses your judgment.' His rebuke was supported by his wife, who urged affectionate counsels of caution, patience, and self-restraint, and was pointed by a set of witty and satirical verses from his brother, Lord Blandford, setting forth the unhappy fate of those who marry in haste and repent at leisure.

It will easily be understood how this attitude—most Americans being proud as the devil—raised corresponding objections on the other side. Mr. Jerome was himself in many ways a remarkable personality. He had made and lost and made again considerable fortunes in the enterprise and struggle of American life. He had founded the first two great American racecourses, Jerome Park and Coney Island Jockey Club, and divides with Mr. August Belmont the claim to be the father of the American Turf. He owned and edited the *New York Times*. A vehement Federalist in the Civil War, he was said to have subscribed nearly half his fortune to the Federal war funds. When in 1862 the war party in New York was discredited by the disasters of the campaign, and riotous mobs attacked the *Times* office, Mr. Jerome—having purchased a battery of cannon and armed his staff with rifles—beat them off, not without bloodshed. Altogether he was a man of force and versatility. He had at first, indeed, written a conditional assent to his daughter's engagement, but he withdrew it with promptness as soon as he heard a murmur of opposition. Mrs. Jerome and her daughters retreated to France; and all interviews, and even communications, were forbidden by all the parents. Randolph Churchill, however, knew his own mind in many things, and most especially in this. Such was his vehemence that the Duke was soon persuaded, for the sake of his son's peace of mind and of his own authority, to acquiesce—at any rate, provisionally—in a formal engagement. But he insisted upon delay. Nothing, he declared, but time could prove an affection so rapidly excited; and with this decision, supported and emphasised by the Jeromes, the lovers had perforce to be content.

The control of parents over grown-up children was in those unregenerate days much more severe than now. Letters were indeed allowed to pass freely between the lovers; but visits were grudged and restricted. Only at intervals of a month, or even six weeks, were they

permitted to see each other, and in these circumstances it may be imagined that both pens were busy. In this field the young lady had a great advantage. The placid succession of the duties and amusements of country life—the round of shooting parties, the varying totals of slaughtered hares and pheasants, the mornings on the Woodstock bench, and descriptions of relations and county folk—however vivacious, were inadequate materials to set against days spent in Paris during the autumn of 1873, when the gossip of the world was reviving after the gag of the war, when Bazaine was upon his trial for his life, when Gambetta declaimed in the Assembly, and when the drawing-rooms, even of foreigners, were full of Royalist and Bonapartist whisperings. For the most part his letters were strictly confined to the subject of main importance. They told over and over again, in the forcible, homely English of which he was a natural master, the oldest story in the world. Indeed, but for the contributions of Miss Jerome the correspondence would certainly have lacked variety.

Towards the end of September the Duke committed himself with preciseness to the opinion that one year's delay was necessary. To this Lord Randolph was far from agreeing and he conceived himself possessed of a lever which might be used to shorten considerably this weary period of waiting.

To Miss Jerome.

Blenheim: Tuesday, September 23.

I cannot tell you what pleasure and happiness your letter gives me; it makes me feel quite a different being, so you really must not threaten me with a long silence. You certainly have great powers of perception, and I cannot but own that there is a good deal of truth in what you say about my being one moment very despairing and another moment very sanguine. I cannot help it; I was made so.

My father has been away for a few days, and yesterday I got a 'piece' from him on the subject of his consent. After a good deal

of unnecessary rigmarole and verbosity he says:

'The great question is still unsolved, whether you and the young lady who has gained your affections are, or can be, after a few days' acquaintance, sufficiently aware of your own minds to venture on the step which is to bind you together for life. What I have now to say is that if I am to believe that your future is really bound up in your marriage with Miss Jerome you must show me the proof of it by bringing it to the test of time. I will say no more to you on this subject for the present, but if this time next year you come and tell me that you are both of the same mind we will receive Miss Jerome as a daughter, and, I need not say, in the affection you could desire for your wife.'

Now these are his words, but I do not mind telling you that it is all humbug about waiting a year. I could, and would, wait a good deal more than a year, but I do not mean to, as it is not the least necessary; for though we have only known each other a short time, I know we both know our own minds well enough, and I wrote a very long and diplomatic letter to my father yesterday, doing what I have never done before, contradicting him and arguing with him and, I hope, persuading him that he has got very wrong and foolish ideas in his head. You see, both he and my mother have set their hearts on my being member for Woodstock. It is a family borough, and for years and years a member of the family has sat for it. The present member is a stranger, though a Conservative, and is so unpopular that he is almost sure to be beaten if he were to stand; and the fact of a Radical sitting for Woodstock is perfectly insupportable to my family. It is for this that they have kept me idle ever since I left Oxford, waiting for a dissolution. Well, as I told you the other day, a dissolution is sure to come almost before the end of the year. I have two courses open to me: either to refuse to stand altogether unless they consent to my being married immediately afterwards; or else—and this is still more Machiavellian and deep—to stand, but at the last moment to threaten to withdraw and leave the Radical to walk over. All tricks are fair in love and war.

These desperate expedients were not, however, necessary. The parents on both sides only wished to be assured that the attachment of their children was no passing caprice, but a sincere and profound affection; and

as the weeks grew into months this conviction was irresistibly borne in upon them. In October the Duke was willing to admit that the period of probation might be considerably curtailed. But he still had strong reasons for not wishing the marriage to take place immediately. The dissolution was certainly in the air. By-election after by-election had gone against Mr. Gladstone's Government. Greenwich, Stroud, Dover, Hull, Exeter, East Staffordshire, and Renfrewshire had renounced their allegiance; Bath had been barely retained, and the Solicitor-General, whose victory at Taunton had been a much-paraded compensation, was threatened with a petition for bribery. It was most important that Woodstock should be held for the Conservatives. No one could possibly have so good a chance as the young cadet born and bred on the soil, who knew half the farmers and local magnates personally, whose excursions with the harriers had made him familiar with all parts of the constituency, and whose gay and stormy attractiveness had won him a host of sworn allies.

Yet he had often in words and in letters expressed a disinclination for public life. It is curious to notice how even in the days of buoyant unconquered youth, moods of depression cast their shadows across his path. Although possessed of unusual nervous energy, his whole life was a struggle against ill-health. Excitement fretted him cruelly. He smoked cigarettes 'till his tongue was sore' to soothe himself. Capable upon emergency of prolonged and vehement exertion, of manifold activities and pugnacities, of leaps and heaves beyond the common strength of men, he suffered by reaction fits of utter exhaustion and despondency. Most people grow tired before they are over-tired. But Lord Randolph Churchill was of the temper that gallops till it falls. An instinct warned him of the perils which threatened him in a life of effort. He shrank from it in apprehension. Peace and quiet, sport and friends,

agricultural interests—above all a home—offered a woodland path far more alluring than the dusty road to London. The Duke felt, and with reason, that unless Lord Randolph were member for Woodstock before his marriage, not only would the borough be seduced to Radicalism, but that the son in whom all the hopes and ambitions of his later life were centred might never enter Parliament at all.

Lord Randolph was very grateful for the friendly attitude his family had now assumed and was quite prepared to repay concession by patience in one direction and by energy in another:—

To his Father.

Blenheim: Thursday, October (?), 1873.

I write by an early post to acknowledge your letter and to thank you very much for it. It is indeed a most kind letter and I am most grateful to you, as it is all I could have expected. Mama tells me that you got up early in the morning to write it, and indeed I thank you very much indeed for writing to me as you have done, and I only hope you did not tire yourself very much before your long journey.

I go to London to-day and to Paris to-morrow. I enclose you a letter from Hawkins about the registration, which seems to be satisfactory. I am sure you need not fear my doing my very best to get in, and therefore to be some credit to you. I feel that in this you have acted very kindly to me and I feel very grateful to you, although I know there are circumstances now which would have led some people to very different conclusions. I am, however, perfectly confident that ultimately you will never regret for a moment having acted as you have done.

To Miss Jerome.

Blenheim: Monday, October (?), 1873.

I was so happy to see your handwriting again; it is next best thing to seeing you. As you will have seen from my letter of Friday, we have no cause now to be disappointed or to be in bad spirits; everything goes on as favourably as we could expect, and my father does not wish, for a moment, to prevent my seeing you

as often as I can, and has promised to give his consent to our marriage when he is sure we are fond of each other. As to the year, I have every right to say that I do not think they will insist on it....

The clouds have all cleared away, and the sky is bluer than I have ever seen it since I first met you at Cowes. It is exactly six weeks to-morrow since we met on board the Ariadne, and I am sure I seem to have lived six years. How I do bless that day, in spite of all the worry and bother that has come since; and I am sure you will not regret it. I have not had a further conversation with my father since I wrote to you, for I think it is best to leave things for the present as they are. Our early golden dreams of being married in December won't quite become realised, but still it won't be very long to wait; and I shall be able to see you from time to time, and write as often as I like; in fact, we can be regularly engaged, and all the world may know it....

It is curious what an effect books have on me; I have two old favourites. When I feel very cross and angry I read Gibbon, whose profound philosophy and easy though majestic writing soon quiets me down, and in an hour I feel at peace with all the world. When I feel very low and desponding I read Horace, whose thorough epicureanism, quiet maxims, and beautiful verse are most tranquillising. Of late I have had to have frequent recourse to my two friends, and they have never failed me. I strongly recommend you to read some great works or histories; they pass the time, and prevent you from worrying or thinking too much about the future. Novels, or even travels, are rather unsatisfactory, and do one no good, because they create an unhealthy excitement, which is bad for anyone. I wonder whether you will understand all this, or only think me rather odd.

There are three new elections to come off, owing to death vacancies; and if they go against the Government, as they very probably will, we are sure to have a dissolution, and then I shall become member for Woodstock. But, after all, public life has no great charms for me, as I am naturally very quiet, and hate bother and publicity, which, after all, is full of vanity and vexation of spirit. Still, it will all have greater attractions for me if I think it will please you and that you take an interest in it and will encourage me to keep up to the mark.

I hope your sister is quite well, comforts you, and sticks up for

me when you abuse me to her or doubt me.

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A fortnight later he insisted that he should be allowed to visit the Jeromes in the middle of December; and this having been agreed to, the process of counting the days began. But upon the eve of departure an unexpected misfortune intervened. His aunt Lady Portarlington was taken dangerously ill. The family were hurriedly summoned to Emo, and the delightful anticipations of a fortnight in Paris under such circumstances were exchanged for the melancholy reality of nearly a month in Ireland, watching in daily uncertainty a painful and unavailing struggle with death. It is easy to imagine the vexation of such delay and the longings which possessed him to leave the house of mourning. But the family leant on him and, while his presence was of real use and value, he felt bound to wait wearily on from day to day. The course of the illness was varied: once recovery seemed almost certain; but after many relapses the end came in the middle of January. Immediately after the funeral—which was celebrated with much Catholic pomp—Lord Randolph tore himself away, crossed the Irish Channel the same night, and was about to proceed the next evening to France, when another even more imperative call arrested him. Parliament was dissolved.

This event, long looked for, often rumoured, had come at last with the suddenness of surprise. But Woodstock was not unprepared. The Duke of Marlborough had waited impatiently for the first General Election after his brother's lapse to regain his control over the representation of his borough. When Parliament had been dissolved in July 1865, Lord Alfred Churchill, according to his agreement, did not open his candidature; and Mr. Henry Barnett, the

Squire of Glympton Park, a well-known London banker, was put forward as the Conservative candidate and (let it not be overlooked) ducal nominee. A Liberal was found in Mr. Mitchell Henry, afterwards better known as the Home Rule member for Galway; but the Squire carried the election by 24 votes, and, having been again successful in 1868, was the sitting member at the time when another cadet of the great house had ripened to a Parliamentary age.

Mr. Barnett now, as it turned out, very conveniently, expressed an earnest wish to relinquish the toils and responsibilities of public life; and the ancient borough, with an imperturbable solemnity and a conservative reverence for the form in which things should be done, was prompt in sending a regular requisition for Lord Randolph's services. The electors, according to this document, declared that no one could better champion their cause at this crisis, or more fitly represent their views in the ensuing Parliament. They urged him to stand; and in view of the fact that there happened to be that very afternoon a coursing meeting in the Park which all the local farmers were expected to attend, he had to set off for Blenheim without delay.

The series of letters to Paris was sadly broken into by the contest, and for the most part only telegrams had to fill the gap: but here and there a moment could be snatched.

To Miss Jerome.

Blenheim: Monday.

It was perfectly impossible for me to get any letter off by last night's post, as I have not had a moment to spare. Since ten this morning I went and saw several people at Woodstock, and had, on the whole, satisfactory answers and assurances of support. It was a most fortunate circumstance that the Annual Coursing Meeting, which my father allows every year in the Park, had been fixed for to-day; all the farmers were there, and as they had a good day's sport were all in great spirits. I took the chair at their

dinner at the Bear hotel, and you cannot imagine how enthusiastic they were for me. They all go as one man. I hear nothing certain as to any opposition; there are no end of rumours, but no one as yet has appeared publicly; I suppose we shall know for certain to-morrow.

I am now off to a part of the borough four miles distant, to see more people, and I have a large meeting of my committee at four in Woodstock. I think I may say that for the present everything is satisfactory. There are 1,071 voters, and I do not think more than 800 will poll; out of these I calculate at least on 460, which will be enough. But this is, of course, mere guess-work; it is all still very uncertain, and I am glad I lost no time in arriving.

Blenheim: Tuesday.

The radical candidate, Mr. Brodrick, arrived this morning; I made his acquaintance, and we shook hands and were very friendly. The contest will be a hard one and the result doubtful; it is impossible to say how the labourers will go. However, I have made a very good start, and have nothing to complain of as yet.

Blenheim: Saturday.

I am sure it is not necessary for me to excuse myself for not writing to you; you would not believe what work it is. We had a great meeting last night, which was very successful; we had a good speaker down from London, and I made a speech. How I have been longing for you to have been with me! If we had only been married before this! I think the reception you would have got, would have astonished you. The number of houses I have been into—many of them dirty cottages—the number of unwashed hands I have cordially shaken, you would not believe. My head is in a whirl of voters, committee meetings, and goodness knows what. I am glad it is drawing to an end, as I could not stand it very long; I cannot eat or sleep.

I am now off again, 10 A.M., to see more people.

Blenheim: Sunday.

At last I have a pretty quiet day; but I have been very busy this afternoon, and, in spite of its being Sunday, I have been active among several little odd fellows whom it is important to pick up. How this election is going I really can form no opinion, and the excitement and uncertainty of it make me quite ill. Yesterday I

was canvassing all day in Woodstock itself. People that I think know better than anybody, tell me it will be very close. You see, with the ballot one can tell nothing—one can only trust to promises, and I have no doubt a good many will be broken. Our organisation and preparations for Tuesday are very perfect, and the old borough has never been worked in such a way before. You have no idea how this election gets hold of me. One can positively think of nothing else except voters and committees, &c., till one's brain gets quite addled and in a whirl. I have a presentiment that it will go wrong. I am such a fool to care so much about it. I hate all this excitement.... I saw my opponent to-day in church. He looks awfully harassed. I feel quite sorry for him, as all his friends here are such a dreadfully disreputable lot; and as I have got the three principal hotels in the town, he has nothing except a wretched, low, miserable pot-house to stay in.

Unfortunate Mr. Brodrick! The result of the election in no way belied the quality of his accommodation.

Ever since I met you everything goes well with me—too well; I am getting afraid of a Nemesis. I always hoped I should win the election, but that under the ballot and against a man like Brodrick I should have that crushing, overwhelming majority [of 165 out of 973 voters] never entered into my wildest dreams. It was a great victory—we shall never have a contest again. The last two contests—'65 and '68—were won only by 17 and 21 majorities; so just conceive the blow it is to the other side. You never heard such cheering in all your life. The poll was not declared till eleven, and the hours of suspense were most trying; but when it was known, there was such a burst of cheers that must have made the old Dukes in the vault jump. I addressed a few words to the committee—and so did Blandford—and was immensely cheered; and then they accompanied us, the whole crowd of them, through the town and up to Blenheim, shouting and cheering all the way. Oh, it was a great triumph—and that you were not there to witness it will always be a source of great regret to me....

There is nothing more to be done except to pay the bill, and that I have left to my father.

The Woodstock election being out of the way, the road was cleared for more important matters. The Duke, his

political anxieties laid to rest, journeyed to Paris, saw the young lady for himself, and, returning completely converted, withdrew all remaining stipulations for delay. But further difficulties presented themselves. The question of settlements proved delicate and thorny. Mr. Jerome had strong and, it would seem, not unreasonable views, suggested by American usage, about married women's property and made some propositions which Lord Randolph considered derogatory to him. Although he was to benefit considerably under the arrangement proposed, he refused utterly to agree to any settlement which contained even technical provisions to which he objected; and after an embarrassing discussion went off to prepare determined plans to earn a living 'in England or out of it,' as fortune should dictate, for himself and his future wife—'a course in which,' so he wrote to his father, 'I am bound to say she thoroughly agrees with me.'

Face to face with this ultimatum—the first of any importance and not the least successful in Lord Randolph's forceful career—Mr. Jerome, who after all only wished to make a proper and prudent arrangement, capitulated after twenty-four hours' consideration. A satisfactory treaty was ratified, and it only remained to fulfil the conditions. The negotiations had already extended over seven months and the ceremony was appointed without further delay. The Duke, though unable to be present himself, sent his blessing in a most cordial letter. 'Although, my dear Randolph, you have acted in this business with less than usual deliberation, you have adhered to your choice with unwavering constancy and I cannot doubt the truth and force of your affection.' On April 15, 1874, the marriage was celebrated at the British Embassy in Paris, and after a tour—not too prolonged—upon the Continent, Lord Randolph Churchill returned in triumph with his bride to receive the dutiful laudations of the borough of Woodstock and enjoy the leafy glories of Blenheim in the spring.

CHAPTER II

MEMBER FOR WOODSTOCK

Minutely trace man's life; year after year,
Through all his days let all his deeds appear,
And then, though some may in that life be
strange,
Yet there appears no vast nor sudden change;
The links that bind those various deeds are seen,
And no mysterious void is left between.
Crabbe, *The Parting Hour*.

A PROFOUND tranquillity brooded over the early years of the Parliament of 1874. Mr. Gladstone was in retirement. A young Irishman, Charles Stewart Parnell, had been beaten at the General Election in his Dublin candidature and did not enter the House of Commons or make a nervous maiden speech till the spring of 1875. Mr. Chamberlain, a new though already formidable English politician, had, as a Radical, vainly attacked Mr. Roebuck, the Liberal member for Sheffield, and was not returned as a representative of Birmingham till 1876. The Irish party was led sedately along the uncongenial paths of constitutional agitation by Mr. Butt; Radicalism was without a spokesman; and the Liberals reposed under the leadership of Lord Hartington and the ascendency of the Whigs. For the first time since the schism of 1846 a Conservative Administration was founded upon a Conservative majority. The fiscal period had closed. All those questions of trade and navigation, of the incidence of taxation and of public economy, which had occupied almost the whole lives of political leaders on both sides, were settled. New strains, new problems, new perils approached—but at a distance; and in the meanwhile the Conservative party, relieved from the necessity of

defending untenable positions, freed from controversies which had proved to them so utterly disastrous, received again the confidence of the nation and the substantial gift of power.

The reasons which had induced, or perhaps compelled Mr. Disraeli to refuse to form a Government on the defeat of Mr. Gladstone's Irish University Bill early in 1873, seemed conclusive at the time. They were certainly vindicated by the subsequent course of events. The Liberal Ministry never recovered its credit. Nonconformist wrath at the Education Act and Radical disdain continued fierce and enduring. Harsh demands for social reforms began to come from Birmingham and grated on the ears of the Whigs. The dissensions in the governing party cast their shadows upon the Cabinet. Vexatious quarrels broke out among Ministers. No reconstruction availed. Not even the return of Mr. Bright to the Administration could revive its falling fortunes: by-elections were adverse and the House of Commons was apathetic. The Government of 1868 had been in its day very powerful. Scarcely any Prime Minister had enjoyed the support of such distinguished colleagues as Mr. Gladstone had commanded in the noonday of his strength. Few Administrations had more punctually and faithfully discharged the pledges under which they had assumed office. The statute-book, the Army, and the finances bore forcible testimony to their reforming zeal. But their usefulness and their welcome were alike exhausted and the nation listened with morose approval to the charges which Mr. Disraeli preferred. 'For nearly five years,' he wrote to Lord Grey de Wilton, October 3, 1873, on the eve of the by-election at Bath, 'the present Ministers have harassed every trade, worried every profession, and assailed or menaced every class, institution, and species of property in the country. Occasionally they have varied this state of civil warfare by perpetrating some job which outraged public opinion, or by stumbling into mistakes

which have been always discreditable and sometimes ruinous.'

Yet it is alleged that a cause much more personal than political precipitated the dissolution. Mr. Gladstone had at the late reconstruction become Chancellor of the Exchequer as well as First Lord of the Treasury. Had he therefore vacated his seat by accepting an office of profit under the Crown? The Opposition was alert; the law officers were as doubtful in their published opinion as the constituency of Greenwich in its temper. The question lay outside the control of the Government and their supporters. If Mr. Gladstone sat and voted when the session opened, he could be sued in the courts for substantial penalties; and none could forecast the decision. On the other hand, the defeat of the Prime Minister, as the culmination of a long series of ill-fated by-elections, would be at once a personal humiliation and a political disaster. It must therefore be reckoned almost a fortunate coincidence that the Estimates both of the Admiralty and the War Office to some degree exceeded the limits within which Mr. Gladstone had hoped to confine them and that the Ministers responsible for those departments should have been reluctant to reduce them. Who shall pronounce upon the motives of men—in what obscure and varying relations they combine or conflict, in what proportion they are mingled? Something of the vanity of a great man irritated by a personal difficulty, something of the weariness that waits on generous effort not acknowledged, something of physical revolt from the interminable wrangles and compromises of a Cabinet, much consideration, let it be said, for the proud dignity of which the British Government should never be divested, induced Mr. Gladstone in the first days of 1874 to advise the dissolution of Parliament.

The Conservatives reaped the advantage of their leader's self-restraint. A year before they had rejected office. They now appealed for power. Instead of coming hat in hand, a

defeated, discredited, and degraded Ministry who had held their places for a few months in order to wind up a session at the contemptuous toleration of a hostile majority, they presented themselves with authority and reserve to the good opinion of the public. The result was decisive. In vain Mr. Gladstone promised the abolition of the income-tax, the diminution of local taxation, and the reduction of burdens upon articles of general consumption. In vain the financial and administrative triumphs of Liberalism were paraded. The elections resulted in a Tory majority of fifty —'really,' according to Mr. Gladstone, 'of much greater strength'; and that strange prophet of Israel who for thirty years had wandered in the wilderness of fiscal heresy, led his astonished or doubtful followers back to the land of place and promise.

Liberal recriminations occupied the morrow of disaster. Mr. Gladstone was blamed for an impulsive and precipitate dissolution. Mr. Chamberlain described his address and its financial allurements as 'the meanest public document that had ever, in like circumstances, proceeded from the pen of a statesman of the first rank.'[3] Other critics asserted that all would have been well had he waited till after the Budget with its noble surplus, or till the genial weather of the summer-time, or till some period still more remote. Under all ran a current of satire and suggestion about the double office, the Greenwich election, and their influence upon greater decisions. Mr. Gladstone for his part was not backward in rejoinder. 'Not from anger, but because it is absolutely necessary to party action to learn that all the duties and responsibilities do not rest on the leaders, but that followers have their obligations too,' he announced his retirement from the Liberal leadership and his determination to secure some interval of private life 'between Parliament and the grave.' From this intention not the consternation of his party, nor the appeals of his friends, nor the taunts of his detractors could move him

further than to promise a limited and occasional leadership, which in the course of a session was found to mean no leadership at all.

Notwithstanding the risk of being forced to form a future Administration, several eminent men stepped forward to the gap; but the issue quickly narrowed itself to a contest between Mr. Forster and Lord Hartington. Mr. Forster had, it seemed, the advantage in talent and authority and the gift of speech. He may be described as the first of the Liberal-Imperialists and on more than one occasion—notably the Crimean War, the Volunteer movement, and the prosecution of Governor Eyre—he had come into sharp conflict with the Manchester school. Although at heart one of the kindliest and most benevolent of men, his personal independence, a certain Yorkshire roughness of manner and an ill-concealed dislike of doctrinaire Radicalism had made him many enemies; and not even the Ballot Act, which he had carried in the teeth of Conservative opposition, could redeem the mortal offence his Education compromise had caused the Nonconformists. His enemies prevailed; and in the early days of 1875 Lord Hartington was duly installed in the vacant place.

If the Opposition in 1874 were without a leader, the Government they confronted was without a policy. The Conservatives owed their success at the polls to the divisions and exhaustion of their opponents rather than to any action or even to any promises of their own. The new Prime Minister did not allow the violent attacks he had lately made upon the conduct of his predecessors to lead him into any reversal of their measures. The composition of the Cabinet was suited to a policy of ‘honest humdrum.’ With the exceptions of Lord Salisbury and Mr. Gathorne-Hardy, Mr. Disraeli’s old colleagues were regarded as ‘safe’ rather than brilliant; and the one new man who joined them, Mr. Assheton Cross, did not seriously alter the prevailing impression.

At the head of a victorious party, with a substantial majority and an overflowing Exchequer, Mr. Disraeli could afford to be generous and was inclined to be conciliatory. He took occasion on the Address to pay a handsome tribute to Mr. Gladstone's long public service and personal fame. The Queen's Speech announced little more than a continuance of the non-contentious part of the programme of the late Liberal Government. The administration of the Irish Viceroy and Lord Northbrook's policy in India were praised and endorsed. The Chancellors, new and old, consulted together upon the reform of legal procedure. Sir Stafford Northcote bore witness, in terms almost of panegyric, to the accuracy of Mr. Gladstone's financial anticipations; and Mr. Gathorne-Hardy accepted in their entirety Lord Cardwell's arrangements for the Army.

In this last instance at least some disappointment was caused to their supporters by the complaisance of the new Ministers. The proposal to make Oxford one of the new territorial military centres had agitated the University ever since the adoption of the Cardwell scheme of Army reform in 1872. In October of that year a memorial, signed by nearly the whole of the teaching staff, had vigorously protested against a plan which it was somewhat fancifully alleged would prove detrimental by example to University discipline and undergraduate morality. Lord Salisbury, as Chancellor, had initiated a debate in the House of Lords in June 1873; and in May Mr. Auberon Herbert had moved in the Commons for a select committee. Mr. Cardwell, however, explained that the site was to be two miles from Oxford, that the number of officers and men to be stationed there was small, and that other University towns contained garrisons; and Mr. Auberon Herbert's motion was defeated (May 23, 1873) by 134 to 90.

Upon the accession of a Conservative Government and especially of a War Minister who had himself strongly supported Mr. Herbert only a year before, the motion was

renewed on May 22 by Mr. Beresford Hope—not unreasonably, as it would seem—with greater expectations of success. Lord Randolph Churchill, who had taken the oath and his seat at the beginning of the session (March 6), seized the opportunity to deliver his maiden speech. Unlike the usual form of such productions, it was prepared at very short notice and was a rather crude debating effort. The Secretary of State, Mr. Gathorne-Hardy, explained that, since the land had been bought and the contractor was at work, he could not now reverse the decision to which his predecessor had come. He was supported by Mr. A. W. Hall, one of the members for Oxford City, who enlarged on the advantages of the place as a military centre, and complained that the University had already succeeded in keeping away the Great Western main line and the railway works.

Lord Randolph spoke from the University point of view. The proposal, he declared, amounted to the turning of an ancient University into something like a modern garrison town, the mingling of learned professors and thoughtful students with 'roystering soldiers and licentious camp followers.' If it were adopted, Oxford might take the place of Aldershot. The opinion of the City ought not to override that of the University. The University of Oxford had made the City of Oxford. The City depended for its very existence upon the University; and while it could forget, it could not forgive, that fact. To save 52,000*l.* the reputation and the future of the University were to be sold. What comparison could be made between the University of Oxford and the Universities of London, Dublin, and Edinburgh? Dublin was full of soldiers 'from the notorious disaffection and insubordination of the Irish people'; London because it was the Metropolis of the United Kingdom; and Edinburgh because it was the capital of Scotland. But the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were founded before standing armies were known or

garrison towns existed. The ablest and the most experienced leaders of the University had boldly said that, if they could prevent it, they would not have Oxford turned into a manufacturing town; they had protested against the town being overrun with railway roughs and navvies; they now objected to its being converted into a military station crowded with disorderly soldiers. Leave their quiet cloisters undisturbed and Oxford would remain the greatest University city in the world.

Sir William Harcourt, who followed, complimented the new member upon the ability of his speech. He professed himself greatly shocked that one who bore a name so inseparably associated with the glories of the British Army should have permitted himself to speak of 'roystering soldiers,' or that one who was elected to the House by a majority all of whom did not belong to the upper classes, should have spoken of 'railway roughs.' The Lord Mayor of Dublin, who spoke later, complained of what he described as an unfounded slander upon his constituents conveyed in the suggestion that a large army was stationed in Dublin for the purpose of keeping down a disloyal and disaffected population; and another member, a graduate of Trinity College, protested against the sneers at Dublin University which he said Lord Randolph's speech had contained. The motion was rejected by 170 to 91; and it is fair to say that none of the evils anticipated have yet occurred. The barracks have proved too far from Oxford to interfere practically with its life, though their presence is a convenience to University candidates for the Army, and the officers form a valuable addition to academic society.

Although it had chanced that Lord Randolph's first speech was against the Government, Mr. Disraeli hastened to write a friendly account of it to the Duchess of Marlborough:—

2 Whitehall Gardens, S.W.: May 23, 1874.

Dear Duchess,—You will be pleased to hear that Lord R. last night made a very successful *début* in the House of Commons. He said some imprudent things, which was of no consequence in the maiden speech of a young man, but he spoke with fire and fluency; and showed energy of thought and character, with evidence of resource.

With self-control and assiduity he may obtain a position worthy of his name, and mount. He replied to the new Conservative member for Oxford City, who also is a man of promise. I am going to Hughenden this morning, and am very busy, or I would have tried to have told you all this in person.

Yours sincerely,
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But the course of the session and of the years that followed offered few opportunities to young members for winning Parliamentary distinction. The waters of politics flowed smoothly and even sluggishly. The Public Worship Regulation Bill brought Mr. Gladstone promptly from his retirement with six resolutions and much moving eloquence. During its passage political leaders were thrown into novel combinations and discords and the ordinary lines of party cleavage altogether disappeared. The House of Commons, with an unconscious disregard of its own rules, wrangled over the debates in the House of Lords. The Prime Minister described the Secretary of State for India as a ‘master of gibes and flouts and jeers.’ Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury on the one hand confronted Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Disraeli on the other. But with this exception the sessions were dull and formal. Now and then an incident or a scene, like Mr. Plimsoll’s outburst or Mr. Biggar’s four-hour speech, excited a

momentary interest or irritation. The purchase of the Suez Canal shares or the Royal Titles Bill or an academic debate upon Home Rule produced from time to time interesting discussions. The mild dissipation of Mr. Gladstone's surplus by his successor at the Treasury provoked a spurt of censure; but the temperature of public life continued low and its pulse languid.

Even in a period of political activity there is small scope for the supporter of a Government. The Whips do not want speeches, but votes. The Ministers regard an oration in their praise or defence as only one degree less tiresome than an attack. The earnest party man becomes a silent drudge, tramping at intervals through lobbies to record his vote and wondering why he came to Westminster at all. Ambitious youth diverges into criticism and even hostility, or seeks an outlet for its energies elsewhere. Lord Randolph took scarcely any part in the Parliament of 1874. During its first three years he did not occupy more than an hour and a half of its time or attention. If he spoke at all, it was usually on matters connected with Woodstock. A question here and there, a few uncontroversial words during the debates on the Public Worship Regulation Bill, a sharp little impromptu speech on a motion for the release of Irish State prisoners in protest against an unkind comparison drawn by Mr. O'Connor Power between the soldiers who had become Fenians and the conduct of the first Duke of Marlborough in deserting William of Orange —these are almost the only references to his existence that 'Hansard' contains.

At the end of May 1875 Sir Charles Dilke moved for a return of the unreformed Corporations of England, making special reference to the circumstances and behaviour of the excessively unreformed borough of Woodstock. He attacked its self-elected corporation, which gave no account of its dealings with its property and contributed apparently only a small proportion to public purposes. He

denounced its Mayor—the landlord of a small public-house, let to him at an absurdly low rate by the Corporation—who, having been summoned and convicted under pressure from the inhabitants for permitting drinking on his premises after hours, had said: 'I have always had a great respect for the police, but I shall never have again.' This cruel indictment brought Lord Randolph to the rescue in an amusing speech, in which he exhibited such unexpected debating powers that it was alleged, and I dare say not without some truth, that he did not hear Sir Charles Dilke's speech for the first time in the House of Commons. He explained that the Foresters had met at the King's Arms and that 'their business had been so important as to last beyond closing time.' The application for the summons, he said, had been delayed because the police had been kept busy by the Shipton-on-Cherwell railway accident; the fines imposed had been trifling, and the Mayor had really said, 'I have always thought highly of the police of Woodstock, and shall henceforth think more highly of them than ever'—a version of his remarks which, it must be admitted, would seem to have indicated a very high degree of civic virtue. Lord Randolph then justified the expenditure of the Corporation, and deprecated 'the vivisection of an unfortunate Mayor and the persecution of a few poor Aldermen.' 'The great beauty of this speech,' said Sir William Harcourt, in reply, 'was that the noble lord, having admitted all the most damaging facts against himself, persuaded the House that they were of no importance whatever.' But at any rate Lord Randolph was successful in saving his constituents from inquiry, and the debate ended amid much good-humour on all sides. Indeed, when Sir Charles Dilke renewed his motion in the following year, there was quite a considerable attendance of members who had laughed at the first dispute and wanted to hear another sparring match.

For the first year after Lord Randolph's marriage he and

Lady Randolph lived in a small house in Curzon Street and indulged in all the gaieties and festivities of the London season, which in those days was much fuller and more prolonged than it is now. Balls and parties at great houses long since closed; Newmarket, Ascot, Goodwood, Cowes, and Trouville; filled the lives of a young couple in merry succession. Little else was thought of but enjoyment; and though the member for Woodstock liked discussing politics and took an intelligent interest in affairs, his attendances at the House were fitful and fleeting. The winter at Blenheim was occupied in hunting with the Heythrop Hounds and varied by occasional visits to Paris, where Lady Randolph's family was living. There he mixed in French society and met politicians and writers, and it was at this time that he formed a friendship with M. de Breteuil, which, like most of his intimate friendships, lasted the rest of his life. It was also during these days that he cultivated a taste for French novels, which ended by making him a fair French scholar, with that comprehensive, peculiar, and correct knowledge of the subtleties and idioms of the language which is often to be noticed in his letters.



Lady Randolph Churchill

In the spring of 1875 Lord and Lady Randolph installed themselves in a larger house in Charles Street, where they continued their gay life on a somewhat more generous scale than their income warranted. Fortified by an excellent French cook, they entertained with discrimination. The Prince of Wales, who had from the beginning shown them much kindness, dined sometimes with them. Lord Randolph's college friend, Lord Rosebery, was a frequent visitor. One night Mr. Disraeli was among their guests, and an anecdote of his visit may be preserved. 'I think,' said Lord Randolph, discussing with his wife their party after it had broken up, 'that Dizzy enjoyed himself. But how

flowery and exaggerated is his language! When I asked him if he would have any more wine, he replied: "My dear Randolph, I have sipped your excellent champagne; I have drunk your good claret; I have tasted your delicious port—I will have no more"!' 'Well,' said Lady Randolph, laughing, 'he sat next to me, and I particularly remarked that he drank nothing but a little weak brandy-and-water.' In August 1875, Lord Randolph went with his wife to America to spend ten bustling days at the Philadelphia Exhibition; and in the United States, as in Paris, he made the acquaintance of many politicians and persons of public note.

Thus for two years his days were filled with social amusements and domestic happiness.

'...All the world looked kind
(As it will look sometimes with the first stare
Which youth would not act ill to keep in
mind).'[4]

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He was embarrassed chiefly by the necessity, which time imposed, of having to select from a superfluity of pleasures. The House of Commons was but one among various diversions. His occasional attendances contributed an element of seriousness to his life, good in itself, attractive by contrast, that provided, moreover, a justification (very soothing to the conscience) for not engaging in more laborious work. But for the recurring ailments to which his delicate constitution was subject and the want of money which so often teases a young married couple, his horizon had been without a cloud, his career without a care. But in the year 1876 an event happened which altered, darkened, and strengthened his whole life

and character. Engaging in his brother's quarrels with fierce and reckless partisanship, Lord Randolph incurred the deep displeasure of a great personage. The fashionable world no longer smiled. Powerful enemies were anxious to humiliate him. His own sensitiveness and pride magnified every coldness into an affront. London became odious to him. The breach was not repaired for more than eight years, and in the interval a nature originally genial and gay contracted a stern and bitter quality, a harsh contempt for what is called 'Society,' and an abiding antagonism to rank and authority. If this misfortune produced in Lord Randolph characteristics which afterwards hindered or injured his public work, it was also his spur. Without it he might have wasted a dozen years in the frivolous and expensive pursuits of the silly world of fashion; without it he would probably never have developed popular sympathies or the courage to champion democratic causes.

When Mr. Disraeli formed his Government, he had asked the Duke of Marlborough to go to Ireland as Viceroy. But the Duke, whose income could ill support such pretended magnificence, and who was quite content at Blenheim, declined. In 1876 the Prime Minister renewed his offer, and urged the special argument that if the Duke took his younger son with him the resentment in London would the sooner blow over in Lord Randolph's absence. Thus urged, the Duke reluctantly consented. Blenheim was handed over to housekeepers and agents and its household was bodily transported to the Viceregal Lodge. His father hoped that Lord Randolph could become the regular private secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant; but various difficulties interposed, and in the end it was decided that the appointment must be unofficial and unpaid. It was certain that his acceptance of 'an office of profit' would involve the expense of another election at Woodstock. It was uncertain whether, even after being re-elected, that particular post could be held jointly with a seat in the

House of Commons.

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach (Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant) to the Duke of Marlborough

Chief Secretary's Lodge, Phœnix Park: Tuesday.

My dear Lord Duke,—The Irish Lord Chancellor is *very doubtful* whether the office of Private Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant is, or is not, a 'new office.' I believe it appears from old almanacks that Lord-Lieutenants had private secretaries before the date of the Act, as one would naturally suppose. But in one case a *Bishop* appears to have held the appointment; and the Lord Chancellor thinks that since that time there may have been such changes made, either in the duties of the office or in the mode in which its holder is paid, as technically to make it a 'new office.' This, however, is to a great extent a question of fact; and I have therefore asked Sir Bernard Burke, who is *the* authority here upon such things, to look into the point and let me have his views in the shape of a memorandum, which I will forward to you.

Please let me know whether you have *quite* settled to come over on Monday night, 11th, reaching Dublin on Tuesday morning; as I must, in that event, summon a Privy Council for Tuesday. And I hope you have got the 'Queen's letter' and your patent, or will have them by that time.

Your Grace's very truly,
M. E. Hicks-Beach.

And again:—

Rockingham, Boyle: November 28, 1876.

My dear Lord Duke,—I fear you will think my letters a decided nuisance; but it is not my fault if I have to convey unpleasant intelligence.

At my request Lord Chancellor Ball has given me the enclosed opinion as to Lord Randolph's position. You will see that it does not in so many words touch the question whether Lord Randolph, if re-elected, could hold the office of your private secretary together with a seat in Parliament; but it rather implies that he could. I will, however, on my return to Dublin on Friday next, ask the Lord Chancellor to look into this point also.

I am bound to say that I attach great importance to any view which the Lord Chancellor may take on such a subject. Perhaps

the only lawyer in Ireland whose opinion on it might be more valuable is, oddly enough, Mr. Butt. But his opinion could only be formally taken, and it would be hardly wise to do this.

Believe me
Your Grace's very sincerely,
M. E. Hicks-Beach.

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The state entry of the new Viceroy was conducted with its usual ceremony on December 11, 1876. Lord Randolph, who with his wife and child followed in the procession, made, amid the bustle and discomfort of this day, a life-long friend. Mr. FitzGibbon filled in 1877 the peculiar office of 'Law Adviser' at the Castle. The proper duty of the 'Adviser' was to answer legal questions put by justices of the peace all over Ireland, but he had also to give advice and opinions to all and sundry at the Castle, in the constabulary, lunacy, valuation, and a dozen other of the queerly-conceived and oddly-entangled departments through which the Government of Ireland is administered. 'After the Duke's public entry,' writes Lord Justice FitzGibbon, 'the legal maid-of-all-work attended with the rest of the officials in the throne room, to be presented. When I had made my bow I went back to my "files." Presently the door opened, and Kaye, the Assistant Under-Secretary, came in with a young man whom he introduced as "the Lord-Lieutenant's son," who "wanted to ask the Law Adviser a question." So he left us. A footman had jibbed—I suppose he did not like the look of Dublin Castle—and Lord Randolph wanted to know whether he could "sack" him without paying his fare back to London. He wanted to do this "as a lesson." I told him that, whatever the law was, the Lord-Lieutenant's son couldn't do it; and so began an acquaintance which ripened soon into a

friendship that, full though it was of almost constant anxiety and apprehension, is one of the dearest memories of my life. How it grew so fast I can hardly tell. I suppose electricity came in somewhere....'

Five minutes' walk from the Viceregal Lodge, on the road to the Phœnix Park, there stands, amid clustering trees, a little, long, low, white house with a green verandah and a tiny lawn and garden. This is the 'Little Lodge' and the appointed abode of the private secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant. By a friendly arrangement with that gentleman Lord Randolph was permitted to occupy it; and here, for the next four years, his life was mainly lived. He studied reflectively the jerky course of administration at the Castle. He played chess with Steinitz, who was living in Dublin at this time; he explored Donegal in pursuit of snipe; he fished the lakes and streams of Ireland, wandering about where fancy took him; but wherever he went, and for whatever purpose, he interested himself in the people and studied the questions of the country. Disdaining the Ward Stag-hounds as not true sport, he hunted earnestly each winter with the Meath and Kildare. Often on a summer's afternoon he would repair to Howth, where the east coast cliffs rise up into bold headlands which would not be unworthy of the Atlantic waves. Here in good company he would make the 'periplus,' as he called it—or, in other words, sail round 'Ireland's Eye'—in the 16-foot boat of FitzGibbon's mate, Frank Lynch (the 'Admiral' of his letters), catch lobsters, and cook and eat them on the rocks of the island. In the evenings he played half-crown whist in Trinity College or at the University Club or dined and argued with FitzGibbon and his friends. 'He was,' writes FitzGibbon, 'always on the move. He had the reputation of an "*enfant terrible*." Before long he had been in Donegal, in Connemara, and all over the place—"Hail fellow, well met" with everybody except the aristocrats and the old Tories; for he showed symptoms of independence of view

and of likings for the company of "the Boys," which led to some friction with the staunch Conservatives and strong Protestants who regarded themselves as the salt of the earth.'

FitzGibbon's Christmas parties at Howth—an institution justly celebrated since, but misunderstood by many, as a gathering of notable men—had begun in the bivouac of six close friends in a half-finished house on Innocents' Day, 1875. The number grew as the years passed by. Lord Randolph came first in 1877 and was accepted as its youngest member into a circle which included David Plunket, Edward Gibson, Baillie-Gage, Webb-Williamson, Professor Mahaffy, Morris Gibson, Father James Healy, Dr. Nedley, and other wise and merry Irishmen. The nights were consumed with whist, chaff, and tobacco; and the intervening days spent in climbing the Hill of Howth or listening to the 'words of wisdom from Morris' which became one of the constant features of the entertainment. These parties were always a great delight to Lord Randolph and during the rest of his life nothing, which could by any effort be thrust aside, was ever allowed to stand in the way of his visit.

Lord Randolph had not been very long in Dublin when he was invited to move a resolution at the annual meeting of the Historical Society of Trinity College. This was a function of no little importance. The Historical Society may be said to correspond to the Oxford Union and members of the one are honorary members of the other. But it is the custom of the Irish body to inaugurate the session of each year with special ceremony. The President of the year, the Auditor, as he is called, presents and reads an address which he has himself prepared, and this then forms the subject of the speeches, in which various resolutions are moved. A distinguished company assembles. The platform is occupied by the leading figures of the Irish Church, Bench and Bar, and the body of the

great dining-hall is filled to overflowing with keen-witted and usually uproarious undergraduates. Before this audience—the most critical outside the House of Commons he had yet ventured to address—Lord Randolph was now called.

The Auditor of the year, Mr. C. A. O'Connor, had chosen for his address 'The Relation of Philosophy to Politics,' a subject not inappropriate in a University that, as it proudly asserts, had 'nurtured the philosophic mind of Burke and cradled the patriotism of Grattan.' The first resolution, of which the Attorney-General had charge, was one of thanks to the Auditor, and Lord Randolph was required to propose the second: 'That the Auditor's address be printed and preserved in the archives of the society.' He began by suitable acknowledgments of the honour of the invitation and in praise of the address. The Auditor, he said, had deprecated the slenderness of the connection between politics and philosophy at the present day and looked forward to a time when politics would be subservient to philosophy. Well, but philosophy was a very comprehensive word, and one would like to know to what system of philosophy the Auditor referred. There had been in the ancient world three principal schools of philosophy: there was the school of the Stoics—a most disagreeable school; the school of the Platonists—a most unintelligible school; and the school of the Epicureans—a most attractive school.

'Perhaps,' he continued, 'I may be permitted to think that there is a connection, almost an intimate connection, between the philosophy of the Epicurean school and what is known as Conservative politics. To let things alone as much as we can; to accustom ourselves to look always at the brightest side; to legislate rather for the moment than for the dim and distant future, gratefully leaving that job to posterity, and thus making all classes comfortable—these are, as I understand them, the maxims of what we know as

Conservative politics.' He went on to speak of Ireland in 1877 and to praise 'New Ireland,' a book by Mr. A. M. Sullivan, then lately published, which had excited much attention. All this and more, delivered with much grace and humour, made a most favourable impression on the assembly. The newspapers in their articles and accounts the next day were flattering to the orator and the confidence, which his Irish friends were beginning to feel in his abilities, was sensibly increased.

Before Lord Randolph had been many months in Ireland he began to form strong opinions of his own on Irish questions and to take a keen interest in politics. He was soon in touch with all classes and parties. He watched Irish administration from the inside, and heard what was said about it out-of-doors. All the official circle were quite ready to impart their information to the son of the Lord-Lieutenant. At Howth and in FitzGibbon's company he met all that was best in the Dublin world. He became an active member of the Dublin University Club and a frequent guest at the Fellows' Table in Trinity College. His relations in Ireland, the Londonderrys and Portarlingtons, impressed him with the high Tory view. He became very friendly with Mr. Butt, who with Father Healy often dined at the Little Lodge and laboured genially to convert Lady Randolph to Home Rule. Indeed, he saw a good deal more of Nationalist politicians than his elders thought prudent or proper. The fruits of this varied education were not long concealed by its green leaves.

A sentence at the end of a speech which he made during the session of 1877 on some small matter of Irish administration reveals the general current of his mind. He expressed his regret for having said—in his maiden speech three years before—that Dublin was 'a seditious capital.' 'I have since learned to know Ireland better.' It was time indeed that some Englishman should 'learn to know Ireland better.' Under a glassy surface forces were

gathering for a violent upheaval. Mr. Butt's leadership of the Irish party gave no pleasure to his countrymen. He had united the various sections of Irish members in a policy of conciliatory agitation for Home Rule. He had, indeed, invented the name 'Home Rule'—since become the very war-cry of prejudice—to soothe and reassure British minds likely to be offended by the word 'Repeal.' His authority was now to be seized by a young man of very different temper.

Parnell was a squire, reared upon the land, with all those qualities of pride, mettle, and strength which often spring from the hereditary ownership of land. Butt was a lawyer, and his world was a world of words—fine words, good words, wise words—woven together in happy combinations, adroitly conceived, attractively presented; but only words. Butt cherished and honoured the House of Commons. Its great traditions warmed his heart. He was proud to be a member of the most ancient and illustrious representative assembly in the world. He was fitted by his gifts to adorn it. Parnell cared nothing for the House of Commons, except to hate it as a British institution. He disliked speeches. He despised rhetoric. Butt trusted in argument; Parnell in force. Butt was a constitutionalist and a man of peace and order; Parnell was the very spirit of revolution, the instrument of hatred, the agent of relentless war.

The conduct of English parties did not strengthen the position of Mr. Butt. They listened to his arguments with great good-humour, and voted against him when he had quite finished. He was regarded as an exemplary politician and his Parliamentary methods were considered most respectable. Ministers paid him many compliments. They and their followers and their Liberal opponents contributed cogent and interesting speeches to the Home Rule debates which he inaugurated year after year. Mr. Disraeli in particular made a very brilliant and witty speech upon the

subject in 1874. But they conceded him nothing. No British Government could have desired a more temperate, courteous, or reasonable opponent. Never were courtesy and reason more poorly served. The Irish legislation for which Mr. Butt pressed was neglected by the Government and disdained by the House. Session after session proved barren. At every meeting of Parliament Mr. Butt was ready with his programme. At every prorogation he departed empty-handed. The debates on Wednesday afternoons were so largely occupied with his proposals that the Cabinet and the Conservative party were wearied with perpetual Irish discussions. 'What am I to say to this?' asked the Law Officer, on one of these occasions, of the Prime Minister. 'Speak,' replied Disraeli, 'for fourteen minutes and say nothing'—a modest request well within the compass of a semi-legal, semi-political functionary. This was typical of the attitude of power towards Irish affairs.

In the session of 1876 nine Bills dealing with land, education, rating, electoral reform, Parliamentary reform, judicial and municipal reform—all burning Irish questions —were introduced by the Irish party. Few were considered. All, except two of minor importance, were cast out. The claims of Ireland upon Parliament were real and urgent. The Chief Secretary pressed upon the Cabinet earnestly, but in vain, the necessity for land legislation. Neither the Parliamentary force nor time could be found. Mr. Butt introduced a Land Bill of his own—very tame by comparison with subsequent enactments. It was rejected by 290 votes to 56. Nearly thirty measures dealing with the land question alone, brought forward by Irish members between 1870 and 1880, perished in the wilderness.

It should not be inferred that no Irish Bills were carried by the Government. Indeed, some of the measures passed during this Parliament are still the law on the matters to which they relate. But the Chief Secretary was the

youngest member of the Cabinet, and the Irish Tories in the House, led by Mr. Kavanagh, being more numerous and even more powerful than in our own time, were able to make anyone who displayed a liking for change sensible of their severe displeasure. On one occasion indeed, when Sir Michael Hicks-Beach had extended Government support to the 'Municipal Privileges Bill' and to a Bill for assimilating the Irish municipal franchise to the English, they lost no time in sending a round-robin to the head of the Government requesting him to dismiss the delinquent Minister. Disraeli returned a suitable reply to this; but the Chief Secretary was forced to refuse the concessions he had desired to make. And although from year to year he succeeded in passing a series of Bills dealing with such subjects as Licensing, Public Health, Lunacy, Jury Qualifications, Prisons, County Courts, and Intermediate Education, he could not free Irish Parliamentary action from discredit in Irish eyes.

Mr. Butt was patient; he believed in patience; he counselled patience to his followers. The majority of them were willing to accept his views. He was opposed to 'a policy of exasperation.' He thought that reason would prevail and that violence of any kind would estrange 'our best friends in England.' He believed, not without foundation, that to injure a representative institution was to strike democracy at its heart. 'Gentlemen first, patriots afterwards' was the motto of his followers. And in return they received that form of respect which, being devoid of the element of fear, is closely akin to contempt. Had the Government of Mr. Disraeli been gifted with foresight beyond the scope of ordinary British Administrations they would by timely concessions, by some few substantial gifts, have vindicated constitutional agitation. But they went their way, living from hand to mouth and from week to week, meeting their daily troubles with such expedients as came to hand. 'If pure advocacy—able, earnest,

courteous—could have won the Irish cause,' writes Parnell's biographer, 'Mr. Butt would have succeeded. It could not, and he failed hopelessly.'[5] A new leader with new weapons was at hand.

Judged by all the available standards, Mr. Butt's position as leader of the Irish party at the beginning of 1877 was secure. He was the most brilliant Irishman in Parliament. He had defended, at much personal sacrifice and with immense ability, the Fenian prisoners of the 'sixties. He was the founder of the Home Rule League and apparently its perennial president. The whole Irish party in the House of Commons was at his back. Whatever of Parliamentary prestige can be enjoyed without executive power supported him. Moreover, in all the personal relations of life he had great advantages. He was genial, tolerant, and kindly, with a smile and a handshake for all, and generous to a fault with his personal friends. Parnell had nothing to offer. He was almost unknown and, even so, distrusted as a landlord. He was a young man with a forbidding manner and almost inarticulate. In a nation preternaturally eloquent he could scarcely jerk out his most familiar thoughts. No conflict could well have appeared more unequal in conditions or more contrarily decisive in result than the duel between these two men.

Obstruction was an ugly novelty to the Parliament of 1874. Some ominous improprieties had marked the resistance to the Irish Church Bill, the Ballot Bill, and the Bill for the Abolition of Purchase in the Army, during Mr. Gladstone's Administration; but no serious deadlock had arisen. Suddenly the House of Commons awoke to the fact that half-a-dozen of its members were persistently and deliberately engaged in paralysing its business. The procedure of those days offered a virgin field. No closure terminated the debate. No Supply rule regulated financial business. No restriction was imposed upon the right of members to move to adjourn the debate or the House or to

report progress in Committee. The minority was restrained only by custom and awe. It now appeared that a few members were resolved to destroy conventions which had been consecrated by centuries of observance.

The mutineers were so few in number that they excited almost as much surprise as irritation. Public reprobation, newspaper abuse, Parliamentary disgust, were directed upon them in vain. The leaders of the Opposition vied in terms of condemnation with Her Majesty's Ministers. The Irish party was shocked and silent. Nothing availed against men whose only object was to inflict an outrage upon Parliament, and who gauged their success by the indignation and sorrow they created. At length, during one weary sitting, in an evil hour for his own authority, Mr. Butt was persuaded to denounce the obstructives and to declare, amid resounding English cheers, his deep detestation of their tactics. But the censure which was so general in England awoke its counter-cry across St. George's Channel. The measure of British hatred and contempt became the measure of Irish sympathy and partisanship. 'Parliamentarianism,' writes Mr. Barry O'Brien drolly, 'was apparently becoming a respectable thing. It might be possible to touch it without being contaminated.' The Fenian organisations, long disdainful of Mr. Butt's constitutional methods and confronted at every session with their utter futility, turned with interest to the new man who moved with unconcerned deliberation into the centre of the stage and dealt with others as though it was his birthright to command and theirs to serve him. Delicate and subterranean negotiations followed with secret societies who were reluctant to compromise the purity of their revolutionary creeds by any paltering with half-measures or pseudo-constitutional agitation. Sympathetic acquiescence—if not, indeed, actual co-operation—was at length almost unconsciously conceded. In two years Mr. Butt was broken. The Home Rule

Confederation cast him off; his friends sorrowfully but unhesitatingly deposed him; his followers enlisted with the conqueror. Mr. Butt's end was melancholy. Hunted and harassed by debt and illness, worn with prolonged exertions and mortified by supersession and defeat, he lived only to see his authority exercised by another and the land for which he had laboured, not unfaithfully, darkened by famine and smouldering with revolt. He died early in May 1879 and the usurper strode forward to encounter many adventures and a still more tragic fate.

Lord Randolph Churchill was a silent, though not unmoved, spectator of the early stages of this drama in the House of Commons, and in the autumn, at the dinner of the Woodstock Agricultural and Horticultural Show (September 18), he expressed his opinion upon them with unguarded freedom, much to the astonishment and displeasure of his family. This speech is the first which reveals the perfectly independent movement of his mind and the shrewd insight which guided it. He could not vote for Home Rule, he said, because without the Irish members more than one-third of the life and soul of the House of Commons would be lost. 'Who is it, but the Irish, whose eloquence so often commands our admiration, whose irresistible humour compels our laughter, whose fiery outbursts provoke our passions?' Banish them, and the House of Commons, composed only of Englishmen and Scotsmen, would sink to the condition of a vestry. 'I have no hesitation in saying that it is inattention to Irish legislation that has produced obstruction. There are great and crying Irish questions which the Government have not attended to, do not seem to be inclined to attend to, and perhaps do not intend to attend to—the question of intermediate and higher education, and the question of the assimilation of the municipal and Parliamentary electoral privileges to English privileges—and as long as these matters are neglected, so long will the Government have to

deal with obstruction from Ireland.' Truths, he said, were always unpalatable, and he who spoke them very seldom got much thanks; but that did not render them less true. England had years of wrong, years of crime, years of tyranny, years of oppression, years of general misgovernment, to make amends for in Ireland. The Act of Union was passed, and in the passing of it all the arsenal of political corruption and chicanery was exhausted, to inaugurate a series of remedial and healing measures; and if that Act had not been productive of these effects, it would be entitled to be unequivocally condemned by history, and would, perhaps, be repealed by posterity. It was for these reasons that he should propose no extreme measures against Irish members, believing as he did that the cure for obstruction lay not in threats, not in hard words, but in conciliatory legislation.

This speech attracted attention in various quarters. Mr. Parnell, who spoke three days later in Paisley, alluded to it at some length and declared that if the Government would pass certain measures dealing with the questions mentioned, they would not be disturbed next session by Irish obstruction. The *Morning Post* expressed its displeasure in a leading article. 'This is the language of Mr. Parnell and his colleagues, and it is the argument on which the Home Rule movement as well as the Obstructionist movement is based.' As to Lord Randolph's remarks about the Union—'It is no exaggeration to say that neither Mr. Parnell nor Mr. Butt could have used stronger language in support of their respective lines of action. But it is not an Irish Rome [*sic*] Ruler or an Irish Obstructive who has used it. It is the Conservative representative of an English borough and the son of the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.' But it was Sir Michael Hicks-Beach who read Lord Randolph with the greatest surprise. He lost no time in writing a remonstrance to the Duke of Marlborough.

The Duke of Marlborough to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach.

Guisachan: September 25, 1877.

My dear Beach,—The only excuse I can find for Randolph is that he must either be mad or have been singularly affected with local champagne or claret. I can only say that the sentiments he has indulged in are purely his own; and, more than this, I was as much amazed as you in reading them, and had no conception that he entertained such opinions. The conjuncture is most unfortunate and ill-timed; but at the same time it must be remembered that though my son, and occupying by leave P. Bernard's house, he is not in any way officially connected with me, and the assumption therefore that he represented my opinions would be both unwarranted and unfair. I quite appreciate your consideration in making no allusion to his remarks, and perhaps, unless it should be absolutely required, the less notice drawn to them the better. Should you, however, feel it to be necessary to correct misapprehensions consequent on his speech, I conceive you are perfectly entitled to do so. I can only repeat that I am extremely annoyed at the folly of his utterance, which I believe on reflection he will regret himself. Perhaps, if I might suggest, a letter from yourself to him in your official position and responsible for Irish business in Parliament might be the best way of dealing with the occurrence.

Yours very sincerely,
Marlborough.

These chronicles do not record the explanations or rebukes which must have followed; but Lord Randolph by no means withdrew or modified what he had said, and is found writing a few days later to the *Morning Post* in a most impenitent mood:—

Junior Carlton Club: September 22.

Sir,—In your article of this morning on my speech at Woodstock you say: 'But what is even more faulty in Lord Randolph Churchill's speech is the assertion, which he indirectly makes, that the Act of Union had not been productive of those remedial measures which, as he rightly contends, are the only justification of the means by which it was passed.' Owing to an

omission in the report of my remarks you have unintentionally misrepresented me. I said that the Act of Union was intended to inaugurate, *and had inaugurated*, a series of healing and remedial measures, and I intimated that perseverance in a course of conciliatory legislation for Ireland might be a sure cure for obstruction, and a still further defence of the methods used to pass the Act of Union.

Again, you say I not only extenuated the conduct of the obstructionists, but justified it. Nothing that I said at Woodstock admits of this construction. I never even discussed the conduct of the obstructionists; I merely discussed the remedies for obstruction which had been proposed by many public men and by a great portion of the English press. Surely you would not have said that Liberal members, in advocating the Irish Land Act and the Irish Church Act, were extenuating and justifying the Fenian movement.

You remark, further, that what I called 'unpalatable plain truths' were certainly unpalatable, but were not true. Yet the misgovernment of Ireland before the Act of Union, and the methods used to pass that Act, are now matters of history. These were two of my 'plain truths'; and the third, that the great questions on which Irish feeling is most deeply interested have been neglected during the last four years, is in my opinion equally undeniable. You accuse me of forgetting the Judicature Act, the improved position of the National school teachers, the grant of 10,000*l.* towards the Irish fisheries. I do not for a moment forget them, but would think it a mockery to say much of them to a people hungering for moderate progressive reform, such as we have had in this country, of their political, municipal, and educational institutions.

It was because I hope that these questions may be settled by the Conservative party, and not by the Liberal party or the Home Rule party, that I made the remarks on which you have animadverted; little dreaming, however, that the utterances of so obscure an individual as myself, in the quiet rural locality of Woodstock, would attract the attention of any portion of the Metropolitan press. As, however, they have attracted your comments, I am confident that you will, with your usual love of fair play, insert this attempt of mine at explanation.

I remain, your obedient servant,

RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

As the differences between Butt and Parnell widened and developed into the supremacy of the latter, Lord Randolph seems to have been more amenable to his father's influence; for in 1879 he voted *against* a resolution for the assimilation of Irish to English privileges, and explained that, although the theoretic argument was overwhelming, the immediate extension of the franchise in Ireland would destroy the moderate and constitutional Home Rulers and secure the ascendency of the more lawless and embittered classes.

During the winter of 1877 Lord Randolph devoted himself, with the assistance of a young Dublin graduate, to the study of Irish intermediate education. He took the question up deliberately, as the first step in public life and a lesson in political work. He spared no pains. He sounded every well of information. He consulted every shade of Irish opinion. He questioned a host of Irish pedagogues and wrote to all the headmasters of the English public schools. An evidence of his activities is provided by a letter from him to the *Freeman's Journal*, published on the last day of the year, on the extinction of the Irish diocesan schools. These had been set up by Queen Elizabeth under the Act of 1570. They were 'diocesan' only because the diocese was a more convenient division than a county and were not meant to be under Church control. The masters were to be appointed by the Lord-Lieutenant and the endowment was in the form of a charge on the property of the Church. But the system had only been partially established and the Irish Church Act of 1869 had, by a strange blunder, treated the schools as Church property, and, as amended in 1872, it allowed the masters to compound like incumbents, a proportion of the commutation money accruing to the 'Church Surplus.' Money had therefore actually been diverted from education and Lord Randolph was intent on reclaiming an

equivalent sum for intermediate instruction.

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But the main purpose of his labours was to draw up a pamphlet taking the form of a letter to his friend Sir J. Bernard Burke, Ulster King-at-Arms—who, it appears, had first interested him in this question—and dealing completely with Irish intermediate education. This letter was finished in the beginning of 1878, was published in Dublin, and sold at 6*d.* It showed, on the evidence of various Royal Commissions, that intermediate education in Ireland was positively declining, yet that a system of intermediate education had existed since the days of Elizabeth, in the shape of Royal Free Schools, the Diocesan Grammar Schools, and the Erasmus Smith Schools, which only required rearrangement and development. It proposed to extend the system of Royal Free Schools and to provide more money out of the Church surplus. The religious difficulty was to be surmounted by appointing lay Catholic masters in Catholic districts and Protestant masters in Protestant districts, with a conscience clause, control by local boards (chiefly lay) and a scholarship system, so as to enable the religious minority in any district to get education elsewhere. This plan, admirable in itself, would probably have been found to underrate the religious difficulty and especially the reluctance of the Roman Catholic Church, evinced in every country, to tolerate education that it does not absolutely control.

Lord Randolph's early efforts in the cause of Irish education were not confined to Ireland or to pamphleteering. From the day when he took it up to the close of his life, he never ceased his endeavours to promote progress and reform and to satisfy real wants and

aspirations in that department. In the session of 1878, with a perseverance and persistence which disgusted the Irish Tories, he brought forward a motion (June 4) for a Select Committee of the House of Commons to inquire into the condition and management of the endowed schools of Ireland, with instructions to report 'how far those endowments are at present promoting, or are applicable to the promotion of, intermediate education in that country, without distinction of class or religion.' In support of this he delivered a considerable speech, moderate and argumentative in tone and crowded with figures and quotations, to prove the many abuses and anomalies of the Irish education system and the urgent need of co-ordination and reform.

He had induced Mr. Chamberlain, with whom he was already on friendly terms, to second the motion; and the case unfolded in these two speeches was sufficiently strong to impress the Government and the House. The Irish Nationalists were profuse in their expressions of pleasure that English members should display so keen an interest in an Irish question. The O'Conor Don expressed his deep obligation and that of all the members connected with Ireland, to Lord Randolph for the manner in which he had introduced the motion. The Government, through its Chief Secretary, Mr. Lowther (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach having by this time been transferred to the Colonial Office), offered, in lieu of a select Committee, a small Commission specially appointed to inquire into the condition, management, and revenues of the schools; and this being thought generally acceptable, the motion was withdrawn. The Commission was duly appointed, Lord Rosse being Chairman and Mr. FitzGibbon and Lord Randolph both among its members. It laboured zealously and Lord Randolph travelled all over Ireland—north, west, and south—collecting information and examining schools. In what manner its researches issued ultimately, but not until

1885, in an Act of Parliament will presently be related.

The session of 1878 was dominated by the Eastern Question. The Russian armies were at the gates of Constantinople. The British fleet lay at Besika Bay. The early months of the year were passed under the shadow of imminent war. Resignations broke the Cabinet circle; patriotic choruses resounded in the streets; the Reserves were called out, native Indian troops were brought to Malta, and a vote of credit of six millions was granted by the House of Commons. The course of British diplomacy and action in Lord Beaconsfield's hands was tortuous and dramatic. Absolutely supreme in the Cabinet after Lord Derby's withdrawal, the Prime Minister led an enthusiastic party and a puzzled nation through the Salisbury-Schouvaloff secret agreement and the Anglo-Turkish Convention to the Congress of Berlin, to the acquisition of Cyprus, to 'Peace with Honour' and the Knightsbridge banquet. It is not my purpose to comment on this or to compare it with that other note which now began again to resound with ever-growing vehemence and intensity through the land, until it broke in a storm of passionate appeal and triumphant eloquence from Midlothian. Never in their life-long conflict were Mr. Gladstone and his great antagonist so fiercely opposed. Their differences cut down to the roots of thought. In policy, in principle, in feeling, in aspiration, they clashed together at every point, large or small, of political method or morality, and behind them all Britain was divided into two furious camps. On both sides their colleagues in Parliament faded into insignificance. On both sides their followers in the country were whole-hearted in their allegiance. The Conservative majorities in the House of Commons were tremendous and inflexible on every issue. The great newspapers, the powers of fashion and clubland, the pledged partisans in the constituencies, had never before found a leader so much to their temper as Lord Beaconsfield. Outside Parliament, with its baffled and

divided Opposition and triumphant Ministry, the Liberal electors hung upon Mr. Gladstone's words as though he were, as he often seemed, inspired. And while the imposing array of Toryism marched proudly and confidently forward, enormous multitudes gathered eagerly and not less confidently to encounter them.

It is perhaps only in these great stirrings of the national mind that a man may discover to which of the main groupings of political opinion he naturally belongs. In all this conflict Lord Randolph Churchill took no public part. An occasional sarcasm used at some small function, an unadvertised abstention from some important division, might have revealed his personal inclinations. But he did nothing to attract public notice and it is only from his private letters that we may learn how decided were his sympathies and by what circumstances he was prevented from action which might easily have altered his whole career.

Parliament met in January 1878, amid conditions of the keenest excitement and of grave crisis, and the Government forthwith demanded their vote of credit for six millions to make special naval and military preparations. Having listened to Ministerial explanations Mr. Forster moved a reasoned amendment amounting to a flat refusal.[6] After a debate extending over a week, disturbed by the wildest reports from the East, Mr. Forster was glad to withdraw his amendment, and, upon the motion to go into Committee the Government, obtained a majority of more than three to one (295 to 96).

Lord Randolph Churchill to Sir Charles Dilke.

St. James's Club, Piccadilly: February 7, 1878.

My dear Sir Charles Dilke,—As I suppose this debate will come to a close with an enormous and disproportionate majority for the Government, and as I think the Opposition have made their stand on unfortunate ground, and that another fight might yet be fought with far greater chances of commanding sympathy

in the country, I want to know whether, if an Address to the Crown, praying Her Majesty to use her influence at the Conference in favour of the widest possible freedom to Bulgaria, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Thessaly, and Epirus, and in favour of totally and finally putting an end to direct Turkish Government in these provinces, was moved by me from the Tory side of the House, it would be supported by the Liberal party. I think I could almost make sure of a strong Home Rule vote on this. I think some Conservatives would support it. If Northcote does not give some very clear information as to what is going to be the policy of the Government, I think a motion of this sort should be made on the Report. The real cry for the country is—not sympathy with Russia, still less with Turkey, but complete freedom for the Slav and Hellenic nationalities.

I am off to Ireland to-night. I don't care enough for the Government to vote for them.... I shall see Butt in Dublin and shall sound him on what I have written to you. My address is Phœnix Park, Dublin.

Yours truly,
Randolph S. Churchill.

And the next day:—

The Castle, Dublin: February 8, 1878.

Many thanks for your two letters. As you say, while everything is in such an uncertain state nothing can be done. The Government have too great an advantage; but I think if we are led into taking any decisive steps hostile to Russia a great effort should be made for an authoritative declaration that the ultimate aim and object of any move on our part is the complete freedom and independence of the Slav nationality, as opposed to any reconstruction of the Turkish Empire. This, I am sure, should be the line for the Liberal party and not the 'Peace-at-any-price' cry, which it is evident the country will not have. In this I shall be ready to co-operate heartily as far as my poor efforts can be any good. It is just possible that if any movement of this kind be made, it would be better to originate it from the Conservative side of the House. I regret to see so much excitement getting up among the masses. It is dangerous material for Beaconsfield to work on. Will you think me very foolish or visionary if I say I look for a Republican form of government for Bulgaria, Bosnia,

and Herzegovina as far more to be preferred to setting up some Russian or German Prince as a puppet under the name of a constitutional monarchy? Perhaps if these ideas seem at all to your liking, and if you think they will command the support of the Liberal party, you would advise me what would be the most favourable moment for bringing them forward. I shall have some conversation with Butt, and have great hope of securing a solid Irish vote on any proposition which might seem to favour the principle of self-government for nationalities.

A few days later, he telegraphed to Sir Charles Dilke:—

Careysville, Fermoy.

I shall be in London Monday morning. Am not ambitious of taking any prominent part, unless it might contribute to the advantage of ideas which we have in common, that a motion should be made from my side of the House. I leave it absolutely to your judgment.

Churchill.

On this, Sir Charles Dilke wrote to Lord Granville, who replied:—

18 Carlton House Terrace.

My dear Dilke,—Such a motion as Lord Randolph Churchill proposes, supported by a certain number of Conservatives, might be well worth consideration, but I doubt his getting any Conservative support, and a contingent of Home Rulers would hardly justify us for making another attack on Plevna just now, with the probable alternative of a crushing defeat or withdrawal in the face of the enemy. I gather that you are doubtful. What did Hartington think?

Yours sincerely,
Granville.

Meanwhile Lord Randolph wrote again:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Sir Charles Dilke.

February 15, 1878.

I have sent you a telegram which I think you will understand. I am sure that my views, whatever they are worth, are in accordance with your speech and Harcourt's and Gladstone's on

the question of the future policy of this country. I am convinced under the present circumstances no motion should be unduly hastened on. There is lots of time. If I were asked to move a resolution, my speech would be an attack on Chaplin, Wolff, and the rest of the pro-Turkish party, confidence in the Government, and an invitation to the Liberal party to act as a whole. I feel I am awfully young to endeavour to initiate such a motion; but I am so convinced of the soundness of our view that I would risk a smash willingly to have that properly brought forward. If only your party would agree as a whole to support such a resolution moved from my side, the Government would at the best have only a majority of 80 after 190; and that would be a check. I shall see Butt before arriving in London and endeavour to make him take up a position on this question. The Government seem to be doing their level best to keep the peace, and perhaps another debate would not be unwelcome to them.

Lord Hartington, however, agreed with Lord Granville that it would be useless to attack again without assurance of substantial Conservative support. Sir Charles Dilke accordingly pressed Lord Randolph as to who might be expected to vote with him; but Lord Randolph could not be sure even of one, though he hoped that Mr. Spencer Walpole, the ex-Home Secretary, would do so. The question of balloting for a private members' night seems also to have been considered.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Sir Charles Dilke.

Castle Bernard, Bandon.

My dear Sir Charles,—I shall be over in London on the 26th instant, and I think it will be time enough then to make my motion. I should not like to make it unless it would command the support of a large number of members. Such support could only come from your side. I think the Conservative party are gone mad. Their speeches are calculated to provoke war. As it is so uncertain whether we shall go to war or a conference, I think I had better wait a little as—though the motion should, I think, be made in any case—the terms would vary very much according to either alternative.... I know of no one but Forsyth whom I could ask to ballot for me. If it commands much support, I should like

to press it even to a division. Cowen's speech and the vociferous cheers of the Conservative party evidently show that the idea of the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire is still predominant on our side; and against that I would try to go a great way. I send a sketch of the motion and I should of course be very glad if you would second one of this nature.

Yours very truly,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Draft of Motion.

That, in view of the extreme suffering so long undergone by the Slav, Bulgarian, and Hellenic nationalities of Bosnia, Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Thessaly, and Epirus, and considering that the Turkish rule over these provinces has now been definitely put an end to, the efforts of Her Majesty's Government should in the opinion of the House of Commons be principally directed towards the establishment of complete freedom and independence for the population of these provinces.

All this, however, remained unknown. The Conservative Administration pursued their course, with the unbroken assent of their followers and amid the acclamations of London Society, through a succession of diplomatic sensations and Parliamentary triumphs, towards a vast electoral disaster.

Devoted as he was to his party, Lord Randolph was by this time thoroughly out of sympathy with them in their Irish and foreign policy. The great Minister whose talk had fascinated him at Blenheim ten years before inspired him no longer. He describes Lord Derby's resignation as 'a thunderclap.' 'I cannot,' he writes to his father, 'like the war tactics. Calling out the Reserves is like throwing down the glove to Russia, and I fear she will not hesitate to take it up.' He was irritated by the movement of Indian troops to Malta. His college friend, Lord Rosebery—the partner of those early conversations—was now the ardent supporter of Mr. Gladstone's Midlothian campaign. A very little, I think, at this time might have led Lord Randolph into open quarrel with the Government. Indeed, it is not

improbable, had he in fact moved his resolution as he wished, that he would have been driven out of the Conservative ranks altogether. When even Radicals and Liberals like Cowen and Roebuck were proud and glad to swim with the stream, when every man who stood against it, was liable to be called a 'Russian' or even a traitor, a single Tory-Democrat must have been overwhelmed. Lord Randolph no doubt realized this; for he must have felt that, unless he could take striking and decisive action, it was useless taking any action at all. But he seems to have looked for an occasion to strike at the Government safely, and for a victim to appease his wrath. He found the first in the County Government Bill and the second in Mr. Sclater-Booth.

The rejection of this measure, which proposed to transfer county government from Quarter Sessions to boards elected partly by the county magistrates and partly by Boards of Guardians, was moved, upon its coming into the Committee, by Mr. Rylands (March 7) from the Liberal benches. Lord Randolph seconded the motion on totally different grounds and in a different tone. Inspired by a strong hostility to the Government, he made his attack from that quarter most dangerous to a Conservative Minister. The Bill was contrary to Tory principles. The Cabinet were not responsible for it. All their time had been taken up by considering how they could possibly get the Fleet into the Dardanelles, and now their whole time was taken up in considering how they could possibly get the Fleet out of the Dardanelles. In these agitating circumstances it would be highly unfair to hold them responsible for 'the legislative freaks of a minor colleague.'

Wrath was concentrated on the President of the Local Government Board, who would annihilate Quarter Sessions and descend in all the pomp of Ministerial authority and 'a double-barrelled name,' so often

associated with mediocrity, upon some unfortunate and over-awed Board of Guardians. A President of the Local Government Board might deal, if he chose, with amendments to the Poor Law or with sanitary questions, or with the salaries of inspectors of nuisances. He should not come down to the House, with all the appearance of a great lawgiver, to reform according to his own views and to improve in his little way the leading features of the British Constitution. He urged the Conservative party not to barter away the old institutions of the country for such 'Brummagem trash.' Lord Randolph professed himself utterly unable, though he had ransacked the whole arsenal, to find words in which to characterise the measure. In default he described it as 'just the sort of little dodge that would be proposed by a President of the Local Government Board called upon to legislate on a great question;' 'another of those futile attempts to make that impossible mixture of Radical principles and Conservative precautions;' and 'to conciliate the masses by the concession of principles dear to them, which concessions were immediately nullified or modified by the details of the legislation.' 'The Government think the populace will be deceived. They are themselves the only dupes. "O infortunati nimium sua si mala norint."' 'I have raised,' he concluded, 'the last wail of the expiring Tory party. They have undergone a good deal. They have swallowed an immense amount of nastiness. They have had their banner dragged along many a muddy path. It has been slopped in many a filthy puddle, until it is so altered that nobody can possibly recognise it. I shall cry "No!" when this motion is put from the Chair; and if I can only get any support—I care not whence it comes or from what motive it is given —I should be prepared to offer an opposition to this most Radical and democratic measure, this crowning desertion of Tory principles, this supreme violation of political honesty.'

Such language had not been heard in the House of Commons since Lord Cranborne had fought the Franchise Bill, and, coming as it did from a member who so seldom addressed the House, at a time when party discipline was so good and the prestige of the Government so high, it created quite a commotion. Mr. Chamberlain, in following, criticized the Bill from the extreme Radical's standpoint, but was markedly friendly in his reference to Lord Randolph's speech. By the time he had finished, the surprise of the Ministerialists had subsided sufficiently to reveal their wrath, and they protested at once against the attack. Mr. Chaplin, whose political antagonism to Lord Randolph was fated to develop early, retorted roughly that if such were his opinions he should 'lose not a moment in going over to the other side of the House'—advice which is often given and sometimes accepted. The unfortunate Mr. Sclater-Booth had hardly the spirit to reply. The Bill had passed its second reading by a large majority. Its further progress was delayed by Nationalist obstruction and Ministerial apathy. It was never again debated by the House, and on July 15 was definitely dropped by the Government. The Duke of Marlborough does not seem to have been very stern in his rebukes on this occasion, and no doubt a large and influential section of the Conservative party secretly rejoiced at the fate of the Bill. 'I do not think,' wrote Lord Randolph to his father, 'the Government is at all ill-disposed towards me for my speech against them. I have found them lately singularly civil. Nobody regrets the Bill, except Sclater-Booth, who is unapproachable on the subject.' Thus for the first time the House of Commons had learned that this silent youth could bite.

1879
Æt.
30



Member for Woodstock.

For the rest of the Parliament Lord Randolph was mute. Scarcely a mention of his name occurs in the 'Debates.' He was absent from many important divisions. His relations and feelings towards the Government seem somewhat to have improved as the Russian war crisis receded, and he remained an impassive spectator of their doings in

Afghanistan, in Zululand, and the Transvaal. Meanwhile the reader may be reminded of the swift passage of time and of the considerable period which this account has already covered.

To his Mother.

Ireland: April 15, 1879.

I write to wish you very many happy returns of your birthday to-morrow, which is also, as perhaps you may remember, our wedding-day; and having been married five years I begin to feel highly respectable.

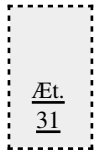
This weather is certainly very wintry and does not seem to lend itself to anything congenial, while anything more odious or unfortunate for fishing cannot be well imagined. I fished for two days in the Suir and never moved a fish, nor did anyone else. However, I have added another Irish county (Tipperary) to my peregrinations in this island.

This is now the fifth birthday you have spent in Ireland and I am sure it must be satisfactory to you to look back on the years you have spent there. I do not think you can recollect a *contretemps* or a cross; and I am sure, if I may say so, no one deserves a pleasanter retrospect: and believe me, I sincerely hope next 15th of April will find you as happy and untroubled as I hope you will be to-morrow.

The wet summer of 1879 produced something like a ‘food and fuel famine’ in the South and West of Ireland. The potatoes failed, grain would not ripen, and the turf could not be dried. The Government met the danger by offering the landlords loans on easier terms than those recognised by law, and cautioned the Irish Poor Law authorities to be ready to administer additional relief. But official aid was wholly insufficient without private charity and in these straits, the Duchess of Marlborough came forward and appealed to the public. She was a woman of exceptional capacity, energy, and decision, and she laboured earnestly and ceaselessly to collect and administer a great fund. Its purposes were to supply food, fuel, and clothing, especially for the aged and weak; to

provide small sums to keep the families of able-bodied men in temporary distress out of the workhouse; and thirdly, while carefully guarding against any kind of proselytism, to give grants to schools, so as to secure free meals of bread and potatoes and, if possible, a little clothing for the children attending them. The plan unfolded in her letters to the *Times* was welcomed not only by the Irish Conservative press, but by the *Freeman's Journal*, which then supported Mr. Butt's policy and which bore handsome testimony to the efforts made by the Viceregal family to become acquainted with the Irish people, and to their great popularity even in the disturbed district near Portarlington, which was their country seat. The ultra-Nationalist papers were less kindly, but the fund was warmly supported and grew apace. The Queen sent 500*l.* and the Prince of Wales 250*l.* By the end of the year 8,300*l.* had been subscribed; by March the receipts were 88,000*l.*; and, before the Viceroy left Ireland (April 21) on the change of Ministry, the fund was 117,000*l.* Although many subscriptions were diverted to a separate fund raised by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, the Duchess of Marlborough's fund ultimately reached 135,000*l.* Its administration was entirely free from sectarian or party influence, Roman Catholics and Protestants being equally represented on the Committee. Upwards of 80,000*l.* was distributed in relief to the local committees, 37,000*l.* expended in seed, and 10,000*l.* upon clothing. The working expenses were under 1,700*l.* In all this Lord Randolph bore an active part. His whole time was given up to the work of organisation and distribution and before he left Ireland in the spring of 1880 he had visited nearly every Irish county and had come into intimate contact with every class in Irish life. His knowledge of Ireland was soon to be of service to him.

1880



The Government of Lord Beaconsfield approached the election of 1880 with some inward misgivings. Their party was united and contented. The *Times* declared that Mr. Gladstone's language was extravagant and out of proportion to any feeling that might exist in the country. The by-elections were not especially unfavourable to Ministers. But nevertheless there were causes for anxiety. The lustre had gradually faded from the 'spirited foreign policy' and from the Imperialism of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Lytton. Taxation had been increased; deficits had taken the place of surpluses; no legislative achievements could be discovered. In India and South Africa useless bloodshed, clotted by disaster, seemed to be the outcome of British activities. The policy of the Government in the Near East was stridently asserted by its opponents to be a failure, if not a fraud. Trade depression, as a reaction from the 'boom' after the Franco-German war, was continuous. Revival was delayed by the uncertainty of the European situation. Economic weakness followed diplomatic strength and military exertion. There had been serious strikes in 1878, and the winter of 1878-9 was marked by acute distress. The elements of Nature were adverse. Agriculture was vexed with wet summers and bad harvests and low prices. All Ireland was dark with gathering storm. There was, no doubt, sufficient reason for apprehension; but no one foresaw the extent of impending defeat.

'Lord Beaconsfield,' wrote Lord Randolph Churchill in 1883,[7] 'was very old and very worn when he got to the top of the tree, and he was but indifferently served by some of his colleagues. Advancing years, an enfeebled constitution, a singularly exhausting and painful form of disease, had compelled him to give way to a disposition naturally indolent and unsuited to the constant mastery of dry administrative detail. He must often have thought that

he had done nearly enough; that he might with justice allow himself to seek in the distractions of London society a pleasure and a repose to which, during most of his life, he had been a stranger. Only the most captious mind could blame him for this; but this it was, nevertheless, which greatly conduced to the downfall of his Government. What time he gave to public affairs was absorbed in studying, with the assistance of the Foreign Secretary, the various phases of the Eastern complication. All else was neglected. Finance was left entirely to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in whose unaided hands deficits and floating debts grew apace. The other heads of departments were all allowed to go their own way, doing what seemed good in their eyes. There was no master mind pervading and controlling every branch of the Administration. Election affairs and organisation went to the dogs. The care, the experience, the personal supervision which Mr. Disraeli, assisted by a few practised hands, had bestowed upon the preparations for the General Election of 1874 disappeared. A weak but wide-spreading centralisation enervated the vigour of the provincial organisation. A stupefying degree of over-confidence, a foolish contempt for the adversary, a fatally erroneous estimate of the revived influence of Mr. Gladstone—these causes, and these alone, all of them preventable, slowly but surely worked the ruin.

On March 8, 1880, Sir Stafford Northcote announced to the House of Commons its approaching dissolution. The next morning there appeared in the papers Lord Beaconsfield's letter to the Duke of Marlborough, assigning to Ireland the foremost place among the perils and embarrassments of British dominion. The memorable and prophetic words of this celebrated document, familiar though they be, require to be recorded here:—

'Nevertheless, a danger, in its ultimate results scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine, and which now engages your Excellency's anxious attention, distracts that

country. A portion of its population is attempting to sever the constitutional tie which unites it to Great Britain in that bond which has favoured the power and prosperity of both. It is to be hoped that all men of light and leading will resist this destructive doctrine. The strength of this nation depends on the unity of feeling which should pervade the United Kingdom and its widespread Dependencies. The first duty of an English Minister should be to consolidate that co-operation which renders irresistible a community educated, as our own, in an equal love of liberty and law.

'And yet there are some who challenge the expediency of the Imperial character of this realm. Having attempted, and failed, to enfeeble our Colonies by their policy of decomposition, they may perhaps now recognise in the disintegration of the United Kingdom a mode which will not only accomplish, but precipitate, their purpose.

'The immediate dissolution of Parliament will afford an opportunity to the nation to decide upon a course which will materially influence its future fortunes and shape its destiny.'

Members of Parliament were forthwith scattered to defend their seats and above the tumult and babel which arose from so many contests little was heard except the reverberating thunders of Midlothian. Lord Randolph hurried back to Woodstock and arrived, as we may judge from the account he gave his mother, none too soon. The Blenheim estates had suffered from the absence of their owner and those dependent upon them felt acutely the diversion to Ireland and Irish purposes of that personal sympathy and care without which the administration of landed property becomes so often at once wasteful and harsh.

Lord Randolph Churchill to his Mother.

Blenheim: March 21, 1880.

I have to thank you very much for your many letters, which

have been so welcome to me. I have now been round the constituency and seen everybody, except a few people in Woodstock whom I have not yet seen, and a few in other parts who were not at home when I called. I shall take them all up this week, but the work will be easier now, and I shall have some time for writing to you.

I assure you it has been hard work, and I have not spared time or trouble; every day this last week I was out by nine and not home till eleven at night. The results of the canvass will be arrived at to-morrow when the Chairmen of the various Committees hand in their reports, but I have no doubt the result will be satisfactory to you. Every day, however, confirms what I wrote last week; the continual expression of the labourer in Stonesfield, Coombe, Handborough, and Bladon is, 'Yes, I voted for you last time, but I have been very badly served since,' and then follows half an hour's complaint. The other Party admit that they would never have tried again, had it not been for these complaints of the labouring men and the great scarcity of employment.

I know well how difficult, almost impossible, it is to please poor people. Nor do I blame your agent for not doing all they ask or for not finding employment for them; that no doubt was out of his power. What I do blame him for, and what I am sure my father and you will blame him for, is for having provoked against himself a great deal of ill-will, and having treated these poor people, and farmers, with rudeness and worse than rudeness, and this, too, during your absence, and at a time when the greatest discretion and temper were wanted for the management of a great estate.

You cannot think how people are looking forward to your return here; they feel quite jealous of all you are doing and have done in Ireland. You have made for yourself a great name among the Radical working men, several of them have spoken to me about you. Several of them who perhaps would have gone for Hall will vote for me, or rather for you; but at the same time I feel as I never felt before how greatly this place and all the neighbourhood depends upon your care and my father's attention.

I have a public meeting, probably the last, to-morrow night in Kidlington. The election will be on April 2, but much work is needed for the proper preparation and organisation for polling

day, so that the Liberals may this time get their ‘quietus.’

I hope you liked my speech at Woodstock. I was prepared for a row, but though I had no one with me to help, and although the other Party was there in great force, helped by a preacher and stump orator, they heard me with the greatest patience for forty minutes. The preacher asked some questions and made some remarks, but I am told that what I said on the Foreign Policy and Home Questions pleased them much, and that I was considered to have had the best of the preacher.

I feel so sorry for all this expense coming on at such a time, but I hope things are going to mend this year. The weather has been perfect—fine, bright, cold days, worth pounds to the farmers, who are cleaning their fields with great activity and advantage. A good harvest this year will do much to set things going; but the serious part of the matter is that the farmers are so much worse off in point of capital, and in addition the land is four years to the bad, suffering from weeds and reduced manure. I fear that even with good harvests the future is full of difficulties to the landlords.

The outlook here at the outset was very alarming, but it is clearing rapidly. I think I must attend more regularly this session. Hall hit me rather hard on account of my slack attendance. I think the Party will keep a fair majority, but they cannot expect to have quite so many as they had nor do I think it would be a good thing. I am afraid you will think I have become rather Jingo, but any lukewarmness at such a moment would be most dangerous.

The election at Woodstock took place on the second day of the polling (April 1), and Lord Randolph Churchill was returned—in a total electorate of 1,060—by 512 votes to the Liberal candidate’s (Mr. W. Hall, of Lancing, Sussex) 452. Thus Woodstock was snatched from the burning; but throughout the kingdom general disaster overwhelmed the Conservatives. In the first four days the Conservative majority had been destroyed by their losses in the boroughs. The counties endorsed and even emphasised the decision. When the returns were complete, Mr. Gladstone had obtained a Liberal majority of 54 over all other sections in the House. The dissolved Parliament had

numbered 351 Conservatives, 250 Liberals, and 51 Home Rulers. The new Parliament assembled with 353 Liberals, 237 Conservatives, and 62 Home Rulers.

In two chapters two-thirds of Lord Randolph's life have been described. Starting with many advantages, he was still at thirty-one obscure. Four or five speeches in as many years had made no particular impression, and the House of Commons had scarcely formed an opinion about him. Stirred on the one hand by liberal and pacific sentiments and restrained on the other by affection for the Conservative party, to which he was bound by so many ties of friendship and tradition and above all by respect for his father, he was prevented during those years from taking any clear or decided action which might have enlisted sympathy or commanded attention. Out-of-doors among the people he was unknown. Adverse social influences denied the recognition of such ability as he had shown. His party was now humbled in the dust. His own family borough lay under the shadow of an approaching Reform Bill. New Ministers and new measures occupied the public mind. Grave and violent dangers beset the State and no one troubled to think about an undistinguished sprig of the nobility. Nevertheless his hour had come.

CHAPTER III

THE FOURTH PARTY

His birth, it seems, by Merlin's calculation,
Was under Venus, Mercury, and Mars;
His mind with all their attributes was mixt;
And, like those planets, wandering and unfixt....
His schemes of war were sudden, unforeseen,
Inexplicable both to friend and foe;
It seemed as if some momentary spleen
Inspired the project and impelled the blow.

Hookham Frere, *The Monks and the Giants*.

GREAT expectations were entertained of the Parliament of 1880 by the Liberal members who assembled at Westminster after the election. Indeed, the position of their party was one of immense strength and advantage. The Government enjoyed the support of a majority in the House of Commons who outnumbered the Conservatives and the Irish combined by more than 50 votes and amounted for practical purposes to between 100 and 130. In the House of Lords they could count upon the wealth and talents of the great Whig houses, the influence of the Cavendishes and the Russells, the experience of Lord Granville, and the eloquence of the Duke of Argyll. They were led by the finest Parliamentarian of this or any other age, whose incomparable powers had won him an almost superstitious veneration; and around him were gathered a band of men of distinguished ability, well known to the country, practised in public affairs and yielding ready subordination to the genius of their chief. Upon the Treasury Bench were seated statesmen like Mr. Bright, Mr. Forster, and Lord Hartington. Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Chamberlain represented the growing Radicalism and the future hope of their party. And when the view was extended from the walls of Parliament to the larger arena of the electorate no less powerful resources were displayed. The tendency of the day was strongly progressive. The ability and authority of the Press—whether Metropolitan, provincial, or local—were ranged in overwhelming preponderance upon the Liberal side. Scotland and London, almost all the great cities, nearly every centre of active political thought—Edinburgh, Birmingham, Glasgow, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield, Bristol—sent their representatives in vast majority to uphold the new Administration; and a Reform Bill promised an almost equal advantage in the counties.

Many active and vigilant societies and a multitude of political clubs stimulated the energies of the rank and file; and the whole was bound together and directed to a common end by a formidable and opulent organisation.

The position of the Conservative party, upon the other hand, was weak and miserable in the extreme. The sympathies and the intellect of the nation were estranged. Lord Beaconsfield, the only man who could touch the imagination of the people, was withdrawn from the popular assembly. Many of the Tory strongholds—family boroughs and the like—were threatened by approaching Redistribution. The Front Opposition Bench, cumbered with the ancient and dreary wreckage of the late Administration, was utterly unequal to the Government in eloquence or authority. The attendance of Conservative members, as in all dispirited Oppositions, was slack and fitful.

Outmatched in debate, outnumbered in division, the party was pervaded by a profound feeling of gloom. They had nothing to give to their followers, nothing to promise to the people: no Garters for Dukes, no peerages for wealth, no baronetcies or knighthoods or trinkets for stalwarts. Although the new spirit created by Disraeli—*Imperium* abroad, *Libertas* at home—still lived in the Tory party, it had been profoundly discouraged by the results of the election; and many of those who swayed Conservative counsels could think of no plan of action except an obstinate but apathetic resistance to change. Jeered at as 'the stupid party,' haunted by profound distrust of an ever-growing democracy, conscious that the march of ideas was leaving them behind, these desponding counsellors could discern in the future no sign of returning fortune and seemed to find the sole function of the Conservative minority in delaying and restricting the movements of the age by means of electoral inequalities, by Parliamentary procedure, and through the prejudices of interest and of

class.

What political prophet or philosopher, surveying the triumphant Liberal array, would have predicted that this Parliament, from which so much was hoped, would be indeed the most disastrous and even fatal period in their party history? Or who could have foreseen that these dejected Conservatives in scarcely five years, with the growing assent of an immense electorate, would advance to the enjoyment of twenty years of power? It needed a penetrating eye to discover the method, and a bold heart first to stem and finally to turn the tide. Who would have thought of breaking up the solid phalanx of Liberalism by driving in a wedge between the Radicals and the Whigs; or dreamt of using the Irish to overthrow the great apostle of reconciliation between peoples; and who without the audacity of genius would have dared to force the Conservative party to base the foundations of their authority with confidence upon the very masses they dreaded and to teach those masses to venerate and guard the institutions they had formerly despised?

The Liberal majority, who had arrived at Westminster in such excellent spirits after their victory at the polls, were enabled quite early in the session to take part in a Government defeat. The electors of Northampton, which was in those days reputed the most Radical town in England, had returned Mr. Bradlaugh as one of their representatives. Charles Bradlaugh came to the House of Commons by strange paths of thought and action. Forty-seven years before he had been born in a religious family, the son of a very poor solicitor's clerk. For a time he was a teacher in an Evangelical Sunday-school; but he began to ask many questions about his faith and its foundations, which appear to have been indifferently answered by a clergyman to whom he applied. Later he was a Chartist, and spoke often at open-air meetings, at first on the Christian side; but after a public disputation with an anti-

Christian opponent he became a declared atheist and found shelter for a while in an anti-Christian family. Harassed by poverty he enlisted in the East India Company's army, was exchanged into the British Service, served with credit several years in the 7th Dragoon Guards, and bought his discharge with a legacy that had come to him from an aunt. Next he was an office-boy to a solicitor, whence he rose soon to manage the common law department of the firm. These harsh and varied experiences had inflamed his mind against many established institutions, human and divine. As a bold and effective platform speaker, or under the pseudonym of 'Iconoclast,' he was accustomed to set forth what occurred to him against Christianity, the Bible, and the House of Brunswick, to the severe displeasure of the more prosperous or more contented classes in the nation. In the year 1877 he intruded upon still more dangerous ground and made himself responsible for the republication of a pamphlet about over-population, its evils and its remedies and other Malthusian topics, which, being among the most tremendous of natural problems, have long been judged unfit for public discussion. The pamphlet is said to have attained a sale of 180,000 copies, and the publisher was sentenced to six months' imprisonment, from which he only escaped through the timely discovery of some legal flaw. Mr. Bradlaugh's struggles against authority, penury, and obloquy were now to be transferred to a more brightly-lighted stage.

On May 3, 1880, Charles Bradlaugh presented himself at the table of the House of Commons and claimed to affirm instead of taking the oath. The Speaker, whom he had acquainted with his intention some days earlier, decided on his own responsibility to leave the question to the decision of the House, and Lord Frederick Cavendish, representing the Government in the absence of Ministers—whose seats had been vacated by taking office—moved accordingly for a Select Committee of Inquiry. Sir Stafford Northcote, the

Leader of the Opposition, being as it appears personally willing to substitute an affirmation for the oath, seconded the motion. When the House met again (May 5) Sir Henry Wolff gave notice that he would oppose the reference to a committee; and when it was nominated he moved (May 11) 'the previous question,' on the ground that to proceed to general business before the Queen's Speech had announced to members the reasons for which Parliament was summoned would be to invade the Royal Prerogative. He was supported by Mr. Gorst, the member for Chatham. A debate ensued, in the course of which some prominent Conservatives deprecated Sir Henry Wolff's motion, and several of the Conservative leaders abstained from the division in which it was defeated by 171 to 74. But the question had already begun to excite attention. The delay was fatal to its settlement. If Mr. Bradlaugh had been content to take the oath unostentatiously among a crowd of members at the beginning of the session, it is almost certain that no question would have been raised. He chose instead in the most public manner to cast down a challenge. It was eagerly accepted. From the caprice that prompted one private member to stir a smouldering fire and the chance interposition of another who happened to observe him arose a protracted and ferocious controversy, which, in Mr. Morley's words, 'went on as long as the Parliament, clouded the radiance of the party triumph, threw the new Government at once into a minority and dimmed the ascendency of the great Minister.'

By a majority of one the committee decided against Mr. Bradlaugh's claim to affirm. He thereupon wrote to the newspapers that he considered it his duty to accept the mandate of his constituents and that if to do so he had to submit to a form less solemn than the affirmation, so much the worse for those who forced him to repeat words which were to him sounds conveying no clear and definite meaning. Having by this, as he no doubt supposed, settled

the matter to the extreme discomfiture of his opponents, he repaired to the House on May 21—the third day of its meeting for regular business—resolved to take the oath in the usual form. But in the meantime Sir Henry Wolff had not been idle. With the assistance of Mr. Grantham—now one of His Majesty's Judges—he had studied the legal aspect of the question and had drafted a resolution. He had consulted with his friends and in particular with the young member for Woodstock, with whom he had struck up a friendly acquaintance in the last Parliament and of whose talents he had formed a high opinion. Mr. Bradlaugh's letter had, moreover, produced an astonishing effect. The House—almost irrespective of party—was profoundly offended and even outraged by his words and by the action he intended. Anger flamed in the Lobbies. Ministers were justly apprehensive of the difficulties that might arise if the question of Mr. Bradlaugh's right to take the oath was held to be one for the determination of the House. They held a council in the Speaker's Library, and proposed to meet the hostile motion, which was now certain when Mr. Bradlaugh should present himself, by moving 'the previous question.' But the Whips reported that the feeling in the House was 'uncontrollable.' The Liberal majority could not be relied on to support 'the previous question' and the Prime Minister was forced to content himself with proposing a new committee to search for precedents.

When the hour came, Mr. Bradlaugh advanced to the table to take the oath. Thereupon Sir Henry Wolff sprang up and objected to its being administered to him. Mr. Dillwyn, a Liberal member, intervened, submitting that it was out of order to question the right of any member to take the oath; but the Speaker, adhering to the intention he had expressed in private, ruled—although in very doubting language—in favour of Sir Henry Wolff. The Speaker directed the member for Northampton to withdraw while Sir Henry Wolff explained his reasons. These were, in

short, that Mr. Bradlaugh's declared opinions upon religion and Royalty necessarily rendered any oath of allegiance that he might take meaningless in form and valueless in fact.

The Prime Minister made an effort to narrow the issue to the simple judicial question of whether a duly elected member could be prevented by the House from fulfilling his statutory obligations and he proposed his Select Committee. The debate which followed was long, serious, and savage. Two views, both held with intensity, prevailed about the man: first, that he was a blatant contumacious atheist who made a living by blasphemy, republicanism, and indecent literature, and sought in Parliamentary honours a fresh advertisement for his hateful trade; and, secondly, that he was a martyr gone wrong, whose zeal and convictions—honest, albeit pernicious—had caused him to suffer in private prospects and public life. The unfavourable view predominated in the House and was adopted with vehemence by the Conservative party. There was a third view—that the House of Commons was no judge of such matters, that it had received no evidence but common report, and even so had no business to exclude members because of their opinions. But such arguments, although urged by orators like Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright, found little acceptance. Extracts were read from 'The Impeachment of the House of Brunswick' and 'The Fruits of Philosophy.' Mr. Bradlaugh's declaration that an oath was to him an idle and meaningless ceremony was repeated over and over again. Was the House to connive at an act of blasphemy? Mr. Gibson from the Front Opposition Bench, taking the Bible in his hands from the table on which it lay, read out impressively the solemn words which were to be mockingly invoked. Mr. F. H. O'Donnell, a militant Irish Catholic, spoke in unmeasured abhorrence of the Bradlaugh doctrines, which he said would degrade human love and human wedlock to

something lower than union of beast with beast. The speech of Mr. Walter of the Times, which, although favouring the appointment of a Select Committee, declared that Mr. Bradlaugh could not be permitted to go through the form of taking the oath, was regarded as representing an important element of moderate Liberal opinion.

Partisanship was not slow to perceive its opportunity. Sir Stafford Northcote and the whole Conservative party made haste to support Sir Henry Wolff. Opposition speakers sought to identify the Liberal party and Mr. Gladstone himself with the member for Northampton. He had been their candidate, he was now their comrade. The division, according to one gentleman, would be between those who were on the side of atheism, disloyalty, and immorality and those who were not. Amid such fury many very wise and worthy exhortations to preserve a judicial spirit were overwhelmed. Lord Randolph Churchill resumed the debate on May 24. For the first time he addressed a crowded House and was supported by the cheers of a great party. There was in his character a strong element of religious feeling. He spoke with a kind of half-restrained passion which commanded attention. He opposed the appointment of a committee. The matter was simple. Let it be decided by what Lord Beaconsfield had called ‘the unerring instinct of the House of Commons.’ Like others who had spoken, he quoted from the Bradlaugh writings. He stood at the corner seat of the third bench below the gangway and when he had finished reading the extract beginning ‘I loathe these small German breast-bestarred wanderers,’ he cast ‘The Impeachment of the House of Brunswick’ upon the floor and stamped upon it, to the surprise of the assembly. Although this was his first entry into the dispute, he seems at once to have been accepted as a principal. Henceforward, upon the Bradlaugh question, he took his natural place as a leader and before two years had passed he was credited by the public with having

begun the whole controversy.

Sir Henry Wolff's motion was rejected in favour of the Ministerial amendment proposing a committee by 214-289. There was another dispute on May 28 over the names of the committee, Lord Randolph being ironically or mischievously anxious that Nonconformists should be more numerous on it. Mr. Gladstone, in reply, concerned himself almost entirely with the arguments of Lord Randolph and Sir Henry Wolff. The committee was appointed. Its search for precedents was barren. It reported that Mr. Bradlaugh could not take the oath, but recommended that he should be allowed to affirm at his own risk, in order that the matter might be settled in the Courts. The Government accepted the view of the committee. On June 21, therefore, Mr. Labouchere moved that his colleague be permitted to affirm. Sir Hardinge Giffard, in the name of the Conservative party, met this by an amendment which declared that Mr. Bradlaugh should not be permitted either to affirm or swear. After two days' debate (June 21 and 22) the first great division of the new Parliament was taken. Mr. Labouchere's motion, although supported by the whole Ministry, was rejected by 275 votes to 230 and Sir Hardinge Giffard's amendment was adopted in its stead. In the clamorous excitement which followed the declaration of the numbers some have discovered the joy of the Tory party at their first revenge for Midlothian.

The account of this episode need not be pursued in detail. How Mr. Bradlaugh presented himself the next day and claimed to swear; how the Prime Minister, his solution having been rejected, refused his guidance to the House; how the Speaker called upon Mr. Bradlaugh to withdraw; how he resisted; how he was heard at the Bar; how he was expelled; how he was committed to the Clock Tower upon the motion of the Leader of the Opposition; how action was taken against him in the Courts for sitting and voting

without statutory qualification, are upon record. How he was unseated and re-elected, and in what manner he finally took the oath, must presently be described. The Bradlaugh case was inexhaustible in scenes and sensations. It recurred almost month after month throughout the Parliament, and whenever it occupied the stage the Government was powerless; the leadership of the House was abandoned by its first and greatest member; the overwhelming majority of the Midlothian campaign became divided and untrustworthy. The credit of the Ministry was injured in Parliament and in the country the Liberal party and its leaders were, not unsuccessfully, represented as the champions of Bradlaugh and his abominated doctrines.

The Fourth Party grew out of the Bradlaugh incident. To Wolff belonged the merit of discovery. The others in coming to his aid had learned the value of co-operation. They had seized an opportunity while regular leaders hesitated. They had helped each other to use it with determination. The whole party had in the end been glad to follow their lead and great and admitted advantage had ensued. They resolved forthwith to make permanent that comradeship which had proved so happy on occasion. Three of them already sat on the Front Bench below the gangway, and during the early days of the session Lord Randolph abandoned his perch on the back benches and came forward to sit with them. An old and respected member of the Conservative party had been accustomed to sit in the corner seat. In a few weeks he departed to serener quarters, saying to Sir Henry Wolff, ‘This is getting too hot for me’; and Lord Randolph thenceforward was regarded as the rightful owner of that coveted place. The compact which bound the ‘Fourth Party,’ as they were soon called by general consent, was simple and elastic. No questions of policy or leadership arose. Each was free to act in perfect independence; but it was agreed that, whenever one of them was attacked, the others should defend him. Upon

these conditions was created a Parliamentary group which proved, in proportion to its numbers, the most formidable and effective force for the purposes of Opposition in the history of the House of Commons.

The four men who had thus come together were, each in his own way, remarkable. The first mention of Sir Henry Wolff in Lord Randolph's letters occurs in 1879. 'I am dining to-night at the Garrick with Sir Henry Wolff and a large party of M.P.'s.' Then again, a few months later, 'Wolff and I are going to London together in order that the questions of the leadership of the party may be complicated by our presence.' When the Parliament of 1880 assembled they seem to have become already fairly intimate friends. Sir Henry Wolff, the son of a distinguished traveller and scholar whose name in the early 'forties was respected in many countries outside his own, had entered Parliament as member for Christchurch in 1874, and had already, by his knowledge of foreign affairs and diplomatic methods, gained a reputation in the House of Commons. He was now member for Portsmouth. He was fifteen years older than Lord Randolph and possessed a large and varied fund of experience and information. Shrewd, suave, witty, and imperturbable, versed in Parliamentary procedure, fertile in schemes, clever at managing people, a master of smoothly-turned sentences and plausible debating points, a ready speaker, an industrious politician, old enough to compel respectful treatment from the House, young enough to love fighting and manœuvres for their own sake, Sir Henry Wolff was, at the beginning of 1880, just the kind of man to make a Ministry uncomfortable. If he contributed notably to the strength of the Fourth Party in public, he added still more to the gaiety of its secret councils. He rallied generously to the chaff in which Lord Randolph always delighted, and the comradeship which grew between them was abiding. No cloud darkened, no conflict of interests or opinions

disturbed it. Of the intimate relations between these four allies, the friendship of Lord Randolph and Sir Henry Wolff was the only one to survive unimpaired the vicissitudes of political life.

Mr. Gorst possessed temper and talents of a different kind. His mood was serious, his ability distinguished, his industry enormous. His career in the past had been more noteworthy than that of any of his companions. He was a rapidly rising lawyer. He had sat in Parliament as early as 1866. He had been entrusted with the reorganisation of the Conservative party machinery after the defeat of 1868, and Mr. Disraeli always regarded the victory of 1874 as largely due to his arrangements, and treated him with special favour and confidence. He probably knew more about politics, public and secret, than all his three colleagues together, and his knowledge of law proved on repeated occasions of inestimable value to the rest. In conjunction with Lord Randolph Churchill his abilities became doubly effective. A few years later Sir Henry James publicly complained, in a Standing Committee, of such an alliance. It was, he said, a poacher's combination—a pointer to find game and a greyhound to run it down.

The career of the remaining member of the Fourth Party is not yet complete. Mr. Arthur Balfour in 1880 was an affable and rather idle young gentleman, who had delicately toyed with philosophy and diplomacy, was earnest in the cause of popular concerts, and brought to the House of Commons something of Lord Melbourne's air of languid and well-bred indifference. How he came at all to be drawn into that circle of fierce energy which radiated from Lord Randolph Churchill was a puzzle to those who knew him best. In the early days of the Fourth Party no one —certainly not his comrades—regarded him as a serious politician. Lord Randolph, who delighted in nicknames, used to call him 'Postlethwaite,' and made him the object of much harmless and friendly chaff. In private life he

already exercised that personal charm and fascination which in later years were curiously to deflect the course of great events. But he seemed so lacking in energy, so entirely devoid of anything like ambition, so slenderly and uncertainly attached to politics at all, that his friends feared he would withdraw altogether, and none recognised or imagined in this amiable, easy-going member for a family borough the calculating, tenacious, and unwearying Minister who was destined through so many years to control the House of Commons and shape the policy of the State.

The Employers' Liability Bill afforded the new confederacy a wide and fertile field for their exertions. The law, as it had been formed by judicial decisions, was, according to modern ideas, strangely harsh upon the workman. The employer was liable for any injury done to third parties by the negligence of his servants but not for injuries done by one servant to another. If, for instance, there occurred at his mills an explosion which killed and wounded both outsiders and his own workmen, the employer might be sued for damages in respect of person or property by the outsiders or their representatives, but injured fellow-workmen had no legal claim because they were in what was called 'common employment.' Complaint against this anomaly had been loud and long. Two extreme remedies were proposed by the respective interests. On the one hand, the employers desired to be free from all liability for injuries done, except by themselves personally; on the other, the workmen demanded the abolition of the doctrine of 'common employment' and an assertion of the consequent liability of the employer to all alike. A Bill had been introduced in the preceding Parliament by Mr. Brassey, a private member, which proposed a middle course. It sought to extend the liability of the employer by nullifying the plea of 'common employment' whenever the injury was caused by a defect

in the machinery, by the negligence of an authorised superintendent, or as the result of obedience to the employer's rules or bye-laws. When the new Ministers assumed office the session was already advanced; and under a hasty necessity for providing a certain legislative pabulum for the activities of Parliament, the Government adopted, with very scanty examination, Mr. Brassey's Bill. The complications in which this plan involved them were numerous. It had not originated in the great departments of the State and was, both in principle and drafting, an amateurish suggestion which might, indeed, sound very plausible and accommodating; but which had not been clearly thought out in a scientific spirit with the advantages of official information. No division was taken upon the second reading; but the debate aroused the Ministers in charge of the measure to the consciousness that they were committed to a confused and ill-considered proposal. It was necessary to move that the Bill should be re-committed, and before it reappeared it was almost entirely rewritten. Its general character as a compromise was, however, preserved.

The Fourth Party held deep council as to their policy upon this measure. They saw that a Bill had practically been thrown to the House to be moulded into shape by debate. They resolved to address themselves conscientiously to the task of perfecting the crude conceptions of the Government. But they resolved further the direction in which their influence should be exerted. The manufacturers and capitalists, who in those days were numerous and influential in the Liberal party, were already greatly perturbed at the extent to which their liability was to be increased, and the Government was constrained to listen to their grumbles. Sitting immediately behind Ministers, Sir Henry Mather Jackson groaned forth his anxieties. Not so the Fourth Party. They approached the question with open minds, as independent persons who

desired only to do right between man and man and cared nothing for the sordid interests involved. Whereas Ministers had expected that Tory opposition would naturally take the form of a defence of the employers' position, the Fourth Party proceeded to criticise the measure entirely in the interests of the working class. This secured them two advantages, which it may be presumed they desired equally. First, it was in accordance with the spirit of Lord Beaconsfield's progressive Toryism and would really benefit the labouring people, for whose sake the Bill was designed. Secondly, nothing could be more embarrassing to a Liberal Government than Conservative opposition on the grounds that the Bill did not go far enough. 'Be thorough,' exclaimed these Tories to the Government. 'Fulfil your election pledges. If you intend to deal with industrial questions let it be in an honest and courageous spirit.' The Government was gravely disconcerted. They found themselves between two fires. Below the gangway the Radicals stirred uneasily at such unanswerable argument; and behind the Treasury Bench the wealthiest supporters of the party were gnashing their teeth at such reckless proposals.

Whenever the subject came before the House the four friends were in their places. There was not a single sitting from which they were absent, or a single clause which they did not amend, or seek to amend. It is, moreover, true that many important alterations in the scope and detail of the measure were conceded to their insistence and that many of their proposals, though rejected by the Government of 1880, have now become the law of the land. The unforeseen complexity of the measure afforded an indefinite scope to their ingenious minds. All sorts of hard cases were propounded, to which the Government could find no satisfactory reply. An employer was to be liable for accidents which occurred through his defective plant or stock. Did this include animate as well as inanimate

things? The Ministers in charge had not made up their minds. They had contemplated in the word ‘stock’ a stack of timber or bricks which might fall and cause injury through negligent stacking. They were now invited to consider the case of live-stock. Lord Randolph said that a farmer might have a horse which he knew perfectly well had a disease of the foot and was liable to come down at any moment. Would the workman riding home from plough and injured by the fall be secured compensation under the Bill? ‘No,’ replied the law officers, ‘for the disease of the foot would not be due to the negligence of the employer.’ ‘But suppose,’ asked Mr. Balfour, ‘the employer had thrown down the horse and broken his knees, and that on a subsequent occasion, in consequence of the horse having been thrown down by his carelessness, his servant was thrown and broke his arm, what then?’ And it then appeared there might be liability.

And what was a defect in ‘stock’? The bricks or timber might be stacked so as to cause injury and yet be themselves most excellent materials. The defect was not in them but in the person who stacked them. Someone recollected that the rays of the sun had ignited lucifer matches lying in a shop window, which in turn set fire to gunpowder and produced a serious explosion. Where was the defect? If anywhere, it was in the glass which had concentrated the rays of the sun. Amid such questionings and the utter confusion to which they led, Mr. Dodson and his friends passed many uncomfortable hours. Lord Randolph and Mr. Gorst were very profuse in regrets for the slow progress of the Bill. But when the Government themselves did not understand their own measure it was necessary to be very careful indeed—and, after all, there was plenty of time; better sit till November than scamp public duties and pass slovenly or unworkable legislation.

Another dilemma was supplied by the case of domestic servants. Mr. Balfour and Lord Randolph together

protested against their exclusion from the benefits of the Act—'merely because they had no votes.' 'What is the special characteristic of footmen or chambermaids,' asked the latter, 'which disentitles them to compensation?' No answer could be discovered except that the risks of such persons were not great. Lord Randolph suggested the case of the man who worked both in the house and in the stable: injured in the house, he received no compensation, injured in the stable, it was his right. How could it be contended that domestic servants ran no risks? 'Suppose,' inquired the member for Woodstock, in a speech which caused keen irritation to the Ministers and almost equal amusement to the House, 'an explosion of gas. An employer comes home late at night. He does not, perhaps, altogether know what he is doing. He blows out the gas. An explosion results, and the servant is seriously injured; ought he not to receive compensation?' 'And what of lifts?' chimed in Mr. Gorst. There were lifts in hotels as well as in factories. Suppose through some defect in the machinery of the lift a servant at a hotel was injured, why was his claim to compensation less good than that of the workman injured through a similar defect in a similar lift in a factory? To the reproach that zeal for the working classes was a new-found virtue in the Tory party and had not been apparent in the conduct of the late Government, Mr. Balfour replied tartly that the late Government had not been formed from members below the gangway, and that if it had the claims of the working classes would no doubt have been met.

So through all the sultry days of August the discussion went forward tirelessly. But it should not be supposed that these objections of detail were advanced frivolously with no general purpose behind them. Lord Randolph had, early in the debates, denounced the doctrine of 'common employment'; and on the third reading Mr. Gorst moved the re-committal of the Bill in the name of the Fourth Party, on account of its multifold inequities and anomalies,

and urged the recognition of some simple general principle which would equally govern the rights of all classes of outsiders, or workmen or servants, whether in factories, private or Government employ, whether in or out of doors. This conclusion is one which modern legislation has already largely secured and which its progress must ultimately achieve.

As with the Employers' Liability Bill, so with Hares and Rabbits, and so with Burials, though the task of perfecting these two latter measures seems principally to have been discharged by Mr. Balfour and Sir Henry Wolff. At every point the Fourth Party were armed with facts and arguments; on every question they had a plan, in all difficulties they sustained each other. The Government were repeatedly exhorted to spare no labour for the public weal. Legislation of an important character, they were reminded, could not be passed in haste, or without proper intervals for reflection on the part of those who were responsible for it. Whenever the Government and their partisans showed signs of impatience—and, judging by the interruptions which are sprinkled in the columns of 'Hansard,' this was not infrequent—a motion, or the threat of a motion, to report progress or to adjourn was found an admirable weapon to employ; while all the time the House as a whole was kept in subjection and often in good-humour, by the excellent quality of the speeches, the wit by which they were adorned, the fertility of resource which distinguished them and the reality of the arguments advanced.

Not content with discharging—however conscientiously—the functions of criticism, the Fourth Party aspired to legislate constructively. With the object of encouraging private thrift and ready-money transactions, Lord Randolph introduced in 1881 a Small Debts Bill which sought to make debts of under one hundred pounds irrecoverable after one year from the date of their being

contracted. Sir Henry Wolff carried a measure satirically described by Sir William Harcourt as the 'Bournemouth Reform Bill,' which enabled the inhabitants of seaside resorts to let their houses for short periods without impairing their voting qualification. In every Parliamentary incident, great or small, the four allies were prominent, if not supreme. The question of erecting a monument in Westminster Abbey to the Prince Imperial of France, killed in the Zulu War, produced differences in the Government, and from the division by which the proposal was rejected several Ministers abstained by withdrawing to the two small rooms behind the Chair which are used for the minor consultations of colleagues or opponents. Sir Henry Wolff at once raised a debate upon this alleged impropriety and, although Sir Stafford Northcote deprecated his action, a long wrangle followed, from which the Government emerged with ruffled plumes. When Mr. Dodson, the President of the Local Government Board, by an absurd mistake got himself elected for a second constituency without having previously applied for the Chiltern Hundreds, it was Lord Randolph Churchill who drew attention to the irregularity; and as the procedure of the House rendered it difficult to debate the matter without some artful device, he himself moved for a new writ for the borough of Chester, while Mr. Gorst—by collusion, as Mr. Gladstone unwarrantably asserted—gave notice of an amendment which would have brought the discussion within the bounds of order.

Nothing could excel the industry of the Fourth Party in Supply. They presented themselves nightly as the vigilant guardians of the public purse. No item of expenditure was too small to be criticised; no economy too petty to be cherished. 'If,' said Lord Randolph Churchill, with a paternal look at Sir Stafford Northcote and his colleagues, 'the late Tory Government had been more attentive to the principles involved in paltry matters of expenditure, they

might still be sitting on the Treasury Bench.' On one warm evening when the bulk of the Conservative party was scattered on its holidays—in pursuit of grouse according to tradition, indulging their wives and families at the seaside according to fact—and when the weary Ministerialists gasped amid the parching streets of London, Lord Randolph Churchill subjected to the most minute examination the grants-in-aid accorded to various learned societies. He inquired about the Meteorological Office and canvassed the value of weather reports. He compared the weather forecasts of Greenwich with those of America. Satisfied upon this, he turned to the Academy of Music and raised further important points for the Minister, Lord Frederick Cavendish, to explain. When the diplomatic vote was taken, Mr. Balfour and Sir Henry Wolff were at hand with stores of knowledge and that keen thirst for information which is only to be gained by personal experience. With only seventeen men to go into the Lobby with them, the Fourth Party were formidable and feared. Nothing could provoke them to anger or to levity. Their dignity and politeness were undisturbed by charges of obstruction. They desired only to further public business and to aid the Government in their responsible duties; and they moved to report progress lest ill-temper should result from the natural impatience of weaker and less conscientious legislators. Under these inflictions the Liberal party groaned and its champions grunted.[8]

It was inevitable that disagreements should spring up between the official leaders on the Front Opposition Bench and the active group below the gangway. At first, to the amusement of the House and later somewhat to its irritation, the Fourth Party claimed to be totally distinct from and independent of all existing parties. 'There are two great parties in the State,' said a member one night. Mr. Parnell: 'Three.' Lord Randolph Churchill: 'Four.' (Laughter.) Fortified by this assumption, the Fourth Party

moved whatever amendments and took whatever course seemed good to them, upon any and every question. As they did not consult their leaders, it often happened that differences arose about their tactics. And when, as we have seen, the influence of these free-lances was so often employed in making Liberal Bills more Radical, it was not surprising that the old Tories and ex-Ministers began to view their busy allies with apprehension.

The leader of the Conservative party in the House of Commons was an old and distinguished man. Sir Stafford Northcote had held high office, first as Secretary of State for India, afterwards as Chancellor of the Exchequer, under Disraeli in 1867 and in 1874. He had led the Commons upon Mr. Disraeli's retirement to the House of Lords. Upon finance he enjoyed a reputation second only to that of Mr. Gladstone. He is said to have possessed the common virtues in special excellence. Although Mr. Gladstone, with that marvellous power great men acquire of looking at things only from their own point of view, described him as 'not strong enough to convince his party that they were wrong,' he also spoke of him as admirable in good-temper, self-sacrifice, quickness, sound knowledge, and general integrity. This eulogy was not undeserved at Mr. Gladstone's hands. Sir Stafford Northcote had in ancient Corn Law days, when Peel was the honoured leader of the Conservative party, been private secretary to Mr. Gladstone at the Board of Trade. The reverence in which he held his former chief was undiminished by the passage of years, and his natural amiability of character led him to express it and display it on many suitable and unsuitable occasions. But the virtues of Sir Stafford Northcote were not those most needed in the stormy times amid which he closed his long career.

'His gentle disposition and good intentions,' said Lord Randolph long afterwards, 'would have saved anyone from attack except a leader of Opposition.' The very qualities

which endeared him to his friends and family and won him the compliments of his opponents, disheartened, irritated, and paralysed his followers in the House of Commons. The deference which he delighted to show to the Prime Minister, offended a party which had just struggled back, smarting and reduced, from a crushing electoral disaster. His lack of enterprising vigour was from the first session of the new Parliament painfully apparent even to his most faithful friends—and all of those who sat below the gangway were not his friends. His speeches were tame and ineffective. When party rancour festered to hate, when crisis at home followed hot on crisis abroad, the mild expostulations with which Sir Stafford was accustomed to conclude the debates, disappointed his followers. The Opposition, always hopelessly outmatched in their official spokesman, were never more plainly at a disadvantage than when their leader undertook to encounter Mr. Gladstone. Sir Stafford Northcote's character was estimable, his talents were distinguished, his experience had been long; but scarcely any Parliamentary chief has been more unequal to the particular work he had to do. And yet though his strength failed year by year and extraordinary physical disabilities oppressed him with increasing severity, his fingers, nerveless for aught else, closed tenaciously upon the reins of power. Unfit for any serious exertion or important business even in private life, he was willing—not, indeed, from any selfish or sordid motive, but from a high sense of public duty—to fill the most arduous offices of State. In a condition when, as a doctor, lawyer, or business man, he would have been unable properly to discharge his duties, he was prepared to form Governments, to grapple with Mr. Gladstone at the head of a great majority, and to guide the Conservative party through the fiercest political tumult of a hundred years. Heedless of the warnings of Nature and blind to the plainest teaching of fact, he struggled gallantly forward

until he died in harness beneath burdens he was utterly unable either to relinquish or sustain.

The Fourth Party were soon openly antagonistic to Sir Stafford Northcote and took no especial pains to conceal their feeling. In private they invariably called him 'the Goat.' This was at first a personal allusion to his beard, but it was afterwards more generally applied to all Conservatives who were thought to be 'weak-kneed.' They found themselves hampered in their conflicts with Mr. Gladstone by those who should have led the onset. They viewed the line of ex-Ministers on the Front Bench with those feelings of impatience which are natural to able men who see, or think they see, great opportunities of warfare cast away by persons much less able. They suspected Sir Stafford himself of being anxious to form a coalition with the Whigs; and, although they carefully preserved in public an air of elaborate politeness towards their leader, their true disposition was not in doubt.

Their opinions were held by many others in the Conservative party before the session of 1880 was ended; and, as always happens under such circumstances, there grew up a counter-faction in Sir Stafford Northcote's support. This was the beginning of strife. It would be profitless to attempt to trace the petty differences upon which mutual dislike was founded. But by the time the recess drew near disagreements were rife. The Fourth Party decided openly to condemn the want of energy and foresight which marked the leadership of the Opposition. The opportunity presented itself at a party meeting held in the Carlton Club on August 20. The plan was drawn up by the four colleagues in convivial conclave at the Garrick Club. It was arranged that Mr. Balfour should, in the name of his colleagues, indicate the failure of Sir Stafford Northcote to lead the party in the House of Commons to the satisfaction of its more active adherents. In pursuance of this Mr. Balfour made a very clever speech, in which he

contrived to deliver a most damaging criticism of Sir Stafford Northcote's methods without actually mentioning his name or using any discourteous phrase. He obtained a considerable measure of assent from the meeting.

On the same day Mr. Balfour, by arrangement with his three friends, attacked the Government for their conduct of public business. His indictment had been carefully drawn up by the four partners, and involved a comprehensive survey of the whole session. He complained that the attempt of Ministers to cram too much into a limited time had resulted in general confusion and in the most improper invasion of private members' rights, and he moved that it was inexpedient that 'important measures should be brought under the consideration of the House at a period of the session when it is impossible that they should receive adequate discussion.' Mr. Gladstone was absent through illness and Lord Hartington undertook to reply to these reproaches. He read out to the House some figures, which had been prepared, of the activities of the Fourth Party during the four months since the dissolution. From this it appeared that Mr. Gorst had spoken one hundred and five times, and had asked eighteen questions; that Sir Henry Wolff had made sixty-eight speeches and had asked thirty-four questions; and that Lord Randolph Churchill had made seventy-four speeches and had asked twenty-one questions. This statement caused much amusement; and after Sir Stafford Northcote had defended the Conservatives at length from the general charge of obstruction which had been urged on behalf of the Government, Lord Randolph rose to vindicate the honour of the Fourth Party. He had prepared himself for this not unexpected duty by a careful study of an article written by Mr. Gladstone when in Opposition in 1879, justifying or at any rate excusing obstruction. Some of the quotations were very effective. 'The public,' wrote Mr. Gladstone, 'has lately heard much on the subject of obstruction in the

House of Commons.... But to prolong debate even by persistent iteration on legislative measures is not necessarily an outrage, an offence, or even an indiscretion. For in some cases it is only by the use of this instrument that a small minority with strong views can draw adequate attention to those views.... There are abundant instances in which obstruction of this kind has led to the removal of perilous or objectionable matter from legislative measures, and thus to the avoidance of great public evils.' Lord Randolph proceeded to read a sentence which seemed to have been specially conceived in advance to protect the Fourth Party. 'Now, if a great party may obstruct, it is hazardous to award narrower limits to the small one; for it is precisely in the class of cases where the party is small and the conviction strong that the best instances of warrantable obstruction may be found.' Lord Randolph declared that these passages would be the charter of himself and 'those who acted with him.' He deplored the absence from the House of the Prime Minister and pleaded that, acting upon the sanction of his great Parliamentary experience, the Fourth Party ought to have escaped Lord Hartington's rebuke. He ended by exhorting the Government to cultivate 'the magic of patience.'

The last appearance of the Fourth Party in the session of 1880 was upon the third reading of the Appropriation Bill, which was not reached till September 4. Notwithstanding the heat of the season and the exhaustion of the House, the member for Woodstock and his friends preserved an air of unrelenting vigilance. Lord Randolph Churchill moved an amendment dwelling on the gravity of the defeat at Maiwand, which he sought to prove, by an elaborate argument based upon the Blue Books, to have been 'mainly attributable to want of foresight, of military knowledge and of caution on the part of the Indian Executive.' His criticisms drew from Lord Hartington a reasonable and weighty reply. Both Sir Henry Wolff and

Mr. Balfour spoke at later stages in the debate, and thus the session reached its close. ‘The rise of a small body of Conservative free-lances below the gangway,’ said the *Times* (September 7), in its review of the session, ‘of whom Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Gorst are the chiefs, is a curious incident, and has originated the half-serious nickname of the "Fourth Party."’

Such were the circumstances attending the rise of the Fourth Party in the beginning of the new Parliament. It must be admitted that Mr. Gladstone was at once their most powerful antagonist and their mainstay. His quick eye discerned very early in the session the menace that was growing below the gangway, and he hastened to respond to the challenge. Perhaps, if he had not been a great and famous Parliamentarian, he would have tried to treat with disdain the arguments of unproved or youthful opponents. He would have left the House during their speeches or, ignoring their criticisms altogether, have contented himself with replying only to the ex-officials on the Front Bench. But his nature prompted him to meet the strongest opposition from whatever quarter it might be offered. His generous care for the life and vigour of the House of Commons drew from him a frank recognition of talent wherever or however displayed. He had his favourites on both sides of the House, and he rallied with measureless good-temper and all his most formidable and glittering weapons of debate to the attacks of the Fourth Party and especially of their leader. Often and often he riddled them and crushed them and pulverised them or reasoned with them patiently or cast them aside with a stern rebuke; and as often they returned by other paths unwearied to the attack.

The Prime Minister was indeed on various occasions the innocent cause of delaying his own legislation. He was always delighted to expound obscure or difficult questions for the benefit of friends or opponents. Of this amiable

weakness Lord Randolph and his friends took, we may be sure, the fullest advantage whenever the pace of Government business seemed to be undesirably rapid. In his most insinuating manner the member for Woodstock —'Woodcock,' it was irreverently called on one occasion —would rise in his place and request the Prime Minister to explain some clause or subsection of a Bill to the Committee. Mr. Gladstone would invariably respond to this invitation with evident alacrity and frequently at considerable length. The wealth of fact and argument with which in a single unpremeditated speech he often enriched the debate served lesser mortals with new ideas. When these were exhausted, Mr. Gorst would get up and thank the Prime Minister for his lucid exposition, which he would say had made everything perfectly intelligible to him, with the exception of one point, upon which he would be most grateful to receive further information. When Mr. Gladstone had made a second lengthy speech upon this, it was Sir Henry Wolff's turn to state how clear all had been made to his comprehension also—with a single exception. 'If you speak again,' growled Sir William Harcourt, a sterner partisan, on one celebrated occasion to his chief, 'we shall be here till morning.' But it should not be supposed from this account that Mr. Gladstone lost by his invariable practice of giving his best to the House. Although now and then his opponents may have snatched some trifling advantage from the superabundance of his strength, no qualities but his own could have surmounted the amazing perplexities of the '80 Parliament or have guided the Liberal party through its perils. So long as his light lasted the House of Commons lived, and amid the fiercest passions and even scenes of violence preserved its hold upon the sympathies and the imagination of the whole world; and at his death it sank at once, perhaps for ever, in public esteem.

The proceedings and progress of the Fourth Party in the

House of Commons did not escape the attention of Lord Beaconsfield and that great man regarded them from the first with high approval. Sir Henry Wolff had already consulted him upon the Bradlaugh controversy. He had known Lord Randolph since Oxford days. He was on friendly terms with all the four friends; but it was Mr. Gorst with whom his relations were most intimate. He took a keen interest in all their Parliamentary manœuvres. He liked to feel himself in touch with the new men and especially with the young men whom the Parliament was bringing into notice and, so far from frowning on their independence, he encouraged them with advice and approbation. He did not often revisit the House of Commons after his elevation to the peerage; but one of these rare excursions was for the purpose of watching the Fourth Party at work and to hear Lord Randolph speak. He made particular inquiries as to what was thought of the Fourth Party in Ministerial circles. In the early spring of 1881, immediately before the commencement of his last illness, he met Sir Henry James at a dinner given by Sir William Harcourt. 'Well,' he said, 'what do you think of Randolph?' Sir Henry James praised his Parliamentary instincts and aptitude. 'Ah, yes, you are quite right,' rejoined Lord Beaconsfield, 'when they come in they will have to give him anything he chooses to ask for and in a very short time they will have to take anything he chooses to give them.' During the autumn Lord Beaconsfield invited Mr. Gorst to visit him at Hughenden, and talked to him with much freedom about the policy and influence of the Fourth Party, about Ireland and the general political situation.

'Lord B.,' wrote Gorst to Lord Randolph Churchill (November 9), 'was in his talk anything but Goaty: he generally expressed great confidence in us, thought we had a brilliant future before us, and promised to help and advise us as much as he could. I can in a letter only state

dogmatically what the oracle said, without giving all his arguments:—

‘1. We ought *not* to pledge ourselves to support the Government in any coercive measures for Ireland. They have encouraged agitation: they have adopted dilatory and inefficient proceedings: and they don’t deserve the confidence of Parliament. We should therefore hold ourselves free to take what course we think best when the Government lay their proposals before us. B. will prevent Northcote, if he can, from making any more pledges. Meanwhile our attitude may be ostentatiously one of reserve. There is a precedent for suspending the Habeas Corpus to suppress Ribbon outrages in the Westmeath Act of 1871. ‘2. B. himself broached the idea that Gladstone may buy off the Irish landlords. He thinks this would be to us a very dangerous move. But there is no use in talking about it either in public or private. Nor can we say how the matter should be dealt with till the move is made. B. has always been in favour of the purchase by the tenant under Bright’s clauses: Lord Salisbury has always supported an extension of this.

‘3. He scouted the idea of Northcote thinking of coalition or being inclined to Derby; and did not bear out what Wolff said about his supporting Derby in the late Cabinet. We need not consult Northcote when Parliament is not sitting. It would be good policy to abuse Government for not summoning Parliament to consider the state of Ireland, and to say that their object in not doing so was to conceal their Eastern policy. We should always courteously inform N., through the Whip, of any step we are about to take in the House of Commons, and listen with respect and attention to anything he may say about it; his remarks, even when we disagree with him, will be well worth attention. But just at present *we need not be too scrupulous about obeying our leader*. An open rupture between us would, however, be most disastrous; but Lord B. thinks if we are courteous and firm Northcote will make no open rupture, and will not throw us over....

‘4. Upon alteration of the rules of the House there is to be the most absolute and unyielding resistance. Cairns has agreed to this, and they will force N. to be firm. There was a committee on the subject twenty years ago, which took some very interesting

evidence, including that of M. Guizot on the *clôture*, which we ought to look up.'

Mr. Gorst was not the only member of the Fourth Party who was encouraged by the Tory leader. 'Lord Beaconsfield,' writes Sir Henry Wolff, 'whom I had known nearly from my childhood, having asked me to call, I went in the autumn of 1880 to the house in Curzon Street where he was then living and where the next year he died. We discussed the situation and I explained how the action of the Conservative party was crippled by the over-caution—not to say indecision—of Sir Stafford Northcote, which led him constantly to throw us over. He replied almost word for word as follows:—

'When Mr. Gladstone announced his withdrawal from public life I fully believed his statement, which was confirmed to me from special sources in which I placed the most implicit reliance. I thought that when he was gone Northcote would be able to cope with anyone likely to assume the lead on the other side, and I wanted rest. I now much regret having retired from the House of Commons, as Mr. Gladstone, contrary to my firm persuasion, returned. I fully appreciate your feelings and those of your friends; but you must stick to Northcote. He represents the respectability of the party. I wholly sympathise with you all, because I never was respectable myself. In my time the respectability of the party was represented by * * * a horrid man; but I had to do as well as I could; you must do the same. Don't on any account break with Northcote; but defer to him as often as you can. Whenever it becomes too difficult you can come to me and I will try to arrange matters. Meanwhile I will speak to him.'

The countenance and kindness thus shown to a rebellious group by so great a man as Lord Beaconsfield filled the hearts of the Fourth Party with a sense of elation. They reflected with satisfaction upon the events of the session. With astonishing rapidity they had risen to a

position of influence in Parliament; their action attracted every day an increasing interest from the public. They commanded the serious attention of the Conservative party and enjoyed the favour of its famous leader. Ministers and ex-Ministers eyed them with equal apprehension. Older members were inquisitive about their plans. They looked forward to the brightest future. Yet there were already gathering clouds. Jealousies in a numerous troop had followed closely on success. Their own contemporaries in the party were quick to resent the formation of a clique and still more the prominence which was accorded to it. The great Tory newspapers laboured assiduously to ignore their existence and, when compelled, alluded to their proceedings only with a sneer. The life and soul of the Tory Opposition, they were freely represented as hostile to its interests. Sir Stafford Northcote seems from the beginning to have scented danger. 'I am inclined to think,' he wrote complacently to Gorst, as soon as Parliament had risen (September 15, 1880), 'that the Fourth Party has done enough for its fame, and that it will be the wiser course for its members now quietly to take their places in the main body, where they will have work enough and to spare.' Gorst, in reply, descanted on the advantages of combination. Each member of the Fourth Party felt stronger for the support and wiser for the counsel of his friends; and he assured Sir Stafford that together they would form a weapon of political warfare which could not fail to be formidable 'in his hands.'

Thus Mr. Gorst to his leader. But the next day a new plan presented itself to him and this he imparted half in fun to his friends. It was in effect that Sir Stafford's proposition should be solemnly embraced, that the Fourth Party should after mature deliberation, at his request, give up the idea—which they had never seriously entertained—of a separate party and 'take their places in the main body,' by sitting immediately behind their leader on the second

bench above the gangway. From this new position, adopted at Sir Stafford's special desire, Mr. Gorst thought that the conduct of the Opposition could be much more effectively directed than from below the gangway and that its leader would very soon fall completely under the control of the masterful men behind him. Lord Randolph Churchill and Sir Henry Wolff both scouted this proposal and supplied a number of reasons against it. Sir Henry Wolff was greatly perturbed at the idea of relinquishing ground which seemed to give the right to treat with party leaders, as he described it, *de puissance à puissance*; and he pointed to Sir Stafford's anxiety as a proof of the advantages of independence. Mr. Balfour's argument was single, substantial, and conclusive. The length of his legs made it indispensable to his comfort that he should sit upon a Front Bench and nothing would induce him to change his quarters. So the matter was settled accordingly; but it is curious that in after-years Lord Randolph used often to relate this story as an instance of Mr. Gorst's Parliamentary knowledge and shrewdness and would frankly admit that if his advice had been followed all legitimate objects might have been attained without the friction and disturbance that ensued.

The Fourth Party had other friends beside Lord Beaconsfield.

Sir Henry Wolff to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Cromwell House, Putney: September 29, 1880.

My dear Randolph,—After you left yesterday I received two very handsome tributes to the Fourth Party—one from Lord Cadogan, who said that he would look with dread at its being done away with, as being the only portion of the Conservative party that did any good at all—the other was from a man whose name I cannot recollect, and who came up to me in St. James Street to say he had been staying with Chenery, the Editor of the *Times*, who had expressed himself very warmly as to the future of the Fourth Party. I shall try and see Chenery; and as Burrows was sent to the Wali's forces I shall endeavour, I hope with better success, to confirm his fidelity,

Ever yours sincerely,
H. D. W.

While opinions were thus divided it was not unnatural that Lord Randolph and his friends should wish to give some public demonstration of their influence and to show that they were not without friends in high places. Mr. Balfour became their ambassador and Lord Salisbury, probably after consultation with Lord Beaconsfield, accepted an invitation to address a meeting at Woodstock. Just outside the Woodstock gate of Blenheim Park the road passes through a considerable courtyard, surrounded on every side by lofty walls and pierced only by the gateway. A temporary roof of tarpaulins erected over this converted the highway into a spacious hall; and here on November 30, 1880, Lord Salisbury and Lord Randolph Churchill first appeared together in political association. The meeting attracted much notice in the country and the attitude of the Tory leaders in the House of Lords towards the independent group which had so severely hustled their colleagues in the House of Commons was, of course, the subject of much comment and speculation. This delicate topic was, however, handled with dexterous caution by the principal speakers. Lord Randolph Churchill, who took the

chair, enlarged upon the loyalty of himself and his friends to Lord Beaconsfield but avoided all mention of Sir Stafford Northcote's name. Lord Salisbury, on his part, was careful to pay an ample tribute to the 'sagacious guidance' of Sir Stafford early in his speech and then he proceeded to praise the energy and ability of the member for Woodstock. The meaning of the demonstration was variously interpreted by the newspapers. The Liberal organs regarded it as a further proof of the growing power of the Fourth Party. The Conservative papers believed, or affected to believe, that the rebellious partnership was now dissolved and that the erring friends had been welcomed back to the party fold. 'It appears,' said the *Times*, 'that Lord Randolph Churchill and Sir Henry Wolff are not bent on forming a new party with the assistance of Mr. Balfour and Mr. Gorst.'

The correspondence of the Fourth Party is extensive and would be highly diverting to anyone who knew the Conservative side of the House of Commons in the early 'eighties. Lord Randolph's private letters do not lend themselves to publication as readily as those of some other eminent persons. They are spontaneous and scrappy. They deal with the little ordinary commonplaces of the writer's life. They reflect his mood at the moment. They are full of personal allusions which would be pointless without names and much too pointed with them. He abominated priggishness in all its forms. No one ever wrote to his friends with less regard to ceremony or with more unaffected frankness. Any piece of gossip, any quaint conceit or joke or piece of solemn drollery, any sharp judgment that occurred to him, went upon the paper without an after-thought. Every passing shadow or gleam of sunlight which fell upon him marked his pages with strong contrasts of feeling often extravagantly and recklessly expressed. Nevertheless his correspondence with Sir Henry Wolff has an air of gay and generous

friendship, strong with an attractiveness of its own. But there runs through it a recurring sense of weariness and of disgust at politics, which seems to have alternated with his periods of great exertion even during these most merry and successful years of his life.

1880-1884

He delighted in receiving Wolff's letters at all times: 'The only fault I find with them is that they are too short; I should like several volumes.' 'Your letters are to me like a glass of the best champagne—exhilarating and stimulating.' 'You have such an entrancing style, even when writing about the simplest matters, that one recognises at once the statesman and the man of letters.' 'It is only your versatile and brilliant genius which could produce such lively correspondence in the dull season.' He paints his own oratorical achievements in glowing colours: 'I had a most warm welcome at Oldham. The meeting numbered some six hundred—all working men. I spoke for fifty-five minutes—quite entrancing (my speech). What would you have given to have heard it!!! I will, however, declaim it to you when we meet. Fair Trade and taxing the foreigner went down like butter. How the latter is to be done I don't know....' (September 10, 1881.)

1880-1884

And a few weeks later: 'Well! Hull was a triumph. I never had such a success with a large audience. Every point told surprisingly. In my second speech my reference to your successful contest with Bradlaugh provoked the greatest enthusiasm. I was received yesterday at the Carlton *à bras ouverts*. I see the Radical provincial press is beside itself with indignation' (November 3, 1881). 'I received the Glasgow invitation—most politely worded it is, and I have accepted it. I only hope it may turn out well,

and that you are not trying me *au dessus de mes forces*. It seems a presumptuous thing to go and preach to a lot of Scotchmen on home politics, which they probably understand much better than I do. However, *de l'audace*, &c.' (October 24, 1882.)

When Lord Randolph was abroad—as he often was for his health, or in 1883 during his retirement after his father's death—Wolff kept him informed about political things. These did not always allure him. 'All your news,' he wrote in January, 1882, from Monte Carlo, 'about your conversation with various distinguished people concerning myself is very pleasant reading, but my disinclination to return to England for the meeting of Parliament grows stronger every day and I seem to have lost all interest in things political. I am happy in Capua, and the thought of once more engaging with Goats and Gibsons *et hoc genus omne* makes me sick. Old * * * came and bored me yesterday for more than an hour, and I had a providential escape from * * * the other day; and yet it is this class of individual of whom the great Tory party is mainly composed. I think I shall copy Gladstone and take to reading Dante and Homer—after,' he adds prudently, 'I have got through one or two French novels I have by me.'

He always followed his friend's doings with attention. 'I have just risen,' he writes July 31, 1883, 'in a state of singular emotion after perusing your Demosthenic oration at Portsmouth'; and again, 'I wonder how things are going to-night. I dare say you are delivering a telling speech. (It is the dinner hour, 8.30 P.M.!) How I wish I was there to listen and cheer!' And again (August 17, 1883): 'You appear to have been sustaining the whole weight of Opposition. I hope you mean to take a good holiday when it is all over. I am quite clear that W. E. G. has been very much bothered by your Suez Canal questions.' At another time he counsels reserve: 'I read with interest both your speeches at Banbury and at Portsmouth, and think that they

were as good as the occasion admitted of or demanded. At the same time I wish I could convince you of what Chief Justice Morris calls "the energy of silence." ... Gorst and I took a walk on Sunday on Hampstead Heath. I have never been there before. There is a capital inn there called "Jack Straw's Castle," where Gorst and I agreed the Fourth Party ought to go for Saturday and Sunday during the Session to recruit their strength' (October 2, 1882). He was bitterly offended by the opposition which on various grounds—partly, no doubt, to annoy him—was threatened against his brother's candidature for the Carlton Club. 'I am more vexed,' he wrote from Gastein, 'than I can tell you about this business of Blandford and the Carlton Club. I wrote to Dyke before starting, particularly enjoining on him the necessity of making no move unless the consent of the committee was assured. And now how can anyone occupy a more unpleasant position than Blandford does? He has publicly changed his politics, to please me more than for any other reason, and owing to H. Chaplin's action his overtures to the Conservatives are spurned.... H. Chaplin and Baron de Worms together will soon make the Tory party too hot to hold me. I shall certainly take my name off the Carlton when I return to town, and a very little would make me consummate H. C.'s and B. de W.'s joy by retiring altogether from the party and Parliament. They do not know how easy it would be to get rid of me. I am sick of politics, which only play the dickens with one's health, and are a dreadful tie. I think the party occupies a worse position now than it did in 1880. But its leading members are so purblind, so given over to the most utter infatuation, that I believe they are of opinion that the country would replace them in power. I only trust, for the sake of the country, that they are as mistaken as I believe them to be.' (August 8, 1883.)

Here is the account of a most famous event of which Gastein was the scene:—

'You will be glad to hear that the Emperor of Germany had the honour of being introduced to me on Saturday last at a tea-party at Count Lehndorff's. This Count, I must tell you, is a Prussian who owns the *bicoque* which I am inhabiting with my suite. He waited on us on Saturday afternoon, and with almost Oriental deference begged that we would honour the Emperor by meeting him. I write all this, lest you should see garbled accounts in the newspapers. The Emperor, I must admit, was very guarded in his conversation, which was confined to asking me how long I had been here and whether I had come for my health. I imitated his reserve. My wife, however, sat by him at tea, and had much conversation, which, I have ascertained, was confined to the most frivolous topics. I have reason to believe, though it is humiliating to confess it, that the fame of the Fourth Party has not yet reached the ears of this despot. I must say he is a very fine old fellow, and the Germans seem really to love him. There were several other Prussians and Austrians present; but I was rather bored on the whole and so was my wife. They wanted us to go the next night, when they had arranged some *tableaux* for the old boy; but I sent an excuse on the ground that I was in deep mourning. We did not come here to kowtow to monarchs.

. . . . . .

'I have just been reading a book on cribbage and I find that in all the games we have played together we have played wrong. The non-dealer at the commencement has the right to mark three holes as compensation for his not having the crib. This you have never allowed me to do. Please therefore send me, by return of post, a cheque for 25*l.*, being the amount you have unjustly and illegally taken from me.' (November 14, 1883.)

Sometimes his letters take a graver tone:—

Blenheim Palace: October 30, 1883.

My dear Wolff,—Your suspicions of intrigues are apparently so deep-rooted that they do not even exclude me from the range of their operations. I have not seen or heard of Chenery since he dined with me last June, nor should I at any time have any communication with him of which you would not be fully cognisant.

I cannot explain the sentence in Saturday's *Times* which seems to have exercised you so much; but, in any case, I wonder that you do not see that these recurring speculations or statements anent the Fourth Party, as to whether it is alive or dead, whether it is united or disrupted, is a strong testimony to its value as a political instrument, and as to the proof of the interest and curiosity of the public in its proceedings. The more Chenery or others in the Press make statements about it, the more I am pleased. I will be at the Carlton at eight o'clock on Thursday.

Yours ever,
Randolph S. C.

And here is a rebuke:—

Blenheim Palace: December 31, 1883.

My dear Wolff,—I have had a very curious letter from the Queen, which I will not show you when we meet.

Yours ever,
Randolph S. C.

Blenheim Palace: January 2, 1884.

My dear Wolff,—You are not generally slow to take a hint, therefore your failure to understand my letter which you received on New Year's Day is, I think, a pretence. In political friendships confidence must be mutual, and measure for measure the rule. You wrote to me that you had received a very curious letter from Lord S., and that you would show it to me when we met. When I receive 'very curious letters from political personages' I have hitherto sent them to you without delay. Your cautious behaviour about Lord S.'s letter seemed to call for similar caution on my part. I therefore wrote to you that I had received a very curious letter from the Queen, which I should not show you when we met, and I shall not.

Yours ever,
Randolph S. C.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL SIR HENRY WOLFF MR. BALFOUR. MR. GORST.



THE FOURTH PARTY.

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Lord Randolph's correspondence with Sir Henry Wolff has carried the reader somewhat in advance of the regular course of the narrative. His letters in 1883 and 1884 belong to a region of more serious disputes than those with which this chapter deals. The swift unravelling of events was to bring varied fortunes and many adventures to the four friends who now delighted to 'act together.' They were to play a decisive part in great affairs. Yet it is probable that the early sessions of their comradeship were the joyous days of the Fourth Party. 'Politics,' wrote Lady Randolph, 'seemed more like a game of chess than the life-and-death struggle it was so soon to become for some of them.' Plots and ambuscades prepared with severe impartiality, amid fun and laughter, against both Front Benches; stormy battles in the House; generous comradeship and glorious discomfiture of foes; miniature Cabinet Councils; toy whitebait dinners, filled the years with merry excitement. One single enormous sofa could contain the whole party—

leaders and followers—at once. They were cartooned together in *Vanity Fair*—Lord Randolph speaking from his famous corner seat, the others and Mr. Balfour (who travelled from Scotland in order to be painted) sprawling on the Bench beside him. Dinner with the Fourth Party was regarded as a rare distinction and justly restricted in its scope. Their political action was not always the result of long premeditation. 'On one occasion,' writes Sir Henry Wolff, 'Balfour gave a dinner at his house, to which he invited the Fourth Party and some other members of Parliament, amongst them Sir R. Cross and Mr. Pell. Someone at length said, "We must return to the House on account of the Bill," of which I do not remember the subject. Randolph said, "We will all go and all speak." Cabs were sent for, and the one I drove in was a few minutes later than his. When I arrived at the House he was already speaking.' Sometimes their fiercest opponents, Sir William Harcourt or Sir Charles Dilke, shared their board; though not, it is presumed, their secrets. Nay, Mr. Chamberlain himself was invited, though this greatly shocked the Duke of Marlborough, who did not understand how his son could cultivate social relations with a person of such pernicious opinions, and was quite sure House of Commons traditions must have greatly changed since he succeeded. One member of the Government, mentioning to the Liberal Whips that he was dining with the Fourth Party, was told that 'so long as he kept those four fellows away he could stay any length of time he liked.' Lord Randolph's house, in St. James's Place, was *next door* to Sir Stafford Northcote's; but luckily the walls were thick; and here we see the Fourth Party gathered in festive council round the dining-room table, amid the haze of countless cigarettes. Wolff has discovered some new intrigue among the 'Goats' or the Radicals or the Parnellites. Gorst has a plan for meeting it. Their leader examines it all with a gay and brilliant vivacity which

made his companionship precious to those to whom it was frankly given; and in the background, rather silent, ready enough with chaff and counsel, but difficult to rouse to action, sits Arthur Balfour, dreamily revolving longer calculations of his own.

Here, then, for the present we may leave them and their leader, happy in the enjoyment of active and pugnacious irresponsibility, tasting the first pleasures of success and fame and displacing with the haughty assertions of youthful ardour the tame acceptances of age. It is time to turn to those grave events which marched in crowded and uninterrupted procession from almost every quarter of the Queen's dominions, to the embarrassment and perplexity of her Ministers.

CHAPTER IV

IRELAND UNDER STORM

'Your oppression taught them to hate—your concessions to brave you; you exhibited to them how scanty was the stream of your bounty, and how full the tribute of your fear.'—Lord John Russell (*Speech*, Feb. 7, 1837).

THE decision of the constituencies in 1880 had no reference to Ireland. Lord Beaconsfield's warning letter was regarded as a somewhat transparent attempt to divert attention from the record of his Government. Politicians were absorbed by controversies upon foreign and colonial affairs, upon Turkish atrocities, Afghan disasters, and South African annexations. The Prime Minister seemed to be under the impression that the Irish Question had been settled, so far as he was concerned, by the Church Act of 1869 and the Land Act of 1870. The Queen's Speech contained no suggestion of Irish Land legislation; and the supporters of the Ministry had assembled at Westminster

eager to discuss every subject—from the Treaty of Berlin to the shooting of hares and rabbits—except the subject of Ireland. They soon found themselves debating little else. 'I frankly admit,' said Mr. Gladstone four years later, 'I had had much upon my hands connected with the doings of the Beaconsfield Government in almost every quarter of the world, and I did not know the severity of the crisis that was already swelling upon the horizon and that shortly after rushed upon us like a flood.'

For more than three years Irish conditions had been growing steadily worse. The yield and value of the crops had dwindled under three successive bad seasons and the number of evictions had increased. There was a deep and general feeling of unrest and discontent among the peasantry. All the permanent elements of revolt were nervously awake. A new man had seized upon the national leadership; a new movement was gathering behind him. The Fenian societies and the Clan-na-Gael had long been hampered in practical action by the purity of their principles. Armed insurrection for the sake of national independence is a spirited and uncompromising creed, but the opportunities in which it can be carried into actual practice must necessarily be rare. Meanwhile it blocked the way of less heroic expedients. The Fenians contained within their ranks many men who were willing, 'when the time came,' to risk or cast away life and liberty in their country's cause. They could not be accused of insincerity. But 'the hour' lagged; the time did not come; and nothing remained but to keep alive from year to year, in all its orthodox integrity, the Fenian doctrine.

The process, when maintained over a considerable period, of professing opinions and intentions for the execution of which no occasion is afforded, is apt to become artificial. The most blood-curdling oaths and sentiments tend to degenerate into ritual. They may preserve in all their vivid squalor the hateful memories of

the past; they cannot be said to exert much influence upon the politics of the present. Had the flag of Ireland been unfurled in civil war, the Fenian societies would have assumed a gigantic importance. Pending that event, they stood aside and allowed the English Government to proceed on its path unmolested. They had long despised Parliamentary agitation. They regarded the House of Commons, not without reason, as a school for Anglicising Irishmen. They expelled from their order any man who took the Parliamentary oath. They abhorred constitutional methods, however effective they might be, as involving some tacit recognition of British institutions. They paid no attention to social movements or to agrarian conflicts. Looking with profound distrust upon all who would not go the whole way with them, they remained a great, secret, silent army, gathered around the watch-fires of unquenchable hatred, morosely forecasting the chances of a battle on which the day would never dawn.

The rise of Parnell in Parliament and the anger which his obstructive tactics evidently excited in England filled these fierce dreamers with a new interest. The impression which his reserved yet commanding personality made upon all who were brought into contact with it, was intense. The deepening discontent and distress of the peasantry seemed to herald the approach of a new opportunity. Fenian opinion was perplexed and divided. Some scorned the hateful alliance with constitutionalism. ‘Freedom comes from God’s right hand.’ A pretence of loyalty, but in reality treason all along the line, would dishonour a national movement and end in sham loyalty and sham treason. Others urged with Davitt that unless the Fenians threw their hearts into the real stirrings of the Irish people, and helped them in their immediate and material need, they would cease to represent the life of their country. In 1879 the principles of doctrinaire treason were preferred. In 1880 a more practical view prevailed and the ‘new

departure' was sanctioned.

The situation was not brought into being by any deliberate or definite action on the part of individuals. It developed of itself in the mysterious unravellings of events. First came Mr. Butt with his organised party of constitutional Home Rulers, then Parnell with his band of fighting obstructives, then Michael Davitt with his schemes of 'agrarian agitation,' and finally the failure of the potato and the cruel severity of the winter of 1879. Economic well-being often takes the heart out of racial animosities. The cause of nationality may excite the educated revolutionist; but the pinch of famine is required before the humble tiller of the soil can be enlisted in his thousands. A political movement to be dangerous must find its substance in social evil. It was the combination of agrarian with national aspirations and the gathering together of all their several forces in one determined hand that imparted sinister and terrible a complexion to Ireland in 1880. Scarcity and poverty supplied the impulse, and misery brought forth her progeny of outrage.

All this formidable movement had already become defined and was rapidly developing when the change of Government occurred. The elections in Ireland had returned sixty pledged Home Rulers to the House of Commons, and a majority of these elected Mr. Parnell as their leader. Mr. Forster, the new Chief Secretary, found many causes for anxiety in the accounts which were given him at the Castle. The sufferings of the winter of 1879 had roused a spirit of violent discontent among the people. The numerous tenant defence societies had been formed by Michael Davitt into the one great organisation of the Land League. Mr. Parnell, after some hesitation, had thrown in his lot whole-heartedly with the agrarian agitation. In his speeches at Westport and Limerick he had urged the farmers to keep 'a firm grip on their homesteads' and not to allow themselves to be dispossessed. One thousand and

ninety-eight evictions, or more than double the number of 1877, had been carried out, amid scenes of riot and misery, in 1879. A furious animosity against the landlords convulsed the tenantry; and the Fenian and Parliamentary leaders openly declared their intention of using the driving power of the land movement as the means by which national independence was to be achieved.

In the face of these facts the first decision of the new Minister, or that forced upon him by his colleagues in the Cabinet, was singularly ill-judged. The Peace Preservation Act which had been passed in 1870, and continued amended by the late Government in 1875, would expire on June 1. It was a mild but not ineffective measure which provided for the compulsory attendance of witnesses, for taxing localities with the payment of compensation, for the suppression of seditious newspapers; and prohibited the carrying of arms in party processions—and other similar regulations. Certainly nothing in the state of Ireland disclosed by every channel of official information, either in regard to agrarian discontent or secret associations, justified its being allowed to lapse. The draft of the Bill for its renewal, prepared by his predecessor, confronted the new Minister on his arrival at the Castle. Out of sixty-nine resident magistrates consulted, sixty-one had declared the re-enactment indispensable and eleven of these had asked for further powers. The growth of agrarian crime told its own tale. But Lord Beaconsfield's letter, though it had not produced much impression on British electors, had at least had the effect of throwing the Irish vote in the English boroughs solidly on to the Liberal side. Many sympathetic speeches and friendly offices had been exchanged between Liberal candidates and Irish politicians, many lofty sentiments about the rights of nationalities had been uttered, and all had proceeded together to the poll as the equal friends of freedom. It would have been awkward after this—as the late Government in fixing the date of the

dissolution may have uncharitably foreseen—to inaugurate the new era for Ireland by 'exceptional legislation in abridgment of liberty.' The Royal Speech accordingly announced that the Peace Preservation Act would not be renewed and that the Government would rely 'upon the provisions of the ordinary law, firmly administered, for the maintenance of peace and order.' Thus, at a time when measures of exceptional precaution, together with large remedial legislation, were both indispensable, the existing securities of the law were relaxed and remedial legislation was entirely neglected. The failure to deal with so vast and complicated a question as Irish land on the part of Ministers who had just taken office may be understood. The abandonment of the Peace Preservation Act in the face of growing danger cannot be defended. It was immediately condemned in the House of Lords by the Duke of Marlborough fresh from his Lord-Lieutenancy, and it was generally believed that the Cabinet had not come to their decision without considerable misgivings.

All illusions as to the comparative unimportance of Irish troubles were quickly dispelled as the session advanced. The state of the country grew worse from day to day. The Irish members maintained an unrelenting clamour in the House of Commons. The good harvest of 1880 left the peasantry still hampered with arrears and in many cases quite unable to pay the rents demanded of them. More than a thousand evictions had already been effected during the first six months of 1880. In June a 'Compensation for Disturbance Bill' was introduced by Mr. Forster with the object of staying, or at least diminishing, the other evictions which were threatening in hundreds all over the country. This Bill—'a ten minutes' Bill, if ever there was one,' as Lord Randolph Churchill called it—'an after-thought, not a deliberately counselled measure; an inspiration, but not from above'—could be justified only by the acute and imminent danger of the Irish situation.

And as yet public opinion in England was not sufficiently impressed with that danger. The Bill was fiercely disputed in the House of Commons, the Fourth Party ever in the forefront of the battle; and although Lord Hartington supported it in a speech of exceptional power, many Liberals were absent from the division when it passed and more than twenty voted with the Conservative party. It was summarily rejected by the House of Lords.

Upon this measure Lord Randolph delivered the first of those Irish speeches which, in the course of the next three years, were to win him acceptance as an authority upon Irish questions. The importance of enterprise and pertinacity in the conduct of Parliamentary Opposition cannot be underrated when Ministers have to be harassed and minorities inflamed. But mere activity, however bold and tireless, will never by itself make a Parliamentary reputation, and the readiest tactician in the House of Commons will lack real influence unless he is master of some important subject upon which he can add to the information and distinction of debate. Lord Randolph's training in Ireland—official and unofficial alike—equipped him as scarcely any other English member was equipped for the discussion of the one vast and predominant question of the day. He took rank almost at once among those to whom Parliament would most gladly or most gravely listen upon Irish affairs, and in his speeches he revealed a range of thought, an authority of manner, and a wealth of knowledge which neither friends nor foes attempted to dispute.

'I happened,' he said (July 5), 'for a period of ten weeks, when the distress was at its height, to be associated with a committee that was relieving that distress on a very vast scale, and my work in connection with it occupied me from eight to ten hours a day. I was in constant communication with the Local Government Board and its inspectors and with the inspectors employed by the

committee and with chairmen of boards of guardians in all parts of the country. If any person, free from official responsibility and perfectly unprejudiced, had an opportunity of ascertaining the extent of the distress, I was that person; and I do not hesitate to say that, although it was severe at times and in certain districts, and would have been disastrous but for the timely relief afforded; yet it never at any time justified, and does not now warrant, the introduction of a Bill of this kind. Not only was food distributed in enormous quantities, but clothes and bedding, and excellent seed which would contribute to prepare for a return of former prosperity. But although the distress was great, the fraud and imposture which sprang up alongside of it were also great. If Ireland, under God's providence, is this year favoured with a good harvest, the Irish people will, I believe, be able to extricate themselves from their difficulties, without recourse being had to any such legislation as is now proposed.'

Having described the Bill as 'the first step in a social war,' and criticised it in correct and elaborate detail, he made an attack on the Chief Secretary as true as it was unkind. 'When the right honourable gentleman took office, he somewhat rashly accepted the popular verdict that in so doing he conferred a great honour upon Ireland. He seemed to be under the impression that his acceptance of the post would change the face of the country and the nature of the people; that from the mere fact of his disembarkation at Kingstown would result a state of things in which the inhabitants of the country would be found contented, and that law, order, property, and life would become immediately secure. He declared that with himself at the helm, legislation of a coercive nature was no longer necessary, that he could with ease carry on the government of Ireland by means of the ordinary law. His conduct seems to resemble the conduct of a miner going into a fiery and explosive mine and declaring that safety lamps were

unnecessary, that an ordinary tallow candle was good enough for him. Meeting with difficulties at the outset, the Chief Secretary came to the conclusion that the best thing to do was to repair to the House with a policy of appeals. He appealed to the Protestants and Catholics of Ireland to unite in an hysterical embrace in celebration of his accession to office. He made a pathetic appeal to the Irish members and landlords to help him; the whole burden of the business being, "For God's sake, keep the country quiet, or what trouble I shall be in!" The policy of appeals not proving altogether satisfactory, the Chief Secretary produced the policy of bribes—a policy which was marked by the generosity which is characteristic of people who are dealing with the property of others. I fear that the next phase of the Government policy will be one of repression.'

The rejection of this Bill, although not unexpected, was a heavy blow to Mr. Forster and the signal for a fierce accession to the Irish agitation. The Government pocketed the affront which had been offered them and had perforce to content themselves with promising a Land Bill next session. Most disquieting reports continued to come from Ireland. Evictions led to riots; tenants who took the places of evicted occupiers were assaulted, their ricks were burned, their beasts were mutilated; arms were stolen from a vessel in Queenstown Harbour; and rumours of secret brotherhoods and of dynamite conspiracies were rife. So the Parliamentary session came to an end.

The winter of 1880-1 was cruel. In the very beginning, in a speech at Ennis (September 19), Mr. Parnell prescribed the methods of the Land League. 'Depend upon it,' he said, 'the measure of the Land Bill next session will be the measure of your activity and energy this winter.' He then explained his new invention; 'better than any 81-ton gun,' as it was afterwards described by enthusiastic followers. 'When a man takes a farm from which another has been evicted, you must *show* him on the roadside when

you meet him [a voice 'shun him'], in the streets of the town, at the shop counter, in the fair, in the market place, and even in the house of worship, by leaving him severely alone, by putting him into a moral Coventry, by isolating him from his kind as if he were a leper of old—you must show him your detestation of the crime he has committed.'

The advice was taken. Three days later Lord Erne's agent, a certain Captain Boycott, served ejectment notices upon a number of tenants. His servants left him. The local shopkeepers refused to serve him. The blacksmith and the laundress declined his orders. His crops remained ungathered on the ground. He was 'left severely alone.' The tale of these doings spread to Ulster. One hundred Orangemen offered to march with arms to his relief and to the rescue of his crops. The Government consented. Under protection of infantry, cavalry, and two field guns, and amid the taunts of the cottagers, the harvest was gathered in and the process of 'boycotting' was advertised to the whole world. It spread throughout Ireland. Nothing was more unexpected than the precision with which an impulsive and undisciplined peasantry gave effect to this new plan. Whole counties conspired together to make it complete. Every class in the population acquiesced. Public opinion supported the Land League and no moral force sustained the government of the Queen.

Behind and beneath this strange system of excommunication came outrages of various kinds upon property, upon animals, and upon life. There were in 1880 10,457 persons evicted compared with 2,177 in 1877, and 2,590 agrarian crimes compared with 236 in the earlier year. 'It rained evictions,' says Mr. Parnell's biographer; 'it rained outrages. Cattle were houghed and maimed; tenants who paid unjust rents or who took farms from which others had been evicted were dragged from their beds, assaulted, sometimes forced to their knees while shots were fired over their heads, to make them promise

submission to the popular desires in future. Bands of peasants scoured the country, firing into the houses of obnoxious individuals. Graves were dug before the doors of evicting landlords. Murder was committed. A reign of terror had in truth commenced.'[9]

'I must say,' wrote General Gordon, who visited the West of Ireland in 1880, 'that the state of our fellow-countrymen in the parts I have named, is worse than that of any people in the world, let alone Europe. I believe that these people are made as we are; that they are patient beyond belief; loyal, but broken-spirited and desperate; lying on the verge of starvation in places where we would not keep cattle.'

Amid such grim and gloomy surroundings the Lord-Lieutenant and his Chief Secretary passed the winter. As early as October they were asking the Cabinet for special powers. Strong reinforcements of troops were moved into the island. In the first days of November a State prosecution was instituted against Mr. Parnell and other leaders of the Land League. Late in that same month the Viceroy, Lord Cowper, intimated that, unless power was taken to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act, he must resign. In December he reiterated his intention and pressed that Parliament should be called together. National and even international attention were riveted upon Ireland. Cabinets were frequent, protracted, vexatious, and indecisive. The harassed Chief Secretary hurried to and fro between the two capitals.

'What more lamentable and ridiculous spectacle,' exclaimed Lord Randolph Churchill at Preston (December 21, 1880), 'has ever been presented than this great Liberal statesman from Bradford, tossed like a shuttlecock from the Irish Executive on to the English Government, tossed back again contemptuously by the English Government on to the Irish Executive—arriving in Dublin and being immediately seized by that horrid, choking nightmare,

Revolution—flying back to London and, finding himself amongst its peaceful citizens and busy streets, fancying that he had been the victim of a bad dream, laughed out of his convictions by his sneering colleagues—and tearing back again to Dublin, only once more to become a prey to hideous realities!'

The two Ministers who were responsible for Ireland united in a demand for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act and eventually, after struggles which nearly broke up the Cabinet, they procured the assent of their colleagues. The remedy was desperate, unwarranted, and ill-chosen. Shocking as were the outrages, they were the least part of the dangers that threatened the fabric of society. They were, moreover, much exaggerated by the official figures. Only seven persons were actually murdered during the winter. The statistics were swollen by 1,300 outrages which proved on examination to consist merely of threatening letters and notices. Many more were trivial annoyances. What rendered them formidable were the temper of the people and the constant apprehension of some fearful outburst. Boycotting was the weapon of the Land League, and indeed it may be said that its sinister efficiency was in great measure a preventive of worse crime. In one fashion or another evictions were greatly diminished. Landlords did not dare to assert their rights. The unwritten law of the Land League, supported by public opinion, superseded the law of the land, backed as it was only by physical force.

It was not easy in 1880, though the science of Coercion has made some progress since, to discover what remedies Mr. Forster should have chosen. It is certain that the remedy he chose was wrong. He seems to have imagined that the agitation depended for its vitality upon certain local leaders; that a comparatively small number of 'village ruffians,' against whom no legal proof existed, but the strongest moral suspicion, were the indispensable and

irreplaceable agents of the whole movement. If they were removed, he believed the whole apparatus of terrorism would collapse. If he could obtain power to arrest these men, who were notorious, peace and order would ensue. No greater misreading of the situation was possible. In dealing with a movement which was formidable only because of its almost universal character, he struck at individuals of minor prominence. He encountered profound communistic stirrings, bitter racial hatred, and intense national aspirations by methods which might have been effective against the rowdy larrikins of a slum. In face of widespread lawlessness, principally petty in its character, the head of the Irish Executive fell back on that supreme abrogation of civil law which authorises arrest and imprisonment without trial. Staking his official existence upon a demand for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, he prevailed upon a shivering and reluctant Cabinet.

Parliament was summoned to meet on January 7. 'How,' asked Lord Randolph Churchill (Preston, December 21), in a speech which, from the fact that it was the first of his speeches to be reported *verbatim* in a Metropolitan newspaper, attracted much attention, 'will this Government, who have been only eight months in office, meet Parliament; and what will be the message which they will have to announce? They will have to acknowledge the fact that Ireland is in open and successful rebellion; that another government, which knows not the Queen, has supplanted the Government which the English and Scotch people recognise; that this alien government is now, with impunity, directing the destinies of Ireland, issuing its decrees to the Irish people, and has, for six months or more, suspended the liberties, confiscated the property, and imperilled the lives of hundreds and of thousands of the Queen's subjects. They will have to announce that this alien government has its own revenues, its own executive,

its own courts of justice, in which persons are arraigned, tried, and condemned, and that persons who are not provided with the passports of that government and who have not enrolled themselves as its subjects, are unable to obtain the necessaries of life and are cut off root and branch from the society of their fellows. They will have to acknowledge that this alien government is the growth of the brief period during which they have held office; that nothing like it has yet been seen in the history of Ireland; and that, before it, the Government of the Queen recoils paralysed and impotent.'

The turbulent course of Irish affairs and Mr. Forster's policy laid the Government open to damaging attack from every quarter. Of this their regular opponents took the fullest advantage and among them no one was more prominent than Lord Randolph Churchill. It was not difficult for a Conservative—or, indeed, for an economist—to find fault with the Compensation for Disturbance Bill of 1880, or the Land Bill of 1881; and the Fourth Party encountered both with zeal and ingenuity. But the repressive measures, involving as they did immense abridgments of liberty and wholesale suspension of the most elementary civil rights, offended deeper instincts in Lord Randolph's nature. If as a party man he disliked the Government, he hated Coercion for its own sake; and this double tide of antagonism carried him to lengths which, for a time, disturbed and even destroyed the harmony of the Fourth Party.

'People sometimes talk,' he said, 'too lightly of Coercion; it means that hundreds of Irishmen who, if law had been maintained unaltered and had been firmly enforced, would now have been leading peaceful, industrious, and honest lives, will soon be torn off to prison without trial; that others will have to fly the country into hopeless exile; that others, driven to desperation through such cruel alternatives, will perhaps shed their blood and

sacrifice their lives in vain resistance to the forces of the Crown; that many Irish homes, which would have been happy if evil courses had been firmly checked at the outset, will soon be bereaved of their most promising ornaments and support, disgraced by a felon's cell and by a convict's garb; and if you look back over the brief period which has been necessary to bring about such terrible results, the mind recoils in horror from the ghastly spectacle of murdered landlords, tenant-farmers tortured, mutilated dumb animals, which everywhere disfigure the green and fertile pastures of Ireland. It is to me, and many others who, like myself, have had the good fortune to live amongst the people of that country, to discover their high qualities and their many virtues, and to know that, under a firm and statesmanlike government, immense prosperity must have been their lot, as it is their due—it is, I say, appalling to reflect that all this promise has been for a time blotted out, all progress arrested, and all industry thrown back by one reckless and wanton act on the part of a Government who, at the outset of their career and in the heyday of their youth and of their strength, knew no higher object and had no nobler aim than to obtain at any cost a momentary and apparent advantage over their opponents.'

The troubles of the Ministry did not come singly. The storm in South Africa, like the storm in Ireland, was gathering fast when the change of Government occurred. In both countries the new Ministers were the heirs of error or neglect; in both their own policy was unfortunate. The freedom of races was perhaps the main inspiration of Midlothian. The annexation of the Transvaal in 1879 had been denounced by Mr. Gladstone again and again in terms of eloquent and indignant candour: 'A free European Christian republican community "transformed" against the will of more than three-fourths of the entire people' into 'subjects of a monarchy.' 'Is it not wonderful,' he asked (December 29, 1879), 'to those who are freemen and

whose fathers have been freemen and who hope that their children will be freemen and who consider that freedom is an essential condition of civil life and that without it you can have nothing great and nothing noble in political society, that we are led by an Administration ... to march upon another body of freemen and against their will to subject them to despotic government?' These were important declarations, and they had been unmistakably approved by the nation. Was it strange that the Boers were led to expect from a Government headed and controlled by the man who had uttered them the restoration of the liberties of which they had been deprived?

Moreover, much could be urged in favour of the annexation of 1879 which could not be urged in favour of its continuance. While the Transvaal and Natal alike lay under the shadow of the great Zulu power, it may have been a practical necessity to assume some control over the dealings of the Boers with their terrible neighbour, lest a quarrel recklessly or wrongfully provoked should not only bring massacre into the Transvaal, but also upon those who dwelt within the Queen's dominions. Great Britain was perhaps forced, in the interests of the white man in South Africa, to afford protection to the Boers, and where she extended protection she had a right to claim obedience. But the danger was now removed; the Zulu power was broken; Cetewayo was a prisoner and his armies and military system destroyed. With the close of the Zulu War the all-important argument for annexation disappeared.

The British Government had already carried forward a considerable account with the Boers. 'They are,' said Mr. Gladstone, 'a people vigorous, obstinate, and tenacious in character, even as we are ourselves.' Driven ever northwards—across the Orange, across the Sand, across the Vaal, by abiding dislike of British rule and organised Government; retreating, like the game they hunted, from the noise of the township and the whistle of the train, the

huge white tilted ox-waggons with their nimble horsemen had found a resting-place in a wilderness more savage, more perilous, than any into which the white man had broken. For nearly forty years they had lived alone—fierce, ignorant, and devout, with no law but their rifles, no books but their Bibles and scarcely any occupation but the chase. Gradually, in the valleys, by the drifts of the rivers, under the shelter of gigantic boulders, farms and tiny villages had crept into being. Gradually the long arm of the detested Government, tampering, protecting, enfolding and at last controlling, had embraced them—even here. Was it to be borne? Boer prejudices, Boer sullenness, Boer obstinacy, were bywords. Boer marksmanship was as yet unknown.

To give back the country to the Boers would no doubt have provoked a noisy conflict in Parliament. But the Minister was, partly for that reason, provided with a large majority. The policy of retrocession was right in principle; it would have proved eminently wise in practice; and had Mr. Gladstone's Government acted in office up to the spirit of their declarations in Opposition, South Africa might have escaped a long concatenation of disasters.

Ministers were ill served by their agents. On November 19, 1880, Sir Owen Lanyon, in a despatch to the Colonial Office, stated that three-fourths of the population were secretly in favour of the continued annexation and that the excitement was the work of a few agitators.[10] Less than a month afterwards nearly the whole male population of the Transvaal was in arms. On December 20 the deadly rifle-fire at Bronker's Spruit proclaimed the beginnings of serious war. The few regular troops available hurried to the scene, were badly led and soundly beaten. What the Government had denied to justice, they conceded to force. During a series of small combats negotiations were actively pressed and reached a successful termination a few days after the flight of the British detachments from Majuba Hill (February 27, 1881). By this arrangement all

the disadvantages of every conceivable policy—and all abounded in disadvantage—were combined. Territory was abandoned; reconciliation was not achieved. The Boers owed little gratitude to the great Power from whom they had shaken themselves free. They rejoiced in the victory of a chosen race over the Midianites. Their Dutch kinsfolk throughout the Colony were naturally proud of their unexpected victories. The British settlers were everywhere humiliated. The British flag was in South Africa associated only with surrender. The loyalists who had fought and risked their all in faith of British power and justice were left to shift for themselves. The attempt to make a virtue of necessity failed ignominiously. And at home in England powerful classes, smarting under insult and unaccustomed shame, sat down to nurse revenge.

These errors or misfortunes were hardly to be retrieved. Time might have healed all scars—was already, after fifteen years, in a fair way to heal them—but a more tragic and tremendous history awaited South Africa. When the Transvaal and its rugged inhabitants would have been forgotten, they became famous. The rocks of their wilderness turned, in the perversity of fortune, to gold and diamonds, and a scattered folk who beyond all others shunned the eye of civilisation were thrust into the very centre of the world's affairs. Their notoriety revived a slumbering shame. Their new-found wealth armed at once their own resentful ambition and directed upon them the envy and the malevolence of their British neighbours; and from an unjust annexation and a dishonoured peace there hung an unbroken chain of ever-expanding and ever-darkening events.

The circumstances of the military operations and of the Majuba peace were vehemently denounced in Parliament by the Conservative party. Lord Randolph Churchill seems to have taken little part in these debates. Three years afterwards he condemned the Boers in strong terms for

their treatment of the natives, and when the Majuba peace had passed out of the circle of real and burning questions and had become part of the ordinary stock-in-trade of party patter and recrimination, he seems to have bestowed upon it more than one passing taunt. But at the time, vigilant as he was to seize every foothold for attacking Mr. Gladstone's Government, he neglected this large opportunity. His silence finds an explanation in the following curious letter to Sir Henry Wolff, written, be it remembered, at a time when England was ringing with denunciations of Boer 'treachery' in the 'massacre' at Bronker's Spruit:—

University Club: December 27, 1880.

I attach the greatest importance to this news from South Africa, and am of opinion that the question of reducing the Boers will divide the Liberal party by a sharper and more insuperable line than any Irish question. The arguments that formerly were of force for the annexation of the Transvaal, can no longer be used with effect. The Zulus are broken, and Secocoeni and his tribe gone, and there is no danger of a native irruption into Natal. The Boers, on the other hand, cannot be said to have ever ceased to be an independent nationality, and are showing now their perfect fitness to take care of themselves.

Your natural and marvellous ingenuity will show you how the strength of this position may be developed. Courtney, if he decides to oppose the 'coercion' of the Boers, will have a great following of Liberals and the entire Irish party. The Fourth Party are individually and collectively unpledged to the annexation of the Transvaal, and it occurs to me one of us (like a thunderbolt in a clear sky) should on the Address pronounce for the independence of the Boers, and protest against British blood and treasure being wasted in reducing a gallant nationality which is perfectly able to take care of itself, taking into consideration the immense difficulties which beset the Home Government in Ireland, the East of Europe, Afghanistan, and Basutoland. Think this over in your 'anxious mind,' and consider the numerous advantageous features which the position offers.

Sir Henry Wolff was not to be persuaded into such a

course. He reminded his friend of the events of 1857, when Palmerston, confronted on the China War by an adverse majority of Radicals and Conservatives, raised the cry of the ‘Honour of England,’ dissolved Parliament, and was returned to power by ‘a rattling majority.’ His counsels prevailed, and the thunderbolt remained unexpended; but the sentiments expressed by Lord Randolph, although partly concealed under the form of partisan tactics, are not to be mistaken. And even the forecast that ‘the question of reducing the Boers will divide the Liberal party by a sharper and more insuperable line than any Irish question’ was in the end to prove not wholly unfounded. His opinions seem to have been strengthened by time, and ten years later, when he visited South Africa, Lord Randolph wrote[11]:—

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‘The surrender of the Transvaal and the peace concluded by Mr. Gladstone with the victors of Majuba Hill were at the time, and still are, the object of sharp criticism and bitter denunciation from many politicians at home—*quorum pars parva fui*. Better and more precise information, combined with cool reflection, leads me to the conclusion that had the British Government of that day taken advantage of its strong military position and annihilated, as it could easily have done, the Boer forces, it would indeed have regained the Transvaal, but it would have lost Cape Colony.... The actual magnanimity of the peace with the Boers concluded by Mr. Gladstone’s Ministry after two humiliating military reverses suffered by the arms under their control became plainly apparent to the just and sensible mind of the Dutch Cape Colonist, atoned for much of past grievance, and demonstrated the total absence in the English mind of any hostility or

unfriendliness to the Dutch race. Concord between Dutch and English in the Colony from that moment became possible.'

Lord Randolph could not foresee in 1891 the Raid of 1896 or the greater catastrophe that lay behind it. Yet the forces which produced both were steadily, though subterraneously, at work; and the Jameson incursion—surprising, detached, eccentric though it appeared at the time—was itself only one vicious consequence of a fatal past.

Let us return to the session of 1881.

Before Parliament met it was known that Ministers had prepared a Coercion Bill and that the Houses were summoned to meet as early as the first week in January for the express purpose of passing it. But the nature of the powers for which Mr. Forster would ask, was a well-guarded secret. The Fourth Party took counsel together betimes. Lord Randolph proposed that they should move an amendment limiting the duration of the Act to one year. The plan was audacious. It would have enabled all the forces opposed to the Government—from whatever cause—the Irish Nationalists, the Conservative party, the dissentient Radicals and Liberals, to vote together. The passage of the Bill must have been rendered more difficult and protracted than ever. And as in all probability Mr. Gladstone would have had to submit to a yearly limit as a compromise, the whole grim business must have been undertaken again in the next session, after hanging like a sword over the Government in the intervening months. On the other hand, it was a dangerous policy for a Conservative party of law and order to adopt. The matter was long debated by the four partners. It was at length decided to consult Lord Beaconsfield; and Mr. Gorst, entrusted with this mission, laid the plan before him on the last day of December 1880. Lord Beaconsfield at first seemed not at all unfavourable. He listened attentively, and

acknowledged the idea to be shrewd and good. He asked for time to consider it and promised to send a definite answer in a few days. On the eve of the session the four friends dined together in state and, as no negative reply had arrived, Lord Randolph was full of hope that his plan would be adopted by the official leaders of the Conservative party. Great was his disappointment when the next day Lord Beaconsfield decided that the proposal, however good in itself as a Parliamentary manœuvre, was not practicable for a Conservative Opposition.

The Fourth Party accepted Lord Beaconsfield's decision as final; not so Lord Randolph. He had manufactured what he called 'political dynamite.' He knew it to be deadly. With or without Lord Beaconsfield's approval, he was prepared to go on. But he failed to persuade the others and in the process their disagreement developed into a regular quarrel. He seems at length to have been prevailed on by his father to give up the idea and, although he said (February 4) in debate that he was very strongly in favour of the Act being allowed to expire in 1882, by which time the Coercion measures of the Government, coupled with their remedial legislation, should have pacified the country, no such amendment ever appeared on the order paper. But for the first three months of the session of 1881 the Fourth Party, greatly to the satisfaction of the Government, practically ceased to exist as a political force or even as a friendly association. Not until the renewal of the Bradlaugh debates was their comradeship restored.

The Queen's Speech of 1880 had contained only a passing reference to Ireland and the intention of the Government to rule without exceptional legislation. The Queen's Speech of 1881 referred to little else but Ireland and the intention of the Government to adopt measures of Coercion. The course of the session followed the lines of the gracious speech. Ireland monopolised attention. Coercion Bills were forced through the House of

Commons in the teeth of frantic Nationalist opposition. Scenes and suspensions were the order of the day. A forty-one hours' sitting was terminated only by the arbitrary and extraordinary intervention of the Speaker. New rules of procedure, lopping off Parliamentary liberties cherished for ages, were devised. The Land Bill took four months to pass. Armed with his new powers, which enabled him to lock up everyone and anyone he pleased, Mr. Forster swept several hundred alleged 'village ruffians' into Kilmainham, where they lived together in great comfort, consulted freely, received visits from their friends, transacted their business, and even wrote letters to the newspapers. They thus achieved cheaply-won martyrdom, often crowned with Parliamentary honours, and their places were eagerly filled by others. The land agitation increased in vehemence and outrages in number. The measure, to obtain which so much had been sacrificed, proved utterly futile.

Through all this turmoil Lord Randolph pursued his wayward course alone. After the Speaker's *coup d'état* (February 2) he spoke in support of the Nationalist motion for adjournment, because, as he said, 'one section of the House was greatly irritated, another section greatly fatigued, and a third greatly alarmed' by what had happened. On this Mr. Balfour at once declared his intention of voting with Sir Stafford Northcote in the Government Lobby, though he contrived to defend Lord Randolph from the criticisms which his speech drew upon him from the highly strained nerves and tempers of the forces of law and order. On the 4th Lord Randolph spoke on the first of the Coercion measures—the Protection of Persons and Property Bill.

'I support this Bill,' he said, 'with reluctance and distrust. I am confident that a proper and vigorous administration of the ordinary law last summer and last autumn would have saved us from this Bill. I cannot with

satisfaction entrust extraordinary powers to a Minister who has proved unequal to the administration of the ordinary law of the land. I know that those powers require to be administered with firmness and decision. The more these qualities abound, the sooner the necessity for extraordinary powers will cease; but I fear that we shall have indecision and timidity and consequently injustice and protracted Coercion.'

On the 15th he supported an amendment to provide every person arrested under the new Acts with a copy of the warrant and a statement of the crime or crimes of which he was suspected, making at the same time a contemptuous reference to 'members who still called themselves Liberals, while they supported a Bill for the suspension of the liberties of the Irish people.' On the 16th he voted for an amendment providing that persons arrested on mere suspicion should be treated differently from ordinary prisoners while incarcerated without trial. This was conceded by the Government after much discussion. On the 18th he urged that the arrest of members of Parliament under special legislation should in all cases be reported to the House. Indeed, throughout these discussions his conduct was considered very reprehensible and shocking.

If Mr. Forster's policy was unfortunate, his position, although supported by overwhelming majorities of both great parties, was certainly unenviable. It is hard to cope with revolution; but to attempt to do so without offending the susceptibilities of a Liberal Cabinet or a democratic party surpasses the wit and patience of man. The reports which reached him every day from magistrates and police, were alarming. His office table at the Castle was littered with letters of fierce and tragic reproach. Indignant landowners claimed imperiously that protection for life and property which even the basest of civilised Governments have rarely denied. The widow wrote from

beside the body of her murdered husband, declaring that his blood was upon the head of the recreant Minister. The country seethed with sedition. Tales of tyranny and terror lacerated the warm heart of the Chief Secretary; and although police and detectives dogged his steps, his life was in constant jeopardy. In Parliament he was the object of frantic and virulent abuse from the Nationalist members. Many Chief Secretaries have faced that form of attack since then. English ears have become accustomed to it—and even deaf to it. But Forster was the first example, and an impression was produced that he was a man specially repugnant to Irish feeling. He was exposed to galling attack from every quarter.

'It is unfortunate for Ireland,' observed Mr. Parnell, 'that the Tories are not now in office. If they were, Parliament would not have seen this measure of Coercion, because in that case the Irish would have had the assistance of the united Whig and Radical parties. We should have had all those platitudes as to the love of liberty which the Liberal party entertain and all those stock phrases which do Liberal Cabinets such good service when they are out of office. The two great parties are now united, but only for one purpose—namely, to crush, put down, and bully a poor, weak, and starving nation....' But although the Government were supported in their repressive legislation by both parties and openly opposed by scarcely any English or Scottish members, the dissatisfaction against them on both sides of the House grew steadily as the session advanced. The regular Opposition neglected nothing that could discredit the Ministry, whether by accusing them of being responsible for the disorder, or by cavilling at their remedies and pointing out how inconsistent these were with their principles.

Although he allowed himself to be persuaded against making a hostile motion, Lord Randolph's detestation of the Coercion Bill grew as he watched its course. 'This

Bill,' he said (March 11, 1881), 'is now passing away from the House, and with it disappears all that liberty-destroying machinery—urgency, *clôtures*, *coups d'état*, and dictatorships—never, I hope, to return again. We shall now be told to turn our attention to remedial legislation. I make no remark beyond this—that remedial measures which are planted under the shadow of Coercion and watered and nourished by the suspension of the Constitution, must be from their nature poor and sickly plants of foreign origin, almost foredoomed to perish before they begin to grow. It was upon their capacity to give contentment and happiness to Ireland that the Liberals relied to gain for themselves immortal credit and to secure a perpetual lease of power. The Chief Secretary went to Ireland in April last, bearing with him the hopes and blessings of an enthusiastic and victorious party. He gave us all to understand that he was to become an emancipator greater even than O'Connell; and within twelve months of office he has come to the House to ask for powers more stringent and more oppressive than were ever granted to or demanded by Lord Castlereagh, the Duke of Wellington, or Lord Grey. I wish the Chief Secretary joy of these beautiful Bills; but I may tell the right honourable gentleman that he has acquired by them the undying dislike and distrust of the Irish people. While I have never denied that some measure of this kind, owing to the conduct of the Government, and that alone, was only too necessary for Ireland—and while I have always admitted that as to the nature and extent of that measure her Majesty's Government, who were the culprits, must be the judges—I still recollect, with unqualified satisfaction, that Coercion is a double-edged weapon and has before now fatally wounded those Administrations which have been compelled by their own folly to have recourse to it.'

Sir William Harcourt, as Home Secretary, was put forward by the Government to reply to this. 'It is difficult,'

he said, ‘to treat the noble lord the member for Woodstock as a serious politician, or to discover to which of the four parties he belongs. He once belonged to his own—the Fourth Party; but he has managed by his conduct during the discussion of this Bill to dissolve that minute party; and his feats in that respect only afford a fresh illustration of the infinite divisibility of matter.’ Sir William went on to say, amid general approval, that, being no more leader of the Fourth Party, Lord Randolph had become adviser to the Third Party (the Nationalists).

But, for all that, the undercurrents of disapproval of Ministerial policy flowed ever more strongly in Parliament, and nothing less than Mr. Gladstone’s unparalleled authority and skill could have sustained the Irish Secretary through the session. His colleagues in the Cabinet were doubtful, and some actively hostile. There was a feeling of suppressed resentment in the Liberal party against the Minister who had been responsible for forcing them into courses so obnoxious to their principles and so damaging to their reputation. Radicals below the gangway became increasingly outspoken in their attacks. A considerable section of the party press was openly hostile. Under these many anxieties and embarrassments the hair of the Chief Secretary grew visibly grey.

Whatever may have been the demerits of the Land Bill of 1881, it was sufficiently large and effective to threaten to take the agrarian wind out of the sails of the revolutionary movement. Unable to oppose openly a measure which conferred real benefits upon the tenants, Parnell resolved to obstruct its working and to prevent the tenants from resorting to the Land Courts. So soon as this intention was made clear the Government seem to have decided upon his arrest. The Prime Minister delivered a preparatory onslaught upon him at Leeds, where he charged the Irish leader with ‘standing between the living and the dead—not, like Aaron, to stay the plague, but to

spread it'; and he hinted that the resources of civilisation were not exhausted. Parnell replied savagely at Wexford. 'If you are arrested,' inquired apprehensive friends, 'who will take your place?' '"Captain Moonlight" will take my place,' replied Parnell. Two days later he was imprisoned in Kilmainham. In the ten months preceding the Coercion Act (March-December 1880) the number of outrages was 2,379; in the ten months which followed, 3,331. The gravest increase was in crime affecting life. Murders and attempts to murder were more than trebled. The Land League, when suppressed, was replaced by an even more sinister and even less responsible organisation. The failure of Mr. Forster's repressive measures was signal.

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The arrest of Mr. Parnell may be regarded as a single exception. As the months slipped by the prisoner at Kilmainham began to grow uneasy. He had regular and perfect information of the state of the country. He found the control of the agitation passing from his hands into those of unknown and desperate people. Captain Moonlight was exercising and delegating his sovereignty. New associations, secret and deadly in their purposes, were sprouting. Parnell required his liberty, and he resolved to treat. Nothing could exceed the satisfaction of the Prime Minister when this was conveyed to him. The mood of the principals being agreeable, ambassadors were found on both sides to arrange conditions. Upon the basis that no sort of agreement existed, Mr. Gladstone undertook to introduce an Arrears Bill and the Irish leader promised to 'slow down the agitation.' A delighted Cabinet ratified the non-existent bargain. Parnell and his colleagues were released; the Lord-Lieutenant, Earl Cowper, and the Chief Secretary, who remained stubbornly unconvinced,

resigned. Such was the Kilmainham Treaty. Parnell, free once more, set to work to gather up the threads of authority. It was too late. He was released on May 2. On the 6th, the day of Earl Spencer's entry as Lord-Lieutenant, Lord Frederick Cavendish, the new Chief Secretary, and Mr. Burke, the Permanent Under-Secretary, were murdered in the Phœnix Park.

Mr. Forster's political fate was reached with the inexorable precision of Greek tragedy. If ever a good man was overwhelmed with successive waves of adversity, it was he. Called at a moment's notice to an office with which he had no special acquaintance, and confronted with dismal alternatives, he had chosen wrongly at the first. An evil fortune dogged his steps. Had he assumed power a year earlier he might have guarded against the outbreak; a year later he would have been free to stem it without any accusation of responsibility for its cause. As a Tory Chief Secretary he might have achieved a glorious reputation as a Coercionist. As a Liberal Minister he was ruined. His errors of judgment were not small. He was, wrote Mr. Gladstone, 'a very impracticable man in a position of great responsibility.' The style and tenor of his letters lend some sanction to this opinion. But, whatever may be thought of his wisdom or, what is of more importance in politics, of his instinct, the courage and integrity which he displayed, command the tribute of all who review, however briefly, his public conduct. What a worthy Englishman might do, he did. No labour was too exacting; no peril deterred him. He faced obloquy and assassination with equal calmness. He chased away the vigilant guards by whom he was surrounded. Almost alone and unprotected he penetrated the most distracted regions, talking to the people face to face and striving with hopeless optimism to allay by argument the passions of centuries.

'If I had thought,' he said in the House of Commons in introducing his Coercion Bill, 'that this duty would

devolve on the Irish Secretary, I would never have held the office; if I could have foreseen that this would have been the result of twenty years' Parliamentary life, I would have left Parliament rather than have undertaken it.' 'If you think,' he wrote to Mr. Gladstone, April 4, 1881, 'that *from any cause* it would be for the advantage of the public service or for the good of Ireland that I should resign, I place my resignation in your hands. You might come to this opinion ... without any disagreement with my official action; and I earnestly beg of you not to allow yourself to be influenced, for a moment, by any personal consideration for me of any kind whatever. For instance, I must request you to pay no regard to the fact that I should probably appear discredited—to have failed,' &c., &c. On the morrow of the tragedy in the Phœnix Park he offered to return to Ireland and fill his old place, so speedily made vacant. But the Prime Minister had come to the conclusion that Ireland was no place for his talents or his virtues. He passed for ever out of the Ministry, to become during the rest of the Parliament one of its most dangerous and vigilant opponents. He was neither the first nor the last able man to be crushed between Irish national passions and English party needs.

In all these moving events Lord Randolph bore little part. At the beginning of the session of 1882 he was in his place with his three allies, all thoroughly reunited and intent upon the Government's misdeeds. Upon the Address the Fourth Party made a combined attack, in which Mr. Forster was accused, with a good deal of evidence, of having illegally transgressed even the wide limits of executive power which the special legislation had assigned him. On February 21 there was another Bradlaugh scene. The member for Northampton, advancing suddenly to the table, produced a book, said to be a Testament, from his pocket, and duly swore himself upon it, to the consternation of the members. Lord Randolph was the first

to recover from the surprise which this act of audacity created. He declared that Mr. Bradlaugh, by the outrage of taking in defiance of the House an oath of a meaningless character upon a book alleged to be a Testament—'it might have been the "Fruits 1882 of Philosophy"'—had vacated his seat and should be treated 'as if he were dead.' In moving for a new writ he implored the House to act promptly and vindicate its authority. Mr. Gladstone, however, persuaded both sides to put off the decision till the next day. On the 22nd therefore a debate on privilege ensued. Sir Stafford Northcote merely moved to exclude Mr. Bradlaugh from the precincts of the House, thus modifying Lord Randolph's motion for a new writ. Lord Randolph protested against such 'milk and water' policy and urged the immediate punishment of the offender. After a long discussion, in which the temper of all parties was inflamed by Mr. Bradlaugh's repeated interruptions, Sir Stafford substituted for his simple motion of exclusion a proposal to expel Mr. Bradlaugh from the House; and this being carried the seat for Northampton was thereby vacated.

Lord Randolph seems to have gained much credit in Tory circles for the promptness and energy with which he had acted; but it was to be almost his last intervention in the debates of the session. At the end of February he was afflicted with a long and painful illness and lay in bed—at first at Wimborne House and afterwards at a little cottage near Wimbledon—for nearly five months. His absence was a grievous loss to the Opposition during the Irish crisis. The public announcement that the imprisoned members had been released was accompanied by a well-founded rumour of some political bargain between the Government and Mr. Parnell. Mr. Forster's explanations exposed the fact that the Kilmainham negotiations, whatever their nature, had been conducted independently of the Irish Secretary by Mr. Chamberlain. Upon all this came the

terrible news of the murders in the Phœnix Park. The new Minister, 'an innocent man' even to the fiercest Fenians, a man honoured and liked by all who knew him, the envoy of peace and reconciliation, was stabbed to death on the very day of his landing. The excitement throughout England was tremendous. After the dead had been buried with every circumstance of national grief and indignation the 'Kilmainham Treaty' came under pitiless review. The Fourth Party headed the attack. They pointed out Mr. Chamberlain as the mysterious 'Number One' of the Fenian inner circle; and Mr. Balfour, speaking with altogether unexpected power, denounced the 'Kilmainham Treaty' as 'an infamy.' This was the first speech he ever made that commanded general attention, or gave any promise of his future distinction. So intense was the feeling in the House that it was freely stated, and acknowledged even on the Liberal benches, that had Lord Randolph Churchill been at hand to strike the blow the Government might have fallen.

It was not until the autumn that he was strong enough to return to the House of Commons. Irish obstruction had reached its inevitable conclusion; and Parliament was assembled for a renewal of the session at the end of October to effect a drastic revision in its procedure. Mr. Gladstone's 'new rules' were ingenious and comprehensive. All sorts of liberties and privileges of debate were ruthlessly lopped off or deformed in the attempt to destroy the abuses by which they had been encumbered. There were restrictions upon dilatory motions of all kinds and devices for checking irrelevance or repetition in debate; but the Closure—*clôture*, as its opponents called it with elaborate foreign accent—was the most formidable instrument upon which the Government relied. Into the discussion of all these grave and novel questions Lord Randolph threw himself with a recuperated strength. The members had no sooner met together than he

was in possession of the House with a constitutional protest—based on precedents going back to 'the ninth year of King Henry the Fourth'—against the impropriety of taking Government business after the Appropriation Act for the year had been passed. And thenceforward, late and early, on small matters and on great, he and his nimble friends were the tyrants of debate.

Before the session was a week old it was everywhere admitted that the whole conduct and temper of the Opposition had undergone a change and that that change was ultimately connected with Lord Randolph's return. Mr. Gladstone had barely had time to offer him some courteous congratulations upon his recovery when they were engaged together in the liveliest of disputes. He contrived over and over again, by repeated allusions to the 'Kilmainham Treaty' (an expression which Mr. Gladstone always regarded with extreme disfavour), or to the course of affairs in Egypt (to which reference will presently be made), to provoke the Prime Minister into indignant declamation. He jeered at the Liberal party—who had been exhorted by their Whips not to take too much part in the discussion—'for assisting in the capacity of mutes at the funeral obsequies of free speech.' Irritated by various motions for adjournment upon Irish and Egyptian affairs, the supporters of the Ministry covered the notice paper with 'blocking notices,' then a newly discovered device, relating to almost every conceivable subject. Lord Randolph deliberately described these as 'bogus motions put down to prevent discussion of *bona-fide* motions.' 'Oh!' said Mr. Labouchere, much shocked, 'I move that those words be taken down.' 'I second that,' rejoined Lord Randolph instantly, and forthwith proceeded to repeat the expression. The usual squabbles, unavoidable perhaps—certainly not very earnestly avoided—soon sprang up between the solemn elders of the Front Opposition Bench and the clever energetic men who impelled them forward

while they were supposed to follow. One night Mr. Gibson voted against an amendment, proposed by the Fourth Party, to prevent the debate on motions for adjournment being confined solely to the question of whether the House should or should not adjourn. When, on the very next day, the restricting rule having been passed with his concurrence, he was himself called to order for breaking it, Lord Randolph's joy was unconcealed.

But a more serious difference arose on the question of the closure. Lord Randolph Churchill wished the Conservative party to meet this with an utterly uncompromising resistance. He wrote (November 4) a fiery letter to the *Times* urging the Opposition, under the euphonious phrase of making 'a determined use of the rights of Parliamentary minorities,' to bring about a deadlock before their powers were for ever destroyed by the new rules, and so to force Mr. Gladstone to appeal to the country against a Conservative cry of 'freedom of speech for the Commons.' 'It is not altogether astonishing,' observed the *Times* (November 6), 'that the prospect of fighting a stout battle with ten times as many followers as Mr. Parnell ever commanded should have a fascination for the ardent spirit of Lord Randolph Churchill.' The leaders of the Conservative party, however, resolved to assume a temperate and reasonable manner in the hopes of obtaining larger concessions from the Government. In this praiseworthy spirit Mr. Gibson moved an amendment, not challenging the principle of the closure, but requiring the vote of two-thirds of those present to make it operative. Lord Randolph delivered on this occasion (November 1) one of those speeches by which his Parliamentary reputation was established. At the moment it commanded absolutely the attention of the House and its conclusions have been sustained by the practice of all the years that have followed.

'The *clôture*,' he said, 'has been called an innovation—a

foreign practice—but it appears to me that a proportionate majority, or what is called a two-thirds *clôture*, is a much greater innovation than the *clôture* itself, and is absolutely foreign to all our principles, ideas, or customs. I know of nothing in the history of this country, or in its laws, or in its Constitution, which can be adduced as a precedent or as an analogy for the proposal in the amendment that the House should require two-thirds of its members to affirm any proposition. We do not require proportionate majorities for the election of our representatives, nor would any proposition to that effect have the slightest chance of being accepted by the country. London, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Glasgow can return members to this House for a period of seven years by simple majorities, and the member so returned is as fully and as firmly the member of that constituency as if he had been elected unanimously. And I think that the election of a member for a great constituency for a period of seven years is a much more important matter and would seem to require a much stronger title, than the closing of an occasional debate in the House of Commons. We know, moreover, that many of the greatest reforms in our laws have been carried by majorities which did not number double figures; and it is undoubtedly, in theory, in the power of Parliament, by a majority of one, to change the Constitution of this country from a monarchy into a republic—which, again, I should say, would be a much more important matter than the closing of an occasional debate. I own I am a firm believer in the general infallibility of simple majorities: they have practically governed the British Empire from time immemorial; and I must express my surprise that the Tory party, or the Constitutional party, which recoils with horror from the Radical innovation of the *clôture*, should propose with eagerness, with anxiety, almost with desperation, the much greater Radical innovation of a two-thirds majority....

‘I imagine that many of those who support this amendment are animated by a secret conviction that the palmy days of Tory government are over, and that the Tory party have nothing to look forward to but a long period of endless opposition, perhaps occasionally chequered by little glimpses of office with a minority. I believe that view to be not only incorrect, but absurdly incorrect. That it is held by many I have no doubt, and those who hold it propose by this amendment to build, as it were, a little dyke, behind which they fancy that they will be able to shelter themselves for a long time to come. A more hopeless delusion never before led astray a political party. How many times does anyone in this House think that the present Prime Minister would permit the Tory party to refuse him the necessary two-thirds majority for getting on with his business? I think he might allow it twice, perhaps three times; but, as sure as he sits there, after the third time, he would come down to this House and declare that the state of public business was deplorable, that the session was one of discomfort and disaster, and that the two-thirds majority must be exchanged for a simple majority; and within a fortnight or three weeks from the date of that declaration this precious little dyke, which was to shelter the Tory party for a long time to come, this little exotic which was so carefully introduced, nurtured, and protected so that the Tory party might repose under its shade, would be abolished, cut down, and swept away into the great dustbin of all modern constitutional checks. The best protection, the best constitutional check against a Liberal Minister which the Tory party can look to is the House of Lords; yet how often does the House of Lords, with its centuries of prescription, with all its vast territorial influence, venture to stand in the way of a Liberal majority? And yet, with this historic caution, not to say timidity, on the part of the House of Lords in your minds, and before your eyes, does anyone really seriously imagine

that this wretched device, this miserable safeguard of a two-thirds majority, could for one moment arrest the tide of popular reform, a safeguard compared with which Don Quixote's helmet was a miracle of protection, or Mrs. Partington's mop a monster of energy and strength?

'But let us look a little further ahead. No one will deny that there are great and burning questions coming on rapidly for settlement—questions relating to the franchise and to the representation of the people—questions relating to the revenue and to trade—questions relating to the land and agriculture—questions affecting the relations between Great Britain and Ireland. Is the Tory party prepared—is it determined—to abdicate and renounce all title to the initiative of legislation on these great questions? Is the attitude of the great Tory Democracy, which Lord Beaconsfield's party constructed, to be one of mere dogged opposition? And is it true, what our foes say of us, that Coercion for Ireland and foreign war is to be the 'be-all and the end-all' of Tory Ministries? I think not; and yet it is on the ability, and not only on the ability, but on the rapidity, with which, in the face of unscrupulous opposition, you may be able to legislate on these questions that your title to power and that your tenure of office will mainly depend. Nevertheless, here you are, under the influence of an Hibernian legal mind, elaborately and laboriously endeavouring to forge for yourselves an instrument which, if you do come into office, will paralyse you so effectually that your power will be as tottering as a house of cards, your tenure of office as evanescent as a summer's day. No, sir, oppose the *clôture* if you will; defeat it if you can; resort for that purpose, if you have the courage, to all those forms and privileges which a Parliamentary minority still possesses, in order, if possible, to compel the Prime Minister to abandon his project, or to appeal to the country to decide between you and him; but, whatever you do, for Heaven's sake do not be seduced by

interested counsels into following foreign fancies, and do not be persuaded by any desire to think only of the moment, and to disembarrass yourselves of all care for what is to come.'

There was great discontent among the Conservative party at this speech. Its force was undeniable, and the members recognised reluctantly and uneasily that they had been led, in support of a vicious compromise, on to ground equally unsuited for defence or attack. All the more were they inclined to resent the proof of their leaders' unwisdom. Mr. Balfour lost no time in making it clear that he disagreed with Lord Randolph Churchill, and when he rose next day to renew the debate he declared himself definitely in favour of the principle of the two-thirds majority to enforce the Closure. Mr. Goschen had praised Lord Randolph's arguments and Mr. Balfour, after alluding to the 'portentous coalition between a discontented Whig and an independent Tory,' devoted his speech entirely to refuting them. In this he was, according to Sir Stafford Northcote, very successful. 'My noble friend, the member for Woodstock,' said the leader of the Opposition naïvely, 'has somehow or other managed to elevate himself into a position from which he finds himself capable of looking down on the Front Benches on both sides and of regarding all parties in the House of Commons with an impartiality which is quite sublime. I do not know what can have taken my noble friend into such heights, or whether he went there to consult the angel Gabriel, or, what is sometimes suspected, to look for the lost principles of the Liberal party—some of which have gone to the planet Saturn and some to the planet Mars—but, whatever may have become of them, his argument seems to me to have been completely answered by the honourable member for Hertford, who sits near him, and I do not think it necessary to dwell further upon it. It certainly seems to me that my noble friend has overlooked, from the great heights

from which he regards these matters, the real importance of those safeguards which he treats as little lights which would be very quickly swept away. I can only say that if he is right, and if they would be quickly swept away, we would not be in a worse position than if we never had them at all.'

Even this rejoinder could not sustain the fortunes of the debate. The division showed how ill-conceived the Opposition tactics had been. The Irish party, who naturally looked upon a Closure which required a two-thirds majority as a device specially directed against them, voted in a body against the amendment. The Whigs were somewhat divided, but the greater number followed Mr. Goschen into the Government lobby. The Fourth Party, consisting of three persons, abstained. Mr. Gibson's amendment was therefore defeated by 322 to 288, or nearly double the majority that had been generally expected. Thus, against their will and in spite of their leaders, the Conservative party became possessed of that great engine of government by which during nearly twenty years of power they were to silence and overcome their political opponents.

Ever since then, obstruction and Closure have struggled against each other in a warfare which has respected no neutral boundaries and recognised no public law. Scarcely any Parliamentary custom or privilege has escaped their joint depredations. Every device or formality designed in the careful wisdom of former ages to safeguard the rights of a minority has been recklessly exploited by the one faction and ruthlessly demolished by the other. The historic procedure of the House of Commons has been reduced to the rigid framework which had hitherto served a purpose only in Continental or Colonial imitations. The whole theatre of war has been devastated. Almost everything within the range of the combatants that was destructible has perished—and has perished beyond repair.

So long as the House of Commons contains no body of opinion which, because more or less independent of party organisations, is capable of being won or estranged by argument or conduct, the vicious conflict must run its appointed course. The end is, however, in sight. The majority must prevail. An elaborate and comprehensive time-table, fixed no doubt with some impartiality, may soon assign immovable limits to all debate. The victory of Closure will be complete. Obstruction will disappear through being at once unnecessary and impossible. But the remedy may prove more painful than the disease and the strength and reality of representative institutions may very easily disappear as well. Certain it is that if the House of Commons is ever to regain its vanished freedom and to preserve its vanishing authority, it will be by new and original treatment and not by belated attempts to revive the systems of the past. A larger and more generous freedom in choosing the subjects to be discussed might compensate for the mechanical regulation of the time allotted to discussion. The delegation of financial and legislative detail to Committees, and the devolution upon local, provincial, or national bodies of much contentious business proper to their respective jurisdictions, would abundantly increase the total time available. And perhaps those more complicated but more scientific methods of Parliamentary election, generally described as 'Proportional Representation,' will some day secure that detached, august, impartial element in British councils whose influence and favour all factions would strive to win.

Lord Beaconsfield's death early in the year 1881 had been a heavy blow to the Fourth Party. Great men at the height of their power often, to their cost, refuse to recognise the ability of new comers. Peel had scorned Disraeli. Gladstone never understood Mr. Chamberlain's capacity till he faced him as a foe. Smaller persons, called from time to time to the conduct of public affairs, exhibit

the same failing in an aggravated degree with greater regularity and more disastrous results to themselves. The jealousy and dislike with which the leaders of the Conservative party in the House of Commons regarded the activities of Lord Randolph and his friends, had been apparent even before the session of 1880 had come to an end. From all such feelings Lord Beaconsfield was free. His character and the hard experiences of his earlier years made him seek eagerly for the first signs of oncoming power. He was an old man lifted high above his contemporaries and he liked to look past them to the new generation and to feel that he could gain the sympathy and confidence of younger men. If he liked youth, he liked Tory Democracy even more. He had, moreover, good reason to know how a Parliamentary Opposition should be conducted. He saw with perfect clearness the incapacity above the gangway and the enterprise and pluck below it. Had his life been prolonged for a few more years the Fourth Party might have marched, as his Young Guard, by a smoother road, and this story might have reached a less melancholy conclusion. He stood above personal rivalries. He was removed from the petty vexations of the House of Commons. Surely he would not have allowed these clever ardent men to drift into antagonism against the mass of the Conservative party and into fierce feud with its leaders. He alone could have kept their loyalty, as he alone commanded their respect; and never would he have countenanced the solemn excommunication by dulness and prejudice of all that preserved the sparkling life of Toryism in times of depression and defeat. But Lord Beaconsfield was gone; and those whom he had left behind had other views of how his inheritance—such as it was—should be divided.

CHAPTER V

ELIJAH'S MANTLE

'Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.'—Job. xxxii. 9.

1883
Æt.
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For nearly three eventful years Mr. Gladstone's Administration had held power. In the country the popularity and prestige of the great Minister were still immense. His authority was as unquestioned by the rank and file of his party as on the morrow of the Midlothian triumph. He was still 'the people's William' to the crowd. But in Parliament and in the Cabinet difficulties had arisen which scarcely any other leader could have stemmed. Bradlaugh, Majuba, Kilmainham, were names full of gloomy significance to the Liberal party, that promised renewed vexation and discredit in the future. Colleagues had dropped off one by one. Lord Lansdowne had left the Government as early as the Compensation for Disturbance Bill. The Irish Land Act had cost the Prime Minister the Duke of Argyll. Mr. Forster had fallen rather than consent to the release of Parnell. A new question was at hand, opening a broad indefinite vista of embarrassment and disaster and involving at the outset a far more serious secession.

1882-1883

The gradual withdrawal of European Powers and final retreat of France left Great Britain alone to confront the growing anarchy in Egypt. A medley of conflicting impulses and incidents—moral obligations, material interests, the Suez Canal, the coupons of the Egyptian debt, Arabi's national movement and the massacre of June—

culminated in the bombardment of Alexandria on July 11, 1882, by the British fleet. Mr. Bright resigned from the Cabinet; but the House of Commons broke into general cheering at the news and only eight Radicals testified to their principles by their votes. Large military operations followed. Twenty-five thousand British soldiers descended upon Egypt. Arabi and his national movement were stamped out under the heavy heel of the British Grenadier and England became responsible for the fortunes of the Nile Valley.

Their intervention was to carry the Government further than they expected. The misrule which had produced in Egypt the national movement of Arabi had created the rebellion of the Mahdi in the Soudan. The inhabitants of vast regions were aflame with military fury and religious fervour. Yusef Pasha had been overwhelmed. The army of General Hicks was being collected for its fatal effort. The Khedival garrisons were everywhere cut off and besieged. Khartoum almost alone was accessible from the north. Inch by inch and hour by hour the Liberal Government was dragged deeper and deeper into the horrible perplexities of the Egyptian riddle and the Soudan tragedy. At each detested step they resolved to go no further. Every act of interference was to be their last. Every day they looked forward to an early evacuation. To get out of the country in the shortest possible time and upon any conceivable justification was their constant and controlling desire; and after every struggle to escape they found themselves more hopelessly and inextricably involved.

To Lord Randolph Churchill the whole policy of intervention seemed a flagrant political blunder and a crowning violation of Liberal principles. He had sympathised from the beginning with the revolt of Arabi Pasha. He subscribed fifty pounds to the expenses of his defence before the Egyptian Court Martial. He believed that the popular soldier and Minister had been the head of

a real national movement directed against one of the vilest and most worthless Governments in the world. That England should use her power to stamp out that movement, to crush the army which sustained it, to banish the leader on whom all depended and to hand back the wretched Egyptians to the incapacity of Tewfik and the extortions of his creditors, was to him an odious crime. The war was—in his eyes—a wicked war, an unjust war, 'a bondholders' war.' And as he felt, so he spoke. While the fighting was actually in progress criticism was necessarily ineffective; but at the beginning of 1883 the excitement of Tel-el-Kebir and Kassassin had begun to subside and Egyptian affairs became a leading subject of Parliamentary debate.

While these embarrassments preoccupied the Ministry, the Conservative Opposition was disturbed by questions of leadership. Who was to be Lord Beaconsfield's successor? Sir Stafford Northcote, as the leader in the House of Commons, seemed to have the most natural and formal claims. Lord Salisbury had not then obtained any large measure of public confidence. He was generally regarded as representing a form of Toryism highly orthodox and respectable in principle, but rather too rampant and unyielding for the practical necessities of the political situation. The epigrams and epithets which slipped so easily from his tongue and pen had won him the reputation of being rash and violent by nature. His comparison of Lord Derby to Titus Oates was not soon forgotten; and, for all the respect in which his character was held, Disraeli's celebrated description of him had gained a very wide acceptance. Even in the House of Lords there had been at first some doubt as to his leadership. Lord Cairns, the Duke of Richmond and the Duke of Marlborough seem all at times to have been considered as safer alternatives. Since his authority had been conceded or asserted in the Upper Chamber some mistakes in tactics had been made, and Lord Salisbury was thought on more than one occasion to

have committed his party further in resistance to Liberal legislation than its strength warranted. For two years, however, the leadership of the party as a whole had been in commission. A kind of 'dual control' had been jointly exerted by the leaders in both houses. Between Sir Stafford Northcote and Lord Salisbury the most pleasant personal relations prevailed and it will be shown in this account that they behaved to each other, in many difficult and delicate circumstances, with unquestionable loyalty. At the same time the great prize and honour of supreme control, with its almost certain reversion of the Premiership, lay between them, and only one could win it. As very often happens in such circumstances, the good faith and good feeling observed between the principals did not extend to their respective supporters; and Lord Salisbury's excellent relations with Sir Stafford Northcote did not prevent the growth of two sulky and jealous factions to support their rival claims.

The Fourth Party stood for a long time apart from these activities and were individually divided as to the course to take. Mr. Balfour's opinion was from the outset clear; and his evident wish that Lord Salisbury, and not Sir Stafford Northcote, should head the Conservative party may have been his chief reason for associating himself with the free-lances below the gangway. Mr. Gorst, on the other hand, was much more friendly to Sir Stafford Northcote. He did not altogether agree with Lord Randolph Churchill in his very adverse estimate of Sir Stafford Northcote's qualities and capacity as a Parliamentary leader, which is generally reflected in these pages. Between these two choices Lord Randolph seems long to have hung in doubt. He was much disquieted by several of Lord Salisbury's actions in the House of Lords, which seemed to indicate an attitude of uncompromising resistance to democratic legislation. On the other hand, the Fourth Party came into constant disagreement with Sir Stafford Northcote in the House of

Commons, and chafed keenly under his guidance.

The evils of the 'dual control' were increasingly displayed as time went by. The Arrears Bill in 1882 ended in the complete collapse of the Opposition in both Houses. Lord Salisbury was for rejecting it in the House of Lords on the second reading and courting a dissolution. In this course he was supported by an enthusiastic meeting of Peers at his house in Arlington Street. The leaders in the Commons dissuaded him from such an extreme measure. It was agreed that the Bill should not be rejected, but materially amended, and that the amendments should be fought for at all risks. Lord Salisbury accordingly amended the Bill in the House of Lords. But Sir Stafford and his friends in the Commons failed to support him with the necessary vigour. A division of opinion grew rapidly in the Conservative ranks. At a time when union and decision were both vital to the success of the operations, neither was to be found. No great effort was made to rally the party in the House of Commons. Grave doubts were expressed as to the wisdom of provoking a conflict between the two Houses. The word 'dissolution' seemed full of evil omen. Only 157 Conservatives out of 242 voted in the decisive division for the Lords' amendments and they were defeated by the crushing majority of 136. The panic spread to the House of Lords. Lord Salisbury, deserted by the Peers, was left in a very ignominious position; and, in spite of the definite arrangement on which he had acted, the party Press resounded with praise of Sir Stafford's prudence and blame of Lord Salisbury's rashness. The need of a single supreme leader was, through the occurrence of such incidents, very widely recognised at the beginning of 1883; but whether Lord Salisbury or Sir Stafford Northcote should be chosen was still a matter of doubt and controversy. The prevailing opinion inclined strongly towards Sir Stafford Northcote.

Lord Randolph began the session of 1883 in great

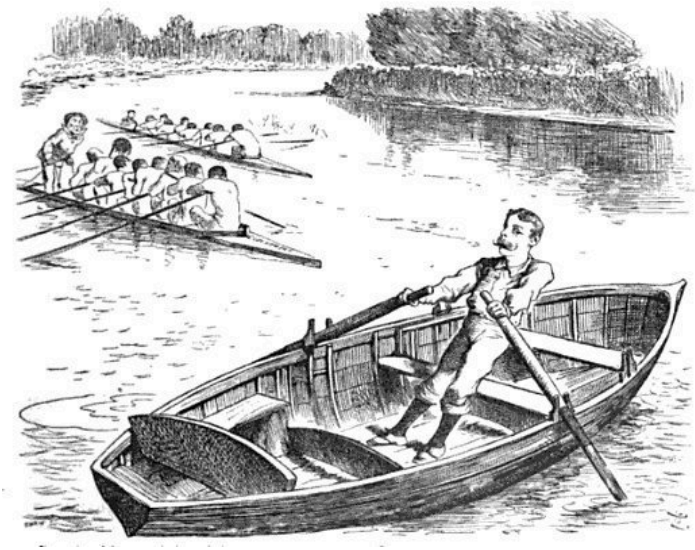
activity, and the Fourth Party, with or without the assistance of Mr. Balfour, was prominent, if not predominant, in almost every Parliamentary event. As a leader of free-lances, Lord Randolph was for ever seeking for a chance to drive a wedge into the Ministerial array. To split the Government majority by raising some issue on which conscientious Radicals would be forced to vote against their leaders, or, failing that, by some question on which the Minister concerned would be likely to utter illiberal sentiments, and bound to justify a policy or a system which the Liberal party detested, was his perpetual and almost instinctive endeavour. Such had been his method during the debates on Irish Coercion; it was his plan upon 'Parliamentary procedure'; it would have been his course, had he not been dissuaded therefrom, in regard to the suppression of the Boer revolt; it was afterwards to be his attitude in much greater degree upon the unending tangles of affairs in Egypt. If the tactics he pursued were adroit, the sentiments he expressed were congenial. Alike from conviction and partisanship he was drawn continually to the more Radical view of political disputes. No one understood better than he the difficulties with which Mr. Gladstone had to contend, or the stresses which paralysed the Cabinet and racked the Liberal party.

'You are no doubt aware,' he told a Manchester audience (December 1, 1881), 'of a curious fact in natural history—that there is an animal more useful than picturesque, generally to be found in our farmyards, which cannot swim. Owing to its ungraceful conformation, whenever it is called upon to swim, it cuts its own throat with its feet; and the spectacle of the Radical party attempting to govern reminds me irresistibly of that animal trying to swim. The Radical party are prevented from governing by what they are pleased to call their principles; and in the act of governing they invariably commit suicide. They are unable to govern Ireland because it was by

stimulating disorder that they attained power. They were unable to suppress the revolt of the Boers, because it is their most sacred principle that any portion of the Empire must be sacrificed rather than that they should incur the charge of "blood-guiltiness." They were unable to retain the valuable possession of Candahar, which had been gained at a cost of eighteen millions, because another of their most sacred principles is that we must rely on "moral barriers." Their Government is without an ally in Europe because this is their diplomatic maxim—that foreign policy is nothing more than an alternate succession of insults and apologies. They are unable to conclude a treaty of commerce, vital though it be to this country, because they have gratuitously tied themselves down to the fetish of limiting Customs duties to six articles of foreign import. So you see, gentlemen, that whenever they attempt to move in the ordinary paths of government one of these so-called principles immediately rises up, paralyses their action, and makes them an object either of mockery or of compassion.'

He took a grim delight in compelling the Under Secretary for the Colonies—'this humanitarian Minister'—and even Mr. Gladstone himself, to defend or palliate the use of dynamite by the Boers in their warfare with the natives. When Mr. Evelyn Ashley was stung by much sarcastic comment into condemning 'the ill-regulated impulses of humanity' which appeared to prompt the Opposition attack, Lord Randolph replied that he had passed the gravest censure on the Prime Minister, whose whole career had consisted in giving way to such 'ill-regulated impulses' and persuading the nation to agree with him. Now, as always, he was an economist. He subjected the Civil Service Estimates to an unremitting scrutiny. The repair of Royal Palaces, the up-keep of the Royal Mews and Parks, formed the subject of protracted debate. He attacked the Royal Buckhounds—''Arry's

Hounds,' as he called them—and declared that only a Cockney who did not know the difference between a field of oats and a field of wheat, and no true sportsman, would take part in the pursuit of a tame animal kept in captivity for the purpose of being hunted over and over again. Against such criticisms the Liberal Ministers could furnish no reply satisfactory to their own supporters.



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ATHWART THE COURSE.

R-nd-lph Ch-rch-ll. (an aggravating Boy): 'In the way again! 'ooray!!'

Punch, July 7, 1883.

Some of Lord Randolph's maxims in Opposition are well known. He is often credited with, though he cannot rightly claim, the authorship of the phrase, 'The duty of an Opposition is to oppose.' Lord Salisbury condemned early in 1883 'the temptation, strong to many politicians, to attempt to gain the victory by bringing into the Lobby men whose principles were divergent, and whose combined

forces therefore could not lead to any wholesome victory.' 'Excellent moralising,' observed Lord Randolph, 'very suitable to the digestions of country delegates, but one of those Puritanical theories which party leaders are prone to preach on a platform, which has never guided for any length of time the action of politicians in the House of Commons, and which, whenever apparently put into practice, invariably results in weak and inane proceedings. Discriminations between wholesome and unwholesome victories are idle and impracticable. Obtain the victory, know how to follow it up, and leave the wholesomeness or unwholesomeness to critics.' His second maxim was as follows: 'Take office only when it suits you, but put the Government in a minority whenever you decently can'; and his third, 'Whenever by an unfortunate concurrence of circumstances an Opposition is compelled to support the Government, the support should be given with a kick and not with a caress and should be withdrawn on the first available moment.'

Lord Randolph always declared that in such things he was sustained by the example of Mr. Disraeli. In 1852 Mr. Disraeli put Lord John Russell in a minority by allying himself with Lord Palmerston. In 1857 he put Lord Palmerston in a minority by allying himself with Mr. Gladstone and the Radical party. In 1858 he put Lord Palmerston in a second minority by following the lead of Mr. Milner Gibson and the Radicals. In 1866 Mr. Disraeli, with the assistance of Lord Cranborne, placed Mr. Gladstone in a minority by allying himself with the Whigs. Again, in 1873 Mr. Disraeli placed Mr. Gladstone in a minority by making a temporary alliance with the Radicals and with the Irish. Fortified by these examples, the leader of Tory Democracy pursued his devious and unexpected course, to the bewilderment of his friends and the discomfiture of his foes.

The chronic friction between the Front Opposition

Bench and the corner seat below the gangway developed in the first few weeks of the session of 1883 a considerable degree of heat. Lord Randolph's opinion of the worthies at the head of his party was not good, and the efforts which he made to conceal it, were not apparent. They complained of the irritating laugh with which he would sometimes mark his dissent from their tactics. He spoke of them collectively in private as 'the old gang.' One by one he fastened upon them nicknames which clung like burrs. Sir Stafford Northcote had always been 'the Goat.' Mr. W. H. Smith and Sir R. Cross were described as 'Marshall and Snelgrove.' Mr. Gibson was 'the family solicitor of the Tory party.' The smoking-room of the House of Commons was always laughing over some new witticism or sharp saying, faithfully carried by mischief-makers from one to another till it reached its final destination and roused the wrath of the potentate concerned. But while in his conversation Lord Randolph was scarcely restrained by the limits of decorum, he remained himself perfectly unapproachable. No man dared to take any liberties with him, and party officials or ex-Ministers who addressed themselves to him found themselves confronted by a suave and formal courtesy through which it was impossible to break.

A sharp and open difference with Sir Stafford Northcote grew early in March out of some small incident of House of Commons tactics:—

Sir Stafford Northcote to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Private.

House of Commons: March 9, 1883.

Dear Lord Randolph,—I understand that a good many of our friends are annoyed at the appearance of a kind of *communiqué* in the morning papers yesterday to the effect that if I were to move the adjournment of the House (as some persons supposed I intended to do) the 'Fourth Party' would not support the motion by rising in their places.

You will, I am sure, understand that any steps taken with the apparent purpose of marking out a separate party within the general body of the Conservatives must be prejudicial to the interests of the whole, and I therefore call your attention to the matter in the hope of preventing similar embarrassments in the future.

I remain
Yours very faithfully,
Stafford H. Northcote.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Sir Stafford Northcote.

2 Connaught Place, W.

Dear Sir Stafford Northcote,—In reply to your letter I have to remark that members who sit below the gangway have always acted in the House of Commons with a very considerable degree of independence of the recognised and constituted chiefs of either party, nor can I (who owe nothing to anyone and depend on nobody) in any way or at any time depart from that well-established and highly respectable tradition.

I am not aware of any *communiqué* on the matter about which you write and I must decline to be responsible for the gossip of the Lobby which may find its way into the daily or weekly Press. I would suggest, however, that 'similar embarrassments' would be avoided for the future, if the small party of Conservatives who sit below the gangway were to be occasionally informed beforehand of your intentions on any particular matter. They consider that they have, during the whole of this Parliament, worked harder in the House of Commons than any other members of the party, and they know that a very considerable body of public opinion in the country approves entirely of the course of action which they have adopted. There would be less danger of 'marking out a separate party within the general body of the Conservatives,' if you would use your influence with some of your late colleagues so as to induce them to abstain from holding my friends and myself up to ridicule and dislike by their speeches in the country, or covertly by inspiring that portion of the daily Press which is notoriously under the influence of the Front Opposition Bench to attack and denounce us, whose only fault is that at all times and by all means we have never ceased from attacking, denouncing, and embarrassing the present

Government. I spoke on this point to Mr. Rowland Winn very freely at the end of the autumn session, and I regret to find that my so doing seems rather to have increased than modified the mischief.

I have the honour to remain
Yours very faithfully,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Sir Stafford Northcote to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Private.

30 St. James's Place, S.W.: March 10, 1883.

Dear Lord Randolph,—I am very sensible of the zeal and ability which you and your immediate friends show in your Parliamentary work. But to turn your work to the best account you really ought to consider the first principles of party action, and, unless you mean absolutely to dissever yourselves from the main body, you ought to act heartily with it except upon occasions when you feel yourselves bound to differ from it; and when those occasions arise, you ought frankly but amicably to tell the leaders what your difficulties and your intentions are. You may be well assured that I am only too glad to confer with all members of the party on these terms, and with yourself as frankly as with anyone. What I must object to is the apparent maintenance of a distinct organisation within the party. It produces infinite soreness and difficulty.

I remain
Faithfully yours,
Stafford H. Northcote.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Sir Stafford Northcote.

2 Connaught Place, W.: March 11.

Dear Sir Stafford Northcote,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter. I do not see my way to complete acquiescence in the views which you have been kind enough to express to me. Since I have been in Parliament I have always acted on my own account, and I shall continue to do so, for I have not found the results of such a line of action at all unsatisfactory. It is not in the power of any Conservative, however hostile towards me he may feel, to throw the slightest doubt upon the orthodoxy of my political views, and with respect to what may conduce to the

ultimate benefit of the Tory party I conceive that the widest latitude of opinion at the present moment is not only allowable but, indeed, imperative.

You have not thought it necessary to allude to the remarks I made in reply to your first letter concerning the censure, the intrigue, the dislike, open or imperfectly concealed, of several of those who appear to be deeply in your confidence, and who may possibly be comprised amongst those whom you designate as 'leaders.' These are matters on which I am perfectly informed and equally unconcerned, but at the same time their existence rather weakens the effect of the second letter which I have received from you. The parties I allude to have a past to get rid of; I have not; and the numerous letters which I have for some time received, and which I continue to receive, from all parts of the country, and from all sorts of individuals and bodies, enable me to be confident that my political actions and views are not so entirely personal as you would seem to imagine.

In conclusion, I would observe that I did not commence this correspondence, but that, as you have done me the honour to communicate to me your opinions on my attitude in Parliament, I am under the impression that it would not be respectful to you if I were not to avail myself of this opportunity to place clearly before you what that attitude will continue to be. It will be the same in the future as it has been in the past; and as I have no particular personal object to gain, and therefore nothing to lose, I can await the result with very considerable equanimity.

I have the honour to remain
Yours very faithfully,
Randolph S. Churchill.

This correspondence heralded a state of war. The Tory leaders affected to regard Lord Randolph Churchill as a contumacious fellow who represented no one but himself, and pushed inordinate pretension with boundless impudence. They continued wilfully blind to the ever-growing movement in his favour of popular opinion among their own party all over the country. Lord Randolph, on his part, was not slow or reluctant to assert his power. In December 1882 he had been visited by a deputation of the

principal Conservatives of Manchester, inviting him to be their candidate for the then undivided representation of that great city. He complained openly to the deputation of the feeble conduct of the Opposition, and these serious gentlemen did not hesitate to greet with unmistakable approbation censures which he passed upon their own leaders.

'I see no good object,' he said, 'to be gained by concealing my opinion that the constitutional function of an Opposition is to oppose and not support the Government, and that this function has during the three sessions of this Parliament been either systematically neglected or defectively carried out. More than once since the present Government came into office legitimate opportunities have arisen for conflict, which ought to have resulted in the overthrow of the Ministry or in great damage thereto; and those opportunities have been allowed to pass by unavailed of. I would venture to lay down with confidence the principle that the healthy vitality of a party is not to be estimated by great speeches in the country, but only by its action in Parliament; and if its action in Parliament is observed to fall considerably below the level of its great speeches in the country, depend upon it there is something or other not altogether satisfactory in its constitution.'

A more decisive declaration was soon to be required. The statue of Lord Beaconsfield was now finished, and April 19, as the anniversary of his death, had been fixed for its unveiling. Towards the end of March the programme of the ceremony was made public and it was found that the principal part of unveiling the statue and pronouncing the eulogy had been assumed by Sir Stafford Northcote, while to Lord Salisbury was relegated the very secondary function of proposing a vote of thanks to Sir Stafford for his speech. The general, if tacit, acquiescence of the Conservative party in these dispositions could only mean

that Sir Stafford Northcote was their recognised and adopted leader and would be the head of any Conservative Government which might come into being. Lord Randolph Churchill was so persuaded of the futility of such an arrangement that he determined at any risk to make a protest, which should at least prevent its unanimous acceptance. On March 29 a letter, which was assigned especial prominence and attracted much attention, appeared in the *Times*, from 'A Tory,' complaining that Sir Stafford Northcote was to unveil the statue and denouncing his selection as the triumph of a 'faction' over the more numerous adherents of Lord Salisbury. Two days later (April 2) Lord Randolph struck his blow.

He had prepared his statement with deliberation and he showed it privately to several intimate friends. All, with the single exception of Mr. Chenery, the Editor of the *Times*, who had a journalist's eye for 'copy,' disapproved of its terms and tone. Some urged him not to publish it. One such appeal lies before me as I write. 'Let me beseech you to stop your letter. I may be presumptuous; I may be importunate; but I am sincere—so listen to me. Your letter is a libel on your own party; it lacks finish; it will offend the *whole* party; it will offend the public. You impute as an offence the attention paid to tradesmanlike counsellors. What will the tradesmen think of you? They will be challenged to reject you, inasmuch as you despise them.... You are now a power in the party; you have pressed heavily on the leaders; you do so to-day, and may continue to do so if you will husband your resources. They don't like it. If they can blow you out of the way they will, and your letter gives them the chance they have been waiting for.... You are attacking them at the wrong moment. Your victim has been ill, sent off to recruit his strength, is back again at his post supported by good wishes and receiving sympathy from all. Are you wanting in generosity? No. *I* say, "No"; but will the public, will your enemies say

"No"?... Such a letter could only be justified by its success. It will be a failure. Your best friends will be unable to prove you right; and when once the tyrant-throne you have raised for yourself, and by yourself, begins to lose the support of the outside public, your enemies within the party will hurry to overwhelm you in its ruins.'

The letter was published forthwith. 'The position of the Conservative party,' wrote Lord Randolph,[12] 'is hopeful and critical. Everything depends upon the Liberals keeping their leader, and upon the Conservatives finding one. An Opposition never wants a policy; but an Opposition, if it is to become a strong Government, must have a leader. The country, though it may be disposed to dispense with Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues, is not likely to exchange them for an arrangement which would practically place the Premiership in commission. The Conservative party must decide at once upon a name. This is more important with the modern electorate than a cry; but at the present moment, when the battle may be joined any day, we have fixed upon neither.'

Yet the Conservative party had an ample choice. 'Lord Salisbury, Lord Cairns, and Sir Stafford Northcote all possess great and peculiar qualifications. If the electors are in a negative frame of mind they may accept Sir Stafford Northcote; if they are in a cautious frame of mind they may shelter themselves under Lord Cairns; if they are in an English frame of mind they will rally round Lord Salisbury.' He proceeded to review the conduct of the Opposition during the last three sessions. 'Such a series of neglected opportunities, pusillanimity, combativeness at wrong moments, vacillation, dread of responsibility, repression and discouragement of hard-working followers, collusions with the Government, hankerings after coalitions, jealousies, commonplaces, want of perception on the part of the former lieutenants of Lord Beaconsfield, no one but he who has watched carefully and intelligently

the course of affairs in Parliament, can adequately realise or sufficiently express; and if it be the case that Ministers have lost ground in the country, they have only themselves to blame, nor have they the slightest right to cherish feelings of resentment against the regular and responsible Opposition in the House of Commons.

'There are many, I know well, among the Conservative party out of the House of Commons who are convinced that if the present opportunities for success are neglected or inadequately turned to account, the days of the Tory party, as we know it, are in all probability numbered; who are convinced, further, that if these opportunities are handled by third-rate statesmen, such as were just good enough to fill subordinate offices while Lord Beaconsfield was alive, they will be neglected or inadequately turned to account. Many of the party in the country are determined that their efforts and their industry shall not result merely in the short-lived triumph and speedy disgrace of *bourgeois* placemen, "honourable" Tadpoles, hungry Tapers, Irish lawyers. The Conservative party was formed for better ends than these....

'...Lord Salisbury alone among those who have endeavoured to guide the action of the Conservative party, has agitated Scotland and arrested the attention of the Midlands. His name and influence in Lancashire are more than sufficient to counterbalance any advantages which may have accrued to the Liberal party from the adhesion of Lord Derby. Even his opponents admit that he has projected a policy rightly conceiving and eloquently expressing the true principles of popular Toryism. Against him are directed all the malignant efforts of envious mediocrity, and it is essential to the future well-being of the Tory party that these machinations should no longer be permitted to obscure the paramount claims of the one man who is capable, not only of overturning, but also of replacing Mr. Gladstone, and who—partly from a

magnanimous trust in the good faith of others, partly from a very high, perhaps an exaggerated, idea of political loyalty—is in danger of being sacrificed to the internecine jealousies of some of the most useless of his former colleagues.'

The publication of this letter excited, as his friends had foreseen, an outburst of indignation against Lord Randolph Churchill. All sections of the Conservative party—including many members who were thoroughly dissatisfied with the conduct of their leaders—united in disowning him and his opinions. When he went down to the House on the morrow of his letter scarcely a member would speak to him, and he sat, alone and abandoned, hunched up in his corner seat. When Sir Stafford Northcote rose to address some questions to Ministers he received a tremendous ovation. Even Mr. Gorst publicly signified his allegiance to him on April 4. On the same day Mr. W. H. Smith denounced Lord Randolph's letter as an attempt to sow discord in the Conservative ranks and as a foul wrong to both Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote. Mr. Chaplin, Mr. Northcote (speaking with the authority of his father), and Mr. Lowther meted out their heavy and righteous censures. Tory and Liberal newspapers vied with each other in wrathful or derisive comment. Two hundred members of the Conservative party attached their names to a memorial expressing their trust and confidence in Sir Stafford, which memorial was duly presented to him by one of their most valued representatives, Sir John Mowbray. Lord Salisbury preserved a golden silence. Never was politician so utterly isolated, so totally repudiated, so signally rebuked, by all of those persons of influence and position upon whose support he must depend.

But the results were curiously barren. The intense irritation at Westminster and in the Carlton found no encouragement in the constituencies. The vehement attacks

to which Lord Randolph was subjected aroused no echo in the great provincial centres. Country newspapers were restrained in their criticism. The *Times* gave him a cautious, left-handed, but effective support. Manchester showed no wish to withdraw its invitation. The working-class electors declined to have their indignation manufactured from the London clubs and offices; and the conviction steadily gained acceptance and assertion that, whatever might be thought of his methods, on the merits of the case 'Randy was right.' So, indeed, he was. In rough but perfectly unmistakable language he had proclaimed a vital truth. He had declared that which most men knew in their hearts, even though they would not or dared not admit it. No amount of memorials or party demonstrations, no loud disclaimers, could prevail against facts which were every day becoming more flagrant.

For a week Lord Randolph remained silent and solitary in his corner seat. Then, just as the storm showed signs of abating, just when the worthies were asking themselves whether, after all, they had not been too hard on a young man who could be, if he only chose, a powerful ally, he published his second letter in the *Times*. In this he described the utter breakdown of 'the dual control' by which the Conservative party was afflicted, how Lord Salisbury had been deserted on the Arrears Bill and how Sir Henry Wolff had been actually impeded in his original opposition to Mr. Bradlaugh by Sir Stafford Northcote. 'The differences of principle which sever the Conservatives from the Radicals are even greater and more vital to the future of the nation than those which agitated the times of Pitt and Fox, or the more recent days of the Duke of Wellington and Lord Grey. The questions of the continuation of the monarchy, the existence of an hereditary legislature, the preservation of a central government for the three kingdoms, the connection between Church and State, are all more or less rapidly

coming within the range of practical politics.... On all these and such like questions the Conservative party hold strong opinions, and if these opinions are to prevail it is essential that they should be represented by, and identified with, a statesman who fears not to meet and who knows how to sway immense masses of the working classes and who either by his genius or his eloquence, or by all the varied influences of an ancient name, can "move the hearts of households." Without such a leader the Conservative party is beaten even before the battle is begun....

' ...I am not in the least alarmed,' the writer concluded, 'by the violence of the replies to the letter which you were good enough to insert a week ago. I know well that many of those who are expressing with so much heat and indignation their disagreement with my views have themselves on many occasions during the present Parliament been loud in their condemnation of the apathy and irresolution of the Opposition and of the fatal influence exercised by one or two of those who surround the leader. It is because of my belief that the maintenance of the Constitution and the existence of a strong, resolute, intelligent and active Tory party are inseparably connected with each other that I have referred to the incidents of the past with the object of averting grave disaster in the future. If that object is even approached by my letters to you, I am only too happy to bear the brunt of a little temporary effervescence and to be the scapegoat on which doomed mediocrities may lay the burden of their exposed incapacity....'

Mr. Chenery was very doubtful about this letter and urged Lord Randolph not to publish it. 'You have produced,' he wrote, 'a great effect by the first letter, which this, in my opinion, would only undo.' But Lord Randolph persisted and the letter was printed. On April 19 Sir Stafford Northcote unveiled the Beaconsfield statue. Lord Randolph wrote for the *Fortnightly Review* of May a

reflective description of this event. He called the article, from which various quotations have already been made, 'Elijah's Mantle.' He cannot claim in any special degree the gift of letters. In private he wrote exactly as he would have spoken to his friends. His public writings were for the most part speeches set forth on paper. But 'Elijah's Mantle' shows a higher degree of literary excellence than any other record he has left behind him. In its picturesque presentment, in its well-chosen words, in the lucidity and force of the argument, it proved not unworthy of the almost universal attention which the personality of the writer drew upon it from the political world.

Lord Randolph described the unveiling of the statue 'under a murky sky and amidst splashing rain'; the melancholy change which a few years had effected in the position and prospects of the once mighty party Lord Beaconsfield had led; the imposing majority of 1874, now transferred bodily to the Liberal side; and the sudden and stunning nature of the catastrophe of 1880. What a surprise it was to the placemen, the rank and file and 'the old men who crooned over the fires at the Carlton'! 'That some malign and venomous genius must suddenly have possessed the mind of the people' was their only explanation. And on all this Lord Beaconsfield's death —'the crowning blow sent by a mischievous and evil-minded fortune.' While 'the Chief' lived, hope had lived too. But from the hour of his death every Tory, in and out of Parliament, high or low, rich or poor, had exclaimed, muttered or thought: 'Oh, if Lord Beaconsfield were alive!' That was a monument to the departed leader more enduring than the bronze on the Abbey Green. Was it not also a criticism, pointed and unanswerable, upon the conduct of affairs since his death, which 'no amount of memorials of confidence, no number of dinners in Pall Mall, no repetitions, however frequent, of gushing embraces between the Lord and the Commoner,' could

gainsay?

Lord Randolph thought that Lord Beaconsfield's career could be painted in a single sentence: 'Failure, failure, failure, partial success, renewed failure, ultimate and complete triumph.' The victory of 1874 had given a golden opportunity to the Tories; but owing to the natural decay of Lord Beaconsfield's physical vigour, that opportunity had been wasted. Would it return? 'The Liberals can afford better to sustain great disasters than the Conservatives, for there is a recuperative power innate in Liberal principles—the result of the longing of the human mind for progress and for adventure—which enables them to recover rapidly and unexpectedly from misfortunes which would seem to be fatal. The Tories, though possessing many other advantages, fail in this respect. As time goes on, their successes will be fewer and separated from each other by intervals of growing length; unless, indeed, the policy and the principles of the Tory party should undergo a surprising development; unless the secret of Lord Beaconsfield's theory of government is appropriated, understood, believed in, sown broadcast amongst the people; unless the mantle of Elijah should fall upon some one who is capable enough and fortunate enough, carrying with him a united party, to bring to perfection those schemes of Imperial rule and of social reform which Lord Beaconsfield had only time to dream of, to hint at, and to sketch.'

Lord Randolph then proceeded to outline for the first time the conception of Tory Democracy which had now possessed his mind.

'Some of Lord Beaconsfield's phrases will bear any amount of microscopic examination. Speaking at Manchester in 1871, by the alteration of a letter in a quotation from the Vulgate he revealed the policy which ought to guide Tory leaders at the present tune: "Sanitas sanitatum, omnia sanitas." Such was the quotation, in

which a careful mind will discover a scheme of social progress and reform of dimensions so large and wide-spreading that many volumes would not suffice to explain its details. By it is shadowed forth, and in it is embraced, a social revolution which, passing by and diverting attention from wild longings for organic change, commences with the little, peddling Boards of Health which occupy and delight the Local Government Department, comprises Lord Salisbury's plans for the amelioration of the dwellings of the poor, carries with it Lord Carnarvon's ideal of compulsory national insurance, includes Sir Wilfrid Lawson's temperance propaganda, preserves and reclaims commons and open spaces—favoured by Mr. Bryce—constructs people's parks, collects and opens to the masses museums, libraries, art-galleries, does not disdain the public washhouses of Mr. Jesse Collings. Public and private thrift must animate the whole, for it is from public thrift that the funds for these largesses can be drawn and it is by private thrift alone that their results can be utilised and appreciated. The expression "Tory Democracy" has excited the wonder of some, the alarm of others, and great and bitter ridicule from the Radical party. But the "Tory Democracy" may yet exist; the elements for its composition only require to be collected and the labour may some day possibly be effected by the man, whoever he may be, upon whom the mantle of Elijah has descended.'

Lord Randolph's letters had aimed at establishing the leadership of Lord Salisbury and had constituted an appeal to him to come forward and head the 'New Tories.' They also intimated with tolerable plainness that if Lord Salisbury were unable or unwilling to don the mantle, there was another who would not hesitate to assume it. References to 'a statesman who fears not to meet, and who knows how to sway, immense masses of the working classes,' and who 'by all the varied influences of an

ancient name can move "the hearts of households,"' although directly applied to Lord Salisbury, were obviously capable of an alternative interpretation. The suggestion was perfectly understood by all and in political circles a hearty, concerted, but deplorably unsuccessful attempt was made to laugh it out of existence.

By the end of April it was evident that the outburst against Lord Randolph Churchill had in no wise injured his position in the country. In order to meet the difficulties of the Bradlaugh case and the repeated explosions of passion to which it gave rise, the Prime Minister had introduced the Affirmation Bill, which would enable persons of no religious belief to affirm, like Quakers, instead of taking the ordinary oath. On this Mr. Gladstone delivered one of his most magnificent orations. When Lord Randolph replied (April 30) he was heard with severe and respectful attention in all parts of the House. He spoke long and thoughtfully, and, although no one could maintain the elevation to which Mr. Gladstone had raised the debate, it was felt that the Minister's arguments had been not inadequately met.





Reproduced by permission of the proprietors of 'Punch,'
A DREAM OF THE FUTURE.
Little Lord R.: 'Ah! they'll have to give me a statue—some day!!'
Punch April 28, 1883.

'The present Bill,' he said, 'is not for the benefit of the whole nation; it is for the benefit of one man, and it is brought in in deference to clamour and violence. Let us consider for a moment who are the classes outside which are opposed to the representative of atheism. They are the religious, the moral, the law-abiding, and the industrious. Who are the personal supporters of atheism outside this

House? For the most part they are the residuum, the rabble, and the scum of the population; the bulk of them are persons to whom all restraint—religious, moral, or legal—is odious and intolerable. Why are we so anxious to give these latter a victory and a triumph over the former?

'I take this Bill of the Government and I strip it of all those flimsy disguises with which the Prime Minister so ingeniously but so uselessly clothed it and I place it naked before the Parliament and before the country—a Bill for the admission of avowed atheists into the House of Commons—and I say that this is a fundamental change in the Constitution of such vital and momentous importance that the people of this country will not hastily ratify it and that the opinion of the country must be ascertained before the Parliament can assent to it.

'We must not only think of the relief of Mr. Bradlaugh, or of the relief of this House from a slight difficulty; we must think what would be the effect on the people of this State of a recognition of unlawful doctrines, and of giving place in the immediate governing body to a man who professes and who preaches that the Christian religion, on which our law has been founded, is false, its morality defective, and its promises illusory. Shall we not be giving to those doctrines a tremendous impetus by altering the Constitution of this country, in order that they may be officially represented in our Councils and may influence our decisions? Can we contemplate without alarm the revulsion that such an act might occasion among those masses of the people who, with some hope of a happier state hereafter, are toiling their weary way through the world, content to tolerate for a time their less fortunate lot —the revulsion that would occur if they inferred from the action of the Legislature that it was even possible for their faith to be false? Surely the horrors of the French Revolution should give some idea of the effect on the masses of the State recognition of atheism! It is from

disasters such as those that we have been very probably preserved by the Christian characteristics of the community. Let me quote the words of Lord Erskine: "The religious and moral sense of the people of Great Britain is the sheet-anchor which alone can hold the vessel of State amidst the storms that agitate the world."

'The peculiarity of the English Constitution is that it is founded upon and incorporated with the Christian morality. It is a characteristic which is possessed by no other nation, however free or however great; and does it not occur to you that the extraordinary prosperity and duration and apparent future of our Empire is not, perhaps, unconnected with this famous characteristic?

'You,' he concluded, pointing to the Liberal party, 'proudly claim the task of carrying the cause of religious liberty to its furthest imaginable limits; be it ours, I reply, nor is it less noble, to endeavour to restrain your aspirations within the bounds of reason and of policy.'

The division produced a great excitement. When the numbers were declared it was found that the Affirmation Bill had upon its second reading been cast out by a majority of three (292—289).

The satisfaction of the Tory party and of some of the best and worthiest people in it at this result was enormous. In the House of Commons very largely, and outside in the Press and among the electors almost entirely, the credit of the victory was assigned to Lord Randolph. 'The best speech he has ever made' was Sir Henry James's comment. The *Punch* cartoon of the week represented him as Ariel urging his hounds to the pursuit and expulsion of Caliban. Once again he was the hero of the hour. One among many letters of approval and congratulation must have given him especial pleasure, and may be quoted here. 'Though it is years since we met,' wrote Dr. Creighton (May 1, 1883), 'and though I only live as a vague memory in your mind, I cannot help writing you a few lines to say

how much I admired your speech last night. As an observer of the course of politics who tries to give them an historical value, I watch your career with growing interest. It seems to me that you combine in a remarkable degree the real principles of statesmanship with an attention to the conditions under which our political life has to be carried on. It is easy to be a doctrinaire; it is easy to be a purely party politician; it is not easy to combine the two into a distinct line of policy. I recognise with admiration your increasing success in this direction and your genuine devotion to the serious pursuit of politics.'

'It is indeed a pleasure to me,' wrote Lord Randolph in reply, 'to know that you have not forgotten your former rather unsatisfactory pupil and that you follow, not without interest and perhaps with some hope, a course of which Fate has not yet determined the form or the end.'

The ceremony of April 19, 1883, was the origin of a new idea destined to spread and flourish over an ever-widening area during all the years that have followed. The Fourth Party had grown spontaneously out of the Bradlaugh controversy. The Primrose League sprang from the unveiling of Lord Beaconsfield's statue. Sir Henry Wolff did not attend in his place to hear Sir Stafford Northcote's speech and Lord Salisbury's vote of thanks, and he arrived at the House of Commons late in the afternoon. The well-known superintendent of the members' cloak-room, Mr. Cove, said to him, 'You must have a primrose,' and gave him one. Thus adorned, Sir Henry entered the Chamber and found the whole Conservative party similarly decorated with Lord Beaconsfield's favourite flower. The fact impressed him vividly and he said to Lord Randolph Churchill as they walked home together, 'What a show of Primroses! This should be turned to account. Why not start a "Primrose League"?' Lord Randolph was instantly interested. 'Draw up a plan,' he said, 'to carry out your idea and we will see what can be done.'

Sir Henry Wolff set to work at once. He looked for his models to the Orange Society which was influential in his constituency of Portsmouth, and to the numerous benefit societies—Foresters, Oddfellows, Good Templars, and the like—with which he was acquainted. He saw how popular the badges, grades, and honorary distinctions of these bodies were with the working classes who supported them. He resolved that the Primrose League should be inferior to none of these in the variety of its regalia or the magniloquence of its titles. He discussed all this at length with Lord Randolph Churchill from day to day; but it was not until the autumn that anyone else was admitted to their councils. During October and November the first practical steps were taken. Lord Randolph Churchill, Sir John Gorst, Sir Henry Wolff, and Sir Alfred Slade met together to form 'a new political society which should embrace all classes and all creeds except atheists and enemies of the British nation.' All four were members of the Council of the National Union. They had exceptional knowledge of the state of Conservative organisations. They saw quite clearly the failure of the existing Conservative and Constitutional Associations to suit the popular taste or to succeed in joining all classes together in defence of the essential doctrines of Toryism. The constitution of the League, its objects and its machinery were settled even in detail at meetings held during these two months. Specimen badges were made. The declaration to be signed by every member of the League was drawn up by Sir John Gorst in the following terms: 'I declare, on my honour and faith, that I will devote my best ability to the *Maintenance of Religion*, of the *Estates of the Realm* and of the *Imperial Ascendency of the British Empire*, and that, consistently with my allegiance to the Sovereign of these Realms, I will promote with discretion and fidelity the above objects, being those of the Primrose League.' Finally on November 17, in the card-room of the Carlton Club, these four gentlemen

resolved themselves into the Ruling Council of the League with power to add to their number.

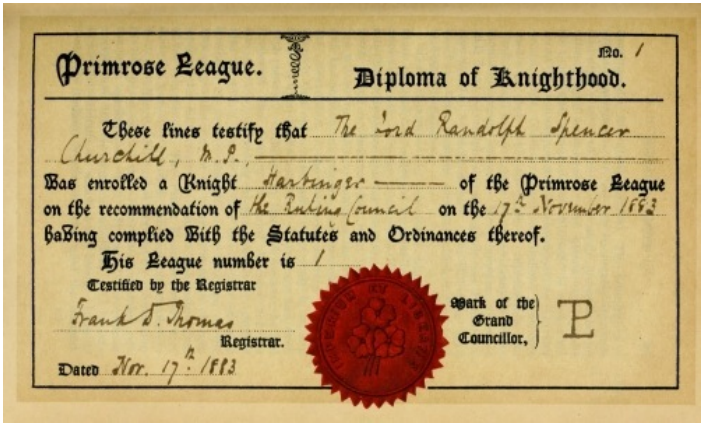
The circle was then gradually increased by the addition of Lord Randolph's closest political allies. Colonel Burnaby, Mr. Percy Mitford, Mr. Dixon Hartland and Sir Algernon Borthwick attended the next few meetings. Great efforts were being made by the leaders of the Conservative party in Birmingham to induce Lord Randolph to stand for that city. Mr. Joseph Rowlands and other prominent Birmingham men were frequently in London on that errand; all were pressed into the League. Lord Randolph Churchill's numerous relations were enlisted. A Ladies' Grand Council was formed, of which Lady Randolph and Lady Borthwick were members and the Duchess of Marlborough the President. A humble office was taken on a second floor in Essex Street, Strand, and the first public announcement was made December 18, 1883, in the advertisement columns of the *Times* and the *Morning Post*, as follows:—

> THE PRIMROSE TORY LEAGUE.—Gentlemen wishing to be enrolled in the Primrose Tory League must apply in writing to the Registrar, Primrose League, care of Messrs. Lacy, Hartland & Co., Bankers, London, E.C., or Messrs. Hopkinson & Sons, Bankers, 3 Regent Street, London, by whom all information will be supplied.

The new political society was in its beginnings viewed with sour distrust by all Conservatives who were officially orthodox, virtuous and loyal. It was regarded as a dodge of the Fourth Party and a new weapon of schism. The struggle on the council of the National Union during the year 1884, which must soon be described, intensified these feelings. The early Primrose knights and dames wore their badges everywhere in public and faced in consequence the keenest ridicule. The *Morning Post* was their only substantial ally. The statutes and ordinances of the League excited the derision of almost all of those who, a few years later, were proud to subscribe to them. The idea in itself was vital; but only the personality of Lord Randolph Churchill and the hopes and enthusiasms which he excited, prevented it from being smothered during its first few months of existence. As it was, only 957 members—including, however, many persons of influence—had enrolled themselves by the end of 1884, and 11,366 by the end of 1885. The Home Rule struggle raised these numbers to 237,283 in 1886 and 565,861 in 1887. A million members was reached in 1891 and the League claims at the present time, twenty-one years after its foundation, to have 1,703,708 knights, dames, and associates upon its rolls; and although its merits as a national institution must necessarily be variously appraised, its power and utility as a political engine have never been questioned.

As the session drew on, the warfare in the House of

Commons became fiercer. Day after day Lord Randolph and his friends assailed the Government with amazing variety and increasing violence. The Prime Minister was repeatedly forced to defend himself and his colleagues from reproach and his encounters with Lord Randolph Churchill were of almost nightly occurrence. ‘You will kill Mr. Gladstone one of these days,’ said some one to Lord Randolph. ‘Oh, no!’ he rejoined, ‘he will long survive me. I often tell my wife what a beautiful letter he will write her, proposing my burial in Westminster Abbey.’



Primrose League. No. 1

Diploma of Knighthood.

These lines testify that The Lord Randolph Spencer Churchill, M.P.

Was enrolled a Knight Harbinger of the Primrose League on the recommendation of the Ruling Council on the 17th November 1883 having complied with the Statutes and Ordinances thereof.

His League number is 1

Testified by the Registrar

Frank S. Thomas Registrar.

Dated Nov. 17th 1883

Mark of the Grand Councillor, P

In all this fighting the hostility of the Front Opposition Bench to the Fourth Party was very plainly marked. Sir Stafford Northcote repeatedly dissociated himself from Lord Randolph, repudiated him, rebuked him, and even supported the Government against him. A Treasury minute had been issued forbidding Civil Servants to petition the Government through members of Parliament. Forthwith Lord Randolph announced that on a named day he would present 250 petitions signed by over 2,000 Civil Servants. Although Ministers took no action against the signatories, Lord Randolph raised the whole matter in the House as a question of privilege. In his speech he attacked

extravagantly Mr. Algernon West, who, as Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue, had signed the offending circular. He condemned the practice of Cabinet Ministers —Sir Stafford Northcote as well as Mr. Gladstone—of appointing their former private secretaries to important posts in the Civil Service. The training of a private secretary—'among the backstairs intrigues and dirty work of office'—was no fit preparation for departmental employment. An attack on a public servant 'who cannot defend himself' is always resented by the supporters of a Government. On this occasion Mr. Gladstone and Sir Stafford Northcote vied with each other in terms of reprobation. Sir Stafford said he had never heard so many misstatements in a single speech. Mr. Gladstone regretted that Lord Randolph should degrade his Parliamentary position by such conduct. The House indulged itself in that pleasant warmth which comes from righteous indignation.

Lord Randolph had persuaded himself, upon a mass of evidence collected for him by Mr. Wilfrid Blunt and others in Egypt, that the Khedive Tewfik was indirectly responsible for the massacre of June 11, 1882, which he believed had been instigated from the palace in order to compass the ruin of Arabi and the national movement, and provoke decisively the intervention of the European Powers. Having adopted this opinion, he held tenaciously to it, and thrust it upon Parliament with earnestness and even with passion. Although in the first instance he had supported the pension to Lord Alcester for his services in bombarding Alexandria, on the ground that it was a reward to the naval profession as a whole, he availed himself of the passage of the necessary Bill (June 8) to bring forward his charges against the Khedive. The House was astonished at his vehemence. The Prime Minister's reply was, however, curiously guarded. He did not absolutely deny the charge. All he said was that the information in the possession of the Government afforded not the least

confirmation of it. It was a 'tremendous charge,' and the Government would be glad to examine the evidence on which it was based. Indeed, it was Sir Stafford Northcote who used the hardest language. While admitting that he considered the warlike intervention in Egypt wrong and unjustifiable, he expressed 'extreme regret' at Lord Randolph's attempt to raise such an issue on the vote for a naval reward to a distinguished officer. 'I decline,' he said, 'to be led by the noble lord, and I trust the House will decline to be induced by the noble lord to accept a position which I consider would be degrading to its honour.' This, as Mr. Gorst said later in the debate, was a statement which would have been better made by the Prime Minister than by the leader of the Opposition, who, however he might view the opinions of Lord Randolph Churchill, should leave it to opponents to attack him.

The affair proceeded further. One of Arabi's officers, Suleiman Sami, was brought before a courtmartial on the charge of burning Alexandria. The witnesses demanded by the defence were not allowed to appear; the trial was unexpectedly curtailed; and the prisoner was sentenced to death. Lord Randolph exerted himself to procure at least delay before the sentence was executed, in order that the irregularities at the trial might be exposed. He declared that Suleiman Sami was himself a witness whose death would be 'a god-send to the Egyptian Government.' Plied with questions and appeals, the Government undertook to make inquiries; but before any satisfactory information was obtained and while the House was still under the impression that the matter was in suspense, Suleiman Sami was hanged. On this being known the feeling in the Conservative party was so strong that Sir Stafford himself moved the adjournment of the House to discuss the conduct of Ministers in regard to the execution, which Lord Randolph furiously described as 'the grossest and vilest judicial murder that ever stained the annals of

Oriental justice.' In this attack the Fourth Party were supported by the great mass of Conservative members.

At Mr. Gladstone's invitation, Lord Randolph laid before him a quantity of evidence which he had obtained in support of his assertions. This evidence was examined by Ministers and officially rejected; but it is remarkable that the Government took no steps, by rebutting it in detail, to discredit their pertinacious assailant. They could not tell how far a fearless and impartial inquiry into the labyrinth of sanguinary intrigue which had cumbered the field of Egyptian politics before the British intervention might carry them. They wrapped themselves in a silence of prudence or disdain, and Lord Randolph continued to repeat his statements with undiminished assurance. He forwarded formally to Sir Stafford Northcote, among others, a copy of the evidence he had sent to the Prime Minister. The style and superscription of the acknowledging letter afford a key to their relations at this period:—

30 St. James's Place: July 1, 1883.

Dear Lord R. Churchill,—I am much obliged to you for sending me a copy of the papers you have submitted to Mr. Gladstone.—I remain faithfully yours,

Stafford H. Northcote.

The Bill for the Suppression of Corrupt and Illegal Practices at Parliamentary Elections brought the Fourth Party together almost for the last time. As it passed through the Committee stage in the beginning of July, all the four friends spoke frequently upon it and supported each other. One night, July 3, having dined together at Lord Randolph's house, they descended upon the House of Commons rather late and, not having heard the early part of the discussion, demanded with perverse audacity that the Chairman should read the clause, as it stood amended, from the Chair. Sir Henry Wolff was the first to make the

request and he threatened to move to report progress unless it was granted. Mr. Gladstone—always in attendance on the House—did not deny the right of members to make such a demand; but hoped that an evil precedent would not be established. Lord Randolph appealed to the Chair. The Chairman intimated that, having read the clause twice, he would read it no more. Mr. Balfour then made a conciliatory speech, proposing that as a compromise the Attorney-General, Sir Henry James, should read the clause. Sir Henry James refused. Sir Henry Wolff thereupon moved to report progress. By this time the House was very full. Sir Stafford Northcote supported the Government and urged Sir Henry not to persist. Lord Randolph then, under repeated interruptions from Ministerialists, amid growing excitement, attacked the Government and Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Herbert Gladstone 'brought in to cheer the Prime Minister' and all their works; but to Sir Stafford he was very polite and deferential and he expressed in modest language the hope that the leader of the Opposition would, after all, support them in their protest. The appeal was, however, fruitless.

On one occasion about this time Lord Salisbury himself seems to have expostulated with Sir Henry Wolff. But the member for Portsmouth had his own methods of defence. 'I do not understand,' said Lord Salisbury as they walked together one day, 'what your real political position is.' 'Oh, I am a "Smithite," Lord Salisbury,' replied Sir Henry reverentially,—'a convinced "Smithite" in politics.' 'But what is your object?' inquired the Tory leader. 'To do good,' was the bland response,—'simply to do good'; and the conversation passed on to other topics.

From these contentions Lord Randolph was suddenly withdrawn by a solemn and unexpected event. On June 28 the Duke of Marlborough persuaded the House of Lords to reject by a narrow majority (145—140) the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill upon its third reading. His speech was

perhaps the best he had ever made. It was also his last. On the night of July 4, when he went to bed, he seemed in the best of health and spirits. Early the next morning he was found dead by his servants, struck down by that same swift, unheralded affection of the heart which was a few years later to end the life of his heir. Lord Randolph was profoundly shocked and grieved by his father's death. He passed many hours reading over his father's letters, all carefully preserved from his boyhood days. That strong religious strain in his nature to which reference has already been made, afforded him consolation in this season of trouble and, though always a devout man, he became much more regular in devotional exercises than at any other period of his life. He had in his hands the threads of half a dozen political enterprises, for the success of which his constant presence in the House of Commons was necessary. He cast them all away from him and retired at once to Blenheim. Many appeals were made to him to return to the arena, where his absence was instantly felt and regretted even by those in his own party who were antagonistic to him. But nothing would induce him to go near Parliament for the rest of the year. 'You are very kind,' he wrote to Wolff, 'wanting me to come back to the House; but it is quite impossible. I am not up to it physically or mentally, and am longing to get away abroad.... It is very melancholy here—sad recollections at every moment. Nothing can be nicer than Blandford to everyone.'

The two brothers were very closely drawn together by their common mourning, and all bitterness faded at once out of the political world. Sir Stafford Northcote wrote, in the gentle courtesy of his nature, a generous and affectionate letter of sympathy and regret and a private correspondence followed between them which stands in pleasant contrast to the general course of their relations and shows that in modern times personal kindness and

good feeling lie never very far below the sullen surface of English politics.

Lord Randolph hurried away with his wife and son to Gastein before the month was out and here his spirits gradually regained their usual buoyancy. His brother joined him late in August and they dawdled home together through Switzerland, visiting its beautiful places, climbing the Rigi 'like the meanest and commonest of Tow Rows,' and so back to Blenheim. During the autumn and winter the Duke of Marlborough persuaded Lord Randolph to start again his pack of harriers; and this pursuit—together with the project, about which the new master of Blenheim was keenly excited, of bringing the railway from Oxford to Woodstock—proved so absorbing that politics seem for a time to have been almost abandoned.

CHAPTER VI

TORY DEMOCRACY

'The Tory party in this country is the national party; it is the really democratic party of England. It supports the institutions of the country, because they have been established for the common good, and because they secure the equality of civil rights without which, whatever may be its name, no government can be free, and based upon which principle every government, however it may be styled, is, in fact, a democracy.'

B. Disraeli: *A Vindication of the English Constitution*.

1882-1885

THE conditions of British politics during the Parliament of 1880, whether in the House of Commons or abroad in the country, were peculiar—perhaps unprecedented. Mr. Gladstone's Administration, outwardly so powerful alike in the capacity of its members and the number and fidelity of its supporters, was divided by zig-zag, oblique,

inconsistent yet fundamental dissensions. Nor were these disturbances the temporary or accidental effect of particular men or measures. There were important measures. There were earnest, ambitious men. But something more lay behind the unrest and uncertainties of the day. Not merely the decay of a Government or the natural over-ripeness of a party produced the agitations of 1885 and 1886. It was the end of an epoch. The long dominion of the middle classes, which had begun in 1832, had come to its close and with it the almost equal reign of Liberalism. The great victories had been won. All sorts of lumbering tyrannies had been toppled over. Authority was everywhere broken. Slaves were free. Conscience was free. Trade was free. But hunger and squalor and cold were also free; and the people demanded something more than liberty. The old watchwords still rang true; but they were not enough. And how to fill the void was the riddle that split the Liberal party. It happened, moreover, that at this very time, already so critical, a Liberal Government had been forced to deal with all kinds of affairs for the efficient conduct of which their formulas furnished no clue. They were compelled to intervene by force of arms in Egypt, to repress popular movements, to banish popular leaders, to hang revolutionaries, to devise ingenious instruments of Coercion, to mutilate Parliamentary procedure and to curtail the freedom of debate. And thus, while half the Cabinet were ransacking the past for weapons of Executive authority, others were groping dimly towards a vague Utopia.

All this confusion was still worse confounded by the imminence of a further extension of the franchise. The ‘ten-pounder’ and the ‘householder’ had been stages of growth. The evolution was now to be completed, or practically completed. The government of a world-wide Empire was, for the first time in human experience, to be thrown unreservedly to the millions. And no man could

predict the results of that experiment. There seemed to be no reason to assume that any large body of working-class electors would ever vote Tory. Who could possibly have foreseen that whether from conscious choice between men and parties or from the unsuspected operation of irresistible forces till then latent, the millions would peacefully hand back their powers to political organisations and so to established authority; that enfranchised multitudes would constitute themselves the buttresses of privilege and property; that a free press would by its freedom sap the influence of debate and through its prosperity become the implement of wealth; that members and constituencies would become less independent, not more independent; that Ministers would become more powerful, not less powerful; that the march would be ordered backward along the beaten track, not forward in some new direction; and that after a period of convulsion and flux, twenty years of Tory Government would set in? Who would have listened to such paradox with patience?

The differences of mood and aim which racked the Ministerial party were reflected, only less vividly, in the Tory ranks. A Conservative Opposition smarting under what they regarded as most undeserved defeat and hampered by leaders to whose defects no one could be blind, had been forced constantly to support their antagonists upon the main issues of their policy. They found the Liberal Government engaged in assertions of authority, at home and abroad, with which all their deepest instincts inclined them to sympathise. The enforcement of the sternest forms of Coercion in Ireland, the suspension and suppression of disorderly members at Westminster, the launching of great warlike enterprises across the sea, were all public objects which upon the highest patriotic grounds commanded Tory assent. Upon the other hand they hated with the fiercest animosity of faction the Ministers who directed these affairs. They knew that a crisis was

approaching. They feared—not without reason—the formidable union of Gladstone and democracy. They believed that he was ruining the country and was prepared to dishonour the Empire. Yet they found themselves repeatedly compelled to vote with him; and even when opportunities of legitimate attack were offered, no one of their champions seemed able to strike the blow.

The hesitancy and incompetence which marked the conduct of the Conservative Opposition—although to some extent due to very lofty motives of public duty—filled with exasperation the militant Tories in the country. Members of Parliament, confronted week after week by definite issues on which votes had to be recorded, found themselves drawn inch by inch into supporting whole spheres of Governmental action. Their friends outside took a more general view. They saw what they took to be a succession of feeble surrenders before Mr. Gladstone's prestige. They saw their representatives, bewitched by his authority and eloquence, in the same Lobby with their arch-enemy. They saw the Liberal Government staggering ponderously forward, in spite of disunion, difficulty, and peril, through a succession of mismanaged warlike undertakings to a series of pernicious domestic reforms. And no man apparently to stand in their path! And then, all of a sudden, a man arose alone, or almost alone, to do battle on their behalf. They watched him struggling day after day against overwhelming odds, overthrown a score of times, deserted and even tripped up by those who should have sustained him; yet always returning with inexhaustible activity to the attack and gaining from month to month substantial and undoubted successes.

The Conservative party outside Parliament had as little real liking for much that Lord Randolph Churchill said about Ireland and Egypt as their leaders and representatives in the House. They could not find any sympathy for the followers of Mr. Parnell. They did not

enjoy being told that British troops had been used in Egypt to collect the bondholders' debts, or the description of such thrilling episodes as the bombardment of a city by an ironclad fleet, a cavalry charge by moonlight, or the storming of an entrenched position as 'tawdry military glories.' They could not join whole-heartedly in eulogies of a Pasha whom British justice had condemned to life-long exile, or in attacks upon the morality and humanity of a Khedive whom British bayonets had replaced upon his throne. All this, even while they cheered, seemed to them unpatriotic. But they could not overlook the commotion which Lord Randolph Churchill's denunciations wrought in the Gladstonian ranks, or the embarrassments in which they involved the Radical supporters of the Ministry. They loved their country much, but they hated Gladstone more; and they consoled themselves with the belief (which did Lord Randolph Churchill less justice than he deserved) that he did not really mean all he said; that it was only his way of beating the Grand Old Man; and that, after all, he was Jingo and True Blue at heart.

During the years which had passed since the new Parliament had met, the working-class supporters of the Conservative party, particularly in the great towns, had come to look with especial favour upon Lord Randolph Churchill. To these were added a considerable defection from those who had hitherto counted themselves Liberals. He touched the imagination of the English people; and he appealed especially to their youth. 'The young men of England,' he exclaimed, 'are joining the Tory party in great numbers. The youth of England is on our side.' He was, indeed, soon forced to defend himself from the assumption 'that any expression of opinion from a person who has no claim to the monumental age of 101, is a breach of decorum, almost an act of indecency, and an indication of incurable vice.' 'Youth,' he said (Edinburgh, December 20, 1883), 'is no doubt a great calamity, and it

appears to excite all the worst passions of human nature among those who no longer possess it. But we may, I think, chase away such depressing reflections by remembering that youth is a calamity which grows less bitter and less poignant as the years go by, and that by the sheer and simple process of living and survival we must, each in our turn, approach the summit of the wave.'

By the end of 1882 he was already unquestionably the most popular speaker in the Conservative party. In 1884 and 1885 he equalled, if he did not surpass, Mr. Gladstone himself in the interest and enthusiasm which his personality aroused. Wherever he went he was received by tremendous throngs and with extraordinary demonstrations of goodwill. In times when good Conservatives despaired of the fortunes of their party under a democratic franchise and even, making a virtue of necessity, regarded it as almost immoral to court a working-class vote, and when the chiefs of Toryism looked upon the resisting powers of small shop and lodging-house keepers, of suburban villadom, and of the genial and seductive publican as almost the only remaining bulwarks of the Constitution, Lord Randolph Churchill boldly enlisted the British nation in defence of Church and State. At a time when Liberal orators and statesmen, 'careering about the country,' as Lord Randolph described them, 'calling themselves "the people of England,"' were looking forward to an election which should relegate the Conservative party to the limbo of obsolete ideas, they were disconcerted by the spectacle, repeatedly presented, of multitudes of working men hanging upon the words of a young aristocrat; and Radicals, bidding higher and higher to catch the popular fancy, heard with disgust the loudest acclamations of the crowd accorded to Lord Randolph Churchill as he denounced 'the Moloch of Midlothian'[13] or 'the pinchbeck Robespierre'[14] for war and tyranny beyond the sea, profusion and misgovernment at home.

Abuse was retorted on his head in vain. '"Yahoo Churchill,"' 'Little Randy,' 'Cheeky Randy,' 'the music-hall cad,' 'the Champagne Charley of politics,' were designations which measured at once his popularity and the rising fury of his foes. His fierce moustache and 'note of interrogation' head lent themselves to caricature. He was drawn as a pigmy, a pug dog, a gnat, a wasp, a ribald and vicious monkey, so habitually, that nearly everyone, who had not seen him in the flesh, believed that his physical proportions were far below the common standards of humanity; but the contrast between his reputed stature and the majestic outlines of Mr. Gladstone and Sir William Harcourt only enhanced his fighting qualities in the public eye. 'Give it 'em hot, Randy,' cried the crowds in the streets and at the meetings, till he himself was forced to complain that he was expected to salute his opponents with every species of vituperation. But, to tell the truth, he responded to the public demand with inexhaustible generosity. He spared no one. Neither persons nor principles escaped an all-embracing ridicule. The most venerated leaders of the Liberal party, famous in the great days of its rise, fared no better at his hands than the crudest and most violent of the New Radicals. One by one Mr. Bright, Mr. Gladstone, Lord Hartington, Lord Granville, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Bradlaugh, and Mr. Schnadhorst were summoned before that irreverent tribunal and exhibited to popular censure and derision.

His speeches were effective far beyond the circles of his hearers. As early as the spring of 1881 the *Morning Post* began to report him *verbatim*. Mr. Chenery, always a firm believer in his genius, followed this example almost immediately. Instead of that paragraph of mutilated misrepresentation with which so many eminent Ministers and ex-Ministers have to remain dissatisfied, column after column of the *Times* was filled with the oratory of an unproved stripling of thirty-two. The remonstrances which

jealousy suggested did not discourage Mr. Chenery; for, indeed, Lord Randolph's speeches were the best of 'copy.' His wonderful memory enabled him to make the most elaborate preparations. His earlier speeches were almost all written out beforehand and learned by heart. He had the knack of being able to foresee the occasion and he wrote not an essay or an argument, but just the kind of harangue that would fit the mood of his audience. His style was essentially rhetorical, and much more spontaneous than his peculiar methods of preparation would imply. He seems to have written with scarcely a single correction and without hesitation of any kind, as fast as he could set pen to paper. Indeed, I fancy that he wrote his speeches chiefly for an exercise of memory and to fix them clearly in his mind and did not by any means make them up with a pen in his hand. Once written, they could be repeated almost without notes and quite without alteration. But in this laborious process they gained a logical sequence which, while it did not in the least detract from the delivery, added vastly to their virtues in reproduction.

Above all, they were entirely fresh and original. Wit, abuse, epigrams, imagery, argument—all were 'Randolphian.' No one could guess beforehand what he was going to say nor how he would say it. No one else said the same kind of things, or said them in the same kind of way. He possessed the strange quality, unconsciously exerted and not by any means to be simulated, of compelling attention, and of getting himself talked about. Every word he spoke was studied with interest and apprehension. Each step he took was greeted with a gathering chorus of astonished cries. As Tacitus said of Mucianus: 'Omnium quae dixerat, feceratque, arte quadam ostentator' ('He had the showman's knack of drawing public attention to everything he said or did'). Before the end of 1882 a speech from Lord Randolph Churchill had become an event to the newspaper reader. The worthy,

pious, and substantial citizen, hurriedly turning over the pages of his *Times* or still more respectable *Morning Post*, and folding it to his convenience, crouched himself in his most comfortable chair and ate it up line by line with snorts of indignation or gurglings of mirth. 'Look what he says about Gladstone. I wonder the *Times* prints such things. How lowering to the dignity of public life! I can't think why they pay so much attention to this young man. Randolph Churchill, indeed—preposterous! Give me the paper back, my dear.'

Speeches are—next to leading articles—the most impermanent of impermanent things. But the character and conceptions of that political movement to the stimulation of which Lord Randolph Churchill devoted his life, and by which he was now to be so swiftly carried forward, cannot be better explained than in his own words; and, moreover, the reader is entitled to have some opportunities of judging for himself. The winter at Blenheim, with its diversions of the Harriers and the Woodstock Railway, seems to have refreshed Lord Randolph's mind and added to his stores of fancy. He emerged from his retirement to plunge into a vehement political campaign. On three successive days in December he delivered at Edinburgh what he called a 'trilogy' of speeches. The first was upon Egypt. Here are its keynotes:—

> The Court of Chancery repudiates loans made by money-lenders to infants even though they may have actually received and spent the money. Far more ought this country, acting as a great Court of Equity, to protect the Egyptians in any efforts they may make to free themselves from this frightful burden [of debt] which is strangling the life out of them—these Egyptians whom Sir Evelyn Wood so eloquently calls the infants of centuries: this burden for the contraction of which they are absolutely innocent, forced upon them by the great money-lenders of the Stock Exchanges of London and Paris. The other day the poor Egyptians were very near effecting a successful revolution; they were very near throwing off their suffocating bonds; but,

unfortunately for Mr. Gladstone, the Prime Minister of Great Britain—Mr. Gladstone, the leader, the idol, the demi-god of the Liberal party—Mr. Gladstone, the member for Midlothian, came upon them with his armies and his fleets, destroyed their towns, devastated their country, slaughtered their thousands, and flung back these struggling wretches into the morass of oppression, back into the toils of their taskmasters. The revolution of Arabi was the movement of a nation; like all revolutions, it had its good side and its bad; you must never, for purposes of practical politics, criticise too minutely the origin, the authors, or the course of revolutions. Would you undo, if you could, the Revolution of 1688, which drove the Stuarts from the throne, because of the intrigues of the nobles and of the clergy? Would you undo the French Revolution because of the Reign of Terror? Would you undo the Revolution of Naples because Garibaldi might not be altogether a man of your mind? You know you would not; you know that those revolutions were justified by atrocious Governments.

. . . . . .

I advocate, in the first place, the expulsion 'bag and baggage' of the Khedive Tewfik, with all 'his Turks and his Circassians, his Zaptiehs and his Mudirs, his Bimbashis and Yuzbashis, his Kaimakams and his Pashas'[15]—no great number of them in all; two or three ships would hold the lot. I advocate the recall of the exiles from Ceylon, the resuscitation of the national party, the formation of a genuine popular Government, at the head of which shall be placed a Prince—either native or European, as you will—who shall be indeed and in truth constitutional, enlightened, and just. I advocate a great re-arrangement and reduction of the Egyptian national debt and a clean sweep of the debts of the victimised, the bankrupt, and the ruined fellaheen. I advocate the placing of Egypt under the guarantee and guardianship of united Europe, so that no one single Power shall be able to exercise there superior influence to another, so that collective authority shall restrain individual ambition. In a word, I advocate—I plead for—the real emancipation of an historic land and the true freedom of an ancient race.

. . . . . .

You will be told that Egypt is the high-road to India, and that Britain must hold it at all costs. This is a terrible and a

widespread delusion. Similar delusions have before now led astray the foreign policy of this country. At one time it was ‘the balance of power’: that has passed away. At another time it was ‘the integrity of the Ottoman Empire’: that has tumbled into an abandoned and forgotten grave; and now we have ‘the high-road to India’ will-o’-the-wisp, which in time will vanish too. Egypt is not the high-road to India. The Suez Canal is a commercial route to India, and a good route, too, in time of peace; but it never was, and never could be, a military route for Great Britain in time of war. In time of war there are no well-marked high-roads to and fro across the British Empire. The path of Britain is upon the ocean, her ways lie upon the deep, and you should avoid as your greatest danger any reliance on transcontinental communication, where, at any time, you may have to encounter gigantic military hosts. (Edinburgh, December 18, 1883.)

The second speech dealt with the question of the extension of the franchise, and must be considered in its place. The third foreshadowed the advent of the Home Rule struggle:—

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Develop, if you like, in any way you may, the material resources of Ireland. Advance public money on the easiest terms for railways, tramways, canals, roads, labourers’ dwellings, fisheries, and objects of that kind. We owe the Irish a great deal for our bad government of them in the past; and if we are not stingy, there are few injuries, however deep, which money will not cure. But do not, if you value your life as an Empire, swallow one morsel more of heroic legislation. By giving a continuous support to the Tory party, let the Irish know that, though they cry day and night, though they vex you with much wickedness and harass you with much disorder, though they incessantly divert your attention from your own affairs, though they cause you all manner of trial and trouble, there is one thing you will detect at once, in whatever form or guise it may be presented to you, there is one thing you will never listen to, there is one thing you will

never yield—and that is their demand for an Irish Parliament, and that to their yells for the repeal of the Union you answer an unchanging, an unchangeable, and a unanimous 'No.' (Edinburgh, December 20, 1883.)

A month later he spoke at Blackpool. Perhaps this speech affords the best example of his rhetorical methods. Certainly it filled Tory Lancashire with merriment and satisfaction:—

Mr. Chamberlain a short time ago attempted to hold Lord Salisbury up to the execration of the people as one who enjoyed great riches for which he had neither toiled nor spun and he savagely denounced Lord Salisbury and all his class. As a matter of fact, Lord Salisbury from his earliest days has toiled and spun in the service of the State and for the advancement of his countrymen in learning, in wealth, and in prosperity; but no Radical ever yet allowed himself to be embarrassed by a question of fact. Just look, however, at what Mr. Chamberlain himself does. He goes to Newcastle and is entertained at a banquet there, and procures for the president of the feast a live earl, no less a person than the Earl of Durham. Now Lord Durham is a young gentleman who has just come of age, who is in the possession of immense hereditary estates, who is well known on Newmarket heath and prominent among the gilded youth who throng the corridors of the Gaiety Theatre, but who has studied politics about as much as Barnum's new white elephant, and upon whose ingenuous mind even the idea of rendering service to the State has not yet commenced to dawn. If by any means it could be legitimate, and I hold that it is illegitimate, to stigmatise any individual as enjoying great riches for which he has neither toiled nor spun, such a case would be the case of the Earl of Durham; and yet it is under the patronage of the Earl of Durham and basking in the smiles of the Earl of Durham, bandying vulgar compliments with the Earl of Durham, that this stern patriot, this rigid moralist, this unbending censor the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, flaunts his Radical and levelling doctrines before the astounded democrats of Newcastle.

After Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Gladstone:—

'Vanity of vanities,' says the preacher, 'all is vanity.'

'Humbug of humbugs,' says the Radical, 'all is humbug.' Gentlemen, we live in an age of advertisement, the age of Holloway's pills, of Colman's mustard, and of Horniman's pure tea; and the policy of lavish advertisement has been so successful in commerce that the Liberal party, with its usual enterprise, has adapted it to politics. The Prime Minister is the greatest living master of the art of personal political advertisement. Holloway, Colman, and Horniman are nothing compared with him. Every act of his, whether it be for the purposes of health, or of recreation, or of religious devotion, is spread before the eyes of every man, woman, and child in the United Kingdom on large and glaring placards. For the purposes of an autumn holiday a large transatlantic steamer is specially engaged, the Poet-Laureate adorns the suite and receives a peerage as his reward, and the incidents of the voyage are luncheon with the Emperor of Russia and tea with the Queen of Denmark. For the purposes of recreation he has selected the felling of trees; and we may usefully remark that his amusements, like his politics, are essentially destructive. Every afternoon the whole world is invited to assist at the crashing fall of some beech or elm or oak. The forest laments, in order that Mr. Gladstone may perspire, and full accounts of these proceedings are forwarded by special correspondents to every daily paper every recurring morning. For the purposes of religious devotion the advertisements grow larger. The parish church at Hawarden is insufficient to contain the thronging multitudes of fly-catchers who flock to hear Mr. Gladstone read the lessons for the day, and the humble parishioners are banished to hospitable Nonconformist tabernacles in order that mankind may be present at the Prime Minister's rendering of Isaiah, or Jeremiah, or the Book of Job....

He proceeded to describe Mr. Gladstone's method of receiving a deputation at Hawarden Castle:—

It has always appeared to me somewhat incongruous and inappropriate that the great chief of the Radical party should reside in a castle. But to proceed. One would have thought that the deputation would have been received in the house, in the study, in the drawing-room, or even in the dining-room. Not at all. That would have been out of harmony with the advertisement 'boom.' Another scene had been arranged. The working men

were guided through the ornamental grounds, into the wide-spreading park, strewn with the wreckage and the ruins of the Prime Minister's sport. All around them, we may suppose, lay the rotting trunks of once umbrageous trees: all around them, tossed by the winds, were boughs and bark and withered shoots. They come suddenly on the Prime Minister and Master Herbert, in scanty attire and profuse perspiration, engaged in the destruction of a gigantic oak, just giving its last dying groan. They are permitted to gaze and to worship and adore and, having conducted themselves with exemplary propriety, are each of them presented with a few chips as a memorial of that memorable scene.

Is not this, I thought to myself as I read the narrative, a perfect type and emblem of Mr. Gladstone's government of the Empire? The working classes of this country in 1880 sought Mr. Gladstone. He told them that he would give them and all other subjects of the Queen much legislation, great prosperity, and universal peace; and he has given them nothing but chips. Chips to the faithful allies in Afghanistan, chips to the trusting native races of South Africa, chips to the Egyptian fellah, chips to the British farmer, chips to the manufacturer and the artisan, chips to the agricultural labourer, chips to the House of Commons itself. To all who leaned upon Mr. Gladstone, who trusted in him, and who hoped for something from him—chips, nothing but chips—hard, dry, unnourishing, indigestible chips....

Gradually the tone changed as the speaker passed from ridicule to serious attack:—

The other startling advertisement I wish to allude to was as follows: 'Hawarden Castle.—The Prime Minister attended divine service this morning. He was guarded as usual' 'Guarded as usual!' 'As usual!' Gracious Heavens! what a commentary on Liberal government in those two words, 'as usual'! Do you know that from the days when first what is called a Prime Minister was invented to the present, there has been no Prime Minister about whom such a statement could be made? Many Prime Ministers have come and gone, good, bad, and indifferent; but the best and the worst have never been guarded by aught else save the English people. And has it come to this? Are the times so terrible, are bad passions so rife and unrestrained, after four years of Liberal rule,

that the apostle of freedom, the benefactor of his country, the man for whom no flattery is too fulsome, no homage too servile, cannot attend divine service in his parish church without being 'guarded as usual'? Surely a world of serious reflection is opened up; surely the art of government must have sunk to a very low ebb when the first servant of the Crown has to be watched night and day by alguazils armed to the teeth. I hope and pray that they will guard him well, for it would be an indelible stain on our name and our fame if a man who has spent fifty years of his life in the service of the State, were to be the victim of an infamous assassin. But I ask myself, are we to blame humanity for this state of things? Is our civilisation all in vain? Is Christianity but a phantom and a fiction? Is human nature the awful and incurable cause? Surely not. It is more natural to blame the policy of the statesmen who, to possess themselves of power, to overthrow a hated rival, set class against class and race against race; who use their eloquence for no nobler purpose than to lash into frenzy the needy and the discontented; who for party purposes are ready to deride morality and paralyse law; who, to gain a few votes either in Parliament or in a borough, ally themselves equally with the atheist or with the rebel, and who lightly arouse and lightly spring from one delirium of the multitude to another in order to maintain themselves at a giddy and a perilous height. (Blackpool, January 24, 1884.)

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A few days later it became known that Lord Randolph Churchill had accepted the invitation of the Birmingham Conservatives to contest that city with Colonel Burnaby at the General Election against Mr. Bright and Mr. Chamberlain. This unfurling of the Tory flag in the very heart and centre of militant and organised Radicalism and against the most famous and the most active of Radical leaders aroused the keenest interest among Conservative working men all over the country. The Tories of Birmingham had long been powerless under the rule of

their opponents. For years they had scarcely been allowed to hold a political meeting. Almost every avenue of civic life and even of municipal employment was closed against them. Now the fighting leader of Tory Democracy was coming to their deliverance. It is impossible to describe the enthusiasm which his bold challenge excited, or the encouragement which it spread through the mass of the Conservative party. The newspapers were filled with cartoons of 'Jack the Giant-killer' or of a diminutive David going forth to battle with a vast screw-bearing Goliath. The mention of his name, or any reference to the contest on which he had entered, drew forth the loudest cheers at every Tory meeting. Letters of gratitude, resolutions of confidence and support, poured in upon him from all parts of the country.

Before actually descending upon Birmingham he sounded a trumpet-call of defiance from Woodstock. He attacked Mr. Bright and Mr. Chamberlain with an impartial and unmeasured ferocity:—

> The battle which Mr. Bright has rashly challenged shall be fought *sans trève ni merci*. The savage animosity which Mr. Bright has breathed into his speeches, has raised a corresponding spirit among his opponents. The robe of righteousness with which he and his confederates have clothed their squalid and corrupted forms shall be torn asunder; naked and ashamed shall they be beheld by all the intelligent public, and all shall be disclosed which can be, whether it be the impostor, and the so-called 'people's tribune,' or the grinding monopolies of Mr. Chamberlain, or the dark and evil deeds of Mr. Schnadhorst.

A positive fury was excited in Radical Birmingham by these and similar words. The political predominance of the Liberal party had been overwhelming and absolutely unbroken in the whole history of the city since the Reform Bill had enfranchised it. All kinds of criticism had been suppressed in all kinds of ways and those who had attempted to voice the opinion of the minority, had found it

best to do so with a prudent politeness. Here was insult in profusion, gross, elaborate, and designed. ‘The mode of warfare,’ observed Lord Randolph, ‘of the Radical party resembles that adopted by savage tribes who endeavour to terrify their opponents by horrid yells and resounding exclamations. I observe that the reports of the speeches of Mr. Bright and Mr. Chamberlain on Tuesday were interspersed with "loud and prolonged groans," "groans," "hisses," "renewed hisses," and "roars of laughter" and such like. These resources will no doubt frighten any person of weak nerves and are calculated to make old women and children run away. But the Tory party in Birmingham, many thousands strong, will preserve its composure and the candidate whom they have put forward, will not be intimidated one little bit.’

Upon April 15 Lord Randolph Churchill opened his campaign in Birmingham in two speeches delivered on successive nights. He was a man of many styles. The arguments which he submitted to the electors were the sincere expression of his deepest convictions; they were in perfect harmony with the whole of his political life and work, but they were strange arguments for a Tory to employ:—

I am not here to deny the services which the Radical party have rendered to English civilisation. I believe that the present generation is considerably indebted to the struggles which were carried on five-and-twenty and thirty years ago by those who were then designated the Philosophical Radicals. They enlarged the boundaries of freedom, they removed religious and civil disabilities, they brought the Constitution into the home and the cottage of the artisan, and they taught the people that there were in the political life of monarchies and nations higher and nobler aims than the perpetual waging of wars or constant striving after territorial aggrandisement. The student of English history, fairly recognising these lofty results, will not be concerned to discover or disclose the faults and the follies—and, indeed, I may say the absurdities—which the Philosophical Radicals mingled with their

creed. Here in Birmingham, amongst your fathers and forefathers, those men found their home, their mainstay, and their trusting friends. But parties, like Empires and like all human combinations, wax and wane. The law of perpetual change, which is the motive principle of the Radical, exercises its fatal effect upon the Radical himself....

What was the great motto which expressed all their principles, which enabled the Radical party of old days to guide and control the course of events, to make and unmake Ministers and Governments, to win and retain the confidence of mighty cities such as yours? 'Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform!'—in other words, Non-intervention, Rigid Economy, and genuine Progressive Legislation. And so long as they adhered to those great rocks with the tenacity of limpets, so long was their good name secure—so long was their wisdom undoubted; and year by year they could appear before you with clean hands and clear consciences to ask from you a renewal of your confidence. Chancellors of the Exchequer, Secretaries to the Treasury and of public departments, groaned under the tyrannical economy of Mr. Hume, but were uncommonly careful to give him as little handle as possible for what they arrogantly called his cheese-paring mania. The genius and influence of Mr. Cobden exercised a diminishing effect upon the estimates of the War and Navy Ministers; and Mr. Bright and Mr. Milner Gibson either averted or effectually censured unjust and unnecessary war.

The Radical party of those days, he went on, was few in number, with no representatives in the Government and no Caucus in the country. 'It was their great principles,' exclaimed the speaker, 'which gave them power, and which they asserted with obstinacy, irrespective of party, on all occasions, small or great.' And now—with half a dozen Radicals in the Ministry and nearly a hundred members in the House—What had been the course of events? In 1880 a war in Afghanistan protracted for a whole year under a Liberal Government; in 1881 the revolt of the Boers, 'with which every Radical in England was bound to sympathise,' met by force of arms, disgracefully and unsuccessfully applied; in 1882 'the struggle for

Egyptian freedom undertaken by Arabi Pasha, suppressed by Liberals, great towns destroyed, bloody battles fought; and estimates swollen nine millions beyond those of Lord Beaconsfield's Administration.'

And what would be the policy of the Conservative party if power were placed in their hands?

I have no right, a humble member of the rank and file of the Tory party, to declare to a great meeting like this what will be their policy. I do not know what will be the policy of the Tory party. I am not the least bit in the confidence of the leaders, and I must admit that I do not enjoy the high honour of their friendship. Only the other night one of them accused me in the House of Commons of being in secret and fraudulent alliance with the Prime Minister for the destruction of the Tory party. I have not been able to gather from their speeches or their acts what would be the policy they would adopt if the responsibility of government was placed upon them. They have preserved a prudent, perhaps an over-prudent, reticence. But though I cannot tell you what their policy will be, I think I can tell you what their policy ought to be—and in general terms what I will try and make it to be—if ever I should represent this powerful constituency. It shall be a policy of honesty and courage. It shall be a policy which will grapple with difficulties and deal with them, and not avoid them or postpone them. It shall be a popular policy, and not a class policy. It shall be a policy of activity for the national welfare, combined with a zeal for Imperial security.

The Tory democratic movement in the English boroughs was powerfully aided by and largely interwoven with the spread of Fair Trade doctrines. In Lancashire especially the persuasive arguments of Mr. Farrer Ecroyd had gained a wide acceptance, and twenty years have not effaced the effects of his exertions. Lord Randolph Churchill, eager to attack the Liberal Government, began in 1881 by urging the Fair Trade cause with characteristic vigour and happy irresponsibility. As his influence and knowledge increased, his assurance upon fiscal matters diminished; and at Blackpool in 1884 he would not commit himself beyond

an ‘inquiry into the present condition of British industry and as to how it is affected by our present methods of raising revenue for the service of the State.’ But certainly no one could have painted in more vivid colours the shocking and melancholy condition of British trade. The words have been often quoted:—

> What is the state of things in the world of British industry? We are suffering from a depression of trade extending as far back as 1874, ten years of trade depression, and the most hopeful either among our capitalists or our artisans can discover no signs of a revival. Your iron industry is dead, dead as mutton; your coal industries, which depend greatly on the iron industries, are languishing. Your silk industry is dead, assassinated by the foreigner. Your woollen industry is *in articulo mortis*, gasping, struggling. Your cotton industry is seriously sick. The shipbuilding industry, which held out longest of all, is come to a standstill. Turn your eyes where you will, survey any branch of British industry you like, you will find signs of mortal disease. The self-satisfied Radical philosophers will tell you it is nothing; they point to the great volume of British trade. Yes, the volume of British trade is still large, but it is a volume which is no longer profitable; it is working and struggling. So do the muscles and nerves of the body of a man who has been hanged twitch and work violently for a short time after the operation. But death is there all the same, life has utterly departed, and suddenly comes the *rigor mortis*. Well, but with this state of British industry what do you find going on? You find foreign iron, foreign wool, foreign silk and cotton pouring into the country, flooding you, drowning you, sinking you, swamping you; your labour market is congested, wages have sunk below the level of life, the misery in our large towns is too frightful to contemplate, and emigration or starvation is the remedy which the Radicals offer you with the most undisturbed complacency. But what produced this state of things? Free imports? I am not sure; I should like an inquiry; but I suspect free imports of the murder of our industries much in the same way as if I found a man standing over a corpse and plunging his knife into it I should suspect that man of homicide, and I should recommend a coroner’s inquest and a trial by jury. (Blackpool, January 24, 1884.)

In any case, even, if free imports were a wise policy, he would not allow Mr. Bright and the Liberal party the credit of the discovery:—

> Mr. Bright advised his audience at Birmingham to read over again the speeches of Mr. Charles Villiers on Free Trade made fifty years ago. I advise them to do nothing of the kind, because if they do they will lose every shred of veneration and respect which they still may feel for the name of Mr. Bright. They will find that the great battle of Free Trade, of which Mr. Bright has never been tired of boasting loud and long, was fought by Mr. Charles Villiers long before Mr. Bright made his appearance in public; that Mr. Charles Villiers bore the burden and heat of that protracted and lengthened contest; and when Mr. Villiers had won the day Mr. Bright and his dear friend Mr. Cobden stepped in and tried to rob him of all his glory. All those who read Mr. Charles Villiers's speeches will find that Mr. Bright and his dear friend Mr. Cobden were nothing more nor less than two plundering cuckoos, who shamefully ejected Mr. Charles Villiers from the nest which he had constructed, and who reared therein their own chattering and silly brood. (Woodstock, January 31, 1884.)

After all this the Fair Traders were not unnaturally inclined to complain when in 1887—three years afterwards—Lord Randolph Churchill having acquired a responsible position, having studied the report of the Commission on Trade appointed largely at his insistence in 1885, having reflected upon the voting of the counties in the General Election, and surveyed the problems of finance from the Treasury chambers, poured buckets of cold water on their cherished schemes and declined to make any exertions in their support.

But the central proposition of the Tory Democratic idea was that the Conservative party was willing and thoroughly competent to deal with the needs of democracy and the multiplying problems of modern life; and that the British Constitution, so far from being incompatible with the social progress of the great mass of the people, was in

itself a flexible instrument by which that progress might be guided and secured.

The Whigs are a class with the prejudices and the vices of a class; the Radicals are a sect with the tyranny and the fanaticism of a sect.... The Whigs tell you that the institutions of this kingdom, as illustrated by the balance of Queen, Lords and Commons, and the Established Church, are but conveniences and useful commodities, which may be safely altered, modified, or even abolished, so long as the alteration, modification, or abolition is left to the Whigs to carry out. The Radicals tell you that these institutions are hideous, poisonous, and degrading, and that the divine Caucus is the only machine which can turn out, as if it was a patent medicine, the happiness of humanity. But the Tories, who are of the people, know and exclaim that these institutions, which are not so much the work of the genius of man, but rather the inspired offspring of Time, are the tried guarantees of individual liberty, popular government, and Christian morality; that they are the only institutions which possess the virtue of stability, of stability even through all ages; that the harmonious fusion of classes and interests which they represent corresponds with and satisfies the highest aspirations either of peoples or of men; that by them has our Empire been founded and extended in the past; and that by them alone can it prosper or be maintained in the future. Such is the Tory party and such are its principles, by which it can give to England the government she requires—democratic, aristocratic, Parliamentary, monarchical, uniting in an indissoluble embrace religious liberty and social order. And this party—this Tory party of to-day—exists by the favour of no caucus, nor for the selfish interests of any class. Its motto is—'Of the people, for the people, by the people'; unity and freedom are the beacons which shed their light around its future path and amid all political conflict this shall be its only aim—to increase and to secure within imperishable walls the historic happiness of English homes. (Blackpool, January 24, 1884.)

Again and again in these years of strife Lord Randolph Churchill returned to this central idea:—

The foundation [of the British Constitution] is totally new, purely modern, absolutely untried. You have changed the old

foundation. You have gone to a new foundation. Your new foundation is a great seething and swaying mass of some five million electors, who have it in their power, if they should so please, by the mere heave of the shoulders, if they only act with moderate unanimity, to sweep away entirely the three ancient institutions and put anything they like in their place, and to alter profoundly, and perhaps for a time altogether ruin, the interests of the three hundred million beings who are committed to their charge. That is, I say, a state of things unparalleled in history. And how do you think it will all end? Are we being swept along a turbulent and irresistible torrent which is bearing us towards some political Niagara, in which every mortal thing we now know will be twisted and smashed beyond all recognition? Or are we, on the other hand, gliding passively along a quiet river of human progress that will lead us to some undiscovered ocean of almost superhuman development? Who can tell?... My state of mind when these great problems come across me—which is very rarely—is one of wonder, or perhaps I should rather say of admiration and of hope, because the alternative state of mind would be one of terror and despair. And I am guarded from that latter state of mind by a firm belief in the essential goodness of life, and in the evolution, by some process or other which I do not exactly know and cannot determine, of a higher and nobler humanity. But, above all, my especial safeguard against such a state of mental annihilation and mental despair is my firm belief in the ascertained and much-tried common sense which is the peculiarity of the English people. That is the faith which, I think, ought to animate and protect you in your political future; that is the faith of the Tory democracy in which I shall ever abide. (Cambridge University Carlton, June 6, 1885.)

. . . . . .

'Trust the people'—I have long tried to make that my motto; but I know, and will not conceal, that there are still a few in our party who have that lesson yet to learn and who have yet to understand that the Tory party of to-day is no longer identified with that small and narrow class which is connected with the ownership of land; but that its great strength can be found, and must be developed, in our large towns as well as in our country districts. Yes, trust the people. You, who are ambitious, and rightly ambitious, of being the guardians of the British

Constitution, trust the people, and they will trust you—and they will follow you and join you in the defence of that Constitution against any and every foe. I have no fear of democracy. I do not fear minorities; I do not care for those checks and securities which Mr. Goschen seems to think of such importance. Modern checks and securities are not worth a brass farthing. Give me a fair arrangement of the constituencies, and one part of England will correct and balance the other. (Birmingham, April 16, 1884.)

And in later years, after the battle had been won, and when the Tory leaders had already begun to look upon their new supporters as if they were an inalienable asset:—

I cannot but feel that we have nearly realised what was some years ago apparently only a dream, the dream of Tory Democracy. You remember with what scoffs and scornings and with what sneers and ridicule the phrase 'Tory Democracy' was received when I first made use of it in the House of Commons in the year 1882. Nothing was too bad, nothing was too taunting, nothing was too absurd to apply to the idea or to those who dared to sustain such an idea in public. You in Birmingham were the first publicly to associate yourselves with the policy which is contained in the phrase 'Tory Democracy.' What is Tory Democracy? Tory Democracy is a democracy which supports the Tory party; but with this important qualification, that it supports a Tory party, not from mere caprice, not from momentary disgust or indignation with the results of Radicalism, but a democracy which supports the Tory party because it has been taught by experience and by knowledge to believe in the excellence and the soundness of true Tory principles. But Tory Democracy involves also another idea of equal importance. It involves the idea of a Government who in all branches of their policy and in all features of their administration are animated by lofty and by Liberal ideas. That is Tory Democracy. (Birmingham, April 9, 1888.)

One more quotation—Lord Randolph's defence of the Established Church—shall close this chapter. The speech from which it is taken was delivered in the course of his Birmingham campaign and comprised a general vindication of the British Constitution. Let it be remembered that in those days the demand for organic

change was real and fierce. The vast unsounded problems of Collectivism and Individualism, the intricate and varying relations between Capital and Labour, the almost limitless power of combined or accumulated wealth and the racial deterioration produced by civilised poverty, were issues which might be considered by philosophers or fought out between master and man but which approached only remotely the Parliamentary and political arena. Disputes about forms of government still absorbed the activities of democracy; and the hall-mark of a good Radical in the 'eighties was secular republicanism:—

I see in the Church of England an immense and omni-present ramification of machinery working without cost to the people—and daily and hourly lifting the masses of the people, rich and poor alike, from the dead and dreary level of the lowest and most material cares of life, up to the comfortable contemplation of higher and serener forms of existence and of destiny. I see in the Church of England a centre and a source and a guide of charitable effort, mitigating by its mendicant importunity the violence of human misery, whether mental or physical, and contributing to the work of alleviation from its own not superfluous resources. And I urge upon you not to throw that source of charity upon the haphazard almsgiving of a busy and a selfish world. I view the Church of England eagerly cooperating in the work of national education, not only benefiting your children, but saving your pockets; and I remember that it has been the work of the Church to pour forth floods of knowledge, purely secular and scientific, even from the days when knowledge was not; and I warn you against hindering the diffusion of knowledge, inspired by religion, amongst those who will have devolved upon them the responsibility for the government of this wide Empire.

But I own that my chief reason for supporting the Church of England I find in the fact that, when compared with other creeds and other sects, it is essentially the Church of religious liberty. Whether in one direction or another, it is continually possessed by the ambition, not of excluding, but of including, all shades of religious thought, all sorts and conditions of men; and, standing out like a lighthouse over a stormy ocean, it marks the entrance to

a port where the millions and the masses of those who are wearied at times with the woes of the world, and troubled often by the trials of existence, may search for and may find that peace which passeth all understanding. I cannot, and will not, allow myself to believe that the English people, who are not only naturally religious, but also eminently practical, will ever consent, for the petty purpose of gratifying sectarian animosity, or for the wretched object of pandering to infidel proclivities—will ever consent to deprive themselves of so abundant a fountain of aid and consolation, or acquiesce in the demolition of an institution which elevates the life of the nation, and consecrates the acts of the State. (Birmingham, April 16, 1884.)

'The work of inspiring a beaten and depressed party with hope and courage,' wrote Mr. Jennings in 1888,[16] 'was substantially left to one man.' What had become meanwhile of the acknowledged leaders of Toryism? Where were the names which in after years were to fill the newspapers and the Government offices? It is curious to reflect that all this time, while Lord Randolph Churchill was straining every nerve in the service of his party, he was the object of almost passionate jealousy and dislike in its high places. The world of rank and fashion had long been hostile to him. The prominent people and party officials who formed and guided opinion at the Carlton Club, on the Front Opposition Bench, and in the central Conservative offices, regarded him with aversion and alarm. They could not understand him. Still less could they explain his growing influence. He was as unwelcome and insoluble a riddle to them as ever Disraeli had been. To them he seemed an intruder, an upstart, a mutineer who flouted venerable leaders and mocked at constituted authority with a mixture of aristocratic insolence and democratic brutality. By what warrant did he pronounce in accents of command on all the controverted questions of the day, when men grey in the service of the State, long installed in the headship of the party, held their peace or dealt in platitude and ambiguity? By what strange madness

of the hour had this youth who derided Radicals for abandoning their principles and preached Liberalism from Tory platforms, gained acceptance throughout the land? The Conservative benches were rich in staid, substantial merchants and worthy squires. They had their blameless young men of good family and exemplary deportment who never gave the party Whips an anxious moment and used their talents only to discover what 'older and therefore wiser' people would wish to have them say. Why was no honour shown to them? Did not they address meetings in the provinces? Did they not utter sentiments to which every sensible and patriotic man might listen with unruffled contentment? And no one marked them! Was there not enough in these evil days to bear from Mr. Gladstone and his legions, without this turbulent uprising in their own ranks?

In truth, at this crisis in their fortunes the Conservative party were rescued in spite of themselves. A very little and they would never have won the new democracy. But for a narrow chance they might have slipped down into the gulf of departed systems. The forces of wealth and rank, of land and Church, must always have exerted vast influence in whatever confederacy they had been locked. Alliances or fusions with Whigs and moderate Liberals must from time to time have secured them spells of office. But the Tory party might easily have failed to gain any support among the masses. They might have lost their hold upon the new foundation of power; and the cleavage in British politics must have become a social, not a political, division—upon a line horizontal, not oblique.

There are, without doubt, some who will be inclined to think that no element of the heroic enters into these conflicts, and that political triumphs are necessarily tarnished by vulgar methods. The noise and confusion of election crowds, the cant of phrase and formula, the burrowings of rival Caucuses, fill with weariness, and even

terror, persons of exquisite sensibility. It is easy for those who take no part in the public duties of citizenship under a democratic dispensation to sniff disdainfully at the methods of modern politics and to console themselves for a lack of influence upon the course of events by the indulgence of a fastidious refinement and a meticulous consistency. But it is a poor part to play. Amid the dust and brawling, with rude weapons and often unworthy champions, a real battle for real and precious objects is swaying to and fro. Better far the clamour of popular disputation, with all its most blatant accessories, hammering out from month to month and year to year the laboured progress of the common people in a work-a-day world, than the poetic tragedies and violence of chivalric ages. The splintering of lances and clashing of swords are not the only tests by which the natural captains and princes among men can be known. The spirit and emotions of war do not depend upon the weapons or conditions of the conflict. A bold heart, a true eye—clear, plain, decided leading—count none the less, although no blood is spilled. 'To rally the people round the Throne,' cried Lord Randolph Churchill, 'to unite the Throne with the people, a loyal Throne and a patriotic people—that is our policy and that is our faith.' Much of the work that he did, was turned to purposes very different from his own. His political doctrines were not free from error and contradiction. But he accomplished no mean or temporary achievement in so far as he restored the healthy balance of parties, and caused the ancient institutions of the British realm once again to be esteemed among the masses of the British people.

CHAPTER VII

THE PARTY MACHINE

'There is rarely any rising, but by a commixture of good and

evil arts.'—Bacon.

In the spring of 1883 Lord Randolph Churchill had invited Lord Salisbury to come forward and head the Tory Democratic movement. In the autumn he determined to persevere alone. The enterprise which he had matured during his retirement at Blenheim was perhaps the most daring on which he ever embarked. It has been stated that he cherished no smaller design than the 'wholesale capture of the Conservative party organisation.' How far in his secret heart he was determined to go cannot be known; but it is certain that he now set to work deliberately upon a twofold plan—first, to obtain the control of the National Union of Conservative Associations; and secondly to secure for that body substantial authority and financial independence.

Nothing but Lord Randolph Churchill's undisputed predominance in debate and his unequalled popularity in the country could have sustained him against the forces which he had determined to engage. From one motive or another, from conscientious and perfectly intelligible distrust, from vulgar jealousy, from respect for discipline and authority, from a dull resentment at the disturbance he created, nearly all the most influential Conservatives in the House of Commons and the Carlton Club were leagued against him. Lord Salisbury was hostile to him. Sir Stafford Northcote had good reason to be so. All the old men who had sat in the late Cabinet, were alarmed; all the new men who hoped to sit in the next, were envious of his surprising rise to power. Scarcely a name can be mentioned of those who had held office in the past or were to hold it in the future, which was not at this time arrayed against him. And with all of them he was now to come into violent collision.

With the beginnings of this intricate conflict around the party machinery the Fourth Party entered upon its final phase. It had grown out of a House of Commons

comradeship amid the Bradlaugh debates. It had soon become the centre and soul of opposition to Mr. Gladstone's Government. It had next been drawn into a vehement effort to displace Sir Stafford Northcote from his primacy in Conservative councils and instal Lord Salisbury in his stead. In all this Mr. Balfour may be said to have worked with the Fourth Party more or less formally and to have sympathised generally and even cordially with their aims. But in the process of fighting several unexpected things had happened. A new political situation was created; new forces had been awakened; a new leader was at hand.

Mr. Gorst and Sir Henry Wolff declared themselves ready to follow Lord Randolph Churchill further. Mr. Balfour immediately diverged. Although during the fight for the party machine he continued nominally to act with the Fourth Party and remained on friendly terms with its members, he now began to oppose Lord Randolph Churchill. He spoke against him in the House of Commons. He canvassed against him in the National Union Council. It has been suggested[17] that Mr. Balfour's course at this time was open to the reproach of disingenuousness. Certainly Lord Randolph Churchill's correspondence lends no support to such a charge. He liked Mr. Balfour as a companion. He did not consider him formidable as an opponent. He was delighted to bear the evils of his antagonism for the pleasure of his society. Moreover, he saw quite clearly that Mr. Balfour's main political sympathy was inseparably attached to Lord Salisbury. To come into conflict with Lord Salisbury was to come into conflict with Mr. Balfour. The difference was natural, inevitable, and legitimate; and no doubt, while it lasted, Lord Randolph was careful to confine his conversation with his friend only to those subjects upon which they were still able to cooperate.

After the electoral disaster of 1880 a meeting had been

held at Bridgewater House, under the auspices of Lord Beaconsfield, to examine the causes of defeat. A committee, formed chiefly of members of the Carlton Club, had been appointed to consider various methods of reforming, popularising, and improving the party organisation. This committee was never dissolved. It continued to exist, and under the title of the 'Central Committee' assumed the direction and management of all party affairs and controlled the large funds subscribed for party purposes. The National Union of Conservative Associations, upon the other hand, was a body formed on a basis of popular representation. Its branches had spread all over the country and its membership included many of the more active local leaders of the Conservative party in the great towns. It was, however, deprived of all share in party government by the Central Committee and jealously excluded from possessing any financial independence. Mr. Gorst was already its Vice-President and had long exercised an influence sustained by an unrivalled knowledge of party machinery. Sir Henry Wolff was one of its original members. But Lord Randolph Churchill's election by co-optation to a seat upon that body in 1882 had led to an unprecedented division of opinion. His personal antagonists had banded themselves together and attacked him upon various ingenious pretexts. One gentleman undertook to prove from elaborately prepared and complicated statistics that the member for Woodstock was a Fenian. Another endeavoured to convince the Council that he was a devoted slave of Mr. Chamberlain—apparently on the curious ground that he had voted against a plan for making a Channel Tunnel. When the Council had divided, the numbers for and against him were exactly equal. The duty of giving a casting-vote fell upon the Chairman. Although consistently hostile to Tory Democracy in all its forms and representatives, Lord Percy refused to use his vote to exclude a distinguished opponent

and Lord Randolph Churchill had thus been elected.

The three faithful members of the Fourth Party were thus brought together. They were not alone or unsupported. The discussions of a year had disclosed unmistakable discontent on the part of a powerful section of the National Union. Many active local politicians—men claiming to speak upon the Council in the name of some of the greatest cities in England—were profoundly dissatisfied both with the conduct of the Opposition and the organisation of the party. They resented their utter lack of influence over either. Themselves above, or at least outside, the jealousies and cabals of the House of Commons, they regarded the free-lances below the gangway as the best fighting men in the Conservative ranks and they looked with enthusiasm to Lord Randolph Churchill as the one man who could revive the failing fortunes of their party and beard the majestic authority of the Prime Minister. It was by the unwavering support of a majority of these gentlemen that Lord Randolph's power upon the Council was maintained through the struggles that followed.

'The National Union,' writes Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, 'was galvanised into life by a desire very prevalent in the party outside the House of Commons—or, at least, in the democratic part of it—to support the more active policy in Opposition of which Lord Randolph was the type, and by the personal differences which were necessarily connected with that subject.'

During the year 1883 Lord Randolph's position on the Council had been one of influence but not of power. The selection of Birmingham as the scene of the Conference of 1883 was a circumstance especially favourable to him. He resolved to seize the opportunity. 'I have seen Gorst,' he wrote (September 28, 1883) to Sir Henry Wolff, 'and arranged with him that at the meeting of the delegates at Birmingham I am to declare war against the Central Committee and advocate the placing of all power and

finance in the hands of the Council of the National Union. This will be a bold step—the Austerlitz of the Fourth Party; but I fancy I may be able to put my views in a manner which will carry the delegates.'

These anticipations were fully sustained at the Conference on October 2. Lord Randolph laid his case before the delegates with the utmost candour. He reminded them of the differences his former election to the Council had occasioned. He wished them quite clearly to understand what his course would be if he were elected again. He denounced the Central Committee, which he justly declared had arrogated to itself powers, it was never intended to possess and was incompetent to exercise. He described the National Union as kept by this committee 'in a state of tutelage, if not of slavery,' and its delegates as 'solemnly invited year by year to elect a Council which does not advise and an Executive which does not administer.'

'I wish,' he said, 'to see the control and guidance of the organisation of the Tory party transferred from a self-elected body to an annually elected body. I wish to see the management of the financial resources of our party transferred from an irresponsible body to a responsible body. I say that this so-called Central Committee is an irresponsible and self-elected body and that the Council of the National Union is a responsible and an annually elected body, and I wish the control of the party organisation to be in the hands of the National Union and taken out of the hands of the Central Committee. There is no instance in history of power, placed in the hands of a self-constituted and irresponsible body, being used otherwise than unwisely at first and corruptly at last.... I hold it is of the last importance that all finance should be collected and administered by your Council. The corrupt practices at the last General Election on our own side, when the organisation was directed by a secret and irresponsible

Committee, were so grave and flagrant that our party in Parliament were absolutely prevented from exposing the graver and more flagrant corrupt practices of the Liberal party.... I should like all the finances of the Tory party to be open for inspection for anyone who may wish to look at them, be he friend or foe. Where you allow secret expenditure you will certainly have corrupt expenditure; and where you have corrupt expenditure you will have vitiated elections, disfranchised boroughs, party disgrace, and public scandal....

'There is another point. The great bulk of the Tory party throughout the country is composed of artisans and labouring classes. They are directly represented here to-day; they are always directly represented on your Council; no party management can be effective and healthy unless the great labouring classes are directly represented on the Executive of the party. I hope before long to see Tory working men in Parliament....

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'Now some of our friends in the party have a lesson to learn which they do not seem disposed to learn. The Conservative party will never exercise power until it has gained the confidence of the working classes; and the working classes are quite determined to govern themselves, and will not be either driven or hoodwinked by any class or class interests. Our interests are perfectly safe if we trust them fully, frankly, and freely; but if we oppose them and endeavour to drive them and hoodwink them, our interests, our Constitution, and all we love and revere will go down. If you want to gain the confidence of the working classes, let them have a share and a large share—a real share and not a sham share—in your party Councils and in your party government....

'I would bespeak your earnest consideration of this grave question of party organisation. Whatever your judgment may be, I shall humbly acquiesce in it. If you are satisfied with the present arrangements, if you think the National Union possesses the power to which it has a right, if you think that things are going well with us and that the future is sure and promising—well then, so do I. But if, on the other hand, you are of opinion, after careful consideration of events since 1880, that we have not yet learnt enough from the experience of the past to avoid disaster in time to come; if you think that we have not yet set our house in order, that we are not as well prepared for battle as we ought to be; if you are dissatisfied and distrustful of our present arrangements and anxious about the prospects of our party; if you are ready to consider and carry out needful and timely reforms—well then, so am I.'

'We had a real triumph,' wrote Mr. Gorst to Sir Henry Wolff (October 3), 'at Birmingham yesterday in carrying without division a resolution directing a new Council to take steps to secure for the National Union "its legitimate influence in the party organisation." They got ——, ——, and —— and a whole bevy of Goats to attend; but Randolph, who was received by the delegates with a regular ovation, made a capital speech attacking the Central Committee and carried all before him. The election, however, went off badly. Clarke, Chaplin, Claud Hamilton, and a lot of other hostile men got elected and it will require the greatest care and skill in the selection and election of the twelve co-optated members to secure us the necessary working majority.'

Lord Randolph's own account was laconic:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Sir Henry Wolff.

October 3, 1883.

Dear Wolff,—The proceedings yesterday were interesting and, on the whole, satisfactory, but I could not give you an account of them in a letter—it would be far too long. I shall be in town on

Saturday, when you must dine with me. Tell Gorst I expect him too, and you will hear all about the infant Caucus. The Goats yesterday had got wind of our proceedings and came down in great numbers. Ashmead Bartlett also went dead against us and 'entravéd' our schemes to some extent. I made my remarks, which appeared to me not to displease the Assembly, though they must have been poison to the Goats. R——, who was present at the beginning, sniffing a row, prudently recollected he had an engagement and withdrew.

Yours faithfully,
Randolph S. Churchill.

The consequences of the unsatisfactory election were evident in the protracted and evenly-balanced conflict which broke out at once upon the new Council. The twelve co-optated members seem to have been upon the whole favourable to Lord Randolph. Some of them were men of such influence in the large towns that the Orthodox Conservatives did not care to oppose them. No doubt much forethought had also been exercised in their selection. At any rate, from that moment Tory Democracy secured a small but solid majority upon the Council.

The first meeting was upon December 7. Lord Randolph moved for an Organisation Committee to consider the best means of carrying into effect the rider passed at the annual conference. A Committee was accordingly appointed. It consisted principally of Lord Randolph Churchill's friends. Its first act was to exclude the honorary secretaries of the Council from its deliberations and to elect Lord Randolph its Chairman. It next resolved unanimously to seek an interview with Lord Salisbury, and the Chairman was instructed to write to him with that purpose.

Nothing could exceed the politeness with which the correspondence opened. Lord Randolph Churchill recounted the events of the Birmingham conference and the formation of the new Organising Committee, and he requested on their behalf the honour of an interview with

the leader of the party. Lord Salisbury replied that it would give him great pleasure to confer with members of the National Union upon any subject which, in their judgment, was of importance to party interests. Some delay was caused through the Christmas holiday; but the meeting took place early in January and was friendly in its character.

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When, however, the Council of the National Union met on February 1, Lord Percy complained that Lord Randolph Churchill should have been elected to the Chair of the Organisation Committee, as it had always been the custom for the Chairman of the Council to preside at all Committees at which he was present. Mr. Chaplin then moved that Lord Percy be requested to resume his position as Chairman of the Organisation Committee. Other motions of a similar character were made. All were rejected by the Council after close divisions, and Lord Percy thereupon resigned the chairmanship. Although Lord Randolph Churchill subsequently himself proposed and carried a unanimous vote of confidence in him, he declined to withdraw his resignation. Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Chaplin were then respectively proposed for the vacant office, and Lord Randolph was elected by seventeen votes to fifteen. But Lord Salisbury, ignoring this decision, continued to communicate with the Council through Lord Percy, and the majority was greatly offended thereby.

On February 29 Lord Salisbury, as he had promised, wrote a formal letter to the Organisation Committee setting forth the views of the party leaders upon the powers and duties of the Council of the National Union:—

Lord Salisbury to Lord Randolph Churchill.

20, Arlington Street: February 29, 1884.

My Lord,—I have the honour to acknowledge your letter of the 17th. The pressure of public business must be my apology for not having sent you an earlier reply.

Sir Stafford Northcote and I have carefully considered the matters which you mentioned at the small meeting which took place here in January. Our task has been rendered more difficult by the circumstance that no proposals were put forward on the part of the National Union. Their communication was confined to the representation that, possessing an efficient organisation, and consisting, as it undoubtedly does, of highly competent men, the Council had not the opportunity of concurring largely enough in the practical organisation of the party.

It appears to us that that organisation is, and must remain, in all its essential features local. But there is still much work which a central body like the Council of the National Union can perform with great advantage to the party. It is the representative of many Associations on whom, in their respective constituencies, the work of the party greatly depends. It can superintend and stimulate their exertions; furnish them with advice, and in some measure with funds; provide them with lecturers; aid them in the improvement and development of the local press; and help them in perfecting the machinery by which the registration is conducted and the arrangements for providing volunteer agency at election times. It will have special opportunity of pressing upon the local Associations which it represents the paramount duty of selecting, in time, the candidates who are to come forward at the dissolution.

The field of work seems to us large—as large as the nature of the case permits—and ample enough to give scope for such co-operation as the able men who constitute the Council of the National Union may be in a position to offer. But if, on consideration, the Council should desire to submit to us any proposal with respect to the above matters or to other subjects, it will, of course, receive our attentive consideration.

Believe me
Yours very truly,
Salisbury.

The arrival of this letter was hailed by Lord Randolph and his friends with delight, and with elaborate gravity

they made haste to accept it as a 'charter' establishing for ever the rights and position of the National Union. It might seem at first sight that Lord Salisbury's utterances were sufficiently vague and guarded; but this was not the view of the Organisation Committee and they forthwith proceeded to draw up a report, in which, it must be confessed, the assigned duties of the National Union seemed to be of a very responsible and definite character. The next step was, of course, to ask for funds to carry out such important work, and the report proceeded to indicate the sources to which the Organisation Committee would look:—

> The Council will, no doubt, perceive that for the proper discharge of these duties now imposed upon them by the leaders of the party the provision of considerable funds becomes a matter of first-class necessity. Your Committee have reason to believe that there exists at the present moment a large fund, collected for the general purposes of the Conservative party, and collected principally owing to the exertions of the Marquess of Abergavenny, from which the Council has from time to time received irregular and uncertain contributions, more or less of an eleemosynary character. Your Committee would strongly recommend to the Council that this arrangement, which in view of the new duties now devolving upon the Council must be considered as of a most unsatisfactory nature, should be modified, and that your Committee should be authorised by the Council to claim from the aforesaid fund a certain definite allocation, which shall be set apart absolutely for the uses of the National Union, and shall, in some measure, enable them to commence the effective discharge of their labours. In view, however, of the large field of work marked out by Lord Salisbury's letter, your Committee are of opinion that whatever funds they may be able to obtain from the aforesaid source should be supplemented by a vigorous and earnest appeal to the Conservative party generally throughout the country for donations and annual subscriptions.

Lastly, the Committee drew up a number of practical suggestions—some of which were subsequently followed, with excellent results—for the purpose of carrying out

‘Lord Salisbury’s scheme.’

Full information of the framing of this report and of its character was conveyed to Lord Salisbury through a channel which could not then be traced and he was much taken aback at the construction which had been put upon his letter. He therefore wrote immediately to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Private and Confidential.

March 6, 1884.

My dear Lord Randolph,—I have been told on good authority that you had inferred, as the result of our recent communications, that in our contemplation the National Union was in some manner to take the place of the Central Committee and to do the work which the latter exclusively does now.

As my letter does not mention the Central Committee, this misapprehension (if, indeed, it has arisen) must be due to something that passed in our conversation at the Carlton on Sunday. I should blame myself severely if I had misled you as to our views on this point. The Central Committee are appointed by us and represent us: and we could not in any degree separate our position from theirs.

I hope, however, that there is no chance of the paths of the Central Committee and the National Union crossing: for there is plenty of good work for both to do.

I am sure you will forgive my giving you the trouble of reading this letter—which only issues from my desire that we should all work together in good understanding.

Believe me
Yours very truly,
Salisbury.

‘With reference to the hope,’ replied Lord Randolph Churchill, ‘which you express, that "there is no chance of the paths of the Central Committee and the National Union crossing," I fear it may be disappointed. In a struggle between a popular body and a close corporation, the latter, I am happy to say, in these days goes to the wall; for the popular body have this great advantage—that, having

nothing to conceal, they can, at any moment they think proper, appeal fully (and in some measure recklessly) to a favourable and sympathising public, and I am of opinion that in such a course as this the National Union will find that I may be of some little assistance to them.'

The report, together with the 'Charter' letter, was presented to the Council at their meeting on the 7th, and their consideration was adjourned till the 14th. At this adjourned meeting Lord Percy read a letter which he had received from Lord Salisbury strongly disapproving of the report and deprecating its adoption. He thereupon moved its rejection. The Council divided, and Lord Percy's motion was negatived by 19 votes to 14. The report was then adopted by 19 votes to 7.

The consequences of this decision were surprising. On March 18 Lord Randolph Churchill received a letter from Mr. Bartley, the principal agent at the Conservative Central Office, informing him that Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote thought it desirable that the Central Committee and the National Union should work with separate establishments, and requesting the National Union to take the necessary steps for removing their belongings.

It is very easy to see what a great tactical mistake Lord Salisbury and his friends committed by authorising such a letter to be written. The premises in question were not the property of Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote and they had no legal power to eject the National Union. The National Union had since 1872 contributed from their own funds 175*l.* annually towards the rent and the office expenses. Moreover—and all this was carefully and forcefully put before the Organisation Committee by its Chairman—Lord Salisbury had directed such a letter to be written without waiting for any official information as to what the action which was complained of really was, and without communicating, except informally through Lord Percy, with the Council. The members of the Council

therefore, many of whom were able men of local influence and importance, felt themselves affronted by discourteous usage. The opinion was expressed that when the leaders of the party had communications to make to the National Union, those communications should be made through their Chairman; and the 'notice to quit,' as it was called, was regarded as a cause of deep and undeserved offence.

Lord Randolph Churchill was careful, however, not to make too much at the moment of this substantial advantage; and he persuaded the Committee to modify the report in several important particulars, so as to remove what were believed to be Lord Salisbury's objections. The revised draft was then, after several parleyings, forwarded to the party leaders, and on April 1 Lord Salisbury replied in a letter[18] which strictly limited the functions of the National Union and provided for its complete control by the Central Committee:—

> To ensure complete unity of action, we think it desirable that the Whips of the party should sit, *ex officio*, on the Council, and should have a right to be present at the meetings of all Committees. Such an arrangement would be a security against any unintentional divergencies of policy, and would lend weight to the proceedings of the Union. Business relating to candidates should remain entirely with the Central Committee. On the assumption, which we are entitled now to make, that the action of the two bodies will be harmonious, a separation of establishments will not be necessary—unless business should largely increase. There is some advantage, undoubtedly, in their working under a common roof, for it is difficult to distinguish between their functions so accurately, but that the need of mutual assistance and communication will constantly be felt.

On the receipt of this letter Lord Randolph Churchill resolved to abandon all pretence at further friendly negotiation. He summoned immediately a special meeting of the Organisation Committee, on which, as has been noticed, his personal influence predominated. Only three members besides himself—namely Colonel Burnaby, Mr.

Cotter and Mr. Gorst—were able to attend; but these nevertheless took the responsibility of sending to the leaders of the party what was, as will presently appear, little less than a declaration of open war.

All these proceedings came before the Council of the National Union at their meeting on April 4. Lord Randolph Churchill, as Chairman, read Mr. Bartley's 'notice to quit' letter of March 17, which, he stated, was the result of an 'unauthorised, unofficial, and inaccurate communication' on the part of some member of the Council to the leaders of the party of what had taken place at the last meeting. But although the letter was a great obstacle to amicable intercourse, he had endeavoured to negotiate with the leaders, and had had many conferences with persons of influence, such as Lord Abergavenny and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach; and, finally, Mr. Gorst and he himself had had the honour of an interview with Lord Salisbury on March 21. The results of the interview had been very satisfactory, and it was understood that the leaders would communicate thereafter with the Council; but in spite of repeated requests, and even visits, no reply of any sort had been received. The Organisation Committee had therefore drawn up their report, making such alterations in it as they believed might make it acceptable. On the day following the circulation of this report to the Council the Chairman had received the letter from Lord Salisbury of April 1, to which the Organisation Committee had sent a reply.[19]

This reply, after recalling the proceedings at Birmingham and the unsatisfactory features in the Conservative organisation—'the control of Parliamentary elections by the leader, the Whip, and the paid agent drawing their resources from secret funds'—suitable perhaps 'to the manipulation of the 10*l.* householder,' but utterly obsolete in the face of an extended franchise—described the gratification and encouragement with which the Council of the National Union had learned that Lord

Salisbury was willing to entrust them with large and important duties. The Council, however, committed the serious error of 'imagining that your Lordship and Sir Stafford Northcote were in earnest in wishing them to become a real source of usefulness to the party.' They had been 'rudely undeceived.' The day after the adoption of their report they had been ordered to quit the premises they occupied. Their report had been disapproved on the ground that their activities would trench upon the functions 'of an amorphous and unknown body styled the Central Committee.' The precise language of Lord Salisbury's 'Charter' letter had been completely abandoned and refuge had been taken 'in vague, foggy, and utterly intangible suggestions.' In order that the Council of the National Union might be 'completely and for ever reduced to its ancient condition of dependence upon and servility to certain irresponsible persons who find favour in your eyes,' it was demanded that the Whips of the party should sit *ex officio* on the Council, with a right of being present at all committees. Finally, in the event of the Council—representing upwards of 500 affiliated Conservative Associations and composed of men eminent in position and political experience, enjoying the confidence of the party in populous localities and sacrificing continually much time, convenience and money to the work of the National Union—acquiescing in such a view of its functions, it might be graciously permitted to remain the humble inmate of the premises which it occupied.

We shall lay your letter and copy of this reply before the Council at its meeting to-morrow and shall move the Council that they adhere substantially to the report already adopted, in obedience to the direction of the Conference at Birmingham; that they take steps to provide themselves with their own offices and clerks; and that they continue to prosecute with vigour and independence the task which they have commenced—namely, the *bona-fide* popular organisation of the Conservative party.

It may be that the powerful and secret influences which have

hitherto been unsuccessfully at work on the Council, with the knowledge and consent of your Lordship and Sir Stafford Northcote, may at last be effectual in reducing the National Union to its former make-believe and impotent condition; in that case we shall know what steps to take to clear ourselves of all responsibility for the failure of an attempt to avert the misfortunes and reverses which will, we are certain, under the present effete system of wire-pulling and secret organisation, overtake and attend the Conservative party at a General Election.

Lord Randolph finished reading the letter, and after moving the appointment of an Executive Committee to carry out the recommendations of the report, sat down abruptly. He was immediately asked to state the names of those who had authorised the sending of such a letter, and the fact that they were only four in number was received with murmurs of astonishment. Lord Percy and Mr. Chaplin declined to serve upon the Executive Committee until the letter was withdrawn, and Lord Claud Hamilton moved at once the following amendment: 'That this Council regrets the disrespectful and improper tone of the letter of the Organisation Committee of the 3rd inst. to the Marquess of Salisbury, and declines to accept any responsibility for the same.' This was seconded by Mr. Stuart-Wortley, M.P., and supported by Mr. Chaplin and others in an acrimonious debate. The issue appeared doubtful, but Lord Randolph Churchill waved aside all suggestions of postponement and insisted upon an immediate decision. So great was his influence that the amendment was rejected by 19 to 13, and the original resolution (appointing an Executive Committee) was carried by 18 to 14. The Council then adjourned till May 2.

The month which followed was a month of intrigue and counter-intrigue. The majority which Lord Randolph commanded upon the Council, was small. He had been elected Chairman by a majority of two. The report of the Organisation Committee had escaped destructive

amendment by five votes. The vote of censure on the Chairman had been rejected by no more than six and the Executive Committee appointed by no more than four. If two or three, or even one man, could be detached, the movement might be crushed and its leader overthrown; and to this end every effort of power and authority, by appeals, by local pressure, by threats and promises, was employed. Against this Lord Randolph could set nothing but his personal influence on the Council and his popularity in the country. It was evident, moreover, that a great trial of strength between the two sections of the Conservative party was impending, and moderate men had to choose once and for all on which side they would be found. It is, to say the least of it, remarkable that the majority on the Council remained till the end of April solid and unwavering.

In the face of this attitude Lord Salisbury and his associates prepared for compromise, and the leaders of Tory Democracy, who knew well how slender were their resources, showed every disposition to meet them. Lord Randolph Churchill declared that he would agree to anything 'which offered an honourable *modus vivendi* to the National Union consistent with the resolution of the Birmingham Conference.' Lord Salisbury appeared willing to concede a large part of what was demanded, including a grant of 3,000*l.* a year to the National Union funds. This compromise was to have been formally agreed to at the meeting of the Central Committee on April 29, but at the last minute an unexpected event occurred.

Mr. Maclean, the Member for Oldham, had hitherto been one of Lord Randolph's consistent supporters on the Council, but his private object had been[20] to overthrow the dual control of Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote, rather than to place the organisation of the party upon a democratic basis. If he had to choose, as he conceived himself compelled to choose, between Lord

Salisbury and Lord Randolph Churchill, his intention was to support the former. He was a man of independent views, who was not likely to be influenced against his decision by either faction, and his intervention at this stage was for that reason all the more effective. He, knowing nothing of the impending compromise, now placed upon the agenda paper of the Council the following motion:—

'That, having regard to the paramount importance of complete harmony and united action between the Central Committee of the Conservative party and the Council of the National Union, a Committee of the Council be now appointed to confer with the Central Committee for the purpose of securing these objects.' On learning this Lord Salisbury at once broke off all negotiations, pending the result of the motion. Mr. Edward Stanhope was put in communication with Mr. Maclean and nothing was neglected to induce him to persist.

The Council met again on May 2. Lord Randolph informed Mr. Maclean privately that he would regard his motion, if carried, as a vote of want of confidence in the Chairman. But Maclean was not to be dissuaded, and upon a division—several of Lord Randolph's friends being absent—his motion prevailed by seventeen votes to thirteen. Lord Randolph Churchill thereupon immediately resigned the chairmanship of the Council. He determined to withdraw entirely from active politics, and it was said that he would seek rest and amusement abroad. He even prepared a letter to Mr. Satchell Hopkins explaining at length his reasons for abandoning his candidature at Birmingham.[21]

Awful joy was manifested at the Tory headquarters upon the sudden and complete suppression of the mutiny. At the Carlton and in the Lobby the 'old gang' were full of nervous self-congratulation. They had borne with him long enough. They had always warned him what the end would be. Now it had fallen out as they had always foreseen. Was

it not sad to see a young man—of undoubted talent—destroy what might have been a meritorious career? &c., &c. The *Standard* chanted a solemn pæan of triumph. The victorious section upon the Council made haste to publish glowing accounts of their action, and incidentally communicated to the press the full terms of the 'irritating letter' which had been sent to Lord Salisbury on April 3, and which was, of course, a strictly confidential document. Sir Stafford Northcote said in his haste that Lord Randolph was 'a bonnet for the Liberal party.' This mood lasted for a little while. Then came a chilling reaction.

The news of Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation became generally known on May 4, and it was received through all Conservative circles—except the highest—with something very like consternation. The publication of his letter to Lord Salisbury made a great sensation, not at all to his disadvantage. Telegrams, letters, resolutions, deputations poured in upon him in a stream. Within forty-eight hours a formidable movement in his favour had begun. The *Times* supported him in a powerful article (May 8). 'The main question at issue between him and the official leaders of the Opposition is whether the internal organisation of the party should be for the future established on a popular and representative or on a secret and irresponsible basis.' It declared that the quarrel, until it was repaired, left the country without an alternative Government. It urged Lord Salisbury not to delay in making friendly overtures. He had 'before this effected a not less difficult reconciliation.' If he delayed, it was quite possible that he might find himself 'in the position not so much of dictating terms of reconciliation as of accepting them.' Many other important Conservative newspapers took a similar view. In the Tory clubs of the large towns it was freely said that the one man who really knew how to fight Mr. Gladstone, had been tripped up by the jealous intrigues of an effete, incompetent clique of aristocrats. A

loud outcry was raised against 'the back-parlour' management of a great party.

A more remarkable and effective demonstration followed. On May 8, the respective Chairmen of the Liverpool, Manchester, Brighton, Sheffield, Hull, Edinburgh, and Bristol Conservative Associations, representing 300,000 electors, met together in London under the presidency of Mr. A. B. Forwood. They invited Lord Randolph Churchill to confer with them, and having heard his views drew up a memorandum to the Council of the National Union, of which the principal recommendation was that he should be 'earnestly requested to withdraw his resignation.' They added, moreover, that the National Union was not as representative of the feeling in the country as it ought to be and urged that immediate steps should be taken to broaden the basis of its organisation. They addressed themselves also to Lord Salisbury both by letter and deputation.

Among the many tokens of public goodwill of which Lord Randolph was at this time the object, there was one which seemed peculiarly welcome. It was a deputation of undergraduates from the Cambridge University Carlton, who travelled to London for the purpose of offering what encouragement lay in their power. A year later, when as a Minister of the Crown Lord Randolph was able to accept the invitation of this club to a House dinner, he alluded to the incident in terms which cast an intimate light upon his feelings at this tempestuous moment:—

'There was a time last year when it happened to me to be engaged in something partaking of the nature of a struggle with men of great position, great responsibility, and great experience, as to the form which modern Conservative political organisation ought to take. That difference of opinion at one time became very sharp, and I did not know what the result of it might be; and I was getting extremely anxious, more for the sake of the Conservative party than

for my own sake. One evening I came home from the House of Commons very anxious and rather discouraged, because at the House of Commons, among people whom I ought to look upon as my political friends, I had met nothing but gloomy looks; and I felt very much inclined to retire from the game, thinking I was doing more harm than good, and rather—to use a slang expression—disposed to cut the whole concern. However, when I arrived at my house I found there waiting for me a deputation from the University Carlton. Three gentlemen—three, I will venture to say, of the most accomplished and able envoys ever sent out on any mission—were waiting for me; and the only error which they committed was that, instead of going into my house and waiting for me there, with whatever accommodation that dwelling might afford, they waited for me in the street, and had been waiting for me some time. I do not think you can imagine the effect that expression of sympathy and that cordial invitation had upon me at the time. Before I received it I felt that I was very young, very inexperienced, and very much alone, and I did not know to what extent any portion or fraction of public opinion might be with me. But the expression of opinion from your club filled me with hopes that, after all, I was not going so very far wrong—that I might still persevere a little longer. I did persevere; everything came all right, everything settled down, both to the harmony and, I think, to the advantage of the Tory party. That was, to my mind, and must always be, as far as I am concerned, a most interesting and memorable incident. It was an encouragement from youth to youth.'

This temper among the rank and file was not lost upon the leaders of the party. The olive branch was held out publicly, though patronisingly, by Mr. Stanhope at a Finsbury meeting as early as May 7. Lord Salisbury replied with grave courtesy to the representations of the provincial Chairmen. All sorts of busybodies ran to and fro like shuttles weaving up a peace. On the 9th a party meeting

was called at the Carlton Club to plan the contemplated second vote of censure on Egyptian policy. Upwards of 170 members of Parliament attended. To the astonishment of many, who thought he had been drummed out of the Conservative ranks, Lord Randolph strolled in unconcernedly, was warmly welcomed by the leaders, and, rising immediately after Sir Stafford Northcote, expressed his entire approval of the terms of the vote of censure and of the general arrangement of the debate. The meeting was loud in its satisfaction at these signs of concord. The negotiations with the Central Committee were resumed, almost at the point where they had been broken off. When the Council of the National Union met again on the 16th, it was evident that the tide of opinion flowed strongly in Lord Randolph's favour. Upon the motion of Lord Holmesdale he was unanimously re-elected Chairman. He thus returned stronger than ever, neither disarmed nor placated, and the movement which he had launched was driven steadily and relentlessly forward.

CHAPTER VIII

THE REFORM BILL

Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri,
Quo me cunque rapit tempestas deferor hospes.
Horace.

Sworn to no master, of no sect am I,
As drives the storm, at any door I knock.
Pope's *Imitations*.

THE Parliamentary session of 1884 began ill for Her Majesty's Ministers and its first month was like enough to have been their last. While the mover and seconder of the Address to the Crown in either House were purring

ceremonious optimism about the improvement of the Egyptian situation, the news arrived that General Valentine Baker's wretched army had been utterly destroyed by Osman Digna in a vain attempt to relieve Tokar. So little disposed, indeed, were the Government to discuss Egyptian affairs that they allowed the debate in the Commons to collapse in a single night without any official reply to the serious attacks which had been made; and it was only revived next day through Lord Randolph's moving the adjournment of the House, in somewhat unusual procedure, to protest against their silence.

Hard upon the heels of Soudan disaster, and equally unwelcome, came Mr. Bradlaugh. Judgment had been delivered in the Court of Queen's Bench upon the suit Bradlaugh *v.* Gosset, brought by the member for Northampton against the Serjeant-at-Arms for excluding him from the precincts of the House. The Court, while admitting the absolute command of the Houses of Parliament over their own discipline, rules of procedure, and interpretation thereof, asserted that resolutions of either House could not affect Acts imposing fines and penalties. The opportunity was thus presented to Mr. Bradlaugh of testing in the Courts the value of a self-administered oath followed by a vote in Parliament. Once again, therefore (February 11), he presented himself at the table. Once again the members broke into a storm of shouting which drowned his voice. Once again the Leader of the House sat silent and powerless. But the battlefield had now become familiar to the Opposition. Sir Stafford Northcote moved that the member for Northampton be not permitted to go through the form of repeating the words of the oath. Mr. Labouchere provoked the House to a division, in which Mr. Bradlaugh voted. Motion was made forthwith to expunge his vote. Mr. Bradlaugh voted again upon this. When it was realised that his vote could always be recorded once oftener than it could be disallowed, the

numbers of the first division were read out and Sir Stafford Northcote's motion was carried by 280 to 187. A further motion to exclude Mr. Bradlaugh from the precincts of the House was agreed to without voting. Mr. Bradlaugh thereafter applied for the Chiltern Hundreds and, his seat being thus vacated, Mr. Labouchere moved for a new writ. This was granted by the House in spite of Lord Randolph's opposition. The electors of Northampton returned Mr. Bradlaugh without delay by a largely increased majority. Sir Stafford Northcote again moved his old motion to exclude him from the House and, although the Prime Minister spoke impressively against it, the motion was carried (February 26) by 226 to 173.

The Government were scarcely free from the humiliations of this affair when fresh tidings of massacre and disaster arrived from the Soudan. Despairing of relief after the destruction of Baker's army, the garrison of Tokar surrendered. The garrison of Sinkat perished in an attempt to cut their way to the coast. While the fate of these places was inevitably approaching, votes of censure were moved in both Houses of Parliament. In the Lords the motion of Lord Cairns and Lord Salisbury was affirmed by 181 to 81. In the Commons the debate followed what was becoming the usual course. Sir Stafford Northcote made a long, mild, and moderate speech, to which Mr. Gladstone replied vigorously. The moment he sat down Lord Randolph Churchill sprang up to attack him in rhetoric which can only be sustained by passion in few men and on rare occasions. '"Too late!"' he cried. '"Too late!" is an awful cry. From time immemorial it has heralded and proclaimed the slaughter of routed armies, the flight of dethroned monarchs, the crash of falling Empires. Wherever human blood has been poured out in torrents, wherever human misery has been accumulated in mountains, wherever disasters have occurred which have shaken the world to its very centre, there straight and swift, up to heaven, or down

to hell, has always gone the appalling cry, "Too late! Too late!" The Opposition cannot but move a vote of censure upon a Government whose motto is "Too late!" The Liberals should be chary of giving support to a Government whose motto is "Too late!"; and the people of this country will undoubtedly repudiate a Government whose motto is invariably "Too late!"'

The Conservative party, profoundly stirred by tales of blood and shame, continued shouting at this fierce conclusion long after the orator had ceased.

From these embarrassments and humiliations the Government found a happy escape which for a while entirely transformed the Parliamentary situation and placed them, in the fifth year of their troubled existence, once again in a position of great advantage. The story of the Reform Bill of 1884 may be briefly told. By enlargements of the household franchise and by assimilation of the county and borough franchise, two million new electors would be called into being and the total electorate raised from three to five millions. The momentum which this ponderous measure acquired was great enough to carry it forward through all sections of the Liberal party and over all opposition in the House of Commons, and to throw on one side or the other, as irrelevant or impracticable, principles as democratic as 'one man one vote,' causes as cherished as 'Female Suffrage,' devices as intricate and attractive as proportional representation. The Bill itself became an object of paramount desire. 'It is,' said Mr. Gladstone in introducing it, 'a Bill worth having; again I say it is a Bill worth your not endangering. Let us enter into no by-way which would lead us off the path marked straight out before us. Let there be no wanderings on the hill-tops of speculation or into the morasses and fogs of doubt. What we want to carry this Bill is union, and union only. What will endanger it is disunion, and disunion only.' And so it proved.

The position of the Conservative party had been very ill-defined on the question of Parliamentary Reform ever since 1867. Mr. Disraeli's action had deprived them for ever of the right to oppose large extensions of the franchise on principle. Tory Democracy, especially in Lancashire, though hostile to the Government, looked with favour on their proposal. Reform was a national as well as a party movement. Yet, on the other hand, some of the strongest and most unyielding forces in the Tory ranks—the county members in the House of Commons and Lord Salisbury in the House of Lords—were prepared to offer a stubborn resistance to the change.

Nor, indeed, were they without grave reason from their point of view. Hitherto the county Conservatives had been mainly, if not entirely, selected and returned by farmers and landowners. The great labouring population had been altogether excluded from political power. Now that the franchise was offered to them, they welcomed it with greater earnestness and enthusiasm than they have ever displayed on any other question. Social reforms were good enough in their way but it was the *vote* on which they had set their hearts. There was a temper among them that no one who understood county politics, could mistake and that filled the Conservative representatives of a hundred seats with a profound dismay. The overwhelming electorate that was to be, regarded the interest of the farmer and landlord as fundamentally antagonistic to their own. Any representative or candidate who was agreeable to the farmer, must therefore be an enemy of theirs. Gratitude for the boon which was offered, threw them still more completely on the Liberal side; and the country party, once all powerful, long predominant, always exercising enormous influence, now looked political extermination in the face.

Lord Randolph Churchill's course through this memorable controversy is not marked by that clearness of

view or consistency of action which may be claimed for him during his whole life upon so many important questions. In a letter written some years afterwards he speaks of it as ‘the only sharp curve’ revealed by his published speeches. But, in truth, the forces which he employed, as well as those with which he was contending, were complex and uncertain to a degree beyond description. Tory Democracy wanted to pass the Bill, yet wanted to destroy the Government. The Conservative party, as a whole, hated the Bill, hated the Government, yet were unable to agree upon uncompromising opposition. These perplexities were multiplied by the struggle for mastery which was proceeding between the rival Parliamentary groups upon the Council of the National Union and by the varying relations of Lord Randolph Churchill towards Lord Salisbury and the official party leaders. The Fourth Party was fated to perish amid this intricate confusion. Its members criticised and even attacked one another and, though they still all sat together in their old places, their old comradeship was utterly destroyed.

It was known during the autumn of 1883 that the question of Reform was occupying the Cabinet and would probably issue in a Bill. On December 19, 1883, when Lord Randolph was delivering his ‘trilogy’ at Edinburgh, he had dealt among other matters with the question of Reform. Attacking the Government, he was easily led into attacking their project. As the representative of a small agricultural borough he could not, as he himself said afterwards, be expected to look upon a measure for the extinction of Woodstock ‘with any very longing eye.’ The divided state of opinion in the Conservative party had not then been disclosed. He believed that they would insist upon fighting the Bill to the death and he was willing to stand with them in such a struggle. He therefore spoke against Reform—not, indeed, in principle—but on the

ground of (1) the inopportuneness of the moment chosen and the far more urgent character of other questions; (2) the obvious risk of any large addition to the Irish electorate; (3) the transparent design of the Government to divert public attention from foreign affairs; (4) the absence of any indication, on the part of the unenfranchised masses, of any great desire for the voting privilege.[22] His words, though listened to with attention and respect, were plainly not acceptable to the audience of Scotch artisans. They wanted to cheer the Tory Democrat: but they also wanted Reform. A more surprising incident followed. Mr. Balfour and Lord Elcho, who were on the platform, both thought it necessary then and there to declare themselves in favour of the assimilation of the county and borough franchise. Before Parliament assembled the utter lack of unanimity in the Conservative party against the Bill was evident and all chance of resisting it consequently perished.

The attempt to overthrow the Government on their Egyptian policy having failed, the Reform Bill was introduced. Lord Randolph proposed to meet it on the second reading by moving the previous question—'that the question be not now put.' This form of opposition asserted most of the objections he had stated at Edinburgh, without committing anyone who might support it to resistance to Reform on principle. He secured precedence for his motion. But the Conservative leaders, who were also unable to meet the Bill squarely, attempted a parry of their own. They declared that they could not agree to the extension of the franchise unless it were coupled with provision for a redistribution of seats. A motion in this sense was placed upon the paper by Lord John Manners in the name of the Opposition. In so far as this motion allowed it to be assumed that the leaders of the Conservative party were favourable to the extension of the franchise, if only it were accompanied by redistribution, it

was plainly a pretence. But there was one element of grim reality about it. A dissolution upon the extended electorate before redistribution had taken effect would have been peculiarly injurious to Conservative interests both in town and country. At Sir Stafford Northcote's request Lord Randolph Churchill removed his motion of 'the previous question' from the paper and issue was accordingly joined upon the motion of Lord John Manners. Even this modified and rather meaningless form of resistance did not secure the support of the entire Conservative party. At the beginning of the session the Government majority had fallen to 17. They carried the second reading of the 'Bill for the Representation of the People,' as it was officially styled, by a majority of 130 (340-210).

Confronted with such evidences of the impossibility of further resisting the measure as a whole, Lord Randolph Churchill now abandoned altogether his opposition. He thought that if the Conservative party were not prepared to fight the Bill, there was no reason why they should incur the odium and the hazards, without the satisfactions of war, or the hope of victory. Moreover, he had in the meanwhile accepted the invitation to contest Birmingham at the General Election, and in exchanging a large democratic constituency for a family borough he was naturally freed from those special reasons connected with Woodstock which had previously influenced him.

These arguments were no doubt fortified by the progress of the debates in the House of Commons. It soon became certain that the Bill would pass and that the Conservative party could offer it no united and general resistance. It became, moreover, evident that the most bitter opponents of Lord Randolph Churchill personally and of Tory Democracy as an idea, were also the most bitter opponents of Reform. The line of cleavage between the New and the Old Tories ran through the whole question. The very fact that the 'old gang' were obstinately against the measure

influenced Lord Randolph powerfully in its favour and he was not the man to allow a single precipitate speech to separate him from those progressive forces in the Conservative party whose representative he was. 'An unchanging mind,' he observed on one occasion, 'is an admirable possession—a possession which I devoutly hope I shall never possess.' He declared publicly that he now regarded Reform as inevitable, and that the principles of the assimilation of the county and borough franchise and of equality of political rights between England and Ireland must henceforth govern Conservatives as well as Liberals. The Fourth Party therefore, after the second reading, became the friends of the Reform Bill and genuinely and materially assisted its passage.

While the Bill was passing through Committee the quarrel in the National Union was at its height, and Lord Randolph and his handful of friends became increasingly hostile to the Conservative leaders and consequently more favourable to Reform. He and Mr. Gorst voted and Sir Henry Wolff spoke against Sir R. Cross's amendment which affected the principle of the Bill. The question of the date at which the Reform Bill should come into force, exercised the Conservative party and was vital to the position of conditional resistance they had perforce adopted. Sir Henry Wolff, in the name of the Fourth Party, made a motion which would have had the effect of postponing the decision upon this point until a later stage. His suggestion was willingly accepted by Mr. Gladstone in the interests of a compromise. Colonel Stanley, however, proposed from the Front Opposition Bench at once to insert words delaying the operation of the Franchise Bill until Redistribution had been effected. Lord Randolph Churchill on this said bluntly that he had changed his mind since the beginning of the session and he argued that while it might have been possible to fight the Bill with a united party, it was foolish to incur popular displeasure by futile

attempts to wreck it. Colonel Stanley's amendment was dismissed by a large majority (276-182).

The tactics of the Fourth Party were supported by a few independent members, but the serious cleavage in the Tory ranks was revealed more evidently by the number of Conservatives who failed, during various divisions in Committee, to sustain the Opposition leaders in the Lobby. Lord Randolph's refusal to fight provoked indignant complaints from those old-fashioned country Tories who, faced by political ruin in their seats, naturally wished to offer the Bill an unyielding resistance, no matter at what cost to party interests in general; and, as may be imagined, they did not neglect to quote Lord Randolph's Edinburgh speech against him. To charges of inconsistency which were not indeed denied, Lord Randolph and his supporters retorted by accusing the Conservative leaders of being secretly anxious to kill a measure they did not dare openly to assail. During these debates the separation of Mr. Balfour from the rest of the Fourth Party became notorious. Lord Randolph, reproached with having abandoned his attitude of strong opposition to Reform, adroitly attributed his conversion to Mr. Balfour and Lord Elcho, who had proclaimed at Edinburgh their dissent from his earlier opinion. Mr. Balfour replied with some acidness that 'his noble friend's efforts to be in perfect accord with the Conservative party, numerous and well-intentioned as they were, did not seem to be crowned with success.' Through the ineptitude of some of their leaders and the perversity of others the Opposition, alike above and below the gangway, cut a poor figure during the debates on the 'Bill for the Representation of the People.'

Perhaps the most direct divergence occurred on Mr. Brodrick's amendment to omit Ireland from the scope of the new franchise. We have seen how Lord Randolph, as a young man in the Parliament of 1874, had first supported and later on—when circumstances had changed—opposed

the extension to Ireland of electoral privileges similar to and simultaneous with those enjoyed in Great Britain. His speech at Edinburgh had laid emphasis on the danger of any large accession to the Irish vote. Only a few days before the question was discussed he had been re-elected, as described in the last chapter, to the chairmanship of the Council of the National Union. It was popularly assumed that he had come to terms with Lord Salisbury, and their reported reconciliation had been ostentatiously paraded in the party press. But when Lord Randolph resumed the debate on May 20, it soon appeared that he was still recalcitrant. Amid an ominous silence on the Conservative benches he asked Mr. Brodrick to withdraw his amendment, and declared that he had made up his mind to vote against it if it were carried to a division. He then declared once and for all in favour of the equal and similar treatment of Ireland in all matters of electoral reform; and this principle of 'similarity and simultaneity,' as it came to be called, has since been commonly identified with his name. One passage in this speech was at the time greatly admired and applauded. Mr. Smith during the autumn had argued that no votes should be given to Irish peasants who lived in mud-cabins, and the 'mud-cabin' argument had become a very prominent feature in the debate. Lord Randolph dealt with this contention in his most polished Parliamentary style.

'I have heard,' he said, 'a great deal of the mud-cabin argument. For that we are indebted to the brilliant, ingenious, and fertile mind of the right honourable member for Westminster.[23] I suppose that in the minds of the lords of suburban villas, of the owners of vineries and pineries, the mud-cabin represents the climax of physical and social degradation. But the franchise in England has never been determined by Parliament with respect to the character of the dwellings. The difference between the cabin of the Irish peasant and the cottage of the English

agricultural labourer is not so great as that which exists between the abode of the right honourable member for Westminster and the humble roof which shelters from the storm the individual who now has the honour to address the Committee.' When the cheers and laughter had subsided he went on to quote the famous lines:—

Non ebur, neque aureum
Meâ renidet in domo lacunar;
Non trabes Hymettiae
Premunt columnas ultimâ recisas
Africâ.

'But if the right honourable member for Westminster were to propose to the Committee that he himself should have a vote at Parliamentary elections and that I should have none, I feel sure the House of Commons would repudiate the proposal with indignation and disgust.' The 'mud-cabin' argument seems after this to have disappeared altogether from Parliamentary warfare and Mr. Brodrick's amendment was rejected by the enormous majority of 332 to 137. After this the resistance of the Opposition in the House of Commons was at an end. The third reading of the Bill was allowed to pass *nemine contradicente* and entered accordingly on the journals of the House. The Bill then went to the House of Lords at the end of June; and there, by amendments supported by majorities of 59 and 50, it was incontinently destroyed. The collision between the two Houses was direct, and a dangerous excitement arose in the country.

Although unwilling to impede the progress of the Reform Bill and decidedly predisposed to take action contrary to the views of his own pastors above the gangway in order to put a spoke in their wheel, Lord Randolph was the most unrelenting and vigilant opponent of the Liberal Government. Whenever and wherever a favourable chance of fighting occurred he was the foremost man, and many furious wrangles between him and Mr. Gladstone, or Mr. Chamberlain or Sir Charles Dilke marked the course of the session. In the quarrel between the two Houses after the rejection of the Bill in the House of Lords, he exerted himself to his utmost on behalf of the House of Lords and laid on the Prime Minister the whole

responsibility for the dangerous constitutional situation which had arisen and was becoming increasingly grave. Hansard and the newspapers record these battles in ample detail. Sometimes he found powerful support. On one occasion, when a dispute arose with Sir Charles Dilke as to the accuracy of a quotation from Lord Randolph's speeches, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach said abruptly that 'he preferred to believe the word of his noble friend to that of the right honourable baronet'—an observation which he was required by the Speaker to withdraw. On another occasion Lord Randolph charged the Prime Minister with having 'traduced' his opponents by representing that Lord Salisbury had said in the course of a confidential conversation that he would not discuss Redistribution 'with a rope round his neck,' and he moved the adjournment of the House. Mr. Gladstone, violently incensed, described this word 'traduce'—which he declared implied a wilful and disgraceful act, not arising from error—as 'foul language.' Lord Randolph immediately rose to order, and asked the Speaker whether the Prime Minister was to be allowed to use words which would not be tolerated in any other member. The Speaker hoped that Mr. Gladstone would not insist on employing the expression. The Prime Minister's reply was accepted as a withdrawal, though his actual words do not favour that construction. It is said that this was the only time in his whole career when Mr. Gladstone incurred the rebuke of the Chair. Lord Randolph seems to have been distressed at having offended his great antagonist so deeply. Later in the debate he rose again. 'Recollecting,' he said, 'the vast difference which separates me from the Prime Minister, I wish to say that it never has been and never will be my intention, during the many years I hope he will remain in this House, to use language in any way incompatible with his lofty position.' Mr. Gladstone received this assurance with much magnificent urbanity. 'I was no doubt at the

moment a little irritated at language that I thought very strong; but on reflection I must own that the noble lord has always been very courteous to me.'

But whether, in these vexed and protracted debates, Lord Randolph Churchill attacked the Prime Minister or harassed his own leaders; whether he was supported by loud applauses of Conservative members or heard by them in chilly silence; whether he seemed to be the accepted spokesman of the Opposition or a solitary politician—his hand against every man and every man's hand against him—his almost unerring eye for a Parliamentary situation, his mastery over the House and his formidable power for good or evil upon the fortunes of his party became continually more evident. Alone, or almost alone, he waged his double warfare against Government and Opposition. Assailed on all sides—from the Ministerial box, from the Front Opposition Bench, from those who sat before him and behind him and even beside him; confronted with his own contradictory statements, now by one side, now by the other; rebuked by the Prime Minister, repeatedly repudiated by his colleagues and leaders, he nevertheless preserved throughout an air of haughty composure and met or repelled all attacks with resourceful and undaunted pluck. 'Tory Democracy,' said Mr. Chamberlain during a vehement speech in favour of the Reform Bill (House of Commons, March 27), 'of which we shall hear a good deal in the future, is represented in this House by the member for Woodstock. I pay the greatest attention to anything he says because I find that what he says to-day his leaders say to-morrow. They follow him with halting steps, somewhat unwillingly; but they always follow him. They may not always like the prescription he makes up for them; but they always swallow it.'

Meanwhile the second vote of censure upon the conduct of Egyptian affairs had been debated. On May 12 Sir Michael Hicks-Beach moved: 'That this House regrets to

find the course pursued by Her Majesty's Government has not tended to promote the success of General Gordon's mission and that even such steps as may be necessary to secure his personal safety are delayed.' The attack was vigorously delivered. The Prime Minister's reply was judged inadequate and disquieting, even by many of his own supporters. Mr. Forster assailed him during the debate harshly and sternly. The weight and earnestness of Lord Hartington alone retrieved Ministerial fortunes. Lord Randolph Churchill spoke (May 13) to a larger audience, according to the newspapers, than had gathered to hear any other speaker; and the benches, the gangways and the spaces below the bar and behind the Chair were all filled to overflowing. Despite the bitterness of the struggle in the National Union, the wrangles over the Reform Bill of almost nightly recurrence and the antagonisms which these had excited, the Conservative members broke into loud acclamation at his rising. Before he had spoken for a quarter of an hour he was sustained by the cheering of the whole party. He scourged Mr. Gladstone relentlessly. He applied to him the well-known story of the Duke of Wellington sitting down after making a speech on Reform amid a great buzz of conversation and, on asking the reason for the excitement, being told: 'My Lord Duke, you have announced the fall of your Government.' It was curious, he said, how different individuals appealed to the Prime Minister's sympathies. 'I compared his efforts in the cause of General Gordon with his efforts in the cause of Mr. Bradlaugh. If a hundredth part of those invaluable moral qualities bestowed upon the cause of a seditious blasphemer had been given to the support of a Christian hero, the success of Gordon's mission would have been assured. But the finest speech he ever delivered in the House of Commons was in support of the seditious blasphemer; and the very worst he ever delivered, by common consent, was in the cause of the Christian hero.'

At this there was a great tumult.

Towards the end, when he had his party thoroughly behind him, Lord Randolph took occasion to declare, in the form of an elaborate eulogy upon Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, his intentions as to the leadership of the House of Commons. ‘I hear a great deal about the deplorable weakness of the Opposition; but I did not detect any deplorable weakness in the speech of the right honourable gentleman who proposed this motion; nor did I detect any deplorable weakness in the sonorous and resonant cheers which greeted that speech continually from beginning to end—a speech with reference to which I may be permitted to remark that it was a magnificent indictment, all the more magnificent because it was so measured and so grave; and I think it must have recalled to the Prime Minister himself the palmy days of Tory leadership.’

‘The Government,’ he concluded, ‘when they went to Egypt abandoned every atom of principle which they possessed. Egypt has been a Nemesis to them and will, I believe, be their ruin. But the whole question is at last, thank God, presented to us in an intelligible form. Will you or will you not rescue Gordon? Answer "Aye" or "No." The people of England and Scotland, and of Ireland also, I believe, say "Aye."’ (Cries of "No" from the Ministerial benches and cheers.) ‘The Prime Minister and a few Radical fanatics say "No"; but great as is the Prime Minister’s power, long as has been his career and dazzling as his eloquence is, the odds against him on this question are so overwhelming that even he must either submit or resign.’ The Government escaped defeat only by twenty-eight votes. Thirty-one Home Rulers voted with the Tory party; and fifteen, or enough to have carried the censure, voted with Ministers. The debate and the division alike foreshadowed the events of 1885.

While the fortunes of battle in the House of Commons varied thus from day to day, the attention of both factions

in the National Union was concentrated on the approaching Conference of delegates from all parts of the country, when the new Council must be elected. The chairmanship depended upon the complexion of the Council. Lord Percy, the official candidate, and his friends entertained hopes that an appeal to the delegates to stand by the official leaders of the party and to repudiate disloyalty would result in the election of a Council hostile to Lord Randolph Churchill. To this end nothing was neglected. A careful and earnest canvass was set on foot, supported by all the influence which the representatives of the old and high Toryism could command. Sheffield, it appears, was specially selected for the meeting-place, as the local members were hostile to Lord Randolph; and that authority in its highest embodiment should not be lacking, Lord Salisbury himself undertook to address the assembled delegates at the evening meeting.

On the other hand Lord Randolph Churchill's friends were not idle, and Mr. Gorst's great experience in all matters of organisation proved invaluable; but when all had been done, the event rested upon a popular vote, the character of which none could forecast. The Conference was awaited by all parties with anxiety and excitement, and passion ran high in the weeks that preceded it. Lord Randolph had promised informally to speak for Mr. Stuart-Wortley at Sheffield. Consequent upon that gentleman's hostility he now refused. He was pressed to reconsider his decision in order to avoid making differences public. He refused. The report of the Council of the National Union was now prepared for the Conference. It contained a succinct account of the course of the quarrel, with many of the letters published in the last chapter. It was felt that its circulation would be damaging to party interests. Mr. Hartley, 'at risk even of annoying you,' wrote (July 9) to urge that it should be suppressed or modified. Lord Randolph curtly replied that the report unanimously

adopted by the Council for presentation to the Conference could not now be altered without authority. A requisition under the rules of the National Union, duly signed by five members of the Council, was forwarded to Lord Randolph (July 10) demanding a special meeting for the purpose of revising the report. Availing himself of the discretionary power reserved to the Chairman under by-law No. 23, Lord Randolph declined to act upon the requisition.

The following correspondence also passed at this time between him and Sir Stafford Northcote:—

Sir Stafford Northcote to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Private.

30 St. James's Place, S.W.: July 10, 1884.

Dear Lord Randolph,—Will you be able to give me a few minutes' conversation after Mr. Gladstone has made his statement to-night?

We ought, I think, as soon as the intentions of the Government have been disclosed, to come to some arrangement for a meeting in London (either St. James's Hall, Duke of Wellington's Riding School, or elsewhere, but *not* out of doors) in order to give the keynote for the party in the country. I would not make it a meeting about the Reform Bill exclusively, but have three or four resolutions—one a general review of the Ministerial misdeeds; another a growl about Egypt; another on the question of the Franchise Bill; and a concluding one urging a dissolution, unless Gladstone has already announced one.

I should like to consult you about the resolutions and about some other points.

I remain
Yours very faithfully,
Stafford H. Northcote.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Sir Stafford Northcote.

2 Connaught Place, W.: July 10, 1884.

Dear Sir Stafford Northcote,—It is my duty always to hold myself at your service whenever it may be your pleasure to do me the honour of asking my opinion on any political question; at the same time I feel bound to remark that former occasions on which

on your invitation I have offered an opinion have almost invariably led to considerable misunderstandings, for which, of course, I blame no one but myself.

The Conference of Associations which is to meet on the 23rd will have to decide upon important and serious differences which have arisen between myself and certain other parties who claim to be acting (with what amount of justice I cannot determine) as the representatives and agents of yourself and the Marquis of Salisbury; and till that Conference has taken place I am certain that it is not in my power to attend public meetings with the slightest usefulness or effect.

Believe me to be
Yours very faithfully,
Randolph S. Churchill.

The Conservative Associations assembled at Sheffield on July 23. Lord Randolph did not attend Lord Salisbury's meeting, though Mr. Chaplin naïvely assured him that he would have been welcome. Upwards of 450 delegates gathered under his presidency in the Cutlers' Hall. He made a conciliatory speech, urging the necessity of adapting the organisation of the Conservative party to the changed political requirements of the day. He expounded the report at length and concluded by declaring that in the contest between himself and Lord Percy he was actuated by no personal ambition, but anxious for the welfare of the party. Lord Percy thereupon attacked him, asserting 'that he had broken away from the leaders of the party and not adhered to them as he ought to have done.' It was known that he spoke with official authority and that the candidates whom he proposed were those favoured by Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote. After a long debate the delegates voted. Lord Randolph Churchill was placed at the head of the poll by 346 votes. Mr. Forwood, his principal supporter, was second, but after a great interval (298). Six of his nominees occupied the first six places. Lord Percy did not appear till the eighth place (260). Lord Salisbury's private secretary, who was also a candidate,

was rejected. Out of thirty candidates proposed by Lord Randolph Churchill, twenty-two were elected. The whole official authority of the party exerted by Lord Percy secured only eighteen out of thirty-six put forward by him. 'The result,' said the *Times* (July 24), 'showed that the substantial victory rested with Lord Randolph Churchill.' His main reforms in organisation had been conceded by the Central Committee and adopted by resolution at the Conference. His own re-election as Chairman was assured.

But now a strange and unexpected turn was given to the course of events. Lord Randolph Churchill's victory, remarkable as it was, had been narrowly won. A powerful and inflamed minority remained upon the Council of the National Union to hamper and assail the leader of Tory Democracy. The proverbial three courses lay before him. To renew his chairmanship and to continue an internecine quarrel up to the very verge of the General Election; to withdraw for a time from public life; or to make a peace with Lord Salisbury. He chose the third. Sir Henry Wolff was authorised to open negotiations. Mr. Balfour's good offices were freely tendered. Lord Salisbury was prompt in seizing the opportunity. Indeed, the suicidal results to the principals and to their party of a continuance of the quarrel were obvious. Terms of reconciliation were speedily arranged. The Central Committee was abolished, and the democratic reforms in the organisation of the National Union were confirmed; the Primrose League was formally recognised and supported by the official leaders. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who had been elected to the Council of the National Union as an independent member on the list of neither contending faction, and who was liked and trusted by both sides, was nominated as the new Chairman. There was, moreover, a general understanding that Lord Randolph Churchill and his friends were to act in harmony with Lord Salisbury and were to be treated with full confidence by him and the ruling members of the

Conservative party.

Such were the conditions, so far as they could be, or have ever been, put on paper. But it is evident that their moral consequences were of much graver importance. No record has been preserved of what passed at the interview between Lord Randolph Churchill and Lord Salisbury. But certain very significant facts are plain. Lord Salisbury did not select a lieutenant. He formed an alliance on terms of comradeship for the general advantage of the party. The two men met as chiefs of almost equal powers. Although Lord Salisbury's primacy was never disputed by Lord Randolph Churchill, they exercised from the very first a divided authority; and it is in the light of this unusual relationship—based not, indeed, upon any definite agreement, but arising out of the hard facts of the situation—that the conduct of both, amid the political turbulence of the next two years, can alone be fairly judged.

Lord Salisbury was loyal throughout to Sir Stafford Northcote, even in a degree which was often detrimental to party interests. But, whatever his wishes may have been, the settlement of the National Union dispute sealed that unfortunate statesman's fate—so far as the leadership of the House of Commons was concerned. The dinner to which, in celebration of the peace, Lord Salisbury invited the Council of the National Union, including a majority of those who had been his most active opponents during the past year, was the public acceptance of Tory Democracy in the councils of the Conservative party. The great meeting held in the Pomona Gardens at Manchester in August and addressed by Lord Salisbury, Lord Randolph Churchill, and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, was a plain indication of the Cabinet and Parliamentary arrangements which would be a necessary consequence of that acceptance.

Sir Henry Wolff, who had been throughout these conflicts Lord Randolph's most intimate and trusted friend, entirely approved of the steps which had been taken to end

the quarrel.[24] Mr. Gorst also wrote to Lord Randolph on July 27, 1884, expressly and explicitly signifying his concurrence and describing Lord Randolph Churchill's refusal to continue as Chairman of Council of the National Union as 'a good stroke of policy.' But it has since been suggested, upon apparently unimpeachable authority,[25] that Mr. Gorst disapproved of the reconciliation; that he thought greater advantage to the Conservative party would have followed from the prosecution of the dispute; and that he conceived himself in some measure deserted by its abandonment. Of Lord Randolph's behaviour to his able, energetic supporter the reader will be able to judge before the story is complete. But there is no doubt that Mr. Gorst was for a time, after the *concordat*, in a position of much weakness and isolation. He had incurred very bitter enmities by the part he had taken in the quarrel. It was especially resented that those talents of organisation which had so greatly aided the Tory victory of 1874, should have been employed against the recognised leaders of the Conservative party ten years later. Men who did not think it wise, in view of what had happened in the past, and still more of what might happen in the future, to anger Lord Randolph Churchill, were glad enough to indulge their spite upon Mr. Gorst. His real feeling—that he had been thrown over—must have become apparent to Lord Randolph Churchill, in spite of his written agreement in the course adopted; and a coolness ensued between them, diversified with occasional heats.

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach laid the National Union peacefully to rest in an obscurity from which its members have only emerged at infrequent intervals to pass Protectionist resolutions. Nearly twenty years elapsed before it recovered, at another Sheffield Conference, a passing shadow of its old importance, and the distinction which it achieved on that occasion may excuse the hope that its future repose will long remain unbroken.

The reconciliation of Lord Randolph Churchill with Lord Salisbury which followed on the Sheffield Conference, was comprehensive and loyally observed. The tactics of the Opposition became more effective in the House of Commons and their councils more harmonious. But strife in the constituencies was to succeed this session of storm and effort. Faced by the rejection of a great popular measure at the hands of hereditary legislators, the Liberal Government did not waver. The autumn was consumed in angry agitation and Parliament was specially summoned for a winter session to pass the Bill again. The Radicals were full of hope that no compromise would be offered or accepted. Never before or since had they laid hands upon so good a battering-ram as the Franchise Bill. Never since those days has the House of Lords placed itself on ground so insecure. But the pressure of public opinion proved effective; Mr. Gladstone was benevolent; and the Queen urgent for a settlement. Lord Randolph Churchill was deeply impressed with the danger of a continuance of the constitutional struggle between the Lords and the Commons. 'It was not a little owing to the urgency,' writes Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, 'with which he pressed on me the need of some arrangement that, with the consent of Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote, I had the preliminary conferences with Lord Hartington which led to the more formal meetings of the leaders of both parties.' Finally, after weeks of haggling, expostulation, menace, and intrigue, it was finally arranged that the Franchise Bill should pass first and that Redistribution upon lines agreeable to both parties should follow forthwith.

To mark and proclaim the newly compacted alliance within the Conservative party, Sir Stafford Northcote came during the autumn recess to speak in Lord Randolph's support at Birmingham. Of all the demonstrations organised against the House of Lords for its rejection of

the Franchise Bill scarcely any had exceeded that held at Soho Pool, near Birmingham, on Bank Holiday. Aston Park, in the same neighbourhood, had been secured on October 13 by the Conservatives for a counter-demonstration, which was to open a week of campaigning throughout the district. Besides Sir Stafford and Lord Randolph Churchill, Colonel Burnaby and many other members of Parliament and candidates were to address the concourse at five simultaneous political meetings, and the well-known attractions of the Park and of the orators were to be strengthened by bands of music and a firework display. According to the Conservatives, the Aston demonstration was to represent the Midlands in general and Birmingham in particular, and special trains were run from all the surrounding constituencies with detachments of enthusiastic Tories and holiday-makers.

These well-conceived arrangements caused much offence to the Radicals of Birmingham. They declared that an attempt was to be made to misrepresent the feeling of their city by importing outsiders and excursionists to swell the numbers of the demonstrators; and as the meetings had been called from the citizens of Birmingham and were in local parlance ‘town meetings’ rather than ordinary ‘party meetings,’ they resolved to attend them too. Admission to Aston Park was by ticket. It was stated that 120,000 tickets would be issued to those who applied for them. Everyone applied. Trade Union secretaries, great Liberal manufacturers like the Tangyes, officials of the Radical organisations, applied for, in some cases, as many as 800 at a time. The promoters of the demonstration became alarmed; and as it was now clear—and even avowed—that the Radicals would attend in force and spoil the effect, the issue of tickets was stopped and the applications were refused. Elaborate, formidable, and, as it proved, thoroughly effective measures were thereupon adopted to enable the voice of Birmingham to be heard. It became

known that large numbers of tickets were being forged. Of course, no one in authority in the Liberal party lent any countenance to such proceedings. Mr. Schnadhorst went away for the day upon important business. A few working men—a mere handful of trampled toilers—spontaneously, with no help from their party, inspired by no other emotion than zeal for freedom and Reform, organised a counter-demonstration. The place of meeting was selected, by an unlucky coincidence, just outside the walls of Aston Park; and there also it happened that, on the appointed day, a cart containing ladders and other useful appliances drew up. The bills announcing this innocent counter-demonstration summoned the 'Men of Birmingham and the Midlands' to assemble for deliberation in Witton Road (just outside the Park), after which 'let all who can get admittance attend the Tory meetings, wear the Gladstone badge, and show you are not ashamed of your colours.' In order that nothing should interfere with the discharge of these civic duties, Tangye's and other large works in the city closed for the afternoon.

The day arrived. The weather was suitable to outdoor political debate. The holders of tickets—forged or genuine—assembled by road and rail from all parts of the Midlands. The Aston grounds were soon crowded with demonstrators. Outside, the counter-demonstration, made up of three large processions, estimated at 15,000 strong, converged upon a waste plot of land hard by the Park wall. Individuals began to climb over but were stopped by broken glass. Earnest hands seized the ladders which stood there by chance and the broken glass was demolished. A waggon which had served as the platform was dragged towards the wall; and by this, by the ladders, and also, it appears, by a convenient tree, many persons swarmed over. Inside they found a single policeman, who could do nothing to gainsay them, and a tool-house containing a number of planks. By using the planks as battering-rams a

breach was made in the wall and thousands of excited people poured through it into the Park to join by force their friends who had entered by fraud.

The open-air meetings were broken up by riot. Stones, potatoes, and even chairs were flung at the members of Parliament who attempted to address the crowd. The platform of the great hall was stormed. Sir Stafford Northcote, who showed much pluck throughout these turbulent experiences which his physical condition ill fitted him to endure, and Lord Randolph Churchill were overwhelmed by furious clamour and finally driven from the hall in the midst of a battle royal of sticks and chair-legs. Lord Randolph, not following promptly enough, was picked up and carried away bodily by a burly admirer from Wolverhampton. The crowd at first followed at a walk and afterwards at a run, and so menacing and dangerous was their temper that Sir Stafford Northcote was dragged along by his guards at full speed and even so narrowly avoided capture. Other members of Parliament had rougher experiences and Mr. Darling[26] was lucky to make an escape from a window before the door of the room in which he had taken refuge was battered down. The platform of the Skating Rink collapsed while a free-fight was raging upon it. The fireworks perished ignominiously in broad daylight; the set-piece of Sir Stafford Northcote being received with storms of groans and fired off, by a refinement of cruelty, *upside down*. Such were the Aston riots. No persons were actually killed in them, but not a few were seriously injured, and hundreds carried away scars and bruises from the fray.

The indignation caused among the Conservatives of Birmingham, and indeed throughout the country, by these events was fierce and bitter. Lord Randolph Churchill turned to the fullest advantage the blunder into which his adversaries had been drawn. Every day for a week, in spite of repeated threats of personal violence, he journeyed to

and fro in Birmingham and in a series of speeches, published and read in every part of the country, he fastened the responsibility for disorder and intimidation upon Mr. Chamberlain and his Caucus. He urged Conservative working men to take effective measures to protect themselves from tyranny and not to hesitate to meet force by force. 'I do not think,' he said, 'the Conservative party ought to look to the police for assistance. We are quite capable of taking care of ourselves.' Formal resolutions were accordingly passed by Conservative Clubs, pledging themselves to take concerted measures of defence and of reprisal. Upon the connection of the Birmingham Corporation with Radical politics he was explicit.

The contest in Birmingham is not a contest, such as is carried on in other constituencies in England, between party and party. It is a contest between popular self-government and a corrupt oligarchy; between electoral freedom and Russian despotism; between open dealing and Venetian espionage; between individual security and public order and all the resources and ingenuity of terror and intimidation. The whole of the governing power of the borough of Birmingham is almost absolutely in the hands of the Caucus. The patronage disposed of is enormous. The Caucus, acting under the name of the Corporation, own the gasworks; they own the water supply; they control the lunatic asylums; they control the grammar school; they control some large establishments in the nature of a drainage farm; they manipulate the borough funds to the extent of nearly one million a year; they pay something like 80,000*l.* a year in wages; and their number of employees, as far as I can ascertain, is about 25,000. And all these enormous resources are directed principally, not so much to the good of the town of Birmingham, as to the maintenance of the power of the Caucus. Every one of their employees knows that he holds his office, his position, his employment, upon the distinct understanding that in all political and municipal matters he must blindly submit himself; and upon the slightest sign even of independence—to say nothing of opposition—he will lose his employment; he will be thrown upon the world with all his family, even if it should lead to his ruin or

his starvation.

These charges were furiously denied, and were no doubt exaggerated in form; but they bore a sufficiently accurate and substantial relation to circumstances well within the knowledge of Birmingham citizens to be highly damaging. Moreover, the argument that the Radical party, although already possessed of all the machinery of national government, were preparing—by the abolition of the Second Chamber on the one hand, and the suppression of public meetings on the other—to subvert the Constitution and to enter upon revolutionary paths, gained acceptance in England far beyond the ordinary limits of Conservative opinion.

So soon as Parliament met, a week later, for the winter session, Lord Randolph placed upon the paper an amendment to the Address taking the form of a vote of censure on Mr. Chamberlain for speeches which encouraged interference with freedom of discussion and incited to riot and disorder. The debate was heralded for several days by much preliminary snarling. Mr. Chamberlain, irritated by constant cross-questioning, referred to Sir Henry Wolff as Lord Randolph Churchill's 'jackal.' 'With his usual insolence,' observed Sir Henry Wolff in reply; and, on being rebuked by the Speaker, he substituted 'with his usual courtesy.' Mr. Chaplin inquired whether the President of the Local Government Board would not proceed to describe his opponents as 'hyænas'; and Lord Randolph Churchill, availing himself of the Speaker's ruling that the word 'jackal,' if looked upon as a figurative expression, was not out of order, proceeded to state that at the earliest possible opportunity he would move his amendment and 'draw the badger.'

This occasion was provided on October 30, and led to a singularly unpleasant debate. Lord Randolph Churchill quoted numerous extracts from Mr. Chamberlain's speeches. He asserted that no Minister of the Crown had

ever used such language and that Irish members had been committed to prison for language much less strong. He declared that Mr. Chamberlain knew beforehand of the counter-demonstration and of what it was intended to effect and that he might easily have prevented the riot had he chosen to do so. Mr. Chamberlain exerted himself greatly, and not unsuccessfully, in replying. He in his turn was able to discover in Lord Randolph Churchill's speeches some traces of violent language. He flatly denied that he had had any personal complicity in the riot, which, he explained, had arisen solely from the mismanagement of the Tory organisation and from their attempt to give their meeting the character of a national demonstration. But the most effective part of his speech consisted in a number of affidavits of roughs, said to have been engaged by the Secretary of the Conservative Association to turn out Liberals from the meeting, whose violence it was alleged had provoked the outbreak. When he sat down he had in great measure stemmed the tide which had been running strongly against him. As his speech was drawing to a close Lord Randolph leaned across the gangway and asked Sir Michael Hicks-Beach if he would reply. Sir Michael, much impressed by Mr. Chamberlain's argument, declined; but Sir Hardinge Giffard, to whom Lord Randolph then turned, stepped into the breach, and with little premeditation made a most admirable and effective rejoinder, which swayed the opinion of the House and threw the gravest doubt upon the authenticity and credibility of the documents from which Mr. Chamberlain had quoted. Upon the division Lord Randolph's amendment was defeated by 214 to 178. 'The majority,' observes the *Annual Register*, 'exonerating Mr. Chamberlain from any blameworthy act, was far smaller than a member of the Cabinet commanding the confidence and sympathy of his supporters had a right to expect.'

The dispute was then carried by both parties into the

Courts. The summonses and counter-summonses were heard together at Birmingham on successive days during the month of November, and when Mr. Chamberlain was examined as a witness (November 26) attempts were made to fix upon him the responsibility of suggesting that the affidavits should be procured. But he denied it. On December 6, the compromise upon the Franchise and Redistribution Bill having been achieved nearly three weeks before, the proceedings came to an abrupt close. But at the Assizes (February 28 and March 2, 1885) a man named Peter Joyce, said to be 'Larry Mack,' a notorious rough whose affidavit had been quoted in Parliament, was tried before Mr. Justice Field on the charge of criminal libel and sentenced, despite the lukewarmness of the prosecution and strong recommendation to mercy, to six weeks' imprisonment. A Liberal of respectable antecedents was found guilty of having had the 'forged tickets' printed and was heavily fined. No evidence was ever produced to sustain any charge against Mr. Chamberlain of having himself fomented the disorders; but an impression was created that the whole affair—especially the discharging of the fireworks upside down—showed that he had been only partially successful in exerting those influences of moral restraint which are so much to be commended in political leaders during times of popular excitement.

The Aston riots led to some curious consequences. When Lord Randolph was arranging for the prosecutions of the 'roughs' whose depositions Mr. Chamberlain had read to the House of Commons, he asked one of his friends to find him a lawyer of repute who would conduct the case so as to make 'as much political capital out of it as possible.' A Mr. Henry Matthews—already a barrister of distinction upon the Midland Circuit—was recommended to him. They met at dinner on two successive nights. Lord Randolph was perfectly delighted with his conversation and his personality and formed the very highest opinion of

his powers. At his insistence Mr. Matthews became a candidate for a Birmingham seat. Eighteen months later, when he was reading in the Athenæum Club the newspaper rumours of the composition of Lord Salisbury's second Administration, he was startled and astonished by Lord Randolph breaking in upon him with the offer of the office of Home Secretary.

The course of their violent political quarrels and the harsh language and personal charges with which they were accompanied produced a total breach in Lord Randolph's private friendship with Mr. Chamberlain. They no longer addressed or saluted each other and such correspondence as was necessary was conducted on both sides with frigid formality. Thus:—

House of Commons: October 28.

Mr. Chamberlain presents his compliments to Lord R. Churchill and begs to thank him for his courtesy in communicating the grounds on which he is prepared to support the charge which he has brought against Mr. Chamberlain.

Lord Randolph had been much exhausted in health and strength by the unremitting exertions of the year, and late in November it was announced that he purposed to start almost immediately for a four months' holiday to India. Mr. Chamberlain no sooner heard this than he was anxious to make friends. His letter speaks for itself:—

Mr. Chamberlain to Lord Randolph Churchill.

40 Prince's Gardens, S.W.; November 27, 1884.

My dear Churchill,—You see that I have returned to the old superscription. If you object, I will not offend again; but I do not like to allow you to leave the country for what, I understand, is a long voyage, necessitated by circumstances that I sincerely regret, without saying that recent occurrences have, in my case at all events, left no personal bitterness behind.

I am sorry that we have been forced into public conflict; I should be still more sorry if political opposition degenerated into a private quarrel.

I heartily wish you a pleasant holiday, and hope that rest and change of scene may thoroughly restore your health and strength.

Believe me,
Sans rancune,
Yours very truly,
J. Chamberlain.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Mr. Chamberlain.

2 Connaught Place, W.: November 27, 1884.

My dear Mr. Chamberlain,—I hasten to answer your very kind letter, which caused me the greatest pleasure.

I had always hoped that the friendship which existed between us and which, for my part, I most highly valued, might at all times be altogether unaffected by any Parliamentary conflicts, however brisk, and even sharp, the latter might be.

It is indeed very pleasant to me to know from the generous expressions in your letter that my hopes are in no way illusory, and as long as I continue in politics it will be a source of pride to me to endeavour to the best of my abilities to mitigate the asperities of party warfare as far as you and I are concerned. I am not likely to forget that in the last Parliament you gave me the most valuable and effective support in a matter in which at that time I was greatly interested, without which support I should have been unsuccessful.

I like to think that it is neither impossible nor improbable that political circumstances may from time to time find us again in agreement; and although your position and power will be far above mine, I shall be on the look-out for those occasions.

Believe me, I am very sensible of your amiable wishes as to the results of my travels to India, and that I hope always to remain

Yours very sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

One more incident which arose out of the Reform Bill must be noticed in its place. When Parliament assembled for the winter session the Conservative leaders agreed with Lord Randolph Churchill to offer a regular though perfunctory resistance to the second passage of the Reform

Bill through the House of Commons, in order to strengthen the position of the House of Lords in effecting the compromise which was now recognised as inevitable. Lord Randolph accordingly placed on the paper an amendment to the second reading, setting forth 'that any measure purporting to provide for the better representation of the people must be accompanied by provisions for the proper arrangement of electoral areas.' This seemed to repeat as a general principle the amendment which Colonel Stanley had moved as a precise instruction on May 23, when the Bill was for the first time in Committee, which amendment Lord Randolph and the Fourth Party had opposed and indeed denounced. The political situation was entirely changed; but the verbal similarity did not escape one acute, retentive mind.

In Lord Randolph's absence at the funeral of Lord Londonderry his amendment was moved by Mr. Stanhope. To the surprise of his party Mr. Gorst rose from below the gangway and thereupon criticised and opposed the amendment in terms which bore a sufficiently close resemblance to those in which Lord Randolph had opposed it when it had last been moved. By this very able and perfectly consistent speech Mr. Gorst gave great offence to all sections of the Conservative party, who were now united in an embrace of unaffected love. Lord Randolph, when he read the newspapers next day, accepted it as a personal declaration of war. He was very angry. 'Gorst,' he said, 'must be punished'; and accordingly on the next sitting of the House (November 7) he administered to his mutinous lieutenant a castigation prolonged, deliberate, and severe. 'I have yet to learn,' he observed, with undisturbed gravity, 'that either the traditions of party warfare or Parliamentary etiquette teaches one to desert one's party and stand aloof from it and refrain from giving assistance to it, simply because of the very inadequate and miserable reason that in one's own poor and very feeble

judgment one does not altogether approve of the course which may have led them into that difficulty.' The mirth which this grimace excited was strengthened by the joy and relief alike of Government and Opposition at the breaking-up of the formidable confederacy at whose hands they had endured so much.

On December 3 Lord Randolph sailed in the *Rohilla* for India. Since the beginning of history many travellers have visited the East. Few have neglected to record their adventures. But if the reader is inclined to follow the subject of this story into an atmosphere remote from that of Westminster his own letters will be found to supply an easy and connected narrative.[27] After several years of strife he entered upon a brief interval of peace. The battles of the Reform Bill had ended in a compromise far less unsatisfactory to Tory interests than could have been expected. The agitation which menaced the House of Lords was at an end. His dispute with Lord Salisbury was settled. The Conservative party had acclaimed the return of the prodigal son. The Aston riots were forgotten in his renewed friendship with Mr. Chamberlain. And as the English coast-line faded, a passing temper of tranquil benevolence led him to send through Wolff messages of amity to all his friends—'even to the erring Gorst.'

CHAPTER IX

THE FALL OF THE GOVERNMENT

'Of this, however, I am well persuaded, that it is better to be impetuous than cautious. For Fortune is a woman who to be kept under must be beaten and roughly handled; and we see that she suffers herself to be more readily mastered by those who treat her so, than by those who are more timid in their approaches. And always, like a woman, she favours the young, because they are less scrupulous and fiercer, and command her with greater

audacity.'—Machiavelli: *The Prince*, chapter XXV.

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THIS account, which has hitherto been concerned with the doings of Lord Randolph Churchill and the steps by which he attained power in his party and in Parliament, must now for a time be greatly extended. However strictly the thread of personal narrative be followed, biography broadens insensibly into history, and the career of a private member becomes a recognisable part of the fortunes of the nation. We enter upon a period of tumult and change. Within little more than a year two General Elections were fought and four separate Administrations took their seats on the Treasury Bench. In order to find an equal convulsion it is necessary to go back almost exactly a hundred years, to the time between the fall of Lord North's Administration in 1782 and the final triumph of Mr. Pitt after his dissolution in 1784. In each period Ministries were constructed and fell like houses of cards; in each a new, young figure sprang suddenly into universal attention; in each, one of the historic parties in the State entered into a disastrous coalition; and the other, after taking office in a minority, secured a predominance which lasted for a generation.

The Administration of 1880 tottered to its fall in tragedy and disaster. General Gordon perished and Khartoum fell in February. The expeditionary columns recoiled in sorrow and failure from the desert and the Nile. The Queen telegraphed her displeasure openly to the Prime Minister; and on a vote of censure the Government escaped only by a majority of fourteen (February 27). Few more critical divisions have been taken in modern times; for the defection of eight more discontented Whigs or Liberals would have procured a dissolution before either the Reform or Redistribution Act could have come into

operation. In the temper of the moment, upon the votes of the old electorate, the Conservative party could hardly have failed to gain a clear majority. With such a prize in view the attacks of the Opposition increased in vehemence, bitterness, and effect. Votes of censure succeeded each other with almost bewildering rapidity. Early in the year Mr. Chamberlain began to proclaim the new demands of Radicalism in a series of crudely impressive speeches. Nationalist Ireland struggled in the grip of Dublin Castle. The menace of Russian aggression towards the Indian frontier grew into reality. Dynamite explosions tore up the Treasury Bench and shook the structure of Westminster Hall. A momentous General Election drew near. It was indeed, as Mr. Gladstone noted in his diary, 'a time of *Sturm und Drang*.'

Lord Randolph Churchill returned from India in March, to find himself in a position of unusual importance. He had won no battle, negotiated no peace; he had passed no great measure of reform; he had never held public office; he was not even a Privy Councillor; yet he was welcomed on all sides with interest or acclamation. The political temperature was steadily rising with the approach of the General Election. The Fourth Party received him with joy and the House of Commons with satisfaction. Mr. Gladstone in his courtly way walked across the House to shake hands with him. His absence had been felt on his own side. He was looked to as a man who would infuse a belligerent energy into the Opposition and range their lines for the impending battle. It was evident to all men that he occupied a position in which he might turn the balance of many great things. 'What place will you give him when the Government is formed?' Sir Stafford Northcote was asked by a friend. 'Say rather,' replied the leader of the Opposition, 'what place will he give me?' 'I had no idea,' said Lord Randolph calmly when this was repeated to him, 'that he had so much wit.'

The passage of a year had wrought important changes. Birmingham, divided by the Reform Bill into seven seats, was no longer the great three-member constituency which had invited him to stand. Colonel Burnaby, his good comrade, had been killed at Abu Klea.[28] But the Central Division sent a pressing requisition. Although the acceptance involved a direct contest with Mr. Bright himself, Lord Randolph considered himself bound by his former promise to come forward; but, lest fortune should be adverse in Birmingham, Mr. Kerans voluntarily withdrew from the candidature of South Paddington, so that that seat also might be at his disposal.

It is not easy to estimate, and quite impossible to explain, the personal ascendency which he had by this time acquired in the House of Commons. The Conservative Opposition almost instinctively yielded to his decisions. His authority seemed to have grown in his absence. On the motion to go into Committee on the Egyptian Loan Bill (April 16) Sir Richard Cross moved an amendment urging that the Suez Canal Convention should be submitted to the House before it was finally settled. The ground was ill-chosen and the occasion inauspicious. The speech of the mover could not fully surmount these disadvantages. But the amendment was moved with all the sanction and authority of the official Opposition, and the party Whips had summoned their followers from far and near to support it. Lord Randolph Churchill made a short speech, suave and friendly in substance, elaborately polite in form, but with just a suspicion of irony. He deprecated the amendment. He persuaded both sides of the House that it was unfortunate. The debate came abruptly to a conclusion. All determination of dividing oozed out of the Opposition. The amendment was withdrawn. This was a typical incident.

Lord Randolph had returned from India at a time when Indian problems occupied all minds. The turbulence of

English politics was hushed for a space by a perilous interlude. In the year 1884, after the occupation of Merv, the Russian Empire attained the limits of its expansion southwards and came at last into contact with the territories of the Amir, to whom, by the engagements of 1880, Great Britain had given a pledge of protection against external aggression. A joint demarcation of the northern boundary of Afghanistan was decided on by the British and Russian Governments, from the Persian border eastwards to a point on the Oxus, beyond which that river had been recognised by the agreement of 1873 as constituting the limits of Afghan territory. The Commissioners of the two Powers had met on the frontier in November 1884, and devoted themselves to their task with that air of leisurely diligence inseparable from international undertakings. On March 30 the tangled negotiations were torn to pieces by an act of violence. While diplomatists were groping for scientific frontiers upon imperfect maps and amid unfamiliar names, General Komaroff advanced, 'covenant' notwithstanding, collided with the Afghan pickets upon the debatable ground, and in a short but bloody action at Penjdeh drove the Amir's forces from the field. All England was stirred. The newspapers were hot to counsel war. A wave of double panic swept across the country. The national temper rose and the funds fell. A period of acute suspense followed.

On all that concerned the safety of India Lord Randolph spoke in picturesque and thoughtful language. 'Our rule in India,' he said at the Primrose League banquet in the St. James's Hall on April 18, 'is, as it were, a sheet of oil spread out over the surface of, and keeping calm and quiet and unruffled by storms, an immense and profound ocean of humanity. Underneath that rule lie hidden all the memories of fallen dynasties, all the traditions of vanquished races, all the pride of insulted creeds....' He spoke of the advance of Russia on the North-West Frontier

—'that sometimes stealthy, sometimes open, always gradual, always sure advance of countless hosts, now resembling the gliding of a serpent, now the bound of a tiger'—as a perpetual injury to stability and progress in the Government and people of India. And his counsels, like those of Lord Salisbury, seemed full of the menace of war.

On April 27 Mr. Gladstone asked the House of Commons for his vote of credit of 11,000,000*l.* He unfolded the 'case for preparation' in an impressive harangue. Tory blood, long chilled, stirred in his veins. The eloquence and authority of his great war speech covered everything behind it—even the total abandonment of the Soudan, which was foreshadowed almost incidentally—and carried everything before it. He sat down while the House was ringing with the united acclamations of Radicals who hated war and of Tories who hated him. The debate collapsed. Notices of motion and amendment disappeared as if by magic. The vote was carried without a single protest.

But it was no part of the policy of the Opposition to allow Mr. Gladstone to obtain personal triumphs of this character. Though for the time they were dazzled by his rhetoric, they felt no confidence that the honour of the country was safe in his hands; and the parlous condition to which British relations with Russia had come, only made them more anxious to get possession of the Government. Lord Randolph, who had freed himself altogether from the Gladstone spell, saw in the collapse of the debate only another proof of that feeble and ineffective leadership of the Opposition against which he had warred so ruthlessly. Hitherto his communications with Lord Salisbury had been scanty and formal. Since the settlement of the National Union dispute no letters had passed between them; and although they were supposed to be working in harmonious agreement, they hardly knew each other at all. But Lord Randolph's vexation prompted him to write with much

more freedom than he had yet allowed himself; and this proved the beginning of an intimate correspondence and association only to cease after the crisis in British politics was over.

Private.

Turf Club, Piccadilly: April 27, 1885. 11 P.M.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—The Opposition cannot be conducted to any other goal but smash if things are to go on as they did to-night. At first all went well. We divided, and were only beaten by 43—a respectable position, the only unpleasant feature of which was the slack attendance of our party. A four-line whip had been out for a week. Many telegrams had been despatched yesterday, and yet only about 160 Tories came up to the scratch. The worst was to come, and I blame myself as much as anyone for what happened. Mr. Gladstone was evidently much annoyed by the opposition to his vote of credit arrangements and commenced his statement in Committee by the most wanton, outrageous, violent, and yet wretchedly weak attack upon the late Government. He then went on into a very elaborate and easily exposed apology for the evacuation of the Soudan, and finally wound up (and this part I did not hear) with a very warlike denunciation of Russian aggression, which H. Fowler of the Home Office told me he thought was too strong. Would you believe it? The whole Front Opposition Bench sat as mute as mummies—though, after all, it was they who had been flouted—and the Prime Minister got his 11,000,000*l.* at one gulp, without a remark of any sort or kind. I have not really the right to complain or criticise, as I went away in the middle of his speech to dine; but it never occurred to me for a moment that Sir S. N. would allow his intemperate remarks to pass unnoticed, or that the debate would collapse in such an ignominious manner for the Opposition.

It is quite possible that the Metropolitan Press may not notice this so strongly, but the Liberal provincial Press will; and the fact remains that at this time of day Gladstone has the audacity to revive in their worst form all the stale and exploded charges against the Beaconsfield Government, and that Northcote, the man most concerned, has not a word to say in reply. The effect in the House of Commons has been deplorable. All the Liberals are cock-a-whoop, and Gladstone has been allowed to obtain,

gratuitously, an unparalleled Parliamentary triumph. It is probable that in the next few weeks crisis and sensation will follow each other closely. You know that under these circumstances, in the House of Commons, if the leader of the Opposition does not move, no one else can; and if to-night's proceedings are to be repeated, we are done. Excuse, I pray you, a hurried scrawl. I thought you might like to have an account fresh from the House of Commons.

Yours very sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

The reply was prompt and friendly.

'I sympathise with you very heartily,' replied Lord Salisbury late the same night. 'But what can I do? It is not a case where advice would be of any service. In fact, I sometimes think my advice does more harm than good; for, if only partially followed, it may produce exactly the reverse of the intended effect. I hope the papers will attribute the collapse to our exalted patriotism. At least, that is the only hope with which one can console oneself.'

Lord Randolph wrote again:—

Private and Confidential.

Carlton Club: April 28, 1885.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—I have been thinking of nothing else but the events of last night in the House of Commons and, encouraged by your kind note received this morning, I venture to inflict upon you another letter.

The tone of the Metropolitan Press this morning is not unfavourable to us; but the Metropolitan Press is most misleading. I see every day the provincial Press, and I know well how in their London correspondence and in their articles they will magnify the personal triumph of Mr. Gladstone. He had been running down for some time, but has now, *for the time*, completely recovered his old position by the extraordinary and unprecedented *coup* he carried off last night. That *coup* has done us, as a party, more real harm with the constituencies than any event in this Parliament which I can remember. This sort of thing did not matter in 1880; but we are now within six months of a

General Election, and any event which greatly elevates the Liberals and depresses our own people has a terrible effect. That triumph of last night will be repeated unless very decided and energetic steps are taken now. The personal ascendency of Mr. Gladstone is our great difficulty. If we can destroy or mitigate that, we gain adherents. I know what the little Fourth Party did in '80 and '81 and what support and sympathy they acquired in the country on that account. That old Fourth Party has disappeared; but the time has come when another body of the same nature, but on much better and weightier lines, might be formed, and might effect astonishing Parliamentary success.

I quite perceive that anything in the nature of open revolt against Sir S. N. would be fatal in every way. At the same time *it is madness* to blind yourself to the fact that whatever abilities he once possessed for guiding a party are utterly gone and that his influence upon the vigour and vitality of the party now enervates and enfeebles; and *that* at a moment when the greatest possible party life and vigour is a matter of life and death.

I have suggested to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach that he should remain permanently in town for the remainder of the Session and should be always in the House of Commons when it is sitting; and I have told him that if he can pledge himself to this, I believe a certain number of M.P.'s would pledge themselves to be always at his back. I allude principally to the old Fourth Party, to Raikes and Chaplin, to Dyke and Gibson, and to one or two more very talented and ambitious young members of the party. The effect of the constant attendance and skilful action of such a body night after night upon the Government cannot be over-estimated. It might lead them to throw up the sponge, either by one or more unexpected defeats. But, in any case, it would keep our party in the country alive and in good heart and should supply them with endless topics for local controversy. It is absolutely essential that some member of real position and influence upon the Front Bench should be at the head of such a combination. The weakness of the old Fourth Party was that they had no *point d'appui*; they were always a body of skirmishers altogether *en l'air*. And yet House of Commons history would be altogether misread if their disintegrating effect upon the Liberal party was underestimated or ignored. To show you what might have been done last night, I have ascertained from so reliable a source as

Lord R. Grosvenor that all the elements of the Courtney faction and the Labouchere faction might have been let loose last night, if only Sir S. N. had not weakly yielded to an evanescent impression created by Gladstone's gingerbread rhetoric, and allowed the debate to collapse. I think under high persuasion Sir M. Hicks-Beach would be prepared to make great sacrifices and run some personal risks, and it is for that reason that I bring all these matters to your notice. I may, without overmuch presumption, claim some little authority on these party interests. My letters to the *Times* in 1882 and my article in the *Fortnightly* clearly foretold the ultimate effect of Sir S. N.'s leadership. They brought much odium upon me at the time and may indeed have embarrassed persons I wished not to embarrass, but my word has been justified by events and by present public opinion.

I pray you not to allow yourself to imagine that either then or now was I or am I actuated by much, or indeed any, personal ambition. My only desire is to see the game properly and scientifically played, and the Conservative party fairly strong in the next Parliament; and I do not care a rap who carries off the laurels or the credit. The plan I propose for efficient Parliamentary action during the remainder of the Session may be skilfully carried out without any formal communication to Sir S. N. But not only does it depend upon Sir Michael being supported by a certain number of M.P.'s; that body will have to be inspired by yourself and will have to show that in their action they are receiving and deserving your support and approval.

I am ashamed of myself for worrying you with this interminable MS. It is only the critical condition of our party prospects which enables me to do it.

Yours very sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

'I concur very much,' wrote Lord Salisbury in answer to this lengthy appeal, 'in your estimate of the evil; and your idea of surrounding the Sultan with a body of Janissaries under Sir M. Beach is likely to be very effective if vigorously carried out. I will gladly do anything I can to help, but always with one reservation. I am bound to Sir S. N.—as a colleague—by a tie, not of expediency, but of

honour; and I could not take part in anything which would be at variance with entire loyalty to him. But what you propose will rather take the form of assistance than supersession. I think that, properly managed, your *jeune garde* may do great things and acquire considerable practical authority. I will talk the matter over with Beach whenever I can see him. But he must abandon agriculture.'

The Conservative party had repented of their enthusiasm by May 4, when the Committee stage of the vote of credit was again set down for discussion. The decision to abandon the Soudan altogether and admit defeat in that quarter of the world had soaked in. They now learned, besides, that—vote of 11,000,000*l.* notwithstanding—Anglo-Russian differences were to be submitted to arbitration—'surrender disguised as arbitration,' as Lord Randolph Churchill called it. They were indignant at what they considered a betrayal. But how to show their displeasure? Sir Michael Hicks-Beach protested against the vote of credit being proceeded with in the altered circumstances without further delay. Lord Randolph, who had a speech all ready, intimated meekly that, unless the vote of credit was forthwith debated, he would obstruct the passage of Supply. The Government, anxious to get their business through, and uncertain which section in the Opposition would prove the more recalcitrant, proposed a compromise. Lord Randolph waved it aside and remained obdurate. The vote of credit came on at once.

The speech which he then delivered was a speech of minute detail, but of accurate detail. In twenty-four hours he had mastered an enormous Blue Book. No one could contradict him at any point. 'So far as I know,' said Lord Salisbury later, 'that description [of Russian proceedings] is historically unimpeachable.' Into the entanglements of General Komaroff's action, of the strategic value of Merv, of the opinions of Baron Jomini, or of the territorial rights of the Amir in the disputed regions of the Murghab and

Khushk rivers it is not, fortunately, necessary to enter. But one episode in Lord Randolph's second speech on May 11 is worthy of record. The complacency with which the Government, and particularly the Prime Minister, had abandoned, in the Soudan, enterprises for the sake of which so many lives, British and Arab, had been sacrificed, had excited general wonder and even disgust.

'I was reading in the *Times* this morning,' said Lord Randolph, dropping his voice and buttoning up his coat —'does the Prime Minister ever read the *Times*?' Mr. Gladstone tossed his head disdainfully. 'It is a pity, because if the Prime Minister had read the *Times* this morning he could not have failed to notice the review of a very interesting book—"The Home Letters of Lord Beaconsfield"—edited by Mr. Ralph Disraeli, who is, I believe, a friend of the Prime Minister's.' ('Nothing of the sort,' said Mr. Gladstone.) 'Lord Beaconsfield, it appears, went many years ago to Yanina, where he had an interview with a very celebrated Minister—Redschid Pasha. There had recently been a great insurrection in Albania which had been put down by the Turks. This is Lord Beaconsfield's account of the interview: "I bowed with all the nonchalance of St. James's Street to a little, ferocious-looking, shrivelled, careworn man, plainly dressed, with a brow covered with wrinkles and a countenance clouded with anxiety and thought. I seated myself on the divan of the Grand Vizier ('who,' the Austrian Consul observed, 'has destroyed in the course of the last three months—not in war—upwards of four thousand of my acquaintance') with the self-possession of a morning call. Our conversation I need not repeat. We congratulated him on the pacification of Albania. He rejoined that the peace of the world was his only object and the happiness of mankind his only wish."' Here there was a long pause, intensified by the hush with which the House awaited the delayed conclusion. 'There,' cried Lord Randolph, raising

his voice suddenly, hissing his words and pointing savagely across the House at Mr. Gladstone—'there, upon the Treasury Bench, is the resuscitated Redschid Pasha.'

I have tried to revive the spirit of this attack as some of those who listened describe it, for *Hansard* reduces it to a very bald account. But, although Lord Randolph Churchill never commanded the surge and majesty of Mr. Gladstone's oratory, he held the House docile and responsive in his grip. Whatever liberties he chose to take, they chose to cheer. So through a speech of an hour and a half, all devoted to a pitiless reproach of 'that policy of base and cowardly surrender to Russia which marks your daily life.' Was it wonderful that party newspapers and party men rallied to this bold champion of their grievances? 'Why was it left to Lord Randolph Churchill,' they asked, 'alone to raise a protest against Mr. Gladstone's treacherous conduct? Where were the occupants of the Front Opposition Bench? Have they resigned their functions? If so, let them resign their position'; and so forth. The next day Lord Granville took occasion to refer to this speech at length in the House of Lords. He declared that he had marked no less than nine passages, 'some of them inaccurate and some exactly opposed to the truth.' Lord Randolph rejoined, through the columns of the *Times*, in a celebrated—or perhaps I should write 'notorious'—letter. He accused Lord Granville, among other things, of showing 'the petty malice of a Whig'; 'of his usual shamelessness'; and of 'sneaking down to the House of Lords to make without notice a variety of deliberate misrepresentations, deliberate misquotations, and false assertions which were quite in accordance with the little that was known about the public career of Earl Granville, Knight of the Garter, and, to the misfortune of his country, Her Majesty's principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.' The *Times* was so horrified at this that, not content with printing the letter in a

column of its largest type, it devoted another column and a half to repeating, for the purpose of dissociating itself from, its insults, and rebuking the bad taste of the author.

But the fate of the Government was not to be settled by anything arising out of the stormy events in the East. Another cause, nearer home and more intimately affecting party politics, was to operate decisively. The Crimes Act was to expire in August. Lord Spencer insisted upon its renewal and his demand was backed by most of the Whig Ministers. The Radical representatives, however, refused to associate themselves with such legislation and moderate Liberals were scarcely less reluctant to tar their hands with Coercion before presenting themselves to the electors as the champions of liberty. On May 15 Mr. Gladstone gave notice that the Government would propose what was, at any rate, a partial continuation of the measure. Five days later Lord Randolph Churchill, at the St. Stephen's Club, struck what was, according to Mr. Morley, a mortal blow. He intimated that a Conservative Government would not think it necessary to renew the Act. His language was guarded and carefully chosen. He had to carry his audience with him and he knew with what satisfaction many of his colleagues in the House of Commons would repudiate his words if they thought their repudiation would be effective. He said, in short, that he was shocked that so grave an announcement as the renewal of a Coercion Bill should be taken as a matter of course. The state of Ireland must be much worse than was commonly supposed for the Radical members of the Cabinet to assent to such a proposal. What a comment it was on Liberal administration, and on the boasted Viceroyalty of Lord Spencer, that the Liberal party could not govern Ireland without that arbitrary force 'which all their greatest orators have over and over again declared is no remedy for lawlessness!' 'I believe most firmly,' he concluded, 'that this ought to be the attitude of the Tory party—that while they are ready and willing to

grant to any Government of the Queen whatever powers may be necessary, on evidence adduced, for the preservation of law and order, they ought to be anxious and careful beyond measure not to be committed to any act or policy which should unnecessarily wound and injure the feelings and the sentiments of our brothers on the other side of the Channel of St. George.' That was all, but it was enough. The speaker was not disavowed. The Tory party remained mute. The words were observed and weighed both by the Irish Nationalists and the English Radicals. Within a few days Mr. Morley gave a notice of motion to oppose the renewal of the Crimes Act. The Radical members of the Cabinet stiffened their backs, and the days of the Ministry were numbered.

As the weakness and embarrassments of the Government and the dissensions in the Cabinet became glaring, it was evident the end could not be distant. But no one could tell when the moment would come; and the imminent possibility of a transference of power forced grave considerations into the minds of the chiefs of the Opposition. They hated the Government. They believed its continuance to be deeply injurious to the country. They were mortified by the dishonour which had been inflicted on British arms and British reputation. The cry of their supporters in the country for unceasing Parliamentary attack was vehement. They were bound to fight their hardest. But, upon the other hand, what if they succeeded? They could not dissolve, because of the Reform Bill. Until the new registers for the reconstructed constituencies had been prepared, and other indispensable mechanical details settled, a General Election was physically impossible. Could they, then, take office? Even if some Ministers were anxious to escape from power, willing to ride for a fall—and this was certainly not the disposition of the Prime Minister—the Government majority was enormous. The only chance of overturning the Gladstone Administration

was by a division on some issue which should at once divide the Liberals and secure the Irish vote. No mere lukewarmness on the part of Ministerialists would suffice.

It was quite plain that an incoming Government, in a minority, without the power of dissolution, brought into office by Nationalist votes, could never carry a Coercion Bill through Parliament. But was a Coercion Bill necessary? Mr. Gibson on whom the Conservatives relied as their Irish authority, was of opinion that it would not be necessary. But certainly Mr. Parnell could make it necessary! The question was long and painfully debated. Clearly they had to fight. Not to do so was to discourage the whole party on the eve of the election. Clearly they might win. To refuse then to undertake the task, to admit that the Conservative party had neither the men nor the cohesion to carry on the Government, would equally injure them in the national estimation. It was a grim dilemma. But the decision did not lie altogether in the hands of particular men. Had it been possible for any one man to give orders which would be obeyed with military discipline, he could not have failed, were he a Conservative, to decide against any attempt to turn out the Government; and, conversely, a Minister must have sought for any decent pretext to resign. But the forces at work were not to be so nicely governed. It is in the nature of Ministries to survive in spite of their inclinations. It is in the nature of Oppositions to strive to win, even in spite of their interests. Borne along by the stream, the Conservative leaders determined to overthrow the Government if they could, and they solaced themselves with Mr. Gibson's assurances that the state of Ireland did not require the renewal of the Crimes Act to protect the lives and liberties of Her Majesty's lieges.

Lord Randolph Churchill made a regular practice of preserving every letter he received. He made notes of many important interviews. Nothing that related to politics,

whether creditable or not, whether important or petty, seems to have been excluded from his archives. Had any agreement been made with Mr. Parnell sufficiently definite or formal to be called a ‘compact,’ it is most unlikely that no written record would have been preserved. No scrap of paper referring directly or indirectly to this subject can, however, be traced. On the other hand, it is certain that he had more than one conversation with the Irish leader; that he stated to him his opinion of what a Conservative Government would do should it be formed; and that he declared that he considered himself precluded by public utterances from joining a Government which would at once renew the Crimes Act. No bargain could, in the nature of things, have been made. The chances of Lord Randolph joining a Conservative Administration were undetermined. The Conservative party would certainly not have ratified such a bargain. Lord Randolph Churchill could not presume to speak in their name; and even if their official leaders had bound themselves, their action might well have been repudiated by important sections of their followers both in Parliament and in the country. ‘There was no compact or bargain of any kind,’ Lord Randolph said to FitzGibbon a year later, ‘but I told Parnell when he sat on that sofa [in Connaught Place] that if the Tories took office and I was a member of their Government, I would not consent to renew the Crimes Act. Parnell replied, "In that case, you will have the Irish vote at the Elections."’

So far as the vote in the House was concerned, the Nationalists wanted little temptation to turn out a Coercionist Liberal Administration. They had long been looking for an opportunity of revenge. They shared the general expectation that the lowering of the franchise would give a great advantage to the Liberal party. Their interest was clearly, and their intention was notoriously, to play for an equalisation in party strength by supporting the weaker side at the dissolution. If the Conservatives would

give them any reasonable excuse for preferring them to the Liberal Government, if they would avoid studied causes of offence, the Irish party would be content to support them in the House and to throw their vote—so far as it could be thrown—for the Conservative candidates in the election. On some such tacit understanding as this Lord Salisbury's first Administration came into power and held sway. Neither party gave away any point of practical importance, or entered into any confidential relationship. Both Tories and Nationalists pursued their own ends. They used each other for their own purposes; and in the end the Conservatives came off the winners. All suggestions of a more definite compact belong to the regions of romance.

Within the space of a single year both great English parties were supported by the votes of the Irish members and were to some extent dependent on their good-will. But there was an important difference between the relations which respectively existed. The Conservatives, consciously or unconsciously, used the Irish party. The Liberals, willingly or unwillingly, were used by them. And whereas the former moved on through that association to prosperous years of power, the latter sank into paralysis and decay. But it should not be inferred from these unedifying reflections that Lord Randolph Churchill in his declarations against the re-enactment of the Crimes Act in 1885 was animated solely by a hard desire to effect a political combination. His views on Irish men and Irish matters were very different in character from the general opinion of his party. He knew Ireland well and liked her people. He had been in former days the friend of Mr. Butt. For five years of hard Parliamentary fighting he and his associates had sat in front of the Irish Nationalists, and many a reciprocal service or manœuvre had built up a House of Commons comradeship. 'You can always trust them,' he used to say, 'if you know them and understand them.' In office or Opposition, in good fortune or defeat,

he detested the use of special legislation in Ireland; and, although he remained an unwavering opponent of Repeal, these pages will show that he at least did not approach Irish questions in a spirit of selfish opportunism.

Lord Randolph's votes and speeches during all the Coercion struggles of the Parliament were, moreover, upon record. The Irish members, on their part, knew that he had often supported them, to the detriment of his reputation among his own friends, while the most brilliant representatives of the Liberal Cabinet were scourging them without pity. They remembered that he had always been civil and friendly to them in days when scarcely any other English member would speak to them. They were attracted by his stormy, rebellious nature. They delighted in his attacks upon the Government. Parnell, we are told, liked him personally, though their acquaintance was scanty. Among prominent English politicians, he was at that time the best friend, and the only friend, Nationalist Ireland could find. Any Government in which he was powerful must be better than the Ministry from which Irish members had received so much ill-usage. It was upon the opinion they had formed of him during several years as a man, and upon their estimate of his influence with his party, and not on any compact or bargain, that they acted in 1885.

In some fashion or another, however, Cabinet and Administration had held together till the Whitsuntide holidays. The third period of the session is dangerous to Governments. Most of the measures of the year, and usually the Budget, are in the Committee stage and liable at any moment to be challenged by a vote. At the same time, when vigilance is most needed, a feeling of languor or exhaustion steals over the House of Commons. With the advent of hot weather weary members seek escape from London. Divisions are frequent; majorities precarious; an accident always possible. Rumours had, however, gained acceptance that Cabinet differences on Irish policy were

not incapable of adjustment, and many Liberal members thought that for the session at least the danger of defeat was passed. But meanwhile a third and, as it proved, a fatal blow had been aimed against the Ministry. An amendment to the Budget had been framed at a meeting in Mr. Balfour's house in Carlton Gardens, at which Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, the Fourth Party, and Mr. Raikes alone were present. It was approved by Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote and placed upon the paper in the name of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. To a casual observer the amendment might have appeared unimportant. It condemned the proposed increase of the beer and spirit duties in the absence of a corresponding increase in the duties upon wine, and declined to add to the duty on real property without relief to the rates. But it was, in fact, artfully and deliberately contrived to unite the Opposition on an issue easily defensible in the country and likely to secure support from the Irish and from the liquor interest in the House. It acquired significance from a rumour that the Radical section of the Cabinet had severely criticised Mr. Childers's increase of the beer duties and wished to substitute therefor an additional duty on spirits.

The debate was not remarkable and until late in the evening neither in the House nor outside it was there any expectation of the actual result. But after the dinner-hour a feeling of apprehension seemed to pervade the air. When the division was about to be taken, the ranks of the Ministerialists were unusually thin. Suddenly it was realised that the result must be narrow. A thrill of excitement swept through the House. The doors were closed, and the counting proceeded. When the tellers advanced to the table it was seen that Lord Richard Grosvenor, the Government Whip, stood at the left instead of at the right of the line. For a moment the significance was not appreciated; then the Opposition burst into exultant cheering, renewed again and again. Four Liberals

and 42 Irishmen had voted against Ministers: 74 Liberals were absent, mostly unpaired: the Government was defeated by 12.

It had come, after all. The mighty Government which had towered up august and formidable in 1880, which during five long years, in spite of disastrous enterprise and so many evil turns of fortune, had presented an unbroken front to all attacks, was overthrown at last. So often had good and careful plans miscarried; so often had skill, patience, and courage led only to disappointment that, although a dark curtain of perplexity obscured the future, this at least was triumph now. Lord Randolph had seen the shot strike home. The aim was shrewd and sure. His famous antagonist was down at last and he did not care, or was not able, to contain his joy. He jumped on his seat below the gangway and, waving his handkerchief, led the cheers of the astonished and delighted Conservative party. Well might they have cheered if they had only known that events would follow from that June division which should lead in direct and unbroken sequence to their long supremacy in the State; and, having regard to the repression and firmness which the next few days would require of Lord Randolph Churchill, his jubilation may be pardoned.

A threefold crisis now supervened: first, the national emergency, arising from grave affairs in Egypt and with Russia, and the political fermentation at home and in Ireland; secondly, a constitutional situation peculiar and unprecedented in character; and thirdly, the struggle within the Conservative party. All these operated simultaneously and sympathetically affected each other. The Liberal Administration was defeated on June 8. On the 9th Mr. Gladstone tendered his resignation to the Queen. The Queen expressed surprise that he should make his defeat a vital question and inquired whether, if Lord Salisbury were unwilling to form a Government, the Cabinet would

remain. Mr. Gladstone replied that they would not remain. The Queen thereupon accepted the resignations, which were announced to Parliament on the 12th, and sent for Lord Salisbury. Anticipating, or having private notice of, the formal summons, Lord Salisbury had already approached Lord Randolph Churchill through Sir Michael Hicks-Beach:—

June 10, 1885.

My dear Lord Randolph,—Lord Salisbury has asked me to tell you that he would be very glad to talk to you on the general position, if you would call on him: and I very much hope that no such ideas as those which you seemed to entertain this afternoon will prevent you from doing so.

I feel convinced (though I am not authorised to give you more than my own belief) that he has asked no one to call on him, and that his reason for not doing so is that he thinks that to do so would be to usurp the position of leader, which no one has as yet conferred on him.

It would be simply ridiculous that this idea on his part, combined with your idea as to 'place-hunting,' should keep you two apart just now.

Yours sincerely,
Michael Hicks-Beach.

And the next day, on the eve of his departure to Balmoral, Lord Salisbury himself wrote:—

Confidential.

20 Arlington Street, S.W.: Thursday, June 11, 4.45.

My dear Churchill,—I have just received a communication which makes me anxious to see you. Could you call on me to-night after dinner, or to-morrow morning?

Yours very truly,
Salisbury.

Lord Randolph thought it better to defer his visit until after Lord Salisbury had seen the Queen. His opinion had already been given as to the conditions under which it would be desirable for the Conservatives to take office, and

was involved in the decision to try to turn out the Liberal Government by means of the Irish vote on the Beach Amendment. He had nothing new to say about that. If Lord Salisbury should decide not to undertake the commission, there would be no necessity to raise the thorny and painful questions connected with Sir Stafford Northcote.

In ordinary circumstances Lord Salisbury's course would have been simple. He would have advised a dissolution of Parliament. This solution was, however, impossible until November, owing to the Franchise and Seats Acts. Therefore his legal and constitutional right of recommending a dissolution was in abeyance; and, upon the other hand, the party of which he was the head would be compelled, if he took office, to carry the Budget, Supply, and other indispensable business of the year through a House of Commons in which they were in a minority of nearly 100. Lord Salisbury was so impressed by the difficulty of the situation that he went to Balmoral with the intention of declining to form a Government.

At Balmoral, however, the Queen persuaded him to make the attempt if Mr. Gladstone would not resume; and several attempts to induce Mr. Gladstone to resume having failed, Lord Salisbury accepted the duty and returned to London to discharge it. His first care was to seek from Mr. Gladstone an assurance of support in the measures absolutely necessary to bring the session to a close. The negotiations were protracted for many days; but eventually Mr. Gladstone agreed that facilities for expediting Supply might reasonably be provided, so long as the liberties of the House of Commons were not placed in abeyance; and he added the assurance that there was no idea on the part of the Opposition of withholding the Ways and Means required for the public service. During this discussion Lord Salisbury addressed himself to the formation of a Government. He forthwith invited Sir Stafford Northcote to become Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the

House of Commons; and Sir Stafford Northcote agreed. He asked Sir Michael Hicks-Beach to be Colonial Secretary; and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach agreed. Lord Salisbury then applied to Lord Randolph Churchill, whom he desired to take the India Office. But Lord Randolph refused to join the Government if Sir Stafford Northcote continued to lead in the House of Commons.

From this position nothing could move him. He remained silent and stubborn. While Lord Salisbury was still undecided whether to go on without him or not, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach intervened. He was, in his own words, 'deeply impressed with the conviction that Lord Randolph Churchill's active assistance as a member of the Government was vital to any hope of Conservative success at the General Election, for his popularity with the new electorate was greater than that of any other member of the party';[29] and therefore, as soon as he learned that Lord Randolph had refused to join, he told Lord Salisbury—though without Lord Randolph's knowledge, and entirely without pre-arrangement of any kind—that in the altered circumstances he could not join either. The dead-lock was again complete.

The narrative must here be somewhat interrupted, so far at least as chronology is concerned, to admit Lord Randolph Churchill's own account of his action. He left behind him a considerable memorandum from which I quote all that is relevant to this situation.

'In the events,' he wrote (as I should judge, early in 1889, though the paper is undated), 'which led to the formation of the Conservative Government in June 1885, I bore a part, and am induced to record my recollection of their nature; for one reason among others, that in my belief they were the main cause which led to the adoption by Mr. Gladstone of the policy of Repeal.

'In the spring of 1885 it was a matter of notoriety among well-informed and studious politicians that the question as

to the expediency of the renewal by the Government then in power of the Irish Crimes Act—which was to expire in September[30]—was one on which the Cabinet could come to no agreement. In the speeches which I made in the month of May at the St. Stephen's Club and at Bow I endeavoured by diffuse examination of the question to do what I could to add to the difficulties which in connection with this subject embarrassed the Ministry.

'My remarks at the former place were followed by a decisive intimation from Mr. J. Morley that he would oppose any measure for the renewal of any portion of the Crimes Act. This intimation practically terminated the duration of Mr. Gladstone's Government. Agreement in the Cabinet on this question became impossible. The Ministers determined to court defeat in Parliament as a method of escape from the dilemma by resignation. A General Election was impending and the Opposition eagerly clutched at any opportunity of discrediting and defeating the Liberal party, and with this eagerness I was in thorough accord. Two attempts to place Ministers in a minority failed—one arising out of the events in the Soudan, the other out of a dispute concerning election expenses and local rates. A third attempt, against the Budget, met with unexpected success. The hostility of the licensed victuallers, who considered themselves aggrieved by Mr. Childers's financial proposals, and the almost admitted connivance of Lord Richard Grosvenor, then the Head Whip of the Liberal party, secured the absence from the division of some sixty or more members of the Ministerial forces. The Government was placed in a minority and resigned.

'The Opposition now found themselves in a position of immense difficulty, and though the difficulty had been foreseen by the leaders it was not on that account in any degree diminished.

'The difficulty was twofold: personal and political.

‘1. For a long time there had been a division of opinion in the Conservative party on the question of the leadership —on the question as to whether Lord Salisbury or Sir Stafford Northcote ought to be the head of any Conservative Administration which events might bring into existence. While, on the one hand, there was a unanimous recognition by the party of the sterling worth and high character of the latter, there was, on the other, an equally unanimous but certainly not equally expressed opinion that he was indisposed by nature and training to place himself in entire harmony with the intense and acute party polemics of the moment; that he was, as he once admitted in a public speech, "deficient in go"; and that Lord Salisbury, though he was much less personally known to members of the House of Commons and much less popular than Sir Stafford, was more qualified for the conduct of a pitched battle such as we had to face.

‘I had identified myself with this latter opinion, and had expressed it publicly and privately in one way and another since the year 1883. In that year I had committed myself to such an extent that my action was much resented by the party in the House of Commons, who adopted and presented to Sir Stafford an address expressing their full confidence in and great admiration of him. My belief is that in this controversy, the existence of which was notorious, the principals had no share; that Sir Stafford and Lord Salisbury behaved with the utmost loyalty to each other, and remained throughout on the most intimate and friendly terms.

‘In June 1885, the crucial moment came. Mr. Gladstone resigned. "Whom would the Queen send for?" was a question in everyone’s mouth. Lord Salisbury was sent for. His intention was, if he formed a Government, that Sir Stafford should become Leader of the House of Commons. To this proposition, when proper opportunity offered, I declined to agree, adhering to my former opinions as to the

indisposition of Sir Stafford for acute party warfare. Whether I was right or wrong I do not argue; public opinion in the party and outside was certainly not with me, and soon after, and since, I have been strongly drawn to the conclusion that I was in error. The fact remains for record: I declined to take office unless there was a change in the leadership of the party in the House of Commons.

'My conviction is that Lord Salisbury was most reluctant to attempt to form a Government. It was most distasteful to him to be brought into any conflict with Sir Stafford, to be preferred above him—thus shattering what had been Sir Stafford's great and honourable ambition. Finally, when it was demanded of him that he should put a slight upon Sir Stafford, and depose him from the leadership of the party in the House of Commons, Lord Salisbury almost determined to renounce the duty imposed upon him by the Sovereign. For days the matter was in suspense. Conversations, suggested arrangements, even intrigues were rife in the Carlton and in the Lobby. I have only a general and second-hand knowledge of what then went on. I kept entirely aloof, saw hardly anyone, and took no part in the controversy beyond what I had originally taken. Ultimately representations were made to Sir Stafford —how and by whom I do not know—which induced him to consent to accept the sinecure office of First Lord of the Treasury and a peerage with the title of Earl of Iddesleigh and Viscount St. Cyres. All I do know is that in these *pourparlers* Lord Ashbourne (then Mr. Gibson) was very busy and prominent and that he constantly and to many expressed his astonishment and displeasure that the susceptibilities or predilections attributed to Sir Stafford should form any obstacle to the formation of a Conservative Government. At that time Mr. Gibson exercised considerable influence with the Conservative party in the House of Commons.'

Lord Randolph seems to have overrated the importance

of the part played in these negotiations by Mr. Gibson, though there is reason to believe that his influence was, so far as it was effective, exerted—and properly exerted—in the direction described. It is probable that Mr. Smith was the principal agent. Like other colleagues who sat beside him on the Bench, he knew, perhaps better than Sir Stafford Northcote's family, how often the progress of heart disease incapacitated the Leader of the Opposition from Parliamentary work, and sometimes even reduced him to a lethargic condition. Mr. Smith had recently taken Sir Stafford for a long cruise in his yacht, the *Pandora*, and had the best reasons for judging his true condition, as well as the best right to make representations to him about it. But to return to Lord Randolph.

'The second part of the difficulty,' proceeds the memorandum, 'which confronted Lord Salisbury was political and arose entirely out of the question whether it was or was not essential and necessary to seek from Parliament a renewal of the expiring Irish Crimes Act. This question had been more than once discussed in small conciliabules before the fall of Mr. Gladstone's Government, and a sort of decision arrived at. I alluded publicly to the subject in a speech I made at Sheffield in the following September. But the former semi-decision did not help Lord Salisbury much when the actual crisis came. The whole question was again gone over with great care. Mr. Gibson in this difficulty was the real arbiter. He was the principal, and indeed the only, adviser to whom Lord Salisbury and his friends could have recourse for Irish information. In all the recurring debates on the state of Ireland and on the Irish land legislation which had marked the preceding sessions since 1880 he had been the real leader, and with him naturally it rested now to decide practically this grave and difficult question. I use the adjective "grave" because I believe that the decision not to attempt to renew the Crimes Act, more than any other

event, finally determined Mr. Gladstone no longer to resist Repeal, and by some process or calculation not open to ordinary persons led Mr. Gladstone to the conclusion that there was a real working alliance arrived at between the Tories and the party of Mr. Parnell, the legitimate results of which would be proposals by the Tory Government in the nature of very large concessions to the Irish in the direction of Repeal.

'My own part in the matter was to express no opinion beyond what was contained in the following formula, from which I never departed, and which was accepted by Lord Salisbury and his friends: If it is decided that the state of Ireland is such as to require the further continuance of the Crimes Act, then the Conservative party cannot accept office, as the period of the session and the Parliamentary weakness of the party preclude the possibility of their passing through the House of Commons the necessary measure. If a contrary decision is arrived at—viz. that the Act may be allowed to expire—then the Conservative party might succeed the Liberal Government with safety and advantage. It was well known that personally I would not have taken office had it been thought necessary by a Conservative Government to attempt to renew the Crimes Act.

'Such was the nature of the difficulty which Lord Salisbury had to solve. I repeat my impression that he was most reluctant to form a Government. The personal difficulties alluded to above deterred him, and the recollections of Lord Derby's Ministries of 1852, 1858, and 1866 were heavily against an attempt to carry on the business of the country without the support of a majority in the House of Commons. The pressure, however, from the local organisations in the country was strong to cause him to undertake the unattractive duty, and the prevalent feeling of the party in Parliament was in accord with this pressure.

'For the decision he ultimately arrived at I can claim little responsibility and in it I had little or no share. I had no prepossession one way or the other, unless it was that the precedent set by Mr. Disraeli in 1873 under similar circumstances, and the apparent results of Mr. Disraeli's action, were very vividly before my mind. I would have consented with equal cheerfulness to one decision or the other; nor do I believe that either decision would have affected numerically the results of the General Election which took place in November.

'Looking back on those events after January 1886, and after the resolution arrived at by Mr. Gladstone to introduce a measure for the Repeal of the Union, I came to the conclusion that in June 1885, we had been most unfortunately inspired. I can trace a clear connection of cause and effect between Lord Salisbury's accession to office in 1885 and Mr. Gladstone's new departure in 1886.'

For five days uncertainty and rumour were supreme. Lord Randolph maintained an unbroken reserve. Good friends who had knowledge of what was going forward pressed him hard. Those who cared about his career thought he was ruining himself. Even Sir Henry James, a political opponent, but a personal friend, was provoked to address him.

The letter is interesting for its frank recognition that 'Tory Democracy' was a faith of its own.

Sir Henry James to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Temple: Saturday Morning.

My dear Friend,—I am so afraid that you are about to make a grave mistake, most injurious to your interests, that I *must* intrude my thoughts upon your breakfast.

I assume Salisbury 'accepts the commission'; of course he will offer you office. If there be any definite measure—say the Crimes Act—which he insists upon and you object to, you will be quite justified in refusing office. For you will have a justification which you can make public, and everyone will give you credit for

having acted according to your principles and conscience. But if your reasons are indefinite—say, for instance, because you cannot obtain a declaration in favour of a Liberal Toryism—you will have no explanation to give which the public will ever be able to understand. Between this and November no policy can be carried into effect by legislation, and so it is scarcely possible that any difference existing between the Salisbury Tories and yourself could be brought to a practical issue. And so, if you now refuse office on theoretical grounds which you can never explain, you will obtain the credit amongst the whole Tory party of having plotted against Salisbury and of having prevented him and them from coming into office. It will be time enough for you to fight the battle of Tory Democracy when some action (by way of legislation or administration) is taken adverse to the principles you hold.

Surely you ought to be catholic *now*, and let all shades of Toryism enjoy a gleam of success. If you do not, you will much endanger the cause of 'Tory Democracy'; for although you can at any time be the leader of a Democracy, your power with the Tory element will be sadly shaken.

Ever yours,
H. J.

Men who presume to deal with great affairs must cultivate an unyielding disposition. It is easy to withstand the reproaches or attacks of opponents; but the honest advice of a friend and well-wisher at once disinterested and experienced saps the foundations of judgment. There was one appeal which must have greatly disturbed Lord Randolph. Nothing in his private life was more striking and constant than his affection for his mother and his respect for her opinion. 'I have been thinking,' she wrote (June 14), 'very quietly and calmly over your position, and I think you might go to see Lord Salisbury before his meeting, to show him your friendly feeling while you maintain your own position. You see, in the winter you felt acutely he did not consult or notice you. He may say on this critical occasion he came to you before anyone else and offered you one of the highest places in his Cabinet,

and you refused your assistance. Yesterday he sends his secretary to bid you to go to his meeting. This, from reasons, you are obliged to decline. But do you not think you owe him some explanation?... He told you to consider his offer; so that, it seems to me, you are almost in duty bound to go to see him; and if you simply refrain from going, he will think you decidedly hostile. There is no doubt he is in a very difficult position, and may say you require *not* any policy or special measure, but simply that he should *kill* an old friend whom *all* respect.... I do hope you may be guided rightly.'

But Lord Randolph Churchill remained unresponsive. No communication of any kind passed between him and Lord Salisbury until the crisis was ended.

'At this time,' writes a Bencher of the Middle Temple, 'an event occurred which strangely evidenced the strength of Lord Randolph's popularity. But a description of the scene needs some explanation. Amongst the Inns of Court the Middle Temple is fortunate in the possession of a Hall grand in its construction and rich in evidence of associations extending over seven centuries. In this Hall, during Term time, the barristers and students dine. From amongst the barristers a governing body, called the Benchers, is selected. On the Grand Day of the summer Term the Benchers entertain distinguished guests at a sumptuous banquet held in the Hall. On these occasions Benchers and guests enter the Hall walking two and two, in procession, to the Daïs, upon which they dine. After the dinner is concluded, in like procession they leave the Hall, walking throughout its full length from the Bar to the door which leads to the Parliament Chamber.

'A Grand Day of the Middle Temple occurred on June 10, 1885. Never before or since has so remarkable a company gathered within that Hall.

'Nearly every Bencher was present, for fifty-five were there. Amongst them were the Prince of Wales and his

eldest son, Prince Albert Victor, who on that day was called to the Bench. But many distinguished visitors were also present, for amongst the guests were the Archbishop of Canterbury, Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, Lord Derby, Lord Cranbrook, Sir Stafford Northcote, Mr. John Bright and other leading politicians; and yet it seemed as if there was only one of whom the gathering was thinking—and he was Randolph Churchill. The first sign of the great interest was shown when the loving-cup was being handed round; for when it was placed in Lord Randolph's hands and he stood up to drink from it, the whole assemblage in the body of the Hall sprang to their feet and cheered him vociferously. No such demonstration had ever occurred in the Middle Temple Hall. And, again, when the dinner was concluded and the Benchers and their guests, walking two and two, proceeded to leave the Hall, a still more marked demonstration took place. The Royal Princes passed almost unheeded, whilst the Hall rang with shouts of "Randolph!" "Randolph!" "Churchill!" "Churchill!" No other name was uttered. It seemed as if all present wished to show that they regarded him—and him alone—as being the political victor of the hour.'

Yet, in contrast with these signs of triumph, what inward misgivings darkened Lord Randolph Churchill's mind! In the presence of a trusted friend he dropped with relief his mask of unconcerned reserve and revealed himself plunged for a while in one of those fits of despondency which so often followed or preceded the crisis and action of his life. 'I am very near the end of my tether,' he said to this friend who met him at the Turf Club in these anxious days. 'In the last five years I have lived twenty. I have fought Society. I have fought Mr. Gladstone at the head of a great majority. I have fought the Front Opposition Bench. Now I am fighting Lord Salisbury. I have said I will not join the Government unless Northcote leaves the House of Commons. Lord Salisbury will never give way. I'm done.'

To the remark that Lord Salisbury could not form a Ministry without him he answered drily, 'He can form a Ministry if necessary with waiters from the Carlton Club.' His companion on this proceeded amiably to suggest that if all was really over with the Conservative party, Liberalism offered a wide field for the activities of a Tory Democrat. 'Ah, no!' said Lord Randolph in utter pessimism, 'Chamberlain and the Birmingham Caucus will swallow you all. It is they who will govern the people of England for the future.' 'The working classes must have leaders.' 'Yes, but they will not want aristocrats.'

The whole country was agog about the political interregnum and busy in the fascinating employment of Cabinet-making. Two main opinions were focussed by the newspapers—one was for a Cabinet of 'old and tried public servants,' to maintain an orderly and decorous Government during the few months that must elapse before the election; the other for a 'Cabinet of Compromise,' which should include the Tory Democrats and secure their powerful aid in the coming fight. But meanwhile the business of the House of Commons was not wholly interrupted and a curious Parliamentary incident occurred. On the evening of the 15th Mr. Gladstone proposed to consider, before adjourning, the Lords' amendments to the Seats Bill. He moved accordingly; but on the question being put Sir Henry Wolff at once moved the adjournment of the debate. He pointed out that the Lords' amendments were matters of substance and importance—as, indeed, they were—and ought not to have been inserted by them into the Redistribution Bill. He declared that such matters could not be decided upon in the absence of a responsible Government or a responsible Opposition. Sir Charles Dilke replied on behalf of the Government that the insertion of these amendments in the Redistribution Bill had the approval of Lord Salisbury himself, and was, in fact, adopted to avoid inconvenient delay. Sir Stafford

Northcote thought it right to confirm the statement that it had been agreed that the matter should be dealt with in the Redistribution Bill instead of by a separate Bill. But the Fourth Party were not inclined to change their minds on that account. Mr. Gorst argued against haste without good reason for haste. Lord Randolph also spoke sharply in favour of the adjournment. What were the leaders of the so-called constitutional party about that they should tolerate the transaction of important business connected with reform under prevailing conditions? He also accused the Government bluntly of having produced the difficulty by procuring defeat.

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach then got up from the Front Opposition Bench and, to the astonishment of his colleagues on the Treasury Bench, spoke in favour of the adjournment and against his leader. In the division the Conservative party split into puzzled fragments, and persons who thought they might be Under-Secretaries—and in such circumstances they are a respectable body—suffered acutely. Thirty-five members voted with Sir Michael and Lord Randolph for the adjournment. Sir Henry Wolff and Mr. Gorst were their tellers. The rest, with Sir Stafford Northcote at their head, went into the Government lobby to support Mr. Gladstone. Sir Henry Wolff's colleague in the representation of Portsmouth was a venerable member of the orthodox Conservative party. As he passed the Front Opposition Bench on his way to vote with Lord Randolph Churchill, Sir Stafford Northcote said reproachfully: 'These are the times when one can tell one's friends.' 'At such a crisis,' replied the old gentleman ruefully, 'and with such an election before us, the representation of Portsmouth must be undivided.'

This was the end. Two days later it was formally announced that Sir Stafford Northcote would retire to the House of Lords and that Sir Michael Hicks-Beach would lead the House of Commons. It has been asserted that this

division settled the struggle and that Lord Salisbury, confronted with this plain proof that Sir Stafford Northcote's leadership would not be accepted by a powerful and active section of his party, capitulated to Lord Randolph Churchill. This is not quite true. No doubt the division clinched the issues; but the personal negotiations which resulted in Sir Stafford's elevation were already far advanced; and he himself notes in his diary of June 15: 'This has apparently been my last night in the House of Commons.' Indeed, there seems to have been less design in the affair than is commonly supposed. Few people—even among the most intelligent and informed—will believe how much in modern English politics is settled by the accident or caprice of the hour. Lord Randolph Churchill had often voted and spoken against the leader of the Opposition before. He thought the acquiescence in Mr. Gladstone's wishes on this occasion stupid, and he said so. He thought the House should adjourn without transacting business and he voted in that sense. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was party to no plot. He did not enter the House until late and had not heard Sir Stafford's speech. He gathered from the debate that the Fourth Party and the 'Janissaries' were attacking the Government and he supported them on general principles. Not until he sat down did he learn what he had done. Moreover, before the division had taken place Lord Salisbury's hopes of a settlement were already so good that he had sent the following letter to Lord Randolph Churchill:—

Private.

20 Arlington Street, S.W.: June 15, 1885.

My dear Churchill,—I was very sorry you were not able to come to our meeting this morning. The general sense of those present, with one or two exceptions, was that we could not well refuse to take office, after all that has happened this year, if the Government have finally determined not to resume it. Still I think everyone present recognised that in a party sense this obligation

was a misfortune.

Though I fear I must draw an unfavourable inference from your absence, I still venture to express a hope that you will allow me to put down your name for the Indian Secretaryship on the list which I must submit to the Queen on Wednesday.

I should be very glad to talk these matters over if you like to come and see me. I shall be in all the morning.

Yours very truly,
Salisbury.

Lord Randolph replied as if nothing had happened:—

2 Connaught Place: June 16, 1885.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—I am deeply sensible of the extreme kindness towards myself which you show me by your letter received this morning, and if not inconvenient to you I will do myself the honour of waiting upon you about eleven o'clock to-day.

Believe me to be
Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

That the interview was friendly and in the main satisfactory may be inferred from the following letter written later in the day, which shows, among other things, that in the hour of victory Lord Randolph Churchill was not inclined to desert those who had worked with him:—

2 Connaught Place: June 16, 1885.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—I do hope you will not be annoyed if I add to your many difficulties by these few lines. Of course, since I saw you this morning I have thought about little else than all that you were kind enough to say to me on many subjects. I do feel very uneasy indeed about Wolff and Gorst, and I cannot think that I have submitted to you their position as regards myself with the urgency which they are entitled to expect from me. If it were possible for you to consider whether it might not be in your power to recommend Wolff for the high dignity of a Privy Councillor I should be easy in my mind about him, and I venture to press this desire of mine upon you.

Gorst ... knows his powers, his position in the House, his

hitherto barely recognised claims, and it makes me perfectly wretched to feel that it must occur to his mind that his failure to obtain that for which so many persons of knowledge consider he is fitted in every way is due to lukewarmness on my part. If I did not know what the general feeling of the House of Commons will be as regards myself on this point, I would have hesitated to trouble you; but I am certain that if with respect to these two cases things remain in the position you gave me to understand this morning they would be, I shall be considered to have failed my friends, and my powers, whatever they may be, of being useful to your Government will be impaired.

Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Lord Salisbury, thus appealed to, consented to submit Mr. Gorst's name to the Queen for the office of Solicitor-General and Sir Henry Wolff's for a Privy Councillorship. When the lavish hand with which high appointments were distributed among persons who had borne no share in the battle is remembered, it cannot be said that these rewards were disproportioned to services or talent.

The difficulties within the Conservative party were now settled; but the delays in the formation of the Government and consequent uncertainty were prolonged in order to extract from Mr. Gladstone further assurances in regard to the passage of necessary public business while the Government were in a minority in the House of Commons; and meanwhile Lord Salisbury retreated to Hatfield. Of the interviews and negotiations incidental upon this, a complete account was afterwards given to Parliament; and on June 23 the acceptance of office by Lord Salisbury and the composition of the Ministry, the main features of which had become generally known, were formally announced, and the constitutional and party crisis came to an end.

'What a triumph!' wrote Mr. Chamberlain on June 18, when the issue became apparent. 'You have won all along the line. *Moriturus te saluto*.' And with this an important

chapter in Lord Randolph Churchill's life may be conveniently closed.

CHAPTER X

THE 'MINISTRY OF CARETAKERS'

'This is no man of system, then; he is only a man of instincts and insights. A man, nevertheless, who will glare fiercely on any object; and see through it, and conquer it; for he has intellect, he has will, force beyond other men. A man not with *logic-spectacles*; but with an *eye*!'—Carlyle on Mirabeau, *French Revolution*, bk. iv. ch. iv.

THE first trials of a Prime Minister are often the most severe. The most formidable obstacles lie at the beginning. Once these have been surmounted, the path is comparatively smooth. Nearly all the rest of Lord Salisbury's life was spent at the head of the Government. In a period of seventeen years he filled for more than twelve the greatest office in the State. Four separate Administrations were formed under his hand. Responsibilities not less grave than those of 1885, far more important legislation, wide acquisitions of territory, vast decisions of peace and war attended their course. But, as with Mr. Pitt, the first two years of his service perhaps exceeded in personal stress all the years that were to follow. And it is probable that no part of those two years was more clouded with anxious perplexity than the autumn of 1885. His own position was not assured. Public confidence in his character and judgment had yet to be won; his authority within his party had yet to be consolidated. That party itself had struggled back to power, weak in numbers, nervously excited by its efforts, upon curious and compromising terms. It was torn by the very inspiration that revived its strength. It awaited in acute apprehension an imminent and momentous election, the

result of which no man could foretell. Very different were those after-years, when the old statesman, towering above his colleagues in the Cabinet and commanding the implicit obedience of his followers, had gathered patiently together round the standards of Conservatism almost all the strongest forces in the country.

Yet while resources were still slender the difficulties and dangers of the situation were tremendous. The dispute with Russia about the Afghan boundary was in its most critical stage. For at least two months the Cabinet faced the chance of war with a formidable military Empire. The triumphant Mahdi was ravaging the Soudan, and Egypt, withdrawn behind her narrowest frontiers, was threatened without and utterly disorganised within. The British finances were oppressed by a deficit. Ireland smouldered. All the elements of Irish national life were banded together under the supreme authority of Parnell and that efficient Protestant rebel was methodically preparing his campaign for an Irish Parliament. In the English provinces Mr. Chamberlain, released from such partial restraint as official obligations had hitherto imposed, unfolded the 'Unauthorised Programme' to an exulting Radical democracy. And behind all 'two million intelligent citizens,' newly enfranchised, impatiently awaited the opportunity of casting their votes. Such were the perils and embarrassments amid which the 'Ministry of Caretakers' came into being. Nor was it strange that eminent politicians were willing to prophesy that after a brief and inglorious career they would be 'swept off the face of the earth.' But Lord Salisbury, reminding the House of Lords that several of the longest Administrations in English history had come into being under precarious conditions, and fortifying himself by the examples and experiences of Mr. Pitt in 1784, of Lord Liverpool in 1812, and of Lord Palmerston in 1855, addressed himself to his heavy task with serene determination.

The Fourth Party was translated bodily to a higher sphere. Lord Randolph Churchill became Secretary of State for India—at that time, with the exception of the Foreign Office, the most anxious and important of all Ministerial posts. Mr. Balfour, though not admitted to the Cabinet, was appointed President of the Local Government Board. Sir Henry Wolff was despatched on a special mission to Turkey and Egypt with wide and peculiar authority over the whole field of Egyptian affairs. Mr. Gorst accepted the position of Solicitor-General. Three out of the four friends who had worked together more or less harmoniously in Opposition were sworn Privy Councillors upon the same cushion; and it was also noticed that an unusual proportion of the thirty-five members who had voted with the Fourth Party in the division upon Sir Henry Wolff's motion during the *interregnum* were included in the Government.

Lord Randolph's popularity was enhanced by his promotion. Those commanding qualities which the House of Commons had so frankly accepted, and Tory Democracy so loudly proclaimed, were now recognised by persons and by classes who had hitherto schooled themselves to regard him merely as an unedifying example of irresponsible audacity. The vigorous assertions of youth were stamped with the seal of official authority and over all hung the glitter of success. His friends, old and new, hastened to offer their congratulations. One of his acknowledgments may be recorded:—

June 25, 1885.

Dear Mr. Tabor,—I was so pleased to receive this morning your kind letter and I trust that your congratulations may be to some extent justified by results. As it is the fact that whatever of success I may have attained is mainly owing to the six years which I passed at Cheam, may I ask as a favour for a holiday for all those young gentlemen who are now deriving from you similar advantages to those which befell me? It would be a

pleasure to me to know that I have not asked anything which was not in your power to grant.

Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Now that Lord Randolph had accepted ‘an office of profit under the Crown’ his seat at Woodstock was vacated and he had to submit himself to re-election. The leaders of the Liberal party did not encourage opposition to Ministers in such circumstances at this juncture. When they had themselves forced upon the Conservative party the task of Administration, it seemed factious to impede the return of individuals necessary for that purpose. Moreover, they were sensible of the advantage which almost always accrues to anyone who is singled out for attack by the opposite side. But the personality of the candidate gave promise of distinction to his opponent, the nice balance of parties in the old Borough held out a hope of success, and Mr. Corrie Grant hurried down from London to voice the hot and not unreasonable resentment of the Radical rank and file. This gentleman appealed to the electors upon a single issue. It was not, he declared, a fight of politics against politics, or of principle against principle—it was a fight against a man. The statements and expressions which Lord Randolph had employed against the Liberal party, its leaders, and in particular Mr. Gladstone, made it necessary at all costs to challenge his return.

Because of the immense pressure of work at the India Office and also no doubt not to treat his opponent too seriously, Lord Randolph declared himself unable to take part in the contest personally and left his election entirely to his constituents and friends. He contented himself with a short address. Having never held office before, it was necessary for him to give double the time of more fortunate persons to acquiring knowledge of his duties. ‘Under these circumstances it is impossible for me to leave London and to go among you as has been on former

occasions my practice and my pleasure. But I console myself with the recollection that I am no stranger to any of you, that for nearly twelve years my public life has been before you, and that on no occasion had I any reason to imagine that I had forfeited your confidence or gone against your general political sentiments.' 'Whatever may be, in your opinion, the position I now occupy, that position you have made; it is mainly your work. And that position I am perfectly certain no stranger or carpet-bagger or any hirelings from the Birmingham Caucus will persuade you to damage or destroy.'

The campaign was opened immediately and with determination on both sides. Sir Henry Wolff, Lord Curzon, Sir Frederick Milner, Mr. St. John Brodrick,[31] a nephew of the former Liberal candidate, arrived in Woodstock to support Lord Randolph; and the Opposition was aided by a zealous contingent from Birmingham to such an extent that at the opening meeting Sir Henry Wolff described Mr. Corrie Grant as 'the delegate of Mr. Schnadhorst and Mr. Chamberlain.' This statement caused Mr. Chamberlain annoyance and he wrote at once to Lord Randolph disclaiming all responsibility for the contest and any desire to cause him trouble. Lord Randolph replied as follows:—

To Mr. Chamberlain.

July 1, 1885.

I think the mention of your name in Wolff's speech was either wrongly reported or else not in the least meant ill-naturedly.... In any case, no mischief is to be made by anyone between you and me as far as I am concerned. I was quite sure that you had nothing to do with the Woodstock contest, but even if you had, I never should have thought it anything else but perfectly fair and legitimate. In the meantime many thanks for your kind letter, which I much value. Don't be angry with Wolff.

There were, notwithstanding, several reasons for uneasiness as to the result. The absence of the candidate

was an undoubted drawback. The propaganda of Mr. Joseph Arch had produced a considerable impression upon a section of the labourers. A more formidable consideration was the attitude of the Duke of Marlborough. Lord Randolph's father had wielded immense personal influence in the borough and had neglected nothing that might constitutionally be done to secure the return of his nominee. Two years before, the new Duke would no doubt have exerted himself to the utmost to help his brother; but the sale of the Blenheim pictures had produced a serious quarrel in the family. Lord Randolph had vehemently protested against the dispersal of so many of the treasures for which Blenheim had been famous and a complete estrangement had ensued. The Duke, moreover, after the opposition which had been threatened to his candidature for the Carlton, had relapsed into political independence. He now declared himself so strictly neutral during the contest that Lady Randolph and the friends who came down to fight the election for her husband, were fain for the first night of their arrival to shelter at the Bear Hotel. Sir Henry Wolff's diplomacy soon proved equal to those difficulties. Friendly relations were restored; Blenheim opened its gates to the Conservatives; and the Duke, stung by a statement in the press that he had himself been a party to Mr. Corrie Grant's candidature, finished by lending his carriages to convey Lord Randolph's supporters to the poll. The election was nevertheless fought under some disadvantage as compared with former occasions.

But the Secretary for India found in Lady Randolph and in his sister, Lady Curzon, a mainstay of support and enthusiasm. 'I should be very glad,' he wrote to his wife on June 29, 'if you could arrange to stay in Woodstock till Friday. If I win, you will have all the glory.' Driving about the widely extended constituency in a smart tandem profusely decorated with pink ribbons, well known to most and with a smile for all, these ladies canvassed

indefatigably from morn till night. Their Primrose badges —still an object of amusement in high Tory circles—were the first to be worn in actual political warfare; and their influence, supplying as it did that personal element without which enthusiasm is scarcely ever excited, became a factor in the fight, against which the eloquence of two Liberal ladies from Girton—specially imported to meet the emergency—was utterly unable to prevail.

The result of the election was announced on the evening of July 3:—

Lord Randolph Churchill	532
Mr. Corrie Grant	405

The majority for Lord Randolph Churchill was 127, or more than double that by which he had been returned in 1880. Needless to relate, the declaration of the poll was received with the utmost satisfaction by the crowd in front of the Bear Hotel, to whom Lady Randolph, Lord Curzon, Sir Henry Wolff, and later on Mr. Corrie Grant made brief but appropriate speeches; and the fact that over six hundred 'result messages' were despatched from the local post-office that evening showed the interest taken by the world at large in this the last of the Woodstock elections.

Even before Lord Randolph was re-elected for Woodstock, he was required in the House of Commons. Portentous extracts were read from his speeches as a private member, and his secretary in the House was cross-questioned about them. Did he still adhere to his charges against the Khedive? Were his views on Ireland what he had declared them to be at Edinburgh? To all such inquiries Lord Randolph sent a simple answer, which may be recommended to others similarly circumstanced: 'I neither withdraw nor apologise for anything that I have said at any time, believing as I do that anything which I may have said at any time was perfectly justified by the special circumstances of that time, and by the amount of

information I may have had in my possession.'

The new Ministers met Parliament with general statements of their views and intentions on July 6. In both Houses they made a good appearance. They achieved at once the requisite pomposity of public utterance, and handled power as to the manner born. To the Peers Lord Salisbury declared that the pledges of any British Government were sacred, and that all existing obligations would be faithfully observed in the further conduct of the negotiations with the Court of Russia. In answer to the taunt, made out-of-doors, that the Conservatives would postpone the date of the election for the purpose of prolonging their enjoyment 'of what some persons are pleased to call the sweets of office,' he invited Lord Granville to admit that the new Government had endeavoured to amend the Redistribution Bill so as even to accelerate the dissolution. Lord Carnarvon justified the attempt to govern Ireland under the ordinary law by statistics which showed the diminution of agrarian crime. He spoke of former statesmen who had failed in Ireland —'so many that the wrecks of them lie strewn about'—and he seemed to wrestle modestly, but hopefully, against the conviction that he himself would be added to the number. In the Commons Mr. Bradlaugh again presented himself and was received by the new Leader of the House with the usual resolutions of prohibition and exclusion, affirmed by the usual majorities. The next day Sir Michael Hicks-Beach explained the few uncontentious legislative projects which the Government would try to carry through and asked for the time of the House to enable them to wind up the business of the Session. Mr. Gladstone declared that the request was not unreasonable and that he would himself endeavour to help the Ministry by his vote and by the example of his silence. Lord Randolph, in what is called 'a statesmanlike tone,' described the late Prime Minister's conduct as magnanimous and considerate; and a

Radical motion of want of confidence in the new Administration finding only two supporters, the prevailing harmony remained unbroken.

The position of the Government, faced by a large majority in nominal opposition, dependent upon Nationalist favour for the avoidance of defeat at any moment and on any question, mistrusted by many of their own friends, bitterly hated by Whigs and Radicals, and unable to escape from constant humiliation by resignation or dissolution, was one of extreme discomfort. But there seemed to be a kind of truce at Westminster, in vivid contrast to the rising strife elsewhere. Under such happy conditions, and with the cessation of Irish obstruction, the end of the Session proved curiously fruitful. The Budget was uncontroversial. The Government helped Lord Rosebery to carry his Secretary for Scotland Bill through both Houses. Lord Salisbury passed a measure dealing with the housing of the working classes, in spite of some murmurings among the Peers at its socialistic flavour. Mr. Balfour took charge of a Medical Relief Bill which ultimately became law, although the Liberal majority 'improved' it to such an extent that the Government disclaimed responsibility for it. Mutual concessions and genuine co-operation placed both a Land Bill and a Labourers Bill for Ireland upon the statute book. The Land Bill, or the 'Ashbourne Act,' as it was called, took extensive effect, and was the foundation and the precursor of all subsequent Land Purchase Acts, culminating in the Land Act of 1903. Sir William Harcourt and the new Home Secretary aided each other to effect most important amendments in the criminal law; and, finally, the Colonial Secretary, firmly refusing to allow the objections of New South Wales to defeat the wishes of the other Australian Colonies, succeeded in passing a Federation Bill which opened the door to a Commonwealth of Australia. Indeed, a Parliamentary Paradise, albeit enduring only upon

sufferance, seemed to have sprung into being in the midst of a Political Inferno. The good sense and tolerance of the nation were gathered within the sheltering walls of Parliament, while discord, faction, and electioneering clamour reigned supreme outside.

One curious legislative feat must be recorded. An Irish Educational Endowments Bill had been brought down from the Lords and read a first time in the Commons early in the session (May 12) as one of Mr. Gladstone's Government Bills. It had been practically abandoned before the change of Ministry. Not one of the members of the new Government had read a line of it; but Lord Randolph—interested as ever in Irish education—was persuaded by FitzGibbon, in the early days of August, that the Bill might be so altered as to make a useful measure and he exerted himself to salve the derelict. The difficulties seemed insuperable. The Chief Secretary for Ireland, Sir William Hart-Dyke, indignant at a proposal to introduce important legislation in the last week of the last session of an expiring Parliament, refused to have anything to do with it. The Leader of the House only consented to allow the attempt upon the condition that the session should not be prolonged by a single day. The Bill had to be redrafted from beginning to end. It could not be advanced a stage without the concurrence of the Nationalist party. Three or four perfectly distinct and usually antagonistic sections of Irish opinion had to be conciliated and the negotiations between Lord Randolph and FitzGibbon on the one hand, and Mr. Sexton and Mr. Healy on the other, afforded some beautiful specimens of Hibernian diplomacy. All obstacles were surmounted. The Irish Attorney-General, Mr. Holmes —with whom Lord Randolph had made friends— undertook the conduct of the redrafted Bill. It was read a second time on August 11. The amendments, covering whole pages of the order paper, entirely altering the Bill from its original shape, unintelligible to everyone except

the Minister who moved them and the two or three Irish members who discussed them, were considered on the 12th. On the 13th the Bill was recommitted, to introduce the necessary money clauses, read a third time and sent to the House of Lords: and the next day, on which the session closed, it passed and received the Royal Assent. None of its thirty-eight sections have given rise to any difficulty and during the nine years which followed its passing it was constantly renewed until the endowments and management of upwards of 1,350 Primary Schools and more than 100 Intermediate and Collegiate Institutions had been reorganised under its operation.

Mr. Holmes, the Attorney-General, like many others who worked under Lord Randolph Churchill, became warmly attached to him. Their joint labours on this Bill impressed him with the extraordinary power of conciliating persons and overcoming difficulties possessed by a man so often associated only with violence. Above all he admired his courage. 'I feel,' he wrote two years afterwards, when the leader of Tory Democracy was leader no more, 'like one of Rupert's soldiers serving under a Dutch Burgomaster.'

One harsh note jarred upon the ears of these Elysian legislators. The new Ministers had scarcely taken office before the shadowy relations which existed between the Conservative Government and the Irish party issued in a substantial form. Nationalist opinion in Ireland had long been excited over one of those dark and curious police cases the savagely disputed details of which are thrust from time to time before the House of Commons, to the bewilderment of British members. In August of 1882 a whole family of the name of Joyce had, with the exception of one young boy, been murdered under circumstances of peculiar atrocity at Maamtrasna. Ten men were arrested upon the evidence of three witnesses who professed to have seen them enter the house in which the crime was

committed. This evidence was confirmed by two of the prisoners who turned approvers. After three successive trials three men were condemned to death and executed, and the remaining five, having pleaded guilty, received death sentences, afterwards commuted to penal servitude for life. So far the story was grimly simple. But it was now alleged that two of the murderers hanged had, in their dying depositions, declared the innocence of the third, Myles Joyce; while this man himself had protested always and to the last that he was not guilty. One of the informers next came forward and swore that he had been told by an official that his evidence would not be accepted by the Crown unless it applied to all the prisoners, that he was given twenty minutes to decide, and that then from 'terror of death' he had been induced to swear away the life of Myles Joyce. An appeal from the Archbishop of Tuam to the Lord-Lieutenant had led to an inquiry by Lord Spencer and this inquiry resulted in the conclusion that the verdict and sentence were right and just.

Hatred of a Coercion Viceroy and the profound distrust which divided all who administered the law in Ireland from the mass of the people, magnified this squalid tragedy into a political issue of importance. It was asserted that as a result of Coercionist procedure and the overweening desire of the Government to secure convictions, not only had an innocent man been done to death, but that some of those still in prison had been wrongfully convicted. When the case was raised in Parliament during the Autumn Session of 1884, the Government, representing the vote as one of confidence or want of confidence in Lord Spencer, refused all further inquiry. In this they were generally supported by both great parties and the Irish motion was rejected by 219 to 48. But Lord Randolph Churchill, Sir Henry Wolff, and Mr. Gorst had voted in the minority with the Nationalists and Lord Randolph had spoken strongly in their favour.

Almost as soon as the formation of the new Cabinet was

complete Mr. Parnell moved (July 17) a resolution reflecting on Lord Spencer and demanding a fresh inquiry. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach opposed this resolution in the name of the Government; but at the same time he said that it was the right of every prisoner at any time to appeal to the Lord-Lieutenant for the reconsideration of his sentence. 'The present Lord-Lieutenant [Lord Carnarvon] has authorised me to state that, if memorials should be presented on behalf of those persons referred to in this motion, they will be considered by him with the same personal attention which he would feel bound to give to all cases, whether great or small, ordinary or exceptional, coming before him.' That was all; and it may not seem a very large concession to Irish national feeling, but it was enough to draw upon the head of the Minister a storm of reproach. Sir William Harcourt, undisturbed by the significant absence of Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, rose to express the indignation of the Liberal party that law and order should be subverted to political expediency and the decision of a Viceroy impugned. These sentiments were received with undisguised approval on the Conservative benches. Lord Randolph Churchill replied. So far as he was personally concerned his task would have been easy. He, at least, had consistently supported the Irish demand for an inquiry. He was to defend in office a smaller concession than he had urged in Opposition. But what with Ulster growlings, sympathetically echoed by the Tory party on the one hand, and on the other the plain need of Nationalist good-will, if peace and order were to be maintained in Ireland under the ordinary law, the path was not easy to find and perilously narrow to tread. His speech, in fact, resolved itself into a series of depreciatory comments upon Lord Spencer's administration. Sir William Harcourt had spoken of it with pride. 'We were proud of the administration of Lord Spencer.' Who did '*we*' include? It was the prerogative of royalty to speak in

the plural number. Sir William Harcourt had once before electrified the country by claiming royal descent. Was it in that exalted character that he used the 'we,' or did he mean that the late Cabinet were united in their admiration of Lord Spencer's Viceroyalty? The division list would show. For himself he had had no confidence in the administration of Lord Spencer. For that reason he had a year before voted in favour of an inquiry into this particular case. The new Government ought not unnecessarily to go out of their way to assume responsibility for the acts of the late Administration. They would now pronounce no opinion upon the merits of the case. The new Lord-Lieutenant would inquire carefully and impartially into it; and pending that inquiry, having full confidence in Lord Carnarvon, Ministers would vote against the motion of Mr. Parnell which seemed to prejudge the issue. On this Mr. Parnell rose at once and said that he was content to await Lord Carnarvon's decision. He therefore asked leave to withdraw his motion. But the discussion did not terminate. The Ulster members and their friends—always so powerful in the Conservative party—were offended by the concession, small though it was, which had been made to their hereditary foes. The friendly tone of the Irish leader, and the Nationalist cheers with which Lord Randolph's strictures upon Lord Spencer had been received, excited Orange wrath and Tory disapproval. Liberals who had smarted under the taunt 'Kilmainham Treaty' were not slow to retort 'Maamtrasna Alliance.' Mr. Brodrick, a young Conservative who had not been included in the new Government as his talents deserved, and who believed, perhaps with reason, that his exclusion was due to the fact that he had voted with Sir Stafford Northcote and against Lord Randolph Churchill in the *interregnum* division, expressed with much force the Conservative discontent. He was supported by the vehement outcry of an Ulster member. Mr. Gorst, who now for the first time defended

the Government as Solicitor-General, unwittingly fanned the flames by allowing himself to use the candid but unfortunate expression 'reactionary Ulster members.' The stern reproaches with which Lord Hartington closed the debate, were endorsed by many Conservatives in the House and by an influential section of the party press.

The Maamtrasna incident was a factor in great events. It profoundly disturbed the Conservative party. It thrust the Whigs for a space back upon Mr. Gladstone. It prepared Mr. Gladstone's mind for the reception of other impressions which were to reach him later. Upon Lord Spencer its influence was perhaps decisive; and the Viceroy who for three years had ruled Ireland with dignity and courage, yet with despotic power, whose name had become a synonym for the maintenance of law and order by drastic measures, finding the standard of Coercion abandoned even by Tory Ministers, came by one wide yet not irrational sweep to the conclusion that Home Rule in some form or other was not to be prevented. There can be no doubt that he was deeply wounded by Lord Randolph Churchill's speech. Connected though they were by many ties of kinship, their friendly relations were not for several years repaired and were never perfectly restored.

Heavy censures have been laid upon Lord Randolph Churchill for his share in this affair. The Maamtrasna inquiry has often been described as part of the purchase price paid by the Conservative party to Irish Nationalism for power. On this a word may be said. Although no bargain of any kind existed, it is obvious that Lord Salisbury's Government—which had come into office upon Nationalist votes, which was forced to govern Ireland by the ordinary law, and which possessed no majority in the House of Commons—was dependent largely upon Nationalist good-will. To preserve that good-will was vital to their power to bring the necessary work of the expiring Parliament to a creditable conclusion and to the success of

their struggle with Mr. Gladstone. Many other issues of domestic and Imperial politics, far greater in their importance than Irish affairs, were at stake in the approaching election. The times were tempestuous; the need was great; the concession pitifully small. In the event, Lord Carnarvon received, considered, and in due course rejected the memorials which were sent him. No decision was reversed; no prisoners were released; but the Irish people, satisfied that the inquiry had been fair, accepted its conclusions. It would not be difficult, from another point of view, to justify on its merits an examination into the administration of justice in an island which for five years had lain in the grip of what was almost martial law, where the most elementary civil rights had been in abeyance and where nearly every safeguard of British judicial procedure had been destroyed—more especially when that examination was demanded by recognised representatives from a Government of which they were in a sense constituents. This is, however, to raise questions beyond the scope of these pages. The merits of the Maamtrasna inquiry will be variously appraised. Lord Salisbury's first Administration must collectively share the responsibility, as they shared the advantage. But, whether right or wrong, Lord Randolph Churchill's personal sincerity cannot be doubted by anyone who reads his consistent declarations upon this and kindred Irish subjects or who studies his life and opinions as a whole.

The feeling excited among the Ulster members and so largely shared by orthodox unbending Conservatives was not concealed. The *Standard* abused the Tory leaders in the Commons as vigorously as any Liberal newspaper. Lord Randolph Churchill had promised to attend a great meeting at Liverpool at which Conservative working men from all parts of Lancashire were to present him with a great number of addresses. July 29 was fixed for the ceremony. On the afternoon of the 28th he learned that Lord Claud

Hamilton, one of his old opponents in the National Union fight, and another local member declined to attend. Regarding this as a deliberate insult to the Government and to himself, he telegraphed at once to the Chairman of the meeting:—

Telegram from Lord Randolph Churchill to A. B. Forwood, Esq.

Lord Claud Hamilton has just informed me that he and Mr. Whitley do not intend to be present at the meeting to-morrow, assigning as their reason that they disapprove so strongly of the policy of the Government on Irish questions that, if they were present, they would be obliged to express publicly their disapproval. Under these circumstances I distinctly decline to attend a meeting of the Tory party in Liverpool at which the two senior members refuse to be present. I think it in the highest degree ungenerous and unpatriotic that two gentlemen professing Tory principles should show at a difficult and critical time such a deplorable want of confidence in a Government which, in all other parts of the United Kingdom, has received from its friends a hearty and cordial sympathy.

From this determination the most frantic appeals from Liverpool failed to move him, and the meeting was abandoned at the last moment, to the great disappointment and inconvenience of all concerned. The Lancashire Tories were not, however, to be discouraged from their purpose and resolutions were immediately passed by the Liverpool Conservative Association inviting Lord Randolph to another similar meeting a few weeks later and urging the local members to attend.

The relations of Ministers with the Irish party which were thought so improper by good Conservatives, and were certainly compromising, did not end with the Maamtrasna inquiry. The appointment of Lord Carnarvon as Viceroy had been a part of the general policy of concession to Irish feeling which the new Government was forced to adopt. His opinions were known to be sympathetic to Irish aspirations and he was for that reason agreeable to the Nationalist party. That he had carried Federation in Canada, had tried to carry it in South Africa, and was well known to be familiar with the machinery of subordinate legislatures and Colonial Parliaments, were facts not in those days devoid of significance. His first speech, in the House of Lords, as Lord-Lieutenant had

been a declaration of the abandonment of Coercion and an appeal, in terms of generous sincerity, for a kindlier feeling between the two countries. Beginning thus, Lord Carnarvon was soon treading that path of hope and peril which seems to possess an almost irresistible fascination for English statesmen who are invited to watch at close quarters the detailed workings of Irish administration.

Lord Randolph Churchill was always inclined to blame Lord Ashbourne for his absence from Ireland at this critical time. 'The Irish Chancellor's constant presence in Dublin,' he wrote in 1889 in the memorandum already quoted, 'might have been of inestimable service to the Viceroy and the Government.... Lord Carnarvon, a nobleman of broad sympathies, liberal mind, and warm imagination, was left alone, without any previous knowledge of the country, to survey Ireland, to realise its condition, to appreciate the difficulties of its government, under the influence and guidance of Sir Robert Hamilton, at that time permanent Under-Secretary, who was possessed of great ability and long experience of the Civil Service, and who had some time previously arrived at the conclusion that the concession of Home Rule in some shape or other was inevitable. There was no countervailing influence of knowledge and authority with the Viceroy such as Lord Ashbourne might have afforded and Lord Carnarvon glided gently into the heresy which so grievously embarrassed and damaged his colleagues and correspondingly strengthened the party of Repeal.'

At the end of July Lord Carnarvon's opinions were so far advanced that he sought an interview with Mr. Parnell. The famous 'empty house' meeting was arranged. In a drawing-room in Grosvenor Square, dismantled and deserted at the end of the London season, the representative of the Queen in Ireland and the executive head of the Irish Government met the man whom the mass of the English people, high and low, had been taught

during five years, by the leaders of both political parties, to regard as guilty at least of high treason and probably of complicity in murder. From the accounts which have since been made public, the conversation that ensued seems to have been interesting and agreeable. Lord Carnarvon carefully explained that he spoke for no one but himself, that he sought for information only, and that as the Queen's servant he could listen to nothing inconsistent with the Union of the two countries. After this formality had been assented to by Mr. Parnell, the two rulers of Ireland—coroneted impotence and uncrowned power—rambled discursively over such topics as self-government and national aspirations, Colonial Parliaments and a central legislative body which might, it appeared, possess—a remarkable licence—the right of protecting Irish industries. Altogether a very instructive afternoon!

When Lord Carnarvon first explained this incident in the House of Lords (June 10, 1886) he stated emphatically that he had had no communication with the Cabinet on the subject either before or after the interview took place and that he had received 'no authorisation' from the Cabinet. Not until two years more had passed (May 3, 1888) did he reveal the fact that he had acted throughout with Lord Salisbury's consent. 'I should have been wanting in my duty if I had failed to inform my noble friend at the head of the Government of my intention of holding that meeting with Mr. Parnell, and still more should I have failed in my duty, if I had not acquainted him with what had passed between us at the interview, at the earliest possible moment. Accordingly, both by writing and by words, I gave the noble Marquess as careful and as accurate a statement as possible of what had occurred within twenty-four hours after the meeting and my noble friend was good enough to say that I had conducted that conversation with perfect discretion.'[32]

Lord Salisbury, however, kept this matter entirely to

himself. No one of his colleagues, not even the Leader of the House of Commons, was made aware of the incident until the fact was declared in Parliament. Lord Randolph Churchill was subsequently both astonished and offended at this concealment of such an important political event from Cabinet Ministers by the head of the Government.

The fact that Lord Carnarvon met Mr. Parnell and, with the knowledge and assent of the Prime Minister, discussed at large with him projects of Home Rule, has been held by many people to prove that the Tory Cabinet was considering such a policy in the autumn. But, as Lord Salisbury never apprised his colleagues of this interview, the inference is obviously incorrect. No Home Rule proposals were ever submitted to the Cabinet of 1885. Had proposals of this kind been submitted, taking the form of the establishment of a Parliament in Ireland, the Cabinet would inevitably have rejected them. If Lord Salisbury had been a convinced Home Ruler he could not have imposed his view upon his colleagues. Principle, prejudice, obstinacy, conviction, would each and all together have paralysed him. Apart from the Irish Viceroy, the two Ministers who might have been expected—according to prevailing impressions and suspicions—to give the most favourable consideration to such proposals were Lord Randolph Churchill and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. It is certain that both Lord Randolph and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach would have resigned rather than support such proposals, still less be responsible for their conduct through the House of Commons; and in resigning they would have been followed by the great majority of their colleagues. If these two leading Ministers had agreed with Lord Salisbury upon a plan, the Cabinet would have broken in pieces; and even if the entire Cabinet had agreed, it is by no means likely that they would have succeeded in carrying the Conservative party with them.

What ground is there for believing that Lord Salisbury

was ever inclined towards Home Rule, or contemplated, even in the vaguest terms, making proposals to the Cabinet? No one knew better than he the character of his party and the disposition of his Government. His method had always been to obtain and use power only *through* the party and *by* the party and no English statesman in the nineteenth century was less likely to split his party or to lead some forlorn, uncalculated crusade of enthusiasm or adventure. Certainly, if any idea had crossed his mind of making a settlement on Nationalist lines with Mr. Parnell, Lord Randolph Churchill would have been the Minister he would earliest have approached. Lord Salisbury was on intimate terms with Lord Randolph. They communicated with the greatest freedom and fulness almost every day and almost always by letter. In all the extensive correspondence that remains no trace can be discovered which suggests even remotely the existence or the recognition of such an idea. The Prime Minister's letters to Lord Randolph, so far as they relate to Ireland, proceed on the fundamental assumption that they are leagued together to resist Home Rule. They speak of the 'onslaught that is impending.' They examine the resources with which it can be met. But that either or both could join the attacking forces is a suggestion in itself so widely improbable, of such inherent absurdity and unimagined remoteness, that it is not even mentioned for the purpose of being dismissed. The same may be said generally of the correspondence of the 1885 Cabinet of which Lord Randolph's archives contain an extensive store.

Why, then, did Lord Salisbury allow and authorise the Irish Viceroy to confer with Mr. Parnell? It is not for me to attribute motives to persons with whom this story is only indirectly connected; but the question cannot be avoided and certain interpretations of his action irresistibly obtrude themselves. It seems, in the first place, a reasonable assumption that Lord Salisbury allowed the Viceroy to

meet Mr. Parnell because the Viceroy was anxious for such a meeting and because Lord Salisbury did not think that such a meeting would do any harm. If the officer responsible for the Government of Ireland thought that his task would be made easier by private consultation with any particular Irishman, why should the head of an Administration avowedly pursuing a conciliatory policy to Irish Nationalism and earnestly endeavouring to preserve order without a special Act, refuse to allow such consultation? Lord Carnarvon was warned to make it perfectly clear that he was acting for himself and by himself, that the communications were from his lips alone, that the conversation was with reference to information only, that no agreement or understanding—however shadowy—was in question, and that the Viceroy must neither hear nor say a word that was inconsistent with the union of the two countries. Lord Carnarvon always asserted that he had made these conditions perfectly clear. Mr. Parnell did not in all respects concur. He declared that he did not recollect that these conditions were made. The conflict of evidence was direct. Even if it were admitted that Lord Carnarvon failed to convey fully to Mr. Parnell these important preliminaries to their discussion, the fact that he honestly tried to do so to the best of his ability and believed that he had in fact done so, relieves him from any imputation of intentional bad faith as regards Mr. Parnell and clears *à fortiori* the Prime Minister—a person more remote from the transaction. But if Mr. Parnell chose to place upon Lord Carnarvon's words a construction which they would not bear or to attach to them an authority which they did not possess; if he chose deliberately, or through natural inclination, to magnify the importance of the whole incident, to treat it as a formal negotiation of a treaty, was Lord Salisbury to blame for that? And if Mr. Parnell thought fit for his own purposes to convey a detailed and highly-coloured account of his interview to Mr. Gladstone

and other Liberal leaders, was Lord Salisbury responsible for that? And if Mr. Gladstone jumped at conclusions upon insufficient and questionable evidence, was Lord Salisbury responsible for that? Could he foresee these possible consequences of the permission he had given to Lord Carnarvon? Ought he to have foreseen them; and if he had foreseen them, ought he to have refused to allow the meeting to take place? These are questions which it is difficult to answer here. A sufficient explanation is that Lord Salisbury allowed the interview to take place in order to pacify the Viceroy and soothe Mr. Parnell and that he did not communicate the fact to his colleagues because he thought the matter would make more trouble in the Cabinet than it was worth. Mr. Parnell's biographer has explained with ingenuous candour the delicate and elaborate manœuvres in which his hero was at this time engaged. 'The course of the Irish leader,' he tells us, 'was perfectly clear. He had to threaten Mr. Chamberlain with Lord Randolph Churchill, and Mr. Gladstone with both, letting the whole world know meanwhile that his weight would ultimately be thrown in the scale that went down upon the side of Ireland.' Tactics like these, though perfectly legitimate for a public object earnestly cherished, are not of a character to entitle those who adopt them to any special consideration.

The session had no sooner ended than the campaign in the country began. The Liberal party went down to the General Election of 1885 in a spirit of comfortable over-confidence. Their leaders occupied themselves more in correcting each other than in assailing the Conservative Government. Indeed, it would seem that in the fulness of their power, with all the prestige of the 'Old Man' and the 'old cause' and the expected reinforcement of 'two million intelligent citizens,' they believed sincerely that the future lay exclusively in their hands and that the only questions of real importance were those which divided the ranks of the

predominant party. Of these questions, however, there seemed to be no lack. Mr. Chamberlain's views upon Local Government, free education, graduated taxation and, above all, upon the transfer, tenure, and compulsory acquisition of land, set forth in a series of remarkable addresses, soon drew him into a lively controversy with Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen. Speech for speech they followed him about the country, until in the end he declared that he would accept office in no Government which 'deliberately excluded' the reforms he had advocated—in other words, in no Government of which they were members. Next came the question of Disestablishment, raised by stern Liberals, who found phrases about 'the old cause' and 'the old ship' soothing rather than satisfying in point of precision and substance. It was supported positively, as it appeared, by 374 Liberal candidates, and eagerly snatched at as a bone of contention by Wales and by English and Scotch Dissenters on the one hand and by Tory Churchmen and—let it be added—Tory politicians, on the other. In the last week of August Mr. Parnell demanded a national Parliament for Ireland. The whole press, Metropolitan and provincial, Liberal and Conservative, denounced his claim as destructive and impossible. 'There was no sign,' said the *Manchester Guardian*, 'of any appreciable section of Englishmen who would not unhesitatingly condemn or punish any party or any public man who attempted to walk in the path traced by Mr. Parnell.' Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain—differing so widely on all else—representing as they did the extreme limits of Whig and Radical opinion, rivalled each other in terms of prompt, explicit, and unqualified condemnation. Ministers were silent. Lord Randolph Churchill, speaking at Sheffield a few days later, ranged over many subjects, dwelt long upon the state of Ireland and the decision not to renew the Crimes Act, but made no reference of any kind to Home Rule.

Upon all these grave matters Mr. Gladstone was called to pronounce; and, like other party leaders under similar circumstances, he exerted himself rather to find a common basis of agreement between followers who fundamentally disagreed than to point a path of his own. He would apparently go as far with Mr. Chamberlain in domestic reform as he could carry Lord Hartington. Disestablishment, he observed cautiously, was a gigantic question, 'and I am very far from saying that if I were twenty years younger, and circumstances were ripe for taking a matter of this kind in hand—either on the one side or the other—I should urge you not to give it the first place in your thoughts and actions.' Upon Ireland and the future he was majestically mysterious and uttered stately phrases about the supremacy of the Crown, the unity of the Empire, and the authority of Parliament, mingled with aspirations towards 'an equitable settlement' and 'another effort to complete a reconciling work.' Mr. Gladstone's utterances were officially declared to have united the Liberal party and, fortified by this assurance, all its sections resumed their warfare with ever-increasing turbulence, amid a babel of conflicting voices.

From this clamour and darkness the lines of battle slowly but surely ranged themselves much as Lord Randolph Churchill had expected and desired. The menace to the Established Church and to denominational teaching consolidated the Conservative party. It provided a new and perfectly unimpeachable bond of union between them and the Irish Nationalists. The cry of the 'Church in danger' rendered Lord Salisbury very tractable on all other questions. To preserve that sacred vessel, to him precious beyond all else in English life, there was scarcely any concession he was not prepared to make—no merchandise he would not jettison. At Newport (October 7) he showed in unmistakable language that he was ready to make common cause with Tory Democrats, though they were

Radicals at heart, and with Irish Nationalists, who were rebels by profession, thereby the better to resist the onslaught of secularism and atheism. Viewed in this light, boycotting seemed to him a very small matter, probably intangible to the law, depending 'on the passing humour of the population,' 'more like the excommunication or interdict of the Middle Ages than anything we know now'; and in fine his Conservative principles made shift to accommodate themselves to a political programme which was morosely admitted by friends and foes alike to be little less than the Gladstonian manifesto.

The Irish vote came over solid and unstinted into the Tory lines upon a Parnellite denunciation of Mr. Gladstone and all his works, which in tone and language might have been an extract from one of Lord Randolph's speeches. 'In 1880,' ran this document,[33] 'the Liberal party promised peace, and it afterwards made unjust wars; economy, and its Budget reached the highest point yet attained; justice to aspiring nationalities, and it mercilessly crushed the national movement in Egypt under Arabi Pasha. To Ireland more than to any other country it bound itself by most solemn pledges. It denounced Coercion, and it practised a system of Coercion more brutal than that of any previous Administration, Liberal or Tory.'

Among the millions who at the General Election of 1885 exercised, many of them for the first time, the proud privilege of the franchise, no human being could have explained with any approach to accuracy what a vote for either of the great parties in the State actually involved, whether in principle or action. Leaders on both sides, swept to and fro by turbulent cross-currents, took refuge in ambiguous obscurity, even where the most fiercely contested questions were concerned. Official Liberalism had no decided opinion about Disestablishment, nor Toryism about Fair Trade. Every politician had his own ideas about a social programme; and Ireland was a riddle at

which neither party cared to guess in the absence of the electoral returns. What a mockery of statesmen's leadership and foresight the future was to unveil! The Parnellite manifesto and the Irish vote weakened, perhaps fatally, the Liberals who a few months later were to stake their fortunes upon Home Rule. Sir William Harcourt, who derided the Conservative party for 'stewing in Parnellite juice,' was himself to stew in that juice for the rest of his life. Lord Salisbury, whose philosophic defence of boycotting had excited general consternation, stood on the threshold of a Coercion Bill and 'twenty years of resolute government.' Mr. Gladstone, appealing for a majority independent of Irish members, became evermore dependent upon them. Mr. Chamberlain was soon to fight for political existence side by side with that same Lord Hartington whom he now described as Rip Van Winkle, to sit for years in the same Cabinet as the Mr. Goschen he now ran up and down the land to denounce, and to be driven from the Liberal party, locked in fast alliance with the very Whigs he was now striving in the name of Radicalism to expel. Whether Lord Randolph Churchill surpassed these standards of consistency the reader will be able to judge as the account proceeds.

These were perhaps the busiest days of his life, and the amount of work of the most exhausting character which he contrived to discharge astonished all who knew him. Besides the anxious and incessant attention which the India Office required, and the ordinary labours of a Cabinet Minister, he had to watch the Irish situation and to prosecute his Birmingham candidature from week to week. In addition to all this he darted to and fro about the country —to Dorsetshire, Sheffield, Worcester, Lynn, Manchester —commending the Conservative cause to the electors in speeches in which serious argument was garnished with a vigour of metaphor and a raciness of language that delighted the Tory Democracy and attracted universal

attention. Lord Salisbury, who knew what the management of the India Office at this time involved, seems to have been genuinely concerned lest his lieutenant should break himself down by attempting a platform campaign as well as his departmental work. 'The strain of doing the two things together,' he wrote (September 13) in a letter almost paternal in the kindness of its tone, 'is enormous: and if you once go a step too far—if you once break the spring—you may take years to get over it.' But Lord Randolph persevered; and though he was forced by ill-health to take a few weeks' rest at the end of September, he managed to carry out nearly all the engagements he had undertaken.

Such brief leisure as he could secure he spent mainly salmon-fishing in the Carron at Auchnashellach—a house and river in Scotland then the property of his brother-in-law, Lord Wimborne. Thither also went Sir Frederick Roberts before leaving to take up the Indian command. Lord Randolph was delighted to renew a friendship so happily begun the year before at Rewah.[34]

To his Wife.

Auchnashellach: September 27.

I have written twenty-one letters to-day, some of them long ones, so you won't be vexed if I only send a short scrawl. I think your letter to Lady Dufferin admirable and all your plans with regard to her Fund most excellent. I am sure Moore will do anything you want. I should advise you to get hold of Mr. Buckle and fascinate him, and make him write you up. I have been very glad to get Sir Frederick Roberts here, and have had long conversations with him on many Indian subjects. Did you not find him very nice? It has been everything for me getting him up here. I never could have had any real satisfactory *pow-wow* in London. He is coming to dine with me on October 6, to meet some of the other Ministers—only a man party. I hope the new cook will be on his mettle....

He found time to pay a flying visit to Howth—thus combining pleasure with certain matters of importance

which drew him to Dublin.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Justice FitzGibbon.

Auchnashellach, Dingwall, N.B.: September 21, 1885.

A line to tell you that on Tuesday, 29th inst., I commence my journey to Howth. A considerable business. I shall go by Carlisle to Holyhead, and imagine I ought to arrive at Kingstown on Thursday morning. From there I shall proceed to the Attorney-General's abode at Monkstown, and later in the day move on in the direction of 'the Eye.'[35] Will you keep me for two nights? I have asked the Lord-Lieutenant to let me go to him on the Saturday. Can you possibly manage to put up my secretary, Cecil Wolff? He is here with me and, while we are exploring the bay and deluding the wily lobster, will decipher telegrams and look after papers—a work I am perfectly unequal to. I hope the 'Tutissimus'[36] will be on the spot and David Plunket—also I shall have to go and see O. V. G. L.,[37] who wrote to me from Buxton the other day; and there are many other old friends I am greatly looking forward to seeing again—you first.

Auchnashellach, Dingwall, N.B.: September 27, 1885.

Many thanks for your letter and telegram. My complete physical restoration absolutely depends upon an evening with Father James Healy.

I shall try to get to you early Saturday morning, and I fear I must leave Monday night, as our great Prime Minister has summoned a Cabinet for Tuesday. I shall go to the Attorney-General's on Thursday morning in order to get myself into a proper state of mind and body before meeting the Lord-Lieutenant. Could you not run out to Monkstown in the early morning, in order that we may deliberate as to the proper employment of Saturday and Sunday and Monday, and also that I may hear at first hand from authentic sources what the FitzGibbon Commission (Endowed Schools) has been up to. I see you have made a lot of jobbing appointments. Wolff is very pleased with your kind letter.

Can't you get O. V. G. L. over to Howth on Sunday? This would be better than any amount of Church.

Please tell Baillie Gage privately that an intelligent telegraph clerk at Howth while I am there would be a great advantage. The

cypher telegrams require care, or else are worse than useless. They come pretty thick now.

The Irish capital under Lord Carnarvon was disturbed by many whisperings of Parnellite intrigue, Maamtrasna alliances, Catholic Universities and Repeal. What if they had known of the conversation in Grosvenor Square? Lord Randolph's sudden arrival in Dublin created a new flutter. It had been very freely said that he had committed himself to the Parnellites on Home Rule, and his visit was attributed in some newspapers to the purpose of further negotiation. He soon reassured his Irish friends. At the Vice-Regal he had a long conversation with Lord Carnarvon. The Viceroy made no mention of his communications with Parnell; but his language excited Lord Randolph's suspicions. He called upon Mr. Holmes, the Attorney-General, early one morning, as he had proposed. They talked much on Irish politics. At length Lord Randolph got up to go. As he reached the door he paused, and, pointing with his finger, said, almost harshly and in a tone of command: 'Now, mind. None of us must have anything to do with Home Rule in any shape or form.' For the rest of his visit he amused himself at Howth, playing whist, chaffing his old friends, and catching lobsters in the bay. The cypher telegrams came in thickly. The short holiday was soon at an end.

Election oratory is not illuminating. The tags, the personalities, the arguments which spring into being in the excitement of the moment, may pass muster in the scrimmage. It were a harsh measure to call them forth one by one in cold blood to justify themselves before austere tribunals of taste and truth. The passions of these stormy months drew Lord Randolph Churchill into a dispute with Lord Hartington very soon to be regretted by both. It was natural that Whigs and Tory Democrats should eye each other with mutual dislike. The Whigs saw with jealousy the hold which the Tory party were gaining upon popular

sympathies; with disgust their readiness to outbid old-fashioned Liberalism in all that appealed to the new democracy; and with alarm the excesses to which their own Radicals were encouraged or goaded thereby. The Tory Democrat, on the other hand, was incensed to see the ægis of aristocracy and wealth and all the solid assurance of respectability spread, however reluctantly, in protection over levelling and revolutionary doctrines. Both exerted influences upon their respective parties—the one of restraint, the other of propulsion—contrary to the general tendency of those parties. It needed but a step from these considerations for each to regard the other as insincere. The Whig accused the Tory Democrat of unscrupulous opportunism; the Tory said that the Whig was a humbug.

The actual dispute arose in this wise. Lord Hartington's examination of Mr. Chamberlain's programme led him to utter many sentiments about the rights of property which were not less gratifying to the Conservative party than his blunt repudiation of Mr. Parnell and Home Rule. 'If,' said Lord Randolph Churchill at Sheffield, after reading one of Lord Hartington's speeches, 'this is really all you can bring yourself to utter on political questions, you cannot indicate any difference between yourself and your friends and the Government now in power. If, on the contrary, you are compelled by the honesty of your nature to indicate the strongest possible difference with a certain section of the Liberal party with whom for years you have hopelessly and vainly tried to agree, then I say you have no longer the right as a patriot and a citizen to oppose the Conservative Government simply on the ground of antiquated names; nor the right to act with Mr. Chamberlain and his friends, who would not only destroy the Constitution, but would destroy with it that great party of the Revolution—the Whigs—under whose guidance that noble Constitution was framed.... I say to Lord Hartington before you all—not by any backstairs intrigue, not by any secret negotiations, but

in the face of this meeting and before all England—to Lord Hartington, to his friends, and to his following, words which were said to men nearly two thousand years ago, who were destined to become great political guides, "Come over and help us."'

This invitation was rejected by Lord Hartington with some asperity. It was comically suggested that he had written to inquire 'Who's "us"?' and had received the answer '"Us" is me.' Radicals earnestly besought him to follow the advice which had been offered. He would be much happier in the Conservative camp. It would be better for all parties if he took the plunge. To a proud man profoundly attached to historic Liberalism, painfully conscious of the increasing difficulties of his position, these taunts were galling in the extreme. In more than one speech he denounced the New Conservatives, of whom he said that they arrogated to themselves the title of Tory Democracy, had no distinctly marked political opinions, and looked on politics only as a game by which they might attain office. One shaft at least was shrewdly aimed. He taunted Lord Randolph Churchill with going about the country with 'a great policy of grand pretensions but absolutely no legislation.'

The Secretary of State for India spoke in Manchester on November 6. It was the eve of the poll. The election fever was at its height. The streets leading to the St. James's Hall were impassable, through the crowd waiting to catch a glimpse of their favourite.[38] The vast hall itself was crammed with excited people. Lord Randolph was in his element. He cast away every kind of restraint and devoted himself for an hour and a half with zeal and relish to an unmeasured attack upon the Whigs, their record, their leaders, their influence, and their aims. He showed how Lord Hartington had opposed almost every reform that the Liberal party had ultimately carried—the ballot, household suffrage, the abolition of flogging in the army—and yet

under pressure had in the end consented to them all; how he was still professedly opposed to manhood suffrage and Disestablishment, but how in the near future he would be forced to support them; how he already advocated that extension of Local Government to Ireland which only the year before he had denounced. This was political principle! And now? 'Did any of you ever go,' inquired the speaker, 'to the Zoological Gardens? If you go there on some particular day in the week you may have the good fortune to observe the feeding of the boa-constrictor, which is supplied with a great fat duck or a rabbit. If you are lucky and patient and if the boa-constrictor is hungry, you may be able to trace the progress of the duck or the rabbit down his throat and all along the convolutions of his body. Just in the same way, by metaphor and analogy, the British public can trace the digestion and the deglutition by the Marquess of Hartington of the various morsels of the Chamberlain programme which from time to time are handed to him; and the only difference between the boa-constrictor and the Marquess of Hartington is this—that the boa-constrictor enjoys his food and thrives on it and Lord Hartington loathes his food and it makes him sick....' 'Ah! the Whigs hate the New Conservatism and the Tory Democracy because they are democratic and because they are popular. They hate the Tory Democracy because it has cut the ground from under their feet; because Tory Democracy has taken the place of the Whigs and swept away that baffling and confusing medley party which at every crisis obscures the issues before the people. No; I quite admit that there is nothing democratic about the Whig. He is essentially a cold and selfish aristocrat who believes that the British Empire was erected by Providence and exists for no other purpose than to keep in power a few Whig families, and who thinks that our toiling and struggling millions of labourers and artisans are struggling and toiling for no other purpose than to maintain in

splendour, opulence, and power the Cavendishes and the Russells.'

The audience were delighted at this hard hitting. Certainly Lord Randolph had set his mark upon the Whig leader in unmistakable fashion. It is said by some who were present and who followed his movements closely, that on no occasion in Lancashire, not excepting the celebrated 'Chips' speech at Blackpool in 1884, was his command from minute to minute of a meeting containing a large proportion of opponents so strikingly displayed. Lord Hartington was deeply and personally offended. 'I hear,' wrote Lord Randolph to his wife a few days later, 'that Hartington says he will never speak to me again. *Je m'en moque.*' But 'never' is a hard word in political strife.

The contest in Birmingham was watched with the keenest interest all over the country. The fame of Mr. Bright, the popularity of his young challenger, the antagonisms which Mr. Chamberlain and his doctrines had excited, the daring of the assault upon the stronghold of Radicalism, the incidents of the Aston Riots, still fresh in the public mind, united so many picturesque and personal elements that the rough and tumble of a modern election assumed the glamour of a Homeric combat. Even Mr. Balfour seems to have become enthusiastic. Considering how intimate his relations with Lord Randolph must have been during these years, it is curious how few of his letters are to be found among Lord Randolph's extensive correspondence. But the Birmingham election drew from him a warm private message of encouragement and congratulation, written in his own hand, in the midst of his own fight in Manchester. Every word uttered by Lord Randolph was diligently reported. Not merely the regular speeches in the Town Hall with which the campaign was opened, but accounts of every petty ward meeting were telegraphed verbatim to the newspapers. Lord Randolph's address[39] had been issued as early as October 10. From

October 24 till the poll a month later he prosecuted his candidature with seemingly inexhaustible vigour and fertility; and as the days slipped by the tide of popular approval seemed to flow ever more strongly in his favour. At the Radical headquarters there had been at first some disposition to treat the attack with indulgent and superior contempt. But soon feelings of incredulous anxiety broke in upon complacency, and Mr. Schnadhorst and his myrmidons bent again over their finished—'perhaps too highly finished,' as Lord Randolph suggested—organisation, ciphering their pledged electors out again by wards and streets and alleys with all that American thoroughness for which the Caucus was remarkable. The progress of the fight, strangely enough, provoked no personal ill-feeling between Lord Randolph and Mr. Chamberlain. Their renewed friendship continued unimpaired. They exchanged various small civilities and avoided, so far as possible, attacking each other in irritating terms. When, for instance, Mr. Chamberlain described Lord Randolph's address as 'colourless' and the reporters wrote 'scurrilous,' Mr. Chamberlain at once telegraphed to explain the mistake and added a friendly inquiry about Lord Randolph's health. For the rest, the contest in all the seven divisions was bitter and fierce. Lord Randolph was helped from morn till night by his wife and his mother, at the head of their Primrose Dames. These ladies canvassed the whole of the Central Division street by street and house by house; and the Duchess of Marlborough—who was, as these pages perhaps suggest, a woman of remarkable character and capacity—visited the factories and addressed the workmen effectively on her son's behalf. If it were in human power to command success, the Central Division of Birmingham would have been won. Against any other candidate Lord Randolph must have prevailed. But the personal loyalty of the people to their famous representative resisted all efforts. 'I like

your husband,' said an old fellow to Lady Randolph on one of her canvassing tours, 'and I like what he says; but I can't throw off John Bright like an old coat.'

Not until the very eve of the General Election did the Liberal party realise that their victory in England and Scotland would not be complete and was even doubtful. For the first time since the Conservatives had taken office in June all talk of triumphant and crushing Gladstonian majorities died away. Tales of distress came in on every hand from the boroughs. Crowds of ardent Conservative working men—utterly unexpected phenomena—assembled to cheer and support the Government candidates. The Conservative party was found, moreover, to have gained vastly in prestige by its short tenure of power. Lord Salisbury's conduct of foreign affairs extorted admiration even from his opponents. The Afghan difficulty had been removed and the Russian crisis was at an end. The Egyptian settlement was proceeding smoothly. Good relations had been restored between Great Britain and the two Empires of Germany and Turkey, from which under the late Government she had been estranged. The charges of 'rashness' and 'Jingoism' which it had been so fashionable to make against Lord Salisbury found their answer in actual events. The new Ministers had shown themselves competent and capable men. It was no longer denied that the Conservative party could produce an efficient alternative to any Government Mr. Gladstone might form.

The voting began on November 23. Forty-four borough constituencies which had been represented in the late Parliament by 35 Liberals and 20 Conservatives now (after redistribution) returned 26 Conservatives and 18 Liberals. Liverpool elected 8 Conservatives and 1 Parnellite (Mr. T. P. O'Connor); Manchester 5 Conservatives to 1 Liberal; Leeds and Sheffield 3 Conservatives each to 2 Liberals. Other large towns like Stockport, Blackburn, Oldham,

Staleybridge, Bolton, Brighton, hitherto for the most part strictly Liberal, were now represented mainly or wholly by Conservatives. London, which in 1880 had sent up 14 Liberals and 8 Conservatives, now returned 62 Members, of whom 36 were Conservatives and 26 Liberals. Wherever the influence of Lord Randolph Churchill upon the Tory Democracy had been the strongest, that is to say, in the great centres of population and of active political thought, victory—all the more dazzling because so desperately won—rested with the constitutional cause. Two ex-Cabinet Ministers and quite a litter of underlings from the late Government fell before the storm. Whereas, in 1880, 287 English borough members had mustered only 85 Conservatives; in 1885, 226 English borough members numbered 116 Conservatives to 106 Liberals, 3 Independents, and 1 Parnellite. And it was, moreover, noticed that even in boroughs where the Tories were outnumbered the increase in their vote was heavy and almost universal.

Yet it is remarkable that, amid so many successes, the Conservative party should have derived enormous encouragement from a defeat. The result of the Birmingham election was declared late on the night of the 24th. Seven Liberals or Radicals were returned for its seven divisions. But the Conservative minorities were everywhere largely increased, and raised in the aggregate from 15,000 voters to 23,000. Whereas in 1880 the proportion of Liberals to Tories in Birmingham was as 2 to 1, it was in 1885 as 3 to 2. Mr. Alderman Kenrick, the Chairman of the National Liberal Federation, saved his seat by scarcely 600 votes from Mr. Matthews. In the Central Division Lord Randolph Churchill was defeated by Mr. Bright by 4,989 votes to 4,216, a majority of less than 800. It was claimed by Conservative, and generally admitted by Liberal, writers that no more significant proof of the change of opinion in English cities could be

furnished than this result. But while the political world was fully aware of the meaning of the Birmingham elections, the Tories who had fought the battle with so much earnestness and enthusiasm were bitterly disappointed. Hope, growing stronger, had even ripened into confidence as the contest had proceeded, and the crowd of local leaders in the Midland Conservative Club awaited the declaration of the poll in intense excitement. As one by one the adverse results came in, the hum of eager conversation died away and gloom overspread every face. The figures of the Central Division were still delayed. 'Churchill's in!' shouted a voice from the street; and a frantic cheer went up. 'At the bottom!' cried the mocker; and fled. Then the truth arrived. There was a sickly silence. In a moment Lord Randolph was upon his feet. 'Gentlemen,' he said, 'the man who cannot stand a knock-down blow isn't worth a damn.' The Midland Conservative Club were accustomed to regard this remark with a respect which they did not always extend to more edifying political pronouncements.

Lord Randolph returned to London next day and was almost immediately elected by a majority of more than 2 to 1 for South Paddington, where he then lived. The Fourth Party had fought everywhere in the front line. Mr. Balfour, forsaking the shelter of Hertford, had captured an immense working-class constituency in Manchester. Mr. Gorst was returned again for Chatham. Only Sir Henry Wolff—still far away in Egypt—fell at Portsmouth, and passes as a Parliamentary politician out of this story altogether. Tory confidence flared high during the first few days of the election and 'Back to 1874' was everywhere the word. Lord Justice FitzGibbon was in London when the returns from the boroughs were coming in, and after spending the small hours among an excited crowd at the tape machine in the Grand Hotel, he hurried round to Connaught Place to see his now famous friend. 'Ah!' said Lord Randolph,

pacing up and down in excited satisfaction, ‘the Whigs can no longer call us the party of the classes. If they do, I’ll chuck big cities at their heads.’

But after the boroughs, the counties. While Liberals all over the country were beginning to lose heart, while whispers of utter defeat and panic were flying about among the wire-pullers, Mr. Gladstone stoutly proclaimed his undiminished confidence that the new voters would reverse the decision of the old; and so it proved. Scotland voted solidly Liberal—only nine Conservatives being returned. In the English counties the agricultural labourers tramped doggedly to vote down the farmers’ and landlords’ candidates. Mr. Farrer Ecroyd’s Fair Trade movement, which had proved so popular in Lancashire towns, exerted an opposite effect in villages, where Corn Law memories were still wakeful. Mr. Chamberlain’s speeches had fallen upon a fertile soil. The country party, with all its immense territorial influence and candidates of county families, was shattered, never to be restored, except as a shadow of its old strength. Henceforth the Conservative leaders, if they were to rule the land, must build in town and country upon the foundation of democracy.





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THE WAITS.
Punch. December 26, 1885.

Ireland was a portent. Not a single Liberal was returned. The Irish Whigs were as a party and a force totally exterminated. Ulster elected 16 Tory members and 17 Nationalists. Out of 89 contests Mr. Parnell won 85, the greater part by overwhelming majorities. Upon such national authority could he base his demand for Home Rule. The leaders of both the great English parties

understood the meaning of the Irish elections. On November 30 Mr. Gladstone was still appealing to his counties for a clear and strong majority over the combined forces of Conservatives and Parnellites. 'There seems to be still hope,' wrote Lord Salisbury to Lord Randolph Churchill, as late as December 3, 'that we may be above low-water mark—*i.e.* Tories + Parnellites = Liberals.' The hopes of both were falsified by the event. The final result of the General Election of 1885 sent to the House of Commons 335 Liberals, 249 Conservatives, and 86 Parnellites. 'Low-water mark' it was.

'What will happen now?' Lord Randolph was asked by a friend. 'I shall lead the Opposition for five years. Then I shall be Prime Minister for five years. Then I shall die.' In respect to the span of his life the words came true almost to the day. But his personal fortunes and the destinies of Britain were about to receive a vast and unanticipated twist.

CHAPTER XI

AT THE INDIA OFFICE

ἀρχὴ ἀνδρα δεἰξει
'Great command proves the man.'

THE reader, having persevered so long amid the intrigues of party and the warfare of Parliament, may now be glad to escape for a while into the calm atmosphere of a public department. The India Office rejoices in a character and constitution of its own. The cost of its maintenance and the salaries of its officials, from the Secretary of State downwards, are defrayed by India and do not appear upon the votes of the House of Commons. The opportunities of debating the policy or conduct of the responsible Minister, except upon formal votes of censure, are therefore perhaps

inconveniently few. Any apparent laxity of control by Parliament is, however, corrected by the Council of India —a body consisting of gentlemen of long and distinguished service in the East—with whom the Secretary of State is by law compelled to act and by whose decisions he is in many matters of the highest importance absolutely bound. Under these restrictions the Minister brings the opinion of his colleagues and of Parliament and his own personal influence to bear upon the majestic organisation of the Government of India.

Modern conditions increasingly enhance the power of the political chief over all officials, military and civil. If the Secretary of State is possessed of sufficient personal authority to enforce his will upon the Cabinet, no hierarchy, however glittering, no Constitution, however venerable, can withstand him. He has it in his power to change the hierarchy and to remould the Constitution till the implement is convenient to his hand; and his decisions will in almost every case be acclaimed by the party press and ratified by driving a party majority through the division lobbies of the House of Commons. But to employ methods so costly and even ruinous, in their violence, is in itself usually a confession of failure on the part of the Minister. His business is to exert his authority by modes of persuasion, patience, and adjustment which may secure in the end the triumph of his opinions without the sensible abasement of others.

The Council of India is for all such purposes an invaluable instrument to a wise Secretary of State. Having in subordination to him officers as great and independent as the Governor of nearly three hundred million persons and perhaps as intractable as a Commander-in-Chief at the head of nearly three hundred thousand soldiers, he should naturally fortify himself with the unique authority of his Council, now in his dealings with the Cabinet and now with the Viceroy. At the time at which Lord Randolph

became Secretary of State the Council of India consisted of fifteen men, nearly all of whom had spent their lives, whether as soldiers or as civilians, in India; nearly all were old or elderly men, and many of them were men of very high distinction and reputation. In these circumstances it was not an easy task for a Secretary of State thirty-six years of age and absolutely devoid of all official experience, to preside over their meetings and to bring to bear on them the personal influence which, for the proper conduct of business, should be exercised by the responsible head of the office. Lord Randolph himself, after his first experience of a meeting of Council, said to a friend that he had felt 'like an Eton boy presiding at a meeting of the Masters.'

'Yet it is probable,' writes Sir Arthur Godley (who was then, as now, Under-Secretary of State for India) in a memorandum for which I am much indebted to him, 'that no Secretary of State ever showed greater skill and address in the discharge of this part of his duties. His treatment of it was characteristic and in a degree peculiar to himself. For some time and until he had mastered the methods of procedure and the idiosyncrasies of the individual members, he took no part whatever in the debates, but sat in his Presidential chair absolutely silent. As soon, however, as he began to feel at home, he adopted a method to which he strictly adhered as long as he was at the India Office. Having gone carefully through the list of agenda, he would decide some days beforehand which were the subjects as to which he desired to use his influence. He would then send for the papers on these subjects and would study them most thoroughly. Then, when the day of meeting arrived, having thus mastered his brief, and possessing the immense advantages of his natural readiness, his powers of speech and his Parliamentary training, he would intervene with decisive effect, and rarely, if ever, failed to carry his point. The other subjects

—those which he had deliberately left unstudied—he never touched, relying entirely upon those members of Council who were specially qualified to deal with them. He treated his Council with great consideration and with marked politeness; but he nevertheless spoke always with confidence and decision and occasionally with a touch of vehemence and of "the personal note" which, though natural enough in the House of Commons, came as a slight surprise in the serener regions of the India Council room.'

Railway construction was one of the first subjects which commanded his personal attention. The opinion had been for some time gaining ground in the Railway Department that the necessary development of Indian lines could only be attained if private enterprise were enlisted to supplement the efforts of the State. Bargains between public departments and limited companies are subject to such severe scrutiny in Parliament that hitherto the India Office had not ventured to offer sufficient inducement to attract commercial interests. Lord Randolph Churchill had, however, no fear of the House of Commons and always believed in his power to persuade them to any reasonable proposal. The construction of the Indian Midland and Bengal-Nagpur Railways had been recommended as famine-protective lines by a select committee which sat in 1884. Under his hand both projects moved forward at once. The stimulus of a four per cent. guarantee on capital, together with one-fourth of the amount by which the net receipts might exceed the guarantee, led to the formation of the Indian Midland Railway Company in July 1885. The railway was 589 miles in length; it connected the Great Indian Peninsula with the East Indian Railway system by continuous broad-gauge lines, opened out a populous and fertile country, and shortened the distance by rail from Bombay to Cawnpore by 134 miles. The Bengal-Nagpur Railway, though, owing to financial considerations, not actually floated till 1887, was eventually founded on the

same conditions. The transfer of the Mysore State Railway to the Southern Mahratta Railway Company for extension and working was another important railway scheme arranged while Lord Randolph was in office.

Nothing pleased the officials of the India Office more in their new chief than his total freedom from anything like humbug. On one occasion the Finance Committee were to deal with the question, then so vital to India, between bimetallism on the one hand, and a gold standard on the other. Before going into the committee he said to the Permanent Under-Secretary, who happened to be in his room: 'I've asked Arthur Balfour to come across and sit with us at this Committee: he knows all about bimetallism, but I'm as ignorant about these things as a calf.' Accordingly Mr. Balfour came and a very interesting discussion took place, at the end of which Lord Randolph (though he probably had not greatly exaggerated his own previous ignorance) delivered an admirable summing-up, worthy of an experienced Chancellor of the Exchequer.

'He was, in fact,' Sir Arthur Godley continues, 'an excellent head of a great department. He occupied himself instinctively and naturally with the great questions and kept his work upon a high plane, leaving petty matters to his subordinates, but always maintaining his own ultimate control. He was, as everyone knows, exceedingly able, quick, and clear-sighted. Besides this, he was very industrious, very energetic and decided when once his mind was made up and remarkably skilful in the art of devolution—that is to say, in the art of getting the full amount of help out of his subordinates. He had the gift of knowing at once whether a given question was worth his attention or should be left to others. If he took it up, he made himself completely master of it; if he left it alone, he put entire confidence in those to whom he left it, endorsed their opinions without hesitation, and was always ready to defend them or to further their wishes. This quality, it is

needless to say, was invaluable both to himself and to those who worked with him. His perfect candour and straightforwardness were not only admirable in themselves but were a great assistance to business. What he said, he meant; and if he did not know a subject he did not pretend to know it. Few high officials can ever have been his superior, or indeed his equal, in the magical art of *getting things done.* Those who worked under him were sure of a friendly and favourable hearing and they felt that, if they had once convinced him that a certain step ought to be taken, it infallibly would be taken and "put through."'

Lord Randolph enjoyed his official work greatly, and made no secret of it. His tenure of the post was brief but it would be safe to say that there was not a single individual among those who had worked with him who was not sorry to lose him. He, on his side, was extremely sorry to go, and freely said so. Just before Christmas, when it was known that the Government would be turned out as soon as Parliament met, he was talking to one of his Under Secretaries and said: 'I suppose you are going away for a holiday?' 'Yes,' was the reply; 'I am going away for a week; what holiday are you going to take?' 'I shall take none,' he said; and then, with the air of one who is making a confession, 'The fact is, you know, it is all very well for you: but I'm new to office: I enjoy it thoroughly; and I'm going to be kicked out very soon. So I mean to stay here and get as much of it as I can.'

Lord Salisbury in after-years distinguished as perhaps Lord Randolph Churchill's greatest quality his power of commanding the personal devotion of his subordinates. In coming to the India Office the new Minister was lucky in finding available as his Private Secretary a remarkable man, who rendered invaluable service to him, to the India Office, and (it is hardly too much to say) to the two Governments of which Lord Randolph was a member. Mr. A. W. Moore had come at an early age to the India Office

as a clerk, with no special reputation for industry or ability, and, being placed in the Finance Department, was soon regarded as a somewhat idle and not very efficient member of the establishment. After some years, however, he was by a lucky chance transferred to the Political Department, which is concerned with Indian Foreign Affairs and with the relations between the Government of India and the Native States and conducts the correspondence which is constantly passing between the India Office and the Foreign Office. No more important work could be found; but it requires special qualifications which are not very commonly met with. 'Mr. Moore,' writes Sir Arthur Godley, 'as soon as he was transferred, was a new man: he set to work with extraordinary energy and zeal and in a very short time acquired the reputation, which he never lost, of being among the most valuable servants of the Crown. His industry was immense, possibly excessive; his knowledge of his work, and of everything connected with it, was unrivalled: he had it always at his finger-ends; and his gift of rapid but clear, lucid and effective conversation and writing was hardly to be surpassed. When Lord Randolph came to the Office, it happened fortunately that, owing to some changes in the Department, Moore's services were available, though his age and position were by this time such as might have been expected to debar him from the office of Private Secretary. In this capacity he was exactly the man Lord Randolph needed; he supplied whatever was at first wanting to his chief, who treated him not only with the most complete confidence but really more as a colleague than as a subordinate; and it may safely be said that he contributed in no small degree to the success with which Lord Randolph discharged the duties of the two great offices which he successively held.'

Moore followed his chief from the India Office to the Treasury when Lord Salisbury's Administration of 1886 was formed, and Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation of

the Chancellorship of the Exchequer seems to have struck him a fatal blow. In a sense it may be said to have broken his heart. His health had for some time suffered from the amount of work he imposed upon himself. He was an active, athletic man, a great hero in the annals of the Alpine Club; but he had undoubtedly over-tasked both his mind and his body in the service of a master to whom he was not only personally but politically devoted. Fortunately, as it seemed, an opportunity occurred just then of offering him the headship of his old branch, the Political Department, in the India Office. He accepted it, and went abroad to the Riviera for a few weeks' rest. But he never recovered from his exhaustion and depression, caught a fever at Cannes and died there two months later (February 2, 1887) at the age of 46. 'The Home Civil Service,' writes Sir Arthur Godley, 'has not, for very many years, sustained a greater loss.'

When Lord Randolph Churchill became Secretary of State for India on June 24, 1885, the imminent danger of war with Russia had been dispelled by the agreement of May 4. Under this it was arranged that Penjdeh should be neutralised till the boundary on that section of the frontier had been settled and that negotiations should be resumed at once in London as to the main points of the line of delimitation, the details of which alone would be examined and settled by Commissioners on the spot. Some progress had also been made towards defining the general line of the frontier by an agreement arrived at on May 22. That agreement, however, left open what was then the crucial question of how to reconcile the full possession by the Afghans of the Zulficar Pass, on which we insisted with the maintenance of the existing communications between points on the Russian side of the frontier which the Russian Government considered essential. This difficulty had declared itself before the change of Government took place and the negotiations on the subject were resumed by

Lord Salisbury from the point at which they had been left by Lord Granville.

Little progress was made for some considerable time and the situation again became somewhat critical owing to the local excitement on both sides of the border and recollections of what had taken place at Penjdeh. Finally, however, an agreement was arrived at and embodied in a Protocol signed on September 10, which stated, in sufficient detail to ensure the completion of the work, the conditions under which the Commissioners on the spot were to carry out the actual demarcation. The agreement was one which, though it necessarily involved mutual concessions, enabled both parties to it to claim that they had made no sacrifice of vital points. From the British point of view the really important objects attained by the settlement were the maintenance of British credit with the Amir, whose interests had been successfully guarded, the escape from what for a long and anxious period had seemed a diplomatic impasse and the establishment of a frontier which has remained unaltered to this day.

The actual demarcation commenced on November 10, when Sir Joseph West Ridgeway met the Russian Commissioner at Zulficar. The work proved long and difficult; and the position of the British Agent, forced to winter with a small escort in that wild country, was full of peril to himself and caused constant anxiety at home. It was not until July 1887 that a Protocol was signed at St. Petersburg completing the delimitation of the whole frontier between the Hari Rud and the Oxus.

Lord Randolph's letters to the Queen throw a clear light on his views and temper during this critical time. The dignified and ceremonious style which flowed so naturally from his pen may surprise the reader who is familiar with his platform speeches and his private letters.

India Office: July 11, 1885.

Lord Randolph Churchill presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and begs to submit the accompanying telegrams which have passed between the Viceroy of India and himself.

There can hardly be any doubt, in view of the remarkable expressions made use of by Mr. Gladstone on Tuesday last in the House of Commons, giving such strong confirmation as to the absolute pledge given by the Government of Russia, that the pass of Zulficar should be ceded to the Amir. Your Majesty's Government is in an exceptionally favourable position for taking up an unyielding attitude on this question. Parliament as a body is practically committed to the policy of faithful observance of pledges given to the Amir, and it may well be that so much Parliamentary unanimity on any large question of foreign policy may not occur again for a very long time. It is most earnestly to be hoped that this dispute with the Government of Russia, which really involves the whole Afghan Question as far as Russia is concerned, may be definitely decided one way or another before Parliament separates for the recess.

The negotiations have been extremely protracted. Troops are being massed, both by Russians and Afghans, near the frontier; the strain on the finances of India, caused by the obligation of keeping our military preparations in a very advanced state, is evidently causing the Viceroy uneasiness; and the character and credit of this country cannot well sustain any further concessions to Russia at the expense of our ally the Amir.

If this matter is not resolutely treated and definitely settled now, before Parliament separates, not only does the state of military emergency, so trying both to this country and to India, continue indefinitely, but there is great reason to believe that in September or October the Russians will make a further advance or aggression, just before the General Election here, causing the greatest alarm, confusion, excitement, and party feeling among the people, and consequently the greatest possible danger to the interests and security of India. Lord Randolph Churchill would humbly submit that no possible precaution should be neglected now in order, if possible, to obviate such an eventuality.

Lord Randolph Churchill humbly submits to your Majesty a memorandum he has drawn up on the subject of proposing to the Government of Russia and, if possible, concluding a comprehensive and to some extent permanent treaty, providing

generally for the integrity of Afghanistan and the regulation of all frontier matters, and having appended to it a rough draft of the possible clauses of such a treaty.

India Office: July 13, 1885.

Lord Randolph Churchill presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and begs to submit that, as is pointed out by your Majesty, it would be in the highest degree desirable to have some information as to the manner in which a proposal for a comprehensive treaty on the Afghan Frontier Question would be received by the Government of Russia.

Lord Randolph Churchill has never supposed that a proposal of this kind would be favourably received by the Government of Russia unless it was known to that Power that such a proposal was favourably received by other European Powers, or that a refusal to view it in a friendly manner would place so singular an interpretation on Russian policy that the continuation of negotiations might become very difficult.

Such a state of things, favourable to the proposal for a treaty the rough draft of which has been humbly submitted to your Majesty, does not exist at the present moment. Whether such a state of things may be brought into existence Lord Randolph Churchill would not venture to determine positively, but he has often expressed to Lord Salisbury the opinion that an effort in this direction could not well be at variance with sound policy, and would in no way conflict with public opinion.

The observation which your Majesty graciously records, that under such a treaty as has been sketched your Majesty's Government would become responsible for the acts of the Amir, is profoundly accurate; and it may well be that such a policy is liable to most searching criticism, and might lead to serious evils. The whole policy which is best known as 'the buffer State policy' is herein called in question, and Lord Randolph Churchill is possessed by the gravest doubts as to whether that policy is the best which could be adopted for the security of your Majesty's Indian Empire.

In its defence it may be urged, (1) That that policy has been adopted by this country for very many years; with short and abrupt intervals it was the policy pursued when Dost Mahomed and when Shere Ali Khan ruled in Afghanistan. (2) That it is a

policy to which both political parties in this country are deeply committed, and therefore it is a policy which, if it does not actually unite public men, perhaps divides them the least. (3) Under that policy pledges of a very binding character have been given to the present Amir, on several occasions, that as long as he is guided by the advice of your Majesty's Government in the conduct of his foreign relations your Majesty's Government will hold themselves responsible for, and will protect him from, any dangers and evils arising from that advice being followed. (4) It is a policy which, if it can be carried out (a very large and wide assumption), undoubtedly has the merit of keeping Russian influence very remote from actual contact with India.

The great danger of the policy alluded to is that it is dependent upon the caprice or the design of the Amir; that it may be upset at any moment by the revolt of the Governor of Badakshan in the north and of the Governor of Herat in the south-west of Afghanistan, by the escape of Ayoub Khan from Teheran, or by a decidedly aggressive movement of the Russian forces.

It may be doubted whether there is any real solution of our difficulties and dangers except in the breaking-up by force of arms of the Russian Asiatic Empire, an enterprise far less hazardous and doubtful, in Lord Randolph Churchill's opinion, than is generally supposed, but nevertheless an undertaking the responsibility of which would, except under extraordinary circumstances, terrify an Administration which at the present day has to face a House of Commons.

Lord Randolph Churchill humbly submits that in acknowledging the great force of your Majesty's observations graciously conveyed to him he has ventured to offer for your Majesty's consideration views and opinions which have for long been upon his mind, and Lord Randolph Churchill earnestly hopes that he may not have transgressed your Majesty's pleasure by too diffuse an exposition.

No further action could well be taken with regard to a treaty until the opinion of the Viceroy has been fully ascertained.

India Office: July 15, 1885.

Lord Randolph Churchill presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and begs to submit that there can be little doubt that your Majesty's apprehension that the Government of Russia will

try to evade the half-promise they gave to cede the pass of Zulficar to the Afghan Amir is well founded. Lord Randolph Churchill would humbly submit to your Majesty whether the original pledge given by the Russians was not very full and unreserved, the difficulty about communications being raised subsequently. In the note to M. de Staal Lord Salisbury has taken this view very plainly. Colonel Ridgeway's telegrams cannot well be regarded as at all reassuring, though there is reason to hope that the news in No. 97 may not be altogether so grave as at first seemed to appear. The sequence of events from day to day does not at all weaken the views on the whole boundary question which Lord Randolph Churchill has from time to time humbly submitted to your Majesty, and Lord Randolph Churchill is more than ever of opinion that a firm and resolute insistence on the faithful fulfilment of Russian pledges is not only vital to your Majesty's interests, but perhaps in reality the best method of averting an eventual rupture of negotiations.

While Lord Salisbury at the Foreign Office was rapidly gathering into his skilful hands the tense and tangled threads of British diplomacy, the Secretary of State for India took pains to secure an effective defence upon the spot. Until the advance of Russia had reached the borders of Afghanistan, the functions of the military forces of India had been limited to maintaining internal peace or to frontier operations against adversaries of limited power. Now that a great European Power, liable at any time to become hostile, was in close proximity to the Afghan border, it was evident that the existing military establishments must be strengthened. The British troops in India were accordingly increased by 11 batteries of artillery (30 guns and 1,373 men), by the addition of a fourth squadron to each British cavalry regiment (1,332 men), and by the addition of three battalions of infantry and the augmentation of each of those already serving by 100 rank and file, amounting to 196 officers and 10,567 men. The increase of the British garrison allowed an expansion—in recognised proportion—of the native army.

Most of the cavalry regiments were raised to four squadrons each and three new native cavalry regiments were formed, making an increase of 56 British officers and 4,572 natives of all ranks. Nine new native infantry battalions were enlisted and the strength of the existing regiments was increased—a total addition of 63 British officers and 11,968 natives of all ranks. Various improvements were made in the position of the native soldier and a native Army Reserve was formed of 23,000 men. The Ordnance and Commissariat Departments were reorganised and an Army Transport Department was formed. The construction of strategical railways, roads and bridges on the North-West Frontier was undertaken, and Karachi harbour was improved as part of a general scheme of defence. Although all these military preparations were rapidly pushed forward, this substantial increase of power was secured at an initial cost of about one and a half millions sterling and maintained at an annual charge of not much more than one million pounds a year. Lord Randolph also approved, shortly before he left the India Office, of a proposal for arming the native army with the best rifle available and placing it in this respect on an equal footing with British troops. This change, however, was long delayed.

Scarcely anything that Lord Randolph Churchill did as a Minister gave him more pleasure than the appointment of Sir Frederick Roberts to be Commander-in-Chief in India. It was almost the first important step which he took on coming into power. Very powerful influences supported the high claims of Lord Wolseley and, as the appointment of the Indian Commander-in-Chief rested according to practice with the Secretary of State for War, the matter hung for some days in suspense. But Lord Randolph was insistent. His long and friendly talks with Sir Frederick Roberts during his visit to India had made a great impression upon him. All his life he continued to assert

that Roberts was the first soldier of his age. The Russian crisis and Sir Frederick's unequalled service and experience in the theatre of possible war constituted in his eyes overwhelming qualifications. He won the agreement of Lord Salisbury; he persuaded the Queen. In less than five weeks after the Government had taken office, the appointment was announced and was received with general assent and satisfaction.

In conjunction with this appointment and with the military preparations, orders were given and money supplied for a Camp of Exercise to be prepared upon a much larger scale than had ever been held in India before. The troops were mobilised early in 1886 in two Army Corps. They assembled at Umballa and Gurgaon—towns 150 miles apart—and after a fortnight of brigade and divisional tactics, the opposing forces came into contact near the famous battle-ground of Panipat. This was the first occasion on which representatives from foreign armies had been invited to be present at Indian manœuvres. Lord Randolph Churchill arranged that the invitations should be sent through the Foreign Office; and Lord Dufferin, who was present during the closing days of the operations, was accompanied by twelve officers from the principal armies of Europe and America.

On August 6 the Secretary of State for India laid the Indian Budget before the House. This statement, coming as it does during the 'Dog Days,' at the end of the Session, is usually heard in its ponderous complexity with apathy by an empty and exhausted House. But the importance of public departments varies with the authority of the Minister who directs them. The Chamber was filled with members in all the interest and eagerness of a great Parliamentary occasion. Nor were they disappointed. Lord Randolph had no difficulty in holding their attention for upwards of an hour and three-quarters while he unfolded in stately language, but with the utmost simplicity and

clearness, the wide scroll of Asia. Intricate and unfamiliar figures, facts and problems tangled with strange names and novel conditions, submitted themselves willingly to his interesting narration. The account was not cheering in its character. The confusion of Indian finances had permitted an astounding error in the Budget calculations of Lord Ripon's Government and the new Minister had to announce to Parliament a heavy deficit, largely unforeseen. The Russian crisis, moreover, imposed upon India the necessity of extensive military preparations. Before he had spoken very long the House realised that Lord Randolph was developing an elaborate indictment of the late Viceroy.

'The most unpardonable crime,' he said, 'of which the Governor-General of India can be guilty, is not to look ahead and make provision for the future. The Government of England cannot from its very nature look far ahead; its policy is always one of month to month, of week to week and sometimes of day to day; it is always more or less a policy of hand to mouth. The reason is, that our Government in England depends upon a Parliamentary majority which is violently assailed and swayed by an enlightened, but at the same time by a capricious public opinion. The Government of England has to think, in shaping its policy, of the state of Europe, of the Colonies and of Ireland; of the state of England; and last, not least, of the state of business in the House of Commons. It has to think of all those subjects, and the result is, that although we in England possess an unrivalled Constitution and unexampled freedom, yet for the purpose of that freedom we have to put up with the disadvantage of little stability and little continuity in our Government and hardly any forethought in our policy. The Government of India is exempt from all these disadvantages. It is a Government in its nature purely despotic, but it is not an hereditary despotism. We do our best to supply India from time to

time with statesmen who shall exercise this tremendous power of government, but who shall at the same time be wise, experienced and courageous. In India it is not as in England. In India there is no public opinion to speak of, no powerful press, and hardly any trammels upon the Government of any sort or kind. For that reason I say that if the Governor-General of India does not look ahead and provide for the future, he not only commits a blunder but is guilty of a crime.

'I am compelled to apply this general statement to the Government of Lord Ripon. Lord Ripon went out to India with a full knowledge of the state of affairs; he knew of all the events which had occurred—of the Russo-Turkish War which led to the Treaty of San Stefano and the Congress of Berlin; he knew of all the events which had caused the great preparations of Russia for advancing on India. He must have had knowledge of the gradual but sure extension of the Russian Empire in Asia.... I say nothing of the abandonment of Candahar. I say little of the destruction of the Quetta Railway. I come rather to the acts of Lord Ripon's Government which seriously affected the finances of this year. Lord Ripon had prosperous times to deal with and an increasing revenue. The sky overhead, to the careless observer, seemed very blue. All dangers apparently had passed away so far as foreign affairs were concerned and so far as they had any bearing upon Indian finances, and Lord Ripon and his counsellors laid themselves down and slept. All indirect taxation of any value was remitted, the Customs duty was almost totally abolished and the salt duty was reduced. In 1882-3 the Indian army was reduced by five cavalry regiments and sixteen infantry regiments. The British army was allowed to fall to 10,000 men below its proper strength. To bring it up to its full strength, which it has now nearly attained, has cost the Indian Government 100,000*l.* No frontier railways were commenced; no roads were begun; no preparations

were made for the defence of a long and difficult frontier. Surely in prosperous times a wise man would have provided for the event of a rainy day. But Lord Ripon slept, lulled by the languor of the land of the lotus. Yet there was much which ought to have warned and to have roused him. In 1882 the Russian Government, with the frankest candour, called our attention to their proceedings in Central Asia and invited us to delimit the frontier of Afghanistan; but the only reply they received was a dull and sullen reply, as of a man under the influence of a narcotic. Our ally, the Amir of Afghanistan, also sent many warnings. It is most curious to observe, in the account of the interview of the Amir with Lord Dufferin at Rawul Pindi, how frequently we come across that familiar saying "I told you so." All this time the cloud grew bigger, the distant darkness nearer and blacker and the great military Power loomed larger and more distinct upon our borders; yet Lord Ripon and his counsellors slumbered and slept, never dreaming that any foreign danger could by any possibility come nigh those dominions which had been entrusted to their watchful care, taking no thought for the morrow, heedless and ignorant of the future which was shaping itself with the utmost clearness under their very eyes. Then, sir, there came a sharp and sudden awakening. Russia's hosts absorbed the territory of Merv, rapidly filled up the vacuum to the south which had been so blindly left unprovided for by us, and Lord Ripon and his counsellors were found, like the foolish virgins, with no oil in their lamps. Then followed the fruitless frontier negotiations and Lord Ripon came home and Lord Dufferin went out, not one hour too soon for the safety of India and the tranquillity of the East. Next we see the lonely and unsupported British Commissioner endeavouring to stay the advance of the Russian troops—troops flushed with success and animated by the highest hopes of glory and of booty. Then came the incident of Penjdeh and, following

that, the vote of credit of eleven millions. Next we see the hasty and hurried recommencement of the Quetta Railway which had been so foolishly abandoned. Then came the announcement of the frontier railways and roads too fatally postponed. And then came the additional military expenditure, from three to four millions; and the result of it all is now before the House in the deficit in the Indian accounts of a million and a half and in the permanent extra military charge of no less than two millions a year.[40] The good time has gone; the advantages which we had, have been thrown away. No economy whatever was practised by that Government. The expenditure on civil buildings was allowed to be increased by over one million a year. The Famine Insurance Fund, on which we prided ourselves, has been proved in time of trial to be illusory. I declare that I endeavoured to contemplate the action of the late Government of India without party passion. I found in it not one redeeming feature. Indian interests were so clumsily, so stupidly, handled that progress has been thrown back almost for a generation; and having to place those results before the House of Commons in the practical and matter-of-fact form of figures and finance, I disown and repudiate on behalf of the present Government all responsibility of any sort or kind for that policy and I hold up that Viceroyalty and the Government responsible for it to the censure and the condemnation of the British and Indian peoples.

'This Parliament,' he concluded, after a survey of many matters interesting in themselves, but too specialised for quotation here, 'has done little or nothing for India. It would appear as if members of Parliament of the present generation considered Indian affairs to be either beneath their attention or above their comprehension, and India is apparently left to pursue its destiny alone—some might even think uncared for—as far as Parliament is concerned. That was not always the case. In the last century, when our

Indian Empire was forming, the greatest men—Mr. Pitt and Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox—did not disdain to apply their minds to the most careful examination and exposition of the difficult and complicated Indian questions, and with great advantage. At the present time, when everything around is changing fast and when nothing seems secure or firm or free from assault and danger, as far as India is concerned, we shall act wisely if we revert to the more patriotic practice of earlier days. I would ask those who have been so kind as to listen to me, and those who possibly may not have concurred in many remarks I have made, to join with me in what I would call an appeal, or even, almost, a command, to those who will be our successors, some faint echo of which may possibly linger around these walls and influence the new Parliament so shortly to meet here: I would ask those who hear me to join in an appeal to the members of the new Parliament to shake themselves free from the lassitude, the carelessness, the apathy, which have too long characterised the attitude of Parliament towards India. I would appeal to them to watch with the most sedulous attention, to develop with the most anxious care, to guard with the most united and undying resolution, the land and the people of Hindostan, that most truly bright and precious gem in the crown of the Queen, the possession of which, more than that of all your Colonial dominions, has raised in power, in resource, in wealth and in authority this small island home of ours far above the level of the majority of nations and of States—has placed it on an equality with, perhaps even in a position of superiority over, every other Empire either of ancient or of modern times.'

With this impressive harangue the 'Ministry of Caretakers' may be said to have brought the Session and the Parliament to a close.

Upon Lord Randolph's acceptance of office begins a constant, intimate and candid correspondence with Lord

Salisbury, which ranges over the whole field of politics at home and abroad, continues with almost equal fulness in Opposition and in Government and ends abruptly in January 1887. Their letters were never more frequent than when Lord Randolph was at the India Office. The fortunes of India were at this time inseparably interwoven with the conduct of the Foreign Office—at first in regard to Russia and Afghanistan, and later on in regard to France and China on account of Burma—and Lord Randolph was always most particular to consult the Prime Minister on any matter of importance and to take no serious step without his concurrence. Lord Salisbury, on the other hand, had much to give to an Indian Secretary. He possessed a vast knowledge of Indian affairs, gained during his prolonged administration of that department; and in all matters of official method, of procedure and etiquette, his guidance was especially valuable to a Minister altogether unversed in the details of administration.

Lord Salisbury was, like Lord Randolph Churchill, a prodigious letter-writer, and he seems to have written no fewer than 110 letters to his lieutenant—many of them very long ones—all in his beautiful running handwriting, during the seven months of his first Ministry. How he ever found time to write so many to a single Minister is a marvel. Often three letters passed between them in a day. On July 25, for instance, Lord Salisbury wrote four times to Lord Randolph on different subjects, all of considerable importance. Two of these letters cover between them five separate pieces of closely written notepaper. To a later generation, accustomed to shorthand writers and anticipating a time when it will be regarded as inconsiderate to address a person on business otherwise than in type, such manual energy is astounding. Whether elaborate letter-writing between Ministers is conducive to the facile conduct of public affairs is doubtful. Strength

and time are consumed, difficulties are multiplied and differences only look wider and more formidable when marshalled by ink and paper. Many of the questions laboriously discussed on both sides of this correspondence could have been despatched immediately at an interview or even upon a telephone. But Lord Salisbury did not like political conversations. He felt that he could not do so much justice to himself or his opinions in an informal discussion as he could either in a letter or a speech. He belonged, moreover, to a formal, painstaking, old-fashioned school; and in Lord Randolph Churchill he had a pupil unexpectedly apt and energetic.

Whatever may have been lost at the time has been gained by posterity, for Lord Salisbury's letters have a character and interest apart from and even superior to the important matters with which they deal. A wit at once shrewd and genial; an insight into human nature penetrating, comprehensive, rather cynical; a vast knowledge of affairs; the quick thoughts of a moody, fertile mind, expressed in language that always preserves a spice and flavour of its own, are qualities which must exert an attraction upon a generation to whom the politics of the '85 Government will be dust.

Throughout their association the letters of both men—whether in agreement or in sharpest dispute—are marked by personal goodwill; and Lord Randolph never for a moment drops the air of respect and deference with which he invariably treated Lord Salisbury and which is never more pronounced than in moments of stress. Lord Salisbury's counsels and comments are always instructive and so often amusing that I may be allowed to transcribe a few at random: 'My dear Randolph,' the letters begin (June 25), '(if I may venture to address a Secretary of State in such familiar fashion!),—So much has been made of Herat, that we must do more than is possible to defend it' (July 25). 'I quite agree with your doctrine that it is better

to go at the principal offender rather than the instrument—with one important qualification—*if you can*' (August 4). 'It is curious to notice how the "buffer State" policy has gone down in the world. When first I had to do with India, nineteen years ago, it was the supremest orthodoxy: you might as well have impugned one of the doctrines of Free Trade' (August 4). Upon a curious little question of Portuguese ecclesiastical establishments in India he writes (August 24): 'I am glad to see you take the same view as on the first blush I was inclined to take. The Government of India by its nature must ignore religious questions, except so far as they take the secular form of furnishing a pretext for either robbery or riot.' 'I am inclined to think you underrate H——. He knows these odd people in a way we cannot do. I should be as much inclined to set up my opinion against that of the keeper of an asylum on the best way of keeping lunatics quiet' (November 24). Again, in another letter on the same day: 'I am afraid F.O. and I.O. have hopelessly divergent opinions on H——'s trustworthiness. But I think that when Departments differ on a point which is not worthy of reference to the Cabinet, the best rule is that the Department should prevail which will have the trouble of dealing with the consequences of a mistake if a mistake is made. The India Office view should therefore prevail.'

'Honours' and promotions of various kinds prove a thorny business to handle, more especially after an episode soon to be recorded. 'I was not aware that Mr. * * * had been disappointed. He bears a high character in the service, and I shall be glad to assist him if I have the opportunity. But it is perilous to go out of the beaten track in matters of promotion. I remember doing it in 1878, and I had a vote of censure moved on me in the House of Commons by a Conservative' (January 8, 1886). 'I am afraid that in the matter of honours I am as destitute as you are. The C.B.'s are all exhausted' (June 20). And again (November 13):

'My Baths are all run dry.' 'There can be no doubt that * * * is a very fit candidate for the Privy Council and I will submit his name at once. We may take more time to consider over the other two—who are less distinguished: it will be time enough to settle whenever a much-to-be-regretted accident befalls us. Unless * * * is very much changed, I doubt your getting him to resign for a Privy Councillorship. If I might follow the precedents of the early Church I should like to make * * * a Bishop' (December 5). 'That fountain which you desire to have turned on for the benefit of Birmingham is frozen up—and only runs with a dribble. It is very difficult to restore it to activity' (November 13).

The pleasant flow of this correspondence was very soon disturbed by an interlude which might have broken up many other things as well. The Bombay command, which at that date was a post of much dignity and importance, carrying the title of Commander-in-Chief and giving the holder a seat on the Governor's Council, became vacant about the same time that the new Government took office. In the prevailing uncertainty upon the frontier Lord Randolph Churchill desired that it should be filled at once. He agreed with Mr. Smith at the War Office upon an officer. The Queen, however, was anxious that the Duke of Connaught should serve in high command in India and Lord Salisbury strongly urged her wishes upon the Secretary of State. 'Though I am quite ready to accept the responsibility of your decision,' he wrote (July 25), 'I cannot, speaking confidentially, take quite your view. I hold that in India the monarchy must seem to be as little constitutional as possible; that it is of great importance to obtrude upon the native Indian mind the personality of the Sovereign and her family; and that, therefore, the policy of giving high military command to one of the Queen's sons is a step of political importance; and that its value is far from being outweighed by the more restricted

considerations attaching to military susceptibilities or the details of military administration.... However, though my opinions on it are clear, the matter is one for your decision.'

Lord Randolph Churchill resisted the appointment with an obstinate determination. It need scarcely be said that his reasons were not based on any suggestion that the Duke of Connaught was not fully qualified to discharge the military duties of the office. They consisted entirely in the grave constitutional objections which exist to the employment of Royal Princes in positions, such as the Bombay command then was, which carry with them the necessity of speaking and voting constantly in Council, and where numerous and important *political* functions, apart from military duty, may at any moment devolve upon the General officer in command. These reasons were unanimously accepted as decisive by the Cabinet on October 9. While the matter was still in suspense there occurred an incident which is, on various grounds, indispensable to the completeness of this story. The letters tell their own tale:—

Lord Salisbury to Lord Randolph Churchill.

(*Very Confidential.*)

Hatfield House, Hatfield, Herts:
August 14, 1885.

My dear Randolph,—About ten days ago the Queen wrote to me and told me to send a private telegram to Lord Dufferin in the following words:

'How would it be for the Duke of Connaught to succeed to the command at Bombay? I wish for your opinion by telegraph after you have consulted Sir Donald Stewart and Sir Frederick Roberts, both of whom, I know, think very highly of the Duke of Connaught's qualifications.'

As it is quite regular for the Queen to communicate directly with the Viceroy, I simply cyphered and sent the telegram without note or comment on my part.

At the beginning of this week I received from the Viceroy and

forwarded to the Queen, also without any comment, the following reply:

'Secret and Personal. Please submit following to Her Majesty. Both Sir Frederick Roberts and the Commander-in-Chief entirely approve of the idea of the Duke of Connaught's appointment to the command of the Bombay army. The Commander-in-Chief observes that the Duke was the best of his General officers, and he considers that he possesses great tact in dealing with the natives. Speaking from a political point of view, I have always considered it a very good thing that one of H.M.'s sons should be in India. The presence of the Duchess of Connaught also exercises a very wholesome effect upon Indian society. Personally I should welcome H.R.H.'s return with the greatest satisfaction.'

The next day there came the following from the Viceroy, which was also sent on to the Queen:

'I conclude you know that in a despatch which will go home next week, or the week following, we are reiterating the proposals already made by the Indian Government for the amalgamation of the Presidential armies, in which case the command at Bombay would be that of a Lieutenant-General. Perhaps you will mention this to Her Majesty.'

I then requested the Queen that I might be allowed to communicate these telegrams to you, which I have received permission to do.

I have not offered her any advice on this matter since I last wrote to you about it—except to defer any public decision till after the election.

My advice to you, however, would be to give way, so far as the Lieutenant-Generalship is concerned; that is to say, subject to the last telegram. It is probable that these three men are sincere in substance in what they recommend; and, if so, there is no doubt they are probably right—and our position (if we oppose them) will be a very difficult one to maintain. On the other hand, I think no declaration should be made before the elections.

Believe me
Yours very truly,
Salisbury.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

Carlton Club: August 14, 1885.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—I have just received your two letters; one about the succession to the Bombay Command, and the other about giving Mr. Gorst[41] a nomination for the examination for the F.O. I am very greatly obliged to you for your kindness in this latter matter.

The first subject is very serious, to my mind. I cannot continue to hold with any advantage the high position which H.M. the Queen has conferred upon me unless I feel I have the confidence of the Sovereign and her principal advisers. This elementary qualification I am without. Some time ago I placed you in possession of the objections which I and others saw to the Bombay Command being conferred upon the Duke of Connaught. I was not aware that it was possible, under such circumstances, that communications should pass between the Prime Minister and the Viceroy, at the instance of H.M. the Queen, without the knowledge of the Secretary of State, on a matter on which the latter held very strong and deliberate opinions.

I have for some time felt that the India Office, while I was there, had little influence with respect to other matters of great importance. But from what has passed between yourself and the Viceroy about the Duke of Connaught, it must be obvious to the Viceroy that I no longer possess either the confidence of the Sovereign or of yourself, and, under these circumstances, I respectfully ask you to submit to H.M. the Queen my resignation of the office which I have now the honour to hold.

Yours very sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Private.

Hatfield House, Hatfield, Herts: August 14, 1885.

My dear Randolph,—I am sorry you take such a view of a correspondence that is perfectly regular. The Queen has always written private letters to the Viceroy, and has always received private answers from him, both received and sent without any knowledge of any of her Ministers. She would have telegraphed in the same way, only the Viceroy did not happen to have her cypher. I did nothing else but cypher and decypher the message

for her. I could no more inform you of her private telegram, without her leave, than I could inform you of a private letter, if I had been asked to copy it for her, without her leave.

I regret very much that you should think I have not shown you confidence. I have done my best to give effect to your wishes as far as I possibly could. In this case I think you are really under a misapprehension. What has passed does not pledge your liberty of action, or decide the question in issue. The question is exactly where it would have been if the Queen, instead of telegraphing, had written to Lord Dufferin. It would still have remained to be decided by her responsible Ministers. The only effect of the telegraphing has been to ante-date the issue by five or six weeks.

I trust I have removed from your mind all misapprehension of the character and effects of the Queen's correspondence with Lord Dufferin.

Believe me
Yours very truly,
Salisbury.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Mr. Moore.

Dear Mr. Moore,—Will you copy the enclosed letter to Lord S., and send it to Hatfield? A special messenger is not necessary.

Yours very truly,
Randolph S. C.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

2 Connaught Place, W.: August 15.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—You write to me, as usual, very kindly, for which I am indeed grateful; but the impressions with which I received your letter of yesterday remain as strong as ever. God forbid that I should allow myself for one moment to throw a shadow of a doubt upon the right of the Sovereign to communicate with the utmost freedom on any conceivable matter with any one of her subjects; but I submit that a very different question arises when a communication from the Queen to so high an official as the Viceroy of India on a matter of high State importance passes through the Prime Minister. Such a communication, so sent, acquires a character of responsibility which it would not otherwise possess.

Moreover, the matter becomes complicated indeed when it

happens to be the fact that it is in the knowledge of the Prime Minister that the Royal communication which he forwards contains a suggestion—or rather, I may say, makes a proposal—to which the responsible head of the Department chiefly concerned entertains the strongest possible objections.

The communications from the Queen direct to the Viceroy may be frequent—I can see no reason why they should not be; but it would appear that telegraphic messages on matters of a very confidential and important nature have not been usual hitherto; otherwise surely the Viceroy would have been provided with a copy of the Queen's cypher.

Generally, I would further submit to you the following: My position in relation to Lord Dufferin is in many ways anomalous. He is old enough to be my father, has been all his life in public affairs, has acquired an immense reputation. Clearly, therefore, it is curious that I should be placed in a position of superiority over him—I who have had no experience of official life, a very short experience of public life, and have not acquired any reputation worth speaking of.

Under the circumstances the relations between the Secretary of State and the Viceroy can be attended with no advantage to the public service, on the contrary must be attended with the utmost disadvantage, unless it is, more than usually even, obvious to the latter that the former possesses the full, complete and perfect confidence of the Prime Minister.

Lord Dufferin is no ordinary man. He has a greater faculty for putting two and two together than most men. I have not the smallest doubts as to the nature of the impression left upon his mind by the Royal communication on the subject of the Duke of Connaught as it has reached him. In about a week he will get a letter from me in which I gave at great length, and with all the arguments that had occurred to me, my strong objections to the appointment in question. He will find that he has committed himself somewhat lightly, and after the manner of a courtier—influenced, no doubt, by the fact that the inquiry came through you—to an opinion diametrically at variance with that of the Secretary of State, and he will know that in so doing the Prime Minister is on his side. If you follow my argument and concur in the premises on which it is based, I think you will easily see that satisfactory and advantageous relations between me and Lord

Dufferin, which under the best circumstances were difficult, will now have become impossible.

The superiority of the Secretary of State over the Viceroy, as intended by the Constitution of the Indian Government, will exist only in name as far as I am concerned, and this must have a most unfortunate effect on all questions of Indian administration. I shall never know, moreover, what communications may not be passing between the Queen, the Prime Minister and the Viceroy on matters of great and small importance; and this element of uncertainty and ignorance of events will prevent me from being of the smallest utility.

The appointment of the Duke of Connaught to a high and very responsible military command in India is, as it appears to me, a question of the utmost importance. It is not my business to point out how largely is raised by it the constitutional position of Royal Princes in these days; though I infer that you are aware of the existence of objections of very considerable weight, from the stipulation which you make with the Queen that no public declaration of the appointment should be made till after the elections. I am concerned only with the matter as it affects India generally, and the Indian Army in particular. Although the Secretary of State is not solely responsible for such an appointment, he practically is the person most identified with it in the public mind: and if it was not for my inexperience of official life, I should have thought that it was absolutely impossible that the freedom of action of the Secretary of State on so important a matter could be so absolutely demolished as it has been in this case.

I may add, to show the extreme inconvenience of allowing matters of this kind to be prematurely settled without the knowledge of the Department chiefly concerned, that the Viceroy's proposal that the Duke of Connaught should have the command of a Corps d'Armée with the rank of Lieutenant-General is absolutely impracticable at the present time. Even assuming that the new proposals of the Government of India for the amalgamation of the Bombay and Madras Commands were approved of by the Secretary of State in Council, and this is very uncertain, they would require, before they could be entered upon, an Act of Parliament. A Bill introduced into the House of Commons for this purpose would lead to much debate; it would

necessarily raise very large questions of Indian government, military and political; might easily fail to pass into law, and at the best would hardly receive the Royal Assent till the early autumn of next year. It cannot be supposed that all this while the Bombay Army could be left without a responsible chief.

Under all these circumstances I remain of the opinion which I expressed to you yesterday. From the first I always had great doubts whether my being in the Government would be any advantage to the Government or to the party. All doubts on the point are now removed from my mind. A first-class question of Indian administration has been taken out of my hands, and at any moment this action may recur, and it is clear to the Viceroy that I do not occupy towards himself the position which the Secretary of State ought and is supposed to occupy.

I therefore with much respect adhere to the views which I put before you yesterday.

Believe me to be
Yours very sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

P.S.—I enclose for your consideration an extract from my letter to Lord Dufferin of July 31.

His advice, which I asked for, will not be worth much now.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Private.

Hatfield House, Hatfield, Herts: August 15, 1885.

My dear Randolph,—I had no intention of taking any decision out of your hands, and I think in attributing it to me you do not put fairly the position in which I was placed. The Queen's desire for privacy was very natural. The question she was asking about her son might have had an unfavourable answer: and then she would naturally wish that as few should know it as possible. I could not, therefore, do otherwise than I did—send the message, and urge her to communicate it to you as soon as I knew it could be done satisfactorily. It would not have been honourable to communicate it before. Perhaps I might, if I had thought of it, have sent the cypher to Ponsonby—but that would hardly have been civil; and it did not occur to me that you would take this objection. As a matter of fact I did not communicate with the

Viceroy otherwise than by transmitting that which was sent to me. But if I had done so I should not have done anything unusual. Lord Beaconsfield used to do it occasionally: and Lord Dufferin wrote to me and asked me to correspond with him. The Viceroy is nominated by the Prime Minister, not by the Secretary of State. I only say this because I am concerned to show that I have not behaved unfairly to you, or taken anything out of your hand. But I do not hold to this power of corresponding either by letter or wire with the Viceroy: and if you really feel that 'you will never know what communications are passing between the Queen, the Prime Minister, and the Viceroy,' I am quite ready to give up for myself the right of communicating with him.

Of course, you must take what course you think right. I should be sorry if, out of mere suspicion of me, you took a step which will tend to break up the party at a critical time: and still more that you should do it on a matter which can hardly fail to make the Queen's name and actions matter of public controversy. But, at all events, before you take any definite step I trust you will talk to me about it. I shall be going through town on Tuesday to Osborne. If you are still there, would you come to me at two o'clock?

Yours very truly,
Salisbury.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

2 Connaught Place, W.: August 16.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—I feel I cannot persist easily in urging my view upon you after your letter received this morning, though it does appear to me that you have not allowed yourself to appreciate with perfect justice the consideration which I tried to convey to you. It can be no satisfaction to me to be the means of depriving Lord Dufferin of the advantage, instruction and pleasure which correspondence direct with you cannot fail to afford him, and I do not quite understand how you can think me capable of such a purpose.

Further, I am much distressed that you should suppose that the step which I was anxious to take (and which I still firmly believe would be for the advantage of all concerned) could be animated by so unworthy a motive as 'suspicion of you.'

My argument was that, viewing all the surrounding

circumstances together, the peculiar occurrence about which I wrote had seriously, if not irreparably, impaired my power of being useful to your Government.

Perhaps, before finally putting aside what I have pressed upon you, you will kindly give Mr. Moore an interview. He understands and can explain the position as I regard it much better than I can make it clear by letter.

I shall be happy to wait upon you on Tuesday in accordance with your desire, if I am allowed to leave the house, to which for the last two days I have been kept a prisoner.

Yours very sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Note by Mr. Moore.

I went to Hatfield on Sunday August 16, and saw Lord Salisbury. The result was that he spontaneously proposed to send the subjoined telegram to the Viceroy, which he thought would remove any misapprehension on the part of Lord Dufferin. I took the draft to Lord Randolph, who quite concurred. The matter was thus settled.—A. W. M.

Lord Salisbury to Mr. Moore.

Private.

Hatfield House, Hatfield, Herts:
Sunday, August 16, 1885.

Dear Mr. Moore,—I am not sure that the last phrase in the draft telegram I gave you is sufficiently accurate. It should run:

'My own view—*though inclining towards the proposal*—is not very decided on the subject.'

That is very much what Lord R. C. said in his letter.

Yours very truly,
Salisbury.

Draft Telegram.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Dufferin.

Most secret. Your telegraphic correspondence with the Queen. It may be as well to put upon record that the telegram I sent you was from the Queen and that I merely transmitted it. The Cabinet have not considered the question; there is much difference of

opinion on the subject, and my own view, though inclining to the proposal, is not very decided.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Private.

Hatfield House, Hatfield, Herts: August 16, 1885.

My dear Randolph,—I was very glad to receive your letter, for it would have been very painful if we had 'come in two' over this matter. I saw Mr. Moore, whose power of exposition I knew of old. I gave him a draft telegram which, if you approve, I will send, and which will prevent any possible misapprehension in Dufferin's mind. I do not the least fear any such misapprehension —for he is an old public servant, and knows the Queen's ways well. You need not have the least anxiety about your authority with Dufferin. I shall be very glad if your health is sufficiently restored to enable you to come about two on Tuesday to my house. I can explain any point you wish explained, and I can tell you what Staal has said.

Ever yours very truly,
Salisbury.

Opinions vary on the merits of this dispute. Some of those who have held great office have informed me that the Secretary of State for India had no choice but to tender his resignation after such an incident: and it is certainly curious that so high an authority upon Ministerial propriety as Lord Salisbury should have allowed the difficulty to arise. On the other hand, it may be urged that personal slights, however provoking, ought never to be allowed to compromise a great political situation. Probably Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, in his dry way, summed the question up correctly:—

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Many thanks for sending me the correspondence, which I return. I am the more glad of its conclusion, because I think there is reason on both sides. The Queen put Salisbury in an almost impossible position by asking him to forward the telegram. He could not tell you of it and it would have been very difficult, perhaps impossible, for him to interfere with her *private*

correspondence by suggesting that she should reconsider it. But, on the other hand, I agree with you that the very fact of *his* forwarding it must have suggested to Dufferin that it was something more than the Queen's private opinion.

Salisbury has written to tell me what has passed and I have therefore ventured to suggest to him that Ponsonby should have the cypher, so that what has occurred should not happen again. So far as I know, the Queen exercises her right of private correspondence with great care, to avoid anything that would affect the decisions of Ministers; and this exception to the rule was obviously due to the personal nature of the question, which Dufferin (had the telegram been sent by Ponsonby) would have quite appreciated.

But please forgive me for saying that I think you looked at this matter rather too seriously last Friday. I think I should have been more inclined to laugh at the story of the telegram than to treat it as a proof of want of confidence on the part of the Queen and Prime Minister. If you had not been ill you would never have said of yourself in your letter to me that 'I have no longer any energy or ideas, and am no more good except to make disturbance.' And I suspect the same reason has influenced your view of this telegram affair.

The sequel, so far as concerned the Bombay command, was simple. Lord Dufferin perceived from Lord Salisbury's second telegram that grave differences had arisen in the Cabinet and that the matter would not be settled with easy and deferential good-humour. Upon receiving Lord Randolph's despatch on the subject, the Viceroy, while seeming to re-iterate his opinion, ranged himself with the Secretary of State in the following dexterous sentence: 'The fact of our having proposed the abolition of the Presidential Commanderships-in-Chief has got rid of what otherwise would have been *an insuperable objection*[42]: namely, the political responsibilities of the Bombay Commander-in-Chief as a member of Council' (August 21). As this proposal involved the carrying of a Bill through the House of Commons, the 'insuperable objection' must have held good until the autumn of 1886—

even had the Government survived. The Cabinet, to whom the matter was referred, unanimously decided (October 9) 'that the political position of the Commander-in-Chief of a presidency army could not be filled by a son of the Queen'; [43] and the Bombay command remained vacant during the remaining tenure of the Government. It should, however, be added, lest anything in the foregoing correspondence should seem to reflect upon the Duke of Connaught, that under Lord Salisbury's second Administration, the 'insuperable objection' being removed by the abolition of Presidential Commanders-in-Chief with their customary political functions, he was appointed to the Bombay command and discharged its military duties with conspicuous advantage to the public.

But the consequences were more lasting outside the actual subject of dispute. Although the correspondence between Lord Randolph and the Prime Minister ripples on as pleasantly as ever, although in the next few months their comradeship became increasingly cordial, it cannot be supposed that such a conflict could pass away without leaving scars. Lord Salisbury could not forget, Lord Randolph Churchill could not but remember, what the result of a resignation had been.

Last in chronology, first in importance, among Lord Randolph Churchill's enterprises at the India Office came the conquest and annexation of Burma. When Lord Randolph Churchill had travelled in India in the winter of 1884, he had consulted a native fortune-teller and thought it worth while to keep a note of what he said. The astrologer, after saying, perhaps ambiguously, 'that he had never seen so good a star since Lord Mayo's (for during his Viceroyalty Lord Mayo was assassinated in the Andaman Islands), repeatedly asserted that his visitor would 'return to India shortly in connection with a warlike expedition,' and that he was 'about to go on a warlike expedition.' The prediction may perhaps in a sense have

come more nearly true than many others of its class. When the Conservatives came into power, the British administration in Burma was confined to the maritime province at the mouth of the Irrawadi and the strip of sea-coast bordering on the Bay of Bengal. The inland country up to the confines of China still remained an independent State under its native ruler, the King of Ava. The relations of the British Government with that State had long been unsatisfactory. By the Treaty of Yandaboo, which terminated the first Burmese War in 1826, the right of a British representative to reside at Mandalay had been secured, and until 1876 this agent of the Imperial Government had from time to time—sitting on the ground and barefooted, according to the inflexible ceremonial of the Burmese Court—endeavoured, with small success, to safeguard the ever-growing commercial interests of British and British-Indian subjects.

In 1878 the old King of Burma died, leaving behind him thirty sons with families on the same generous scale. A palace intrigue secured the throne to Prince Theebaw and the new reign was inaugurated by an indiscriminate massacre of the late King's other sons, with their mothers, wives and children. Eight cart-loads of butchered princes of the blood were cast, according to custom, into the river. The less honourable sepulchre of a capacious pit within the gaol was accorded to their dependents. Two of the thirty sons had had the prudence to take refuge with the British Resident, who not only stoutly refused to surrender them but addressed a strong remonstrance to the Burmese Government. The Burmese Minister for Foreign Affairs replied tartly that the procedure followed was in accordance with precedent and that under the existing treaties of 'grand friendship' the two great Powers were bound to respect each other's customs. With this answer the Government of India were forced to be content, though Ministers at home seem to have had some difficulty in

persuading Queen Victoria to sign the necessary message of cousinly congratulation to the new monarch.

The unpleasant feelings which had been aroused were not readily allayed. Since 1876 the British representative had been instructed not to sit upon the ground barefooted when enjoying the honour of a royal audience but to sit upon a chair, clothed in the ordinary manner. The etiquette of the Burmese Court could not, however, be relaxed. The King refused to countenance the innovation and all direct access to the Sovereign ceased. Forced now to deal only with the Minister of State, the British representative found his personal influence vanishing and his personal safety impaired. For nearly a year the British Residency remained guarded by a scanty escort, wholly indefensible in itself, within a mile of the palace where 'the ignorant, arrogant, drunken boy-king, surrounded by a set of parvenu sycophants, the men of massacre and bloodshed, ignorant and savage enough to urge him on to any further atrocities,'[44] disposed of a body of two thousand soldiers. It was therefore decided in 1879 to recall the whole Residency and the Government of India, whose patience was inexhaustible, were left without a representative at the Burmese capital.

For the next five years disorder and misgovernment gripped the land of Upper Burma. In 1883 a hideous massacre was perpetrated upon three hundred prisoners in the gaol. Outrages upon British subjects and upon British vessels on the Irrawadi were frequent. The protests of the Viceroy were treated with disdain. Innumerable vexations arose. Trade was strangled. The life and property of a large European-Indian community were insecure. So threatening was the Burmese attitude that a considerable addition, involving much expense, had to be made in the garrison of the maritime province, and this necessary precaution aggravated the prevailing uncertainty. To complete the tale of grievances, Burmese Missions were found in March

1885 to be negotiating treaties of commerce in various foreign capitals. Such was the situation when Lord Randolph Churchill became Secretary of State.

Events were now to force a crisis. The Burmese Mission had already negotiated in Paris a Franco-Burmese Convention. The French Consul at Mandalay, an energetic man, had acquired great authority. French influence was rapidly becoming predominant and ousting British interests, both diplomatic and commercial. Banks, railways, mining and timber concessions were falling almost daily into their hands. The long procession of facts which advanced upon the British Government in July 1885, left no room to doubt the imminence of a dominant foreign influence in Upper Burma, involving the most serious and far-reaching consequences to the British province of Lower Burma and to the Indian Empire. The whole question at once became urgent.

While these considerations were causing Her Majesty's Government the utmost anxiety, a lucky incident occurred. King Theebaw, partly from want of money, partly in a spirit of sheer bravado, imposed a fine of 29 lacs of rupees upon an important British company trading in his dominions, on a pretext that certain Customs duties had not been paid, and with the intention of ruining the company and transferring their concession to a French firm. With this final and definite provocation Lord Randolph Churchill considered the case for action complete both as regards Parliament and the country. He threw himself into the enterprise with characteristic vigour. The official papers show on almost every page the driving power which he exerted. As early as July 25 he drew Lord Salisbury's attention to the rumours of a new Franco-Burmese Convention. Lord Salisbury's reply was terse: 'The telegram, if not a *canard*, is painfully important. The King of Burma must not be allowed to conclude any such convention.' Unofficial remonstrances having produced no

effect, Lord Randolph addressed the Foreign Office formally on August 28, urging that a communication should be made to the French Government stating that any further prosecution of the commercial projects in contemplation 'will necessitate such prompt and decided measures as may most effectually satisfy the paramount rights of India in the Indo-Chinese Peninsula.' The French Government recognised frankly that the British interest in Burma was much more intimate and substantial than their own. Their Ministers temporised politely and deprecated, while they did not arrest, the activities of the Consul.

Meanwhile King Theebaw, in his great unwisdom, rejected almost insolently the remonstrances of the Government of India and their proposal that the case should be referred to arbitration. On October 16, therefore, Lord Dufferin transmitted to the India Office the draft of an ultimatum insisting that a special envoy of the British Government should be received at Mandalay to settle outstanding disputes and that a British Resident, suitably guarded, should be permanently admitted, without being forced to submit to any humiliating ceremony, to the Court of Ava. It was further intimated to King Theebaw that he would be required in future to accept the same position in regard to his foreign relations as the Amir of Kabul and to regulate them in accordance with British advice. Lord Randolph Churchill, in approving the despatch of the ultimatum, telegraphed as follows:—

> The terms of your ultimatum are approved. But I am strongly of opinion that its despatch should be concurrent with movement of troops and ships to Rangoon. If ultimatum is rejected, the advance on Mandalay ought to be immediate. On the other hand, armed demonstration might bring Burmese to their senses. Also, on account of security of many British subjects and Europeans in Upper Burma, it is of vital importance that Burmese should feel that any injury to them or their property would be followed by rapid punishment. Under all the circumstances of the case, and in view of public opinion here, I do not think that considerations of

expense should deter you from these precautions. Lord Salisbury concurs. I would suggest that you should demand an answer within a specified time.

Overwhelming force was employed. An expedition, consisting of a naval brigade of 433 seamen and marines, with 49 guns and machine-guns, and 3,029 British and 6,005 native soldiers, with 28 guns, was ordered to assemble, together with a flotilla, at Thyetmyo by November 14, under command of General Prendergast, with Colonel White (afterwards Sir George White) and Colonel Norman as Brigadiers. These troops were collected swiftly and unostentatiously. No sufficient reply having been received by the appointed date—November 10—General Prendergast was ordered to advance. The strength of the force employed, prevented any effectual opposition in Burma. Its rapid movement allowed no time for serious complications to develop either with France or China. The Burmese army was routed at Minhla on November 17, at a cost of one officer and three men killed and five officers and twenty-four men wounded. On the 27th Mandalay was occupied and King Theebaw was a prisoner. Injuries and embarrassments tolerated for fifty years were swept away in a fortnight. General Prendergast's advance was pressed forward to Bhamo, on the Chinese frontier, which was soon occupied without any serious fighting.

Although a sporadic resistance—euphemistically termed 'dacoity'—disturbed the less accessible regions for several years, Burma was now in British hands. What was to be done with it? Lord Randolph Churchill was for annexation simple and direct. The Council of the Governor-General disapproved of this course, which they feared would excite the hostility of China. Many important authorities preferred the establishment of a native prince under British advice. Lord Salisbury thought the great cost of British administration would overweight the new territory. In the

end, however, the Secretary of State for India prevailed. The Chinese Government was reassured by the abandonment of Lord Randolph Churchill's projected mission to establish commercial relations between India and Thibet, to which they had been persuaded to give a rather reluctant consent. They were soothed and even gratified by the establishment of a Llama in Burma—'a spiritual king sending decennial presents,' as Lord Salisbury with relish describes him, 'though,' he adds, 'the Chinese Empire is no more Buddhist than Chartist.' The annexation was resolved. Lord Randolph arranged that the proclamation should be made on January 1, 1886, as 'a New Year's present to the Queen.' On the last day in December he was staying with FitzGibbon for his Christmas party; and as the clock struck midnight he lifted his glass and announced, with due solemnity, 'Howth annexes Burma to the British Empire.' The next morning the Viceregal proclamation was published. It is one of the shortest documents of the kind on historical record:—

By command of the Queen-Empress, it is hereby notified that the territories formerly governed by King Theebaw will no longer be under his rule, but have become part of Her Majesty's dominions, and will during Her Majesty's pleasure be administered by such officers as the Viceroy and Governor-General of India may from time to time appoint.

APPENDICES

I

THREE ELECTION ADDRESSES

1874.

To the Electors of Woodstock.

I GLADLY avail myself of the opportunity afforded me by the retirement of your late member, Mr. Barnett, to offer myself as your representative in the coming Parliament.

The politics I profess are strictly in accordance with those of the great leaders of the Conservative party which the Borough of Woodstock has now so long supported.

Many questions of great political importance which formerly divided the Conservative from the Liberal party have passed for the present out of the field of conflict; their settlement, whether for good or evil, being now stamped on the face of our Statute Book. The essential features of the Constitution of this country continue, however, to defy the attacks of extreme Reformers. All legislation should, in my opinion, be based strictly on the outlines of these features, which are capable of being developed and expanded in accordance with the demands of a progressive age.

Any measures that would ameliorate the condition of the working classes would ensure my best and most earnest assistance. My desire would be to place at their disposal, if it were possible, the common necessaries and comforts of life free from the prohibitory impost of taxation.

Some reforms of the systems of rating and local taxation are much required. This subject, however, I hold to be one which should be dealt with largely in one comprehensive measure, and not piecemeal or by small instalments after the manner of recent futile attempts.

Legislation tending to the severance of the Established Church from the State would be vigorously opposed by me. On the other hand, measures which would increase the great sphere of usefulness of the Church of England and render her more and more the Church of the nation, I would as vigorously support.

With regard to Foreign Policy, it is impossible to blind oneself to the fact that the position of England among foreign nations has deteriorated in the hands of the recent Liberal Administration. While deprecating unnecessary interference in Continental affairs, I am of opinion that in cases where the honour of our country is implicated, the security of the nation can only be attained by a bold and uncompromising policy. To that end I should oppose any large reduction of our naval and military establishments. An economical policy might, however, be consistently pursued, and the efficiency of our forces by land and sea completely secured, without the enormous charges now laid upon the country.

The Colonial Empire of Great Britain, offering as it does a field of development for the talent, energy and labour of the sons of our overburdened island, will continually demand the attention of the Legislature. I would support all efforts which would tend to facilitate the means of emigration, and would at the same time strengthen and consolidate the ties which unite the Colonies with the mother country.

With regard to education, both in this country and in Ireland, I am of opinion that the existing means are capable of a large and liberal development, and that while the rights of conscience should be most sacredly respected, religious teaching should not wholly be forgotten.

The Education Act of 1871 has, on the whole, successfully settled the question and opened the doors of knowledge to all our countrymen without regard to sect. I agree with the spirit of that Act, but any alterations that may be needful to ensure its more perfect working will always receive my best consideration.

The principles of true Conservatism I hold to be those of gradual, unceasing progress, adhering strictly to the lines of a well-founded Constitution and avoiding all violent and unnecessary changes. It is in these principles, in which I

firmly believe myself, that I aspire in hopeful confidence to become the Representative of the Electors of the Borough of Woodstock.

Should I be so fortunate as to be successful in gaining your confidence, I can safely promise that the interests of the Borough will not suffer from any neglect at my hands, and the wishes and views of every individual member of the constituency, of whatever political party, will always receive my best and most earnest attention.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,
Yours very faithfully,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Woodstock, January 26, 1874.

1880.

To the Electors of Woodstock.

Parliament is about to be dissolved, and I venture again to solicit a renewal of your confidence, which for six years I have enjoyed.

When in 1874 you did me the honour to return me as your representative to the House of Commons, I pledged myself to give a general support to the policy and the principles of the Conservative party.

And now that I again offer myself as a candidate for the Borough I confidently appeal to you on the same grounds, renewing my former pledges.

The attention of the Parliament which is about to expire has been chiefly occupied by momentous questions of Foreign Policy involving almost the existence of the Empire.

Her Majesty's Government have had to contend not only against the dangerous ambition of a great Foreign Power but also against a determined and powerfully-led Opposition at home.

By repeated and unusually large majorities the policy

which the Government pursued has been sanctioned by Parliament. A few weeks will surely demonstrate that it has been approved by the country.

In giving a consistent support to that policy I am convinced that I have been carrying out the wishes of a vast majority of this constituency, and I believe that the safety of this Empire can only be secured by a firm adherence on the part of the country to the course pursued by the present advisers of the Crown.

To their credit it may be stated that they have hitherto achieved the great result of 'peace with honour' without having added perceptibly to the burdens imposed upon the people by taxation.

My opinions on domestic matters have been more than once stated to you during the six years which have elapsed since my election in 1874. The Conservative party have been instrumental in placing on the Statute Book many comprehensive and useful measures. I would instance the Act to Consolidate and Amend the Law relating to Friendly Societies; the Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act; the Act Consolidating and Extending the various Laws relating to the Sanitary Condition of the People; the Act for Modifying and Improving according to Modern Experience the Regulations affecting the Discipline and Control of our Army; and other Statutes which I need not now particularise.

Her Majesty's Government have now in hand carefully considered measures for the consolidation of the Criminal Code, and for the improvement of the Law of Bankruptcy; also three most important measures relating to the settlement of landed estates, enlarging the powers of life owners and reducing the cost of land transfer, to which, as you may imagine from my remarks to you in the autumn, I shall be prepared, if you return me as your Member, to give a most cordial support.

The present condition of Ireland must be a cause of uneasiness to every thoughtful person and will no doubt occupy the anxious consideration of the new Parliament.

The party led by Mr. Parnell, which has for its object the disintegration of the United Kingdom, must, in my opinion, be resisted at all costs.

At the same time, I do not see how the internal peace of Ireland can be permanently secured without a judicious reconsideration of the laws affecting the tenure of land; and should measures with that object be introduced by her Majesty's Government, I shall be inclined to give them an unprejudiced support.

It must not be forgotten that the successful and wise solution of the difficulties surrounding the question of Irish education effected by ministers and the Conservative party will greatly contribute to the rapid progress of a future prosperity of the sister Island.

I am in favour of the present system of County Government by Quarter Sessions, but I think that the hands of the magistrates might be strengthened by the addition of elected representatives of the ratepayers.

The contribution from the Imperial revenue to the expenses of Local Government, which was the work of the Conservative party, has no doubt proved a boon to the agricultural community. I should be glad to see this principle further carried out by throwing a portion of the cost of maintenance of highways upon the moneys annually voted by Parliament.

To secure the freedom and to encourage the enterprise of the tenant farmer, it would be expedient to abolish the Law of Distress in its present form.

It appears to me that all matters dealt with by that law should be a subject of agreement between landlord and tenant.

I shall heartily co-operate with any party which brings

forward carefully considered measures for the amelioration of the condition of the agricultural labourer, and I think it would be well if powers were given to municipalities and local bodies for the purchase of land to be let in allotments and for the improvement of the dwellings of this valuable class of men.

Trusting that the principles above enunciated will commend themselves to your consideration and will secure your approval,

I have the honour to remain,
Very faithfully yours,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Woodstock, March 9, 1880.

1885.

To the Electors of Birmingham.

The time is near when you will be called upon to express your judgment on the past and your desires for the future. Two schools of political thought strive against each other to win your confidence. The one, composed of those who, having had under their complete control the Government of the Empire from May 1880 until June 1885, are unable to justify their claims upon you by any record of foreign or colonial or home achievement, but, contenting themselves with incomplete and misleading extenuation of acknowledged failure, seek to attract you by a renewal of promises, and even bribes, which bitter experience has shown they have neither the capacity nor the strength to fulfil. The other, whose views I share, and whose policy I will endeavour soon, as best I may, personally to uphold among you, appeals to the electoral body in Great Britain and Ireland to confirm the adverse judgment pronounced on June 9, against Mr. Gladstone's Administration by the Parliament which in a few weeks will be dissolved. That judgment, striking and wide-reaching as it was in its

immediate results, was literally wrung from a House of Commons the majority of which would have been only too glad to have continued their support of Mr. Gladstone had it not been for the irresistible influence of popular discontent, excited by various causes—Irish troubles, Colonial losses, Indian dangers, costly wars, fruitless sacrifices of many heroes, financial excesses, Parliamentary impotence, imperilled industries, commercial and agricultural depression growing greater and more alarming year by year. All this was expressed by the action of the House of Commons on June 9. Mr. Gladstone's Government, the author of these many and long-continued disasters, fell; that Government in 1880 so popular, so powerful, with such immeasurable opportunities for promoting the peace, progress and prosperity of the people, fell, and not a voice was raised, either in Parliament or the country, of sympathy for the vanquished or of mourning over their fall. Mr. Bright will request of you to contribute to restore to power that most unlucky Administration. To this end will be directed all the powers of his unrivalled oratory, his simple but forcible invective, his personal position and experience. But very little of patriotism, very little of self-interest, very little of recollection, reflection and calculation will compel you to remain outside the influence of that persuasive voice. The British Empire is great and powerful from the character of its people, the extent of its dominions and the varied nature of its resources. More than all other Western nations, we can afford to indulge ourselves in experiment and, indeed, caprice, as regards our system of Government or the direction of our Home and Imperial policy. But there are limits even to the strength of the British Empire, and a repetition of the policy of the last five years will, without doubt, transgress those limits. Yet such will be the inevitable consequence of a restoration to office of the Liberal party, as that party is at present constituted. The

old divisions, the irreconcilable differences, personal and political, which all the ascendency of Mr. Gladstone was unable to compose, much less conceal, while he was Prime Minister, which were the chief cause of the failure of his Administration, are now blazing forth most fiercely, and Mr. Gladstone, with all honesty, warns you that his controlling hand will be stretched forth only for a little time. To this party, which even hatred of the Tories cannot decently unite, which comes before you with such a past, you will be asked to commit for another six years perchance the destinies of the Empire. You cannot yield to this appeal.

The policy of the Tory party is before you:—To regain the friendship of the European Powers which prejudice, presumption and poltroonery had all but forfeited; and to use that friendship so as to maintain effectually the united European action by which alone the peace and the liberties of the peoples of the Continent and of these islands can be secured and developed; to evolve from the region of sentiment such forces as may enable the mother country to tighten the bonds of union between herself and our colonies and to rear on a practical and permanent basis, for defensive and commercial purposes, that Imperial federation of the subjects of the Queen which many wise and far-seeing minds regard as essential to the perpetuation of our power; to conciliate by equal laws and by just and firm administration our Irish brethren, now much irritated and estranged, so that the Union which Nature, as well as policy, has effected may for all time endure; to place, by material provisions and constructions, the security of our Indian dependency beyond the influence of panic, alarm or even anxiety, and simultaneously, by careful Parliamentary inquiry, to ascertain how we may most safely and most speedily bring to the strengthening of our Government all that is high and good of the traditions, the intellects and the aspirations of the native races; to give to our rural and

agricultural population that machinery of self-government which has been of advantage to our great towns; to strive, as far as the laws of political economy may permit, to multiply the number of freeholders and occupiers; to utilise the powers of the House of Commons, in recent years almost forgotten, so as either to effect financial retrenchment and departmental reform, or else to make sure that the present expenditure of the people's money is justifiable and thrifty; to develop still further the efficiency of Parliament by alterations in its methods of transacting business and in its hours of labour; to restore public confidence; to revive commercial enterprise by a patient continuance of good and prudent administration; in a word, to govern the British Empire by the light of common sense. That is the policy of the Tory party.

Measures are now recommended to you by our opponents which the Tory party will not only not attempt to carry out, but which I hope and believe they will always resolutely oppose. They are the dismemberment of the Empire, under the guise of National Councils, the abolition of the House of Lords, the disestablishment of the Church and the appropriation of its endowments to the support of irreligious education, the compulsory acquisition by local bodies of landed estates for the purposes of arbitrary division, the wholesale plunder of all who have acquired properties, great or small, by thrift or by inheritance, under the names of 'ransom' and of 'graduated taxation.' These and other similar projects, if they are decided by the nation to be wise and prudent, I freely admit must be confided to the hands of Mr. Chamberlain and his friends. I will have none of them, for I know that they mean political chaos and social ruin.

Such, gentlemen, are to my mind the circumstances of the time, as far as they can be conveniently and concisely summarised in an election address. No one can be more convinced than I am that I should be guilty of intolerable

presumption if I based my candidature for the Central Division of Birmingham on any other ground than the truth of the political principles I have endeavoured in this document to set forth; moreover, I am profoundly aware that from many causes, some of them physical, I have feebly and inadequately served in the House of Commons. My opponent has the immense advantage of long-established possession, amounting in the minds of some almost to prescriptive right; he is further supported by a highly (perhaps too highly) finished political organisation. But the experience of the past and the essential truth of the principles which I will endeavour to sustain may, in all probability, outweigh these considerable forces. The people, in the widest acceptance of the expression, are now, for the first time in the history of England, called upon to decide and define their future. If they are guided by reflection and by knowledge they cannot err. But if, unmindful of the last five years, they recur, like the constituencies in 1880, for government and for policy to those who have so misled them and betrayed them, I, in common with the party with which for twelve years I have acted, will patiently accept their judgment; but history will mourn and will wonder long at the blindness and the folly, ay, even the insanity, of a people who, called to the more free and perfect enjoyment of their ancient liberties, deliberately and in spite of warnings writ large and full, flung away a priceless heritage, and consigned to the grave of the past a great and glorious Empire.

I am your obedient servant,
Randolph S. Churchill.

India Office, St. James's Park:
October 10.

II

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO THE NATIONAL UNION OF CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATIONS

1884.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Lord Randolph Churchill.
Private.

Hatfield: April 1, 1884.

My Lord,—I had the honour of receiving a letter from you, dated the 19th ult., in which, on behalf of the Organisation Committee of the National Union, you requested that Sir Stafford Northcote and myself would give our early consideration to a report and other documents which you enclosed.

We had already expressed our disapproval of the report; therefore, in the absence of any explanation, we could not have entered further upon the consideration of it. We had the advantage, however, of a conference with yourself and Mr. Gorst, in which some passages of the report, which seemed to us objectionable, were explained. It was made clear to us that there was no intention on the part of the Council of the National Union either to trench on the province of the Central Committee or to take any course upon political questions that would not be acceptable to the leaders of the party. The 'large and general principles of party policy' reserved for the determination of the Council by the fourth recommendation of the report were explained to refer exclusively to questions affecting the organisation of the affiliated Associations.

It was very satisfactory to us to find from your language that the Council were at one with us in the conviction that harmonious co-operation between them and the Central Committee was of great importance to the interests of the party, and that the matters which have hitherto been disposed of by the leaders and Whips of the party must remain as heretofore in their hands, including the expenditure of the funds standing in the name of the Central Committee.

It was thought desirable that, in place of further discussing the report, Sir Stafford Northcote and I should indicate with more precision the objects to which the efforts of the Council may with the greatest advantage be directed. It appears to us that these objects may be defined to be the same as those for which the Associations themselves are working. The chief object for which

the Associations exist is to keep alive and extend Conservative convictions, and so to increase the number of Conservative voters. This is done by acting on opinion through various channels, by the establishment of clubs, by holding meetings, by securing the assistance of speakers and lecturers and by the circulation of printed matter in defence of Conservative opinions, by collecting the facts required for the use of Conservative speakers and writers, and by the invigoration of the local press.

In all these efforts it is the function of the Council of the National Union to aid, stimulate and guide the Associations it represents.

Much valuable work may also be done through the Associations, by watching the registration and, at election time, by providing volunteer canvassers and volunteer conveyance. But in respect to these matters it is desirable that the National Union should act only in concert with the Central Committee, because there are in many constituencies other bodies of Conservatives who do not belong to the Associations, but whose co-operation must be secured.

To ensure complete unity of action, we think it desirable that the Whips of the party should sit, *ex officio*, on the Council, and should have a right to be present at the meetings of all Committees. Such an arrangement would be a security against any unintentional divergencies of policy and would lend weight to the proceedings of the Union. Business relating to candidates should remain entirely with the Central Committee. On the assumption, which we are entitled now to make, that the action of the two bodies will be harmonious, a separation of establishments will not be necessary—unless business should largely increase. There is some advantage, undoubtedly, in their working under a common roof, for it is difficult to distinguish between their functions so accurately but that the need of mutual assistance and communication will constantly be felt. I have the honour to be

Your obedient servant,
Salisbury.

Lord Randolph Churchill to the Marquess of Salisbury.

The National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations,

St. Stephen's Chambers, Westminster S.W.: April 3, 1884.

My Lord,—I have laid your letter of the 1st inst., in which you indicate your reconsidered views and those of Sir Stafford Northcote concerning the position and functions of the National Union of Conservative Associations, before the Organisation Committee. It is quite clear to us that in the letters we have from time to time addressed to you and in the conversations which we have had the honour of holding with you on this subject, we have hopelessly failed to convey to your mind anything like an appreciation either of the significance of the movement which the National Union commenced at Birmingham in October last or of the unfortunate effect which a neglect or a repression of that movement by the leaders of the party would have upon the Conservative cause. The resolution of the Conference at Birmingham in October—a Conference attended by upwards of 450 delegates from all parts of the country—directed the Council of the National Union to take steps to secure for that body its legitimate share in the management of the party organisation. This was an expression of dissatisfaction with the condition of the organisation of the party and of a determination on the part of the National Union that it should no longer continue to be a sham, useless and hardly even an ornamental portion of that organisation.

The resolution signified that the old methods of party organisation—namely, the control of Parliamentary elections by the Leader, the Whip, the paid agent, drawing their resources from secret funds—which were suitable to the manipulation of the 10*l.* householder were utterly obsolete and would not secure the confidence of the masses of the people who were enfranchised by Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill, and that the time had arrived when the centre of organising energy should be an elected, representative and responsible body. The delegates at the Conference were evidently of opinion that if the principles of the Conservative party were to obtain popular support, the organisation of the party would have to become an imitation, thoroughly real and *bonâ fide* in its nature, of that popular form of representative organisation which had contributed so greatly to the triumph of the Liberal party in 1880 and which was best known to the public by the name of the Birmingham Caucus. The Caucus may be perhaps a name of evil sound and omen in the

ears of the aristocratic or privileged classes, but it is undeniably the only form of political organisation which can collect, guide and control for common objects large masses of electors; and there is nothing in this particular form of political combination which is in the least repugnant to the working classes in this country. The newly-elected Council of the National Union proceeded to communicate these views to your Lordship and Sir Stafford Northcote, and invited the assistance of your experience and authority to enable them to satisfy the direction which had been imposed upon them by the delegates.

It appeared at first from a letter which we had the honour of receiving from you on February 29 that your Lordship and Sir Stafford Northcote entered fully and sympathetically into the wishes of the Council, in which letter it was distinctly stated that it was the duty of the Council—

1. To superintend and stimulate the exertions of the local Associations.

2. To furnish them with advice and in some measure with funds.

3. To provide lecturers on political topics for public meetings.

4. To aid them in the improvement and development of the local press.

5. To help them in perfecting the machinery for registration and volunteer agency at election time.

6. To press upon the local Associations the paramount duty of a timely selection of candidates for the House of Commons.

Nothing could have been clearer, more definite or satisfactory than this scheme of labour; and accompanied as it was by observations of a flattering character concerning the constitution of the National Union, the Council was greatly gratified and encouraged by its reception.

The Council, however, committed the serious error of imagining that your Lordship and Sir Stafford Northcote were in earnest in wishing them to become a real source of usefulness to the party, and proceeded to adopt a report presented to them by us, in which practical effect was given to the advice with which the Council have been favoured, and they were under the impression that they would be placed in a position to carry out their labours successfully by being furnished with pecuniary

resources from the considerable funds which your Lordship and Sir Stafford Northcote collect and administer to the general purposes of the party.

The Council have been rudely undeceived. The day after the adoption of the report, before even I had had time to communicate that report officially to your Lordship, I received a letter from Mr. Bartley, the paid Agent of the leaders, written under their direction, containing a formal notice to the National Union to quit the premises occupied by them in conjunction with the other organising officials, accompanied by a statement that the leaders declined for the future all and any responsibility for the proceedings of the National Union.

Further, in your letter of the 1st instant you express your disapproval of the action of the Council, and decline to consider the report, on the ground that the contemplated action of the Council will trench upon the functions of an amorphous and unknown body, styled the Central Committee, in whose hands all matters hitherto disposed of by the leaders and Whips of the party must remain, including the expenditure of the party funds.

In the same letter you state that you will indicate with more precision the objects at which the Council of the National Union should aim, the result being that the precise language of your former letter of February 29 is totally abandoned, and refuge taken in vague, foggy and utterly intangible suggestions.

Finally, in order that the Council of the National Union may be completely and for ever reduced to its ancient condition of dependence upon, and servility to, certain irresponsible persons who find favour in your eyes, you demand that the Whips of the party—meaning, we suppose, Lord Skelmersdale, Lord Hawarden and Lord Hopetoun in the Lords, Mr. Rowland Winn and Mr. Thornhill in the Commons—should sit *ex officio* on the Council, with a right of being present at the meetings of all Committees.

With respect to the last demand we think it right to state, for the information of your Lordship, that under the rules and constitution of the National Union the Council have no power whatever to comply with this injunction. The Council are elected at the Annual Conference and have no power to add to their number. All that they can do is that, in the event of a vacancy

occurring among the members, they have power by co-optation to fill up the vacancy.

I will admit that in conversation with your Lordship and Sir Stafford Northcote, with a view to establishing a satisfactory connection between the Council and the leaders of the party without sacrificing the independence of the former, I unofficially suggested an arrangement—subsequently approved by this Committee—under which Mr. R. N. Fowler, one of the Treasurers of the National Union, might have been willing to resign that post, and Mr. Winn might have been elected by the Council to fill it—an arrangement widely different from the extravagant and despotic demand laid down in your letter of the 1st instant.

You further inform us that in the event of the Council—a body representing as it does upwards of 500 affiliated Conservative Associations, and composed of men eminent in position and political experience, enjoying the confidence of the party in populous localities, and sacrificing continually much time, convenience and money to the work of the National Union—acquiescing in the view of its functions laid down in your letter of April 1, it may be graciously permitted to remain the humble inmate of the premises which it at present occupies.

We shall lay your letter and copy of this reply before the Council at its meeting to-morrow and shall move the Council that they adhere substantially to the report already adopted, in obedience to the direction of the Conference at Birmingham; that they take steps to provide themselves with their own officers and clerks; and that they continue to prosecute with vigour and independence the task which they have commenced—namely, the *bonâ fide* popular organisation of the Conservative party.

It may be that the powerful and secret influences which have hitherto been unsuccessfully at work on the Council, with the knowledge and consent of your Lordship and Sir Stafford Northcote, may at last be effectual in reducing the National Union to its former make-believe and impotent condition; in that case we shall know what steps to take to clear ourselves of all responsibility for the failure of an attempt to avert the misfortunes and reverses which will, we are certain, under the present effete system of wire-pulling and secret organisation, overtake and attend the Conservative party at a General Election.

I have the honour to be
Yours obediently,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Draft of Lord Randolph Churchill's letter resigning his candidature for Birmingham.

Dear Mr. Satchell Hopkins,—You will not be surprised, after what passed yesterday at the Council of the National Union, to receive a communication from me with reference to the electoral contest which the Conservative party in Birmingham intend to wage at the General Election, and to the part in that contest which I have been invited to take. It will be within your recollection that in last November, when you first inquired of me whether I would be willing to have my name submitted to the Conservative party in Birmingham as one of the candidates for the Parliamentary representation of the town, I hesitated greatly before complying with your very flattering request. My hesitation was not due to any great fear of defeat, but rather to doubts which I entertained as to whether the political principles, both as regards foreign and domestic affairs, which I held to and which I should advocate as candidate for Birmingham, were in any degree coincident with the political principles of the present leaders of the Tory party or would be adopted by them if they came into power. You are also aware that shortly before I went to Birmingham at Easter for the purpose of addressing public meetings at the Town Hall I again expressed to you those doubts, which had been rather confirmed than dissipated by various circumstances which had marked the interval between April and November last. It is within your knowledge that the Council of the National Union has been since its election by the Conference of Associations at Birmingham in October 1883 engaged in a struggle to acquire for itself a large share in and control over the organisation of the Tory party throughout the country, to become the principal centre and source of organising energy, and to transform itself from a thoroughly sham and artificial into an active and powerful body. The Council in undertaking this effort was acting in obedience to the positive direction of the delegates at the Conference. The principles of political organisation which animate the Council are the encouragement, extension and formation of popular Associations combining all classes and electing a representative and responsible executive in electoral districts for the carrying-on of

all business relating to Parliamentary elections. This is the form of political organisation which has been widely and successfully adopted by the Liberal party, which is the only form of political combination suitable to the present vast electorate but which as far as the Conservative party is concerned is solely confined to some of the most populous constituencies of Great Britain. I would also add that this is the only form of organisation which can bring the Parliamentary action of the Conservative party into harmony and sympathy with the masses of the people in the country who are inclined to support the principles of that party. A popular organisation and a popular policy follow naturally the one upon the other, and without the former you will not have the latter. The efforts of the Council from the outset met with the strongest opposition from those who have great influence with the leaders of the party, who at present control such organisation as exists, and dispense in irresponsible secrecy the considerable funds subscribed for party purpose.

To thwart the efforts of the Council every pretext of delay was seized upon, promises and menaces being freely resorted to. The Council, however, succeeded in procuring from the leaders a document recognising largely the legitimacy of their demands and conceding much of that which they claimed; but so soon as they embodied its substance in a report for the purpose of immediate action, an attempt was first made to prohibit this step, and when the Council had the independence to persist, the National Union received a prompt notice to quit the premises it had so long shared with the agents of the party leaders. Thereupon the Council were careful not to communicate this hostile measure to the Associations in the country, ever hoping that a conciliatory spirit might yet avert a public rupture. Unfortunately no corresponding spirit restrained those who had been opposed to the Council. Independents in the Conservative party could not be brooked for a moment, and a circular was hurriedly issued from the Central office to every Association and agent in the country intimating that the National Union was an outcast, and that a small Committee nominated by the leaders themselves, in whose appointment the Associations had no voice, would conduct all the functions for the discharge of which the National Union was originally constituted. Notwithstanding the issue of this document, which threw local bodies and local

leaders into the greatest confusion and embarrassment, the Council of the National Union continued their efforts to bring about an arrangement which, while preserving their independence and usefulness, would enable them to act harmoniously with all authorities in and sections of the party.

These efforts proved unavailing, and on the 2nd instant the majority of the Council was induced under great pressure to recede from the line of action which it had for six months adopted, and a Committee was appointed to supersede the Chairman and the Executive Committee.

The advocates of popular control on the Council were suppressed, the inchoate work of invoking energy and co-operation among the Associations was abruptly stopped, and the Council has been in effect reduced to the position of dependence and unreality from which the delegates at the Birmingham Conference had directed it to emancipate itself.

Such is the summary of the abortive effort of the National Union to infuse a popular element into the organisation and policy of the Tory party. The jealous guardians of aristocratic privilege have proved for the time too powerful for those who would base the strength of the Tory party upon the genuine and spontaneous attachment of the masses of our people. The interests of the many are still to be sacrificed to the love of power and interested ambition of a favoured few.

These things being so, I have arrived at the irresistible conclusion that it would be impossible for me, consistently even with the lowest standard of political honesty, to solicit the suffrages of the citizens of Birmingham in support of the obsolete policy still adhered to by the Tory party; basing my solicitations upon those principles of government, whether domestic or foreign, which I endeavoured to set forth in your Town Hall at Eastertide; knowing, as I know now, beyond all doubt of contradiction, that notwithstanding the immense changes effected by the Reform Bill of 1867, and about to be effected by the Reform Bill of 1884, those principles are inexpressibly repugnant to the authorities of the party and would never be carried into effect by the Tory party under their guidance.

The malignant influences which for four years have had complete possession of the Tory party and hopelessly muddled

the conduct of the Opposition, rendering us an object of derision even beyond the limits of these Islands, ought not in my opinion to be permitted to overshadow the destinies of the British people.

Caring less than nothing for results personal to myself, and using what lights I possess, what knowledge and experience I have acquired for the purpose of laying the whole truth on political matters before the public on the eve of a great national decision, I have, after much reflection and perhaps unduly prolonged self-restraint, indited to you this communication. You and your friends will surely perceive that, hampered and shackled by the animosity of those whose support is essential, and which I had a right to anticipate, it would be out of the question for me with any hopes of honourable success to realise the aspirations of the Conservatives of Birmingham.

I remain
Yours faithfully,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Sir Henry Wolff to Mr. Harold Gorst.

28 Cadogan Place, S.W.: Jan. 5, 1903.

My dear Harold Gorst,—Only on Saturday I saw the recent number of the *Nineteenth Century*, in which was published your third article on the so-called 'Fourth Party.'

It contains two passages which I should like to see corrected.

On page 138 you write: 'Lord Randolph Churchill, on his own initiative and without consulting his colleagues, made terms for himself with Lord Salisbury.'

This statement does not accord with my recollections.

After the Sheffield conference on July 23, 1884, it appeared to me and to some other friends of Lord Randolph Churchill, that the election of a majority of his supporters on the council of the National Union placed him in a position so strong as to enable him without any misconstruction or sacrifice of dignity to negotiate with Lord Salisbury for more harmonious action. Your father was out of town, and there was no time to lose, as the election of a chairman of the Union was impending. I was therefore authorised to inquire whether Lord Salisbury would be willing to discuss certain points with Lord Randolph Churchill. The same day they met, and an agreement was come to on the following terms:—

(1) Lord Randolph Churchill and his friends were to act in harmony with Lord Salisbury, and were to be treated with full confidence by him and the ruling members of the Conservative party.

(2) Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was to be elected chairman of the National Union.

(3) The Primrose League was to be officially recognised by the leaders of the party and by the Council of the Union.

(4) In order to celebrate this concordat—as you have put it—Lord Salisbury was to give a dinner to the Council.

The conditions were carried out within a few days. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was elected chairman and the Primrose League recognised, by resolution, at the first meeting.

As above mentioned, your father was at the time absent, but until now I had always understood that he concurred in the course taken. I had attributed his absence from the dinner to some other cause, and I the more believed in his approval of the reconciliation from the support given the next year, after conference, both by himself and Lord Randolph Churchill, to a motion made by me in the House of Commons to adjourn the third reading of the new Reform Bill during the interregnum between the resignation of Mr. Gladstone and the accession of Lord Salisbury. This motion is, I think, referred to by Sir Herbert Maxwell in his 'Life of Mr. W. H. Smith.'

I had regretted in later years to perceive that there was some tension between your father and Lord Randolph Churchill; but, through ignorance, I had imputed it to disagreements on the formation of Lord Salisbury's second Administration in 1886, when I was absent from England.

The second passage which, to my mind, requires explanation occurs on page 140. It runs thus:—

'But no member of the Fourth Party, except himself (Lord R. C.), was admitted to the Cabinet. Mr. Balfour, though made President of the Local Government Board, was excluded from the latter distinction.'

I have always understood that at the time Lord Randolph Churchill not only advised, but urged the admission of Mr. Balfour to the Cabinet; and that this advice was not followed on account of Lord Salisbury's reluctance to give to a near kinsman

an advancement to which others might think they had greater claim.

Yours very truly,
H. Drummond Wolff.

III

REFORM BILL, 1884

Lord Randolph Churchill to H. H. Wainwright, Esq., M.P.

2 Connaught Place, W.: June 9, 1884.

My dear Mr. Wainwright,—You tell me in your letter of the 30th ult. that you find some difficulty in understanding my recent action in the House of Commons with respect to the Reform Bill.

The position of the Conservative party on the question of Parliamentary Reform ever since 1887 has been very ill-defined. The action taken at that time by Mr. Disraeli and his colleagues made it impossible for the Conservative party at any future date to oppose on principle large extensions of the franchise. That this result was clearly perceived by the authors of the Reform Bill of 1867 is proved by the fact that in no single speech of Mr. Disraeli or of Sir Stafford Northcote on the question of Parliamentary Reform can any trace be found of opposition to assimilation of county and borough suffrage on principle. The old Tory attitude of 1832 has been for ever abandoned. I think, if you refer to Mr. Disraeli's address to the Buckinghamshire electors in 1874, you will find a passage clearly intimating that he himself was prepared, if necessary, to supplement his work of 1867 by doing what Mr. Gladstone is at present engaged on. If these facts had any meaning at all they meant this—that extension of the franchise was no longer a monopoly of the Liberal party, and was not attended by any danger to the Constitution.

Lancashire, which is usually in the van of the Conservative party in Great Britain, was quick to detect the change. When I went to Oldham and to Manchester in the autumn and winter of 1881 for the purpose of addressing public meetings I was particularly enjoined by the leading gentlemen in those places not to say a word against the assimilation of the county and borough franchise. During the sessions of 1880-81, 1881-82, 1882-83, the question of Parliamentary Reform was permitted to remain in a dormant state, and the position of both parties with regard to it was to no inconsiderable extent forgotten.

Suddenly in the autumn of 1883 it was rumoured that Parliament would be called upon to deal with the question; the recess oratory of Ministers and their followers confirmed the intelligence; the Conservative leaders were singularly reticent of their opinions, and I found myself (then, as now, a mere member of the rank and file of the party) obliged to go at length into this question of Reform before an Edinburgh audience without having at my command any certain indication as to the course which the Conservative party would pursue. As the representative of a small agricultural borough which any new Reform Bill must extinguish I could not be expected to look upon the measure with any very longing eye; further, in accordance with the maxim that it was the duty of the Opposition to oppose, I considered that it would be right and reasonable for Conservatives to resist the proposed Reform Bill on the ground of (1) the inopportuneness of the moment chosen and the far more urgent character of other questions; (2) the obvious risk of any large addition to the Irish electorate; (3) the transparent design of the Government to divert public attention from foreign affairs; (4) the absence of any indication, on the part of the unenfranchised masses, of any great desire for the voting privilege. On those grounds at Edinburgh I spoke against Reform; but I perceived that my views, though listened to with kindness

and courtesy, were not highly acceptable to the intelligent audience of Scotch artisans which I was addressing, and moreover the disagreement with those views which was expressed from the platform by Mr. Balfour, M.P., and Lord Elcho, M.P., voiced unmistakenly the prevalent opinion of the meeting.

In the ensuing period, before the opening of Parliament, I ascertained by communications with members of the party at the Carlton that no unanimity of feeling on the subject of Parliamentary Reform existed; that many borough members, and particularly Lancashire members, were positively in favour of the change; and that direct opposition on principle was only to be expected from a highly influential but numerically small circle of members representing county and borough constituencies exclusively of a rural character.

Under these circumstances, after Parliament had met, and after the Opposition had failed to overthrow the Government on the Egyptian policy, and the Reform Bill had been introduced, I proposed on the second reading of the Bill to move the previous question—a form of opposition which appeared to combine most of the objections which I had stated at Edinburgh, while not committing anyone who might support it to resistance to Reform on principle. Sir Stafford Northcote requested me not to persevere with this motion, which had precedence over the amendment of Lord John Manners, and it was accordingly removed from the paper. Now Lord John Manners' motion, if it meant anything at all (and on this I am not prepared positively to decide), meant that the Conservative party was prepared to deal with extension of the franchise, provided that the measure was accompanied by provisions for the redistribution of seats. Yet even this modified form of resistance did not secure the support of the entire Conservative party, and was defeated by the overwhelming majority of 130. Finally, on the motion to

go into Committee, Mr. Chaplin's proposal to exclude Ireland from the Bill met with so little favour from the leaders of our party that he wisely declined to press it to a division.

These things being so, I am sanguine that all impartial persons will agree that a frank and open departure from the position of strong resistance to Reform which I had taken up in December was not only pardonable but incumbent upon any practical politician. Had that position been the position of the Conservative party generally, I would certainly have adhered to it at any sacrifice; but, far from that, it was not even the position of any considerable section of the party, who as a body recurred to the policy of Mr. Disraeli. Moreover, since December I had by the favour of the Conservatives in Birmingham become a candidate for the Parliamentary representation of that immense constituency, and undoubtedly in Birmingham there existed no serious differences between Liberals and Conservatives as to the propriety of the assimilation of the county and borough franchise. Having thus been guided to the conclusion that Reform was inevitable, and that equality of political rights between England and Ireland was to govern the Conservatives as well as the Liberals, I did not conceal my change of mind from the House of Commons or the public. It appeared to me to be as reasonable and intelligible a change of mind as it could be possible for any M.P. to undergo; brought about not by one short debate, as has been most erroneously asserted, but by a careful study of a continued succession of circumstances extending over a period of four months. I am sure that it is well for our public life that a change of opinion on any great question, should it take place, should be frankly and fearlessly avowed; and I believe that violent censure of such a change, if generally adopted, would tend to produce hypocrisy and political dishonesty: and possessed by that idea I do not now hesitate to remark that if the Government

were to give a definite guarantee to Parliament that their Reform legislation should not be operative until the redistribution of seats has been provided for, by the announcement that Parliament will be called together in the autumn to complete the scheme, and by the insertion of a proper date in the present Bill before which no election shall take place under it, then I see no strong or overwhelming reason why the labours of the present session should be rendered abortive by the rejection of the Bill for the representation of the people.

IV

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL'S LETTERS FROM INDIA

To his Wife.

S.S. *Rohilla*: December 13, 1884.

We had a very enjoyable day yesterday at Malta; the steamer dropped anchor at 9.30, and greatly to my surprise the Governor, Sir Lintorn Simmons, whom I did not know, sent his barge and an aide-de-camp to fetch me off and take me to the Palace. I had a long interview with the Governor, who was most polite and agreeable. He was very gloomy about Wolseley's expedition and generally about the Army, Navy, fortifications, &c.; and as he is considered one of our greatest authorities, I suppose he is right as to the unsatisfactory condition of everything. But they want such a lot of money!

He showed me all over the Palace, which would have delighted you; it is one of the finest buildings I ever saw. His sitting-room used to be the Grand Master's bedroom, and the whole place is in much the same condition as it was 300 years ago. The tapestries exceed in beauty any I ever saw. After we had seen the great church, a magnificent edifice, Lord John Hay gave us his barge to go round the dockyard, which fortunately happened to be full of ships. We went over the *Dreadnought* and *Inflexible*, and on the latter enjoyed the pleasure of moving the turrets and 80-ton guns with just the same ease as one winds up one's watch—the whole

thing very wonderful, very complicated and perfectly unintelligible, and all the more interesting on that account.

At 1.30 luncheon with the Governor; large party; Admiral Tryon and Lord Elphinstone, going out to Australia, Lord John Hay and others. We returned on board in the Governor's barge in great state, the object of admiration and envy of the other passengers.

At five o'clock the ship started again for Port Said, where we hope to arrive Tuesday night. The weather keeps very fine. To-day (Sunday) muster of the crew at 10.30: 120 Lascars, Negroes, Turks, heretics and infidels; curious objects. After that, church in the saloon, the chief merit of which was its brevity. The ubiquitous parson, of course, presided, and gave us a silly address on the dislike the clergy felt for the laity and *vice versâ*, and several silly reasons for same. I thought if the clergy are like him the whole thing was very easily accounted for, but have not yet communicated to him this suggestion.

They are talking of getting up some theatricals and concerts; I hope they won't. The two junior officers on board are very cheery fellows, and give smoking concerts in their cabin, which is about 6 ft. square, and which seats comfortably about a dozen persons, smoking, drinking whiskey-and-water and singing choruses. I have twice attended these concerts, which are of a very cheerful character; and so wonderful is the sea air that though the concert-room atmosphere might be cut with a knife and the whiskey is copiously supplied, one feels rather the better than the worse for it the next morning.

I saw the *Morning Post* of the 4th at Malta with Borthwick's valedictory article; the article is so very friendly that I fear people will think I wrote it myself.

December 18.

Here we are in the Canal, which is very much what I expected; a dirty ditch with nothing remarkable except the multitudes of flamingoes, pelicans, and wild fowl in the lakes we passed. It is a great nuisance having to change ships. I have got so accustomed to the *Rohilla*, and the captain is such a good fellow that I am quite sorry to leave him. I doubt if the *Nizam* will be as pleasant.

S.S. *Nizam*: December 22.

Yesterday we had adventures. At 10.30 the machinery broke down; something had got into the cylinder. At first they thought it would only be an affair of half an hour, but in the end we did not start again until seven in the evening. In the meantime we had church on deck, the captain doing clergyman; and after that there was great excitement over some sharks which were swimming about the ship. In the clear water we could see them beautifully, each attended by a shoal of pilot fish, a most beautiful creature about the size of a 10-lb. salmon and streaked with the brightest blue. The sailors fixed a piece of pork on a hook at the end of a chain, and instantly hooked one. Such a business to get him on board!—and he flapped about finely, making us all beat a hasty retreat, in which two or three unfortunate people were knocked down and trampled on. Then we caught another, and after that a very large one, which turned out to be 7 ft. 6 in. long and weighed 210 lbs. This one had three live sharks inside, which we cut out and handed round. The vitality of these brutes is extraordinary. After their tails had been cut off and their insides taken out they kept flapping and struggling, and the heart of one placed on a bit of wood kept beating for hours.

In the meantime the *Rohilla*, which left Suez after us, came in sight and, seeing something was wrong, bore down. Captain Barrett and his chief engineer came on board, and there was much joy at meeting again, and drinks were partaken of. As they found we could go on again in a short time they departed and steamed away, and were soon out of sight; and then we felt gloomy, as it was quite uncertain whether the machinery would not collapse again, and if it did we should have no *Rohilla* to pick us up, and might be days in the Red Sea. But while we were at dinner another ship appeared, and this turned out to be the *Rohilla*, which felt nervous about us and had come back. Much relief was experienced at this amiability and soon after, after much struggling, our machinery was in motion; but this delay will make us get to Aden in the dark, which is most tiresome.

Government House, Bombay: January 1, 1885.

We got here Tuesday morning early, after a very pleasant voyage across the Indian Ocean. I found the Governor's carriage waiting at the dock, and we came up here. Sir James Ferguson is most kind and pleasant and so are all the Staff. I have not done any sight-seeing yet, except going into Bombay and walking

about the streets and looking at the people, an endless source of interest. It would be quite useless my endeavouring to describe to you my impression of this town. The complete novelty and originality of everything is remarkable, and one is never tired of staring and wondering. I cannot tell you how much I am enjoying myself or how much I wish you were with me. The Bombay Club asked me to a dinner but I declined, as there would have been speeches and more or less of a political demonstration against the Ripon party, which would never have done. I did not come out to India to pursue politics or to make speeches.

January 9.

We have been going about a great deal, seeing various things and people. Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, a great Parsee, took us to see the Towers of Silence, where they place all the dead Parsee bodies to be eaten by vultures. I was asked to write my opinion of their process in their books, and composed a highly qualified and ambiguous impression which would have done credit to Gladstone.

Last night we dined at the Byculla Club with several gentlemen, when an American lady gave us some very dull recitations from Tennyson; we were all much bored. I had a long interview with eight of the leading native politicians on Wednesday morning on Indian politics, in which they set forth with great ability their various grievances. We leave to-night for Indore, and after that go to Jaipur, Agra, Delhi and Lucknow, which last place we hope to reach about the 21st. From there I go to spend a week or ten days with Colonel Murray in the district which he administrates, somewhere on the borders of Nepaul. We shall be in camp, and moving about every day, and I shall be able to see something of the details of Indian administration and also lots of sport; but of this last I shall be a spectator rather than an actor. You have no idea how extraordinarily polite people are out here, and what trouble they take to amuse me.

The Residency, Indore: January 14.

We were met at the junction for Indore by Captain F., of Holkar's service, who informed us that Holkar was away from his capital and was ill, but would come to a station near and meet us; and presently there we found him, drawn up with all his Court. We had an interview of about half an hour, while the other

unfortunate passengers were kept waiting. He was most gracious and very intelligent, and when we left he embraced me. At Indore we found his son, also drawn up, and more *pow-wow*. In the evening fireworks, Hindoo drama, Nautch, conjurers, &c. All very Hindoo and delightful the first time one sees it, but I can quite imagine that after a time it would pall. In the morning Holkar sent us out cheetah-hunting for black buck; however, the cheetah was sulky and would not run well, so did not catch one. We then took our rifles, and I shot three and Thomas two.

The Residency, Lucknow: January 24, 1885.

Poor Fred Burnaby's death[45] is a great blow to me, and it was so sad getting his letter enclosed in yours this morning. I wrote to him as I passed through Egypt; I wonder if he got my letter. I shall miss him greatly. I see Airlie has been wounded, but am delighted not to find the names of any more of our friends in the list of casualties. I have had a most exasperating letter from Wolff, saying that he has a great deal to tell me, but that it is so important he cannot write it for fear the letter should be lost. Did you ever know such tiresomeness?

I have no intention to hasten my return in order to increase the embarrassments of the Government. I am starting off to-night for Colonel Murray's camp.

In camp Dudna: February 1.

Here we are in camp in the middle of an immense Government forest at the foot of the Himalayas. We have been leading a very enjoyable life since we left Lucknow and Colonel Murray. Out all day careering round on elephants after game, sleeping in tents at night, always at a different place, always hungry for breakfast, very hungry for dinner—two sensations to me which have the attraction of novelty. The whole thing is a charming change after racketing about in railways from town to town. We have not seen much game, I must admit, as it is far too early in the year and, no grass being burnt and much water being about, the wild animals are very widely scattered, and shots are few and far between; though yesterday we hunted one leopard which ultimately escaped after being much fired at and, I think, grievously wounded. I shot a very nice swamp deer and Thomas a nilghai or blue bull. We also shot pea-fowl, bustards and partridges, and every variety of bird. We have fifteen elephants, and these

creatures are an unfailing source of interest and amusement. I think an elephant is the best mode of conveyance I know. He cannot come to grief; he never tumbles down nor runs away (at least, not on the march); nothing stops him; and when you get accustomed to his paces he is not tiring. You would not believe what steep places they get up and down or what thick, almost impenetrable jungle they go through. If a tree is in the way, and not too large a one, they pull it down; if a branch hangs too low for the howdah to go under, they break it off. They are certainly most wonderful animals, and life in many parts of India would be impossible without them. The scenery all round here is lovely—very wild, and with splendid woodland effects. We have spent more days in camp here than we meant, which has altered our plans a little, but I like so much seeing the country and the people.

What explosions these are in London! I think it very amiable of the dynamite people to blow up the House of Commons when we are all away; they might have chosen a more inconvenient moment.

To his Mother.

Government House, Calcutta: February 8.

I have had the great good fortune to kill a tiger. It was our last day, and the party proposed to shoot ducks and snipe; but for that I did not much care and suggested that I and a Mr. Hersey (an English gentleman who is living in the district) should go into the forest on the chance of seeing deer and perhaps getting a sambur-stag, while the others went to shoot ducks. This was agreed to, and the others bet fifty rupees they would have the heaviest bag. Well, Hersey and I, each on an elephant and accompanied only by two other elephants, were beating an open space in the forest when I came upon the recently killed carcase of a hog, half devoured. Hersey, when he saw it, declared it was quite fresh, and that the tiger must be close by. You may imagine the excitement. We beat on through the place and then came through it again, for it was very thick high grass. All of a sudden out bundled this huge creature, right under the nose of Hersey's elephant, and made off across some ground which was slightly open. Hersey fired, and missed. I fired, and hit him just above the tail. (A very good shot, for he only showed me his stern, and he

was at least forty yards off.) Hersey then fired his second barrel, and broke his shoulder, which brought him up (literally with a round turn). He took refuge in a patch of grass about fifty yards from us, where we could just see bits of him. Heavens, how he growled and what a rage he was in! He would have charged us but that he was disabled by Hersey's last shot. We remained still, and gave him four or five more shots, which, on subsequent examination, we found all told; and then, after about five minutes' more awful growling, he expired. Great joy to all. The good luck of getting him was unheard of at this time of year; the odds were a hundred to one against such a thing. He was a magnificent specimen, nine feet seven inches in length, and a splendid skin—which will, I think, look very well in Grosvenor Square. This is certainly the acme of sport. I never shall forget the impression produced by this huge brute breaking cover; or, indeed, the mingled joy and consternation of the other party when they saw him—for they had to pay up fifty rupees. They had got a black buck and a blue bull, and thought they had certainly won.

Tigers in the Zoo give one very little idea of what the wild animal is like.

Government House, Calcutta: February 10.

I hope to leave Bombay March 20th and return viâ Marseilles, in which case I should be back in London about the 11th or 12th April. I do not think I shall be able to stop in Paris, as I guess the House of Commons will be just reassembling after Easter, and it would be a good moment to drop in upon that body. It is extremely pleasant here. The Dufferins are very kind and easy-going; the Staff, too, are amiable; and Bill Beresford does everything he can for one. Yesterday the Government telegraphed to Dufferin to despatch a brigade of Indian troops and thirty miles of railway plant to Suakim. Great preparations at once made; late at night comes an order from London countermanding the whole thing. Dufferin, diplomatist that he is, could not conceal his disgust at this vacillation when they handed him the telegram on our return from dinner. I telegraphed to Borthwick, and I hope I put the fat in the fire.

Rewah: February 17.

I got a telegram from Wolff yesterday, through Pender, saying that affairs were pressing and a crisis impending, and inquiring

when I was coming back. *Mais je connais mon Wolff*; he has crisis on the brain and, in any case, no political contingency will hasten my return by an hour. I expect the Government will try and get put out and the Tories will try to come in; I wish them joy of it.

On Sunday morning General Roberts turned up, and we had a jolly day; lots of talk. The General is all I had imagined him to be. He is very keen on taking me up the frontier to Peshawar and Quetta. It would be most pleasant if it could come off, and one would learn a great deal about that most mysterious problem, 'the dangers of the Russian advance'; but there is no chance of it.

Benares: February 24.

This place is the most distinctly Hindoo city I have yet seen; old and curious in every part. We are leaving for one of the Maharajah's palaces, or villa rather. We are extremely *bien logés et nourris*, with a retinue of servants and carriages at all times ready. There is an old Rajah, Siva Prasad, an interesting and experienced old man who acts as guide; he speaks English perfectly, though at the top of his voice, and indulges in endless dissertations on Indian politics. Yesterday morning we started off to see the Maharajah's royal palace of Ramnugger. Very great reception; all the retainers, elephants, horses, &c., together with army—the latter about 100 strong—drawn up in a long avenue from the gates to the door. The army gave a royal salute, and the band played 'God save the Queen,' which I had to receive with gravity and dignity; rather difficult! The Maharajah's grandson, a boy of ten, met us at the door, and his son, a man of thirty, half-way up the staircase; such are the gradations of Oriental etiquette. The Maharajah was not there, as he is old and infirm, and was keeping himself for the evening. Then Nautch girls and mummers, which, so early in the morning, were out of place; and so on.

Later we took a boat, came down the Ganges, and saw all the Benares people bathing—thousands. As you know, this is part of their religion. The water is very dirty, but they lap up quantities of it, as it is very 'holy'; also there were to be seen the burning Ghats, where all the dead are cremated. There were five bodies burning, each on its own little pile of faggots; but the whole sight was most curious and I am going again this morning to have

another look. Benares is a very prosperous city, as all the rich people from all parts of India come here to spend the end of their days. Any Hindoo who dies at Benares, and whose ashes are thrown into the Ganges, goes right bang up to heaven without stopping, no matter how great a rascal he may have been. I think the G.O.M. ought to come here; it is his best chance.

In the evening the Maharajah gave a party to all the native notabilities of the city; great attendance of Baboos. Many of them speak English, and some appear to be very clever men, but I have had so much *pow-wow* that I did not talk to them much. I discovered a great scandal here the evening of my arrival. I found the magistrate and police were impressing Bheesties, or water-carriers, for service in the Soudan; great consternation in the profession, and all the Bheesties were hiding and were being actively hunted up by the police. I investigated the matter, questioned the head of the police, and went and saw three of the victims for the Mahdi. The poor creatures fell at my feet in the dust, screaming not to go. I was very angry, and telegraphed it to Sir Alfred Lyall, the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces, and an inquiry is being made which will, I hope, save these unfortunate persons from a service to them terrible. This little incident of our rule goes far to explain why we make no progress in popularity among the people.

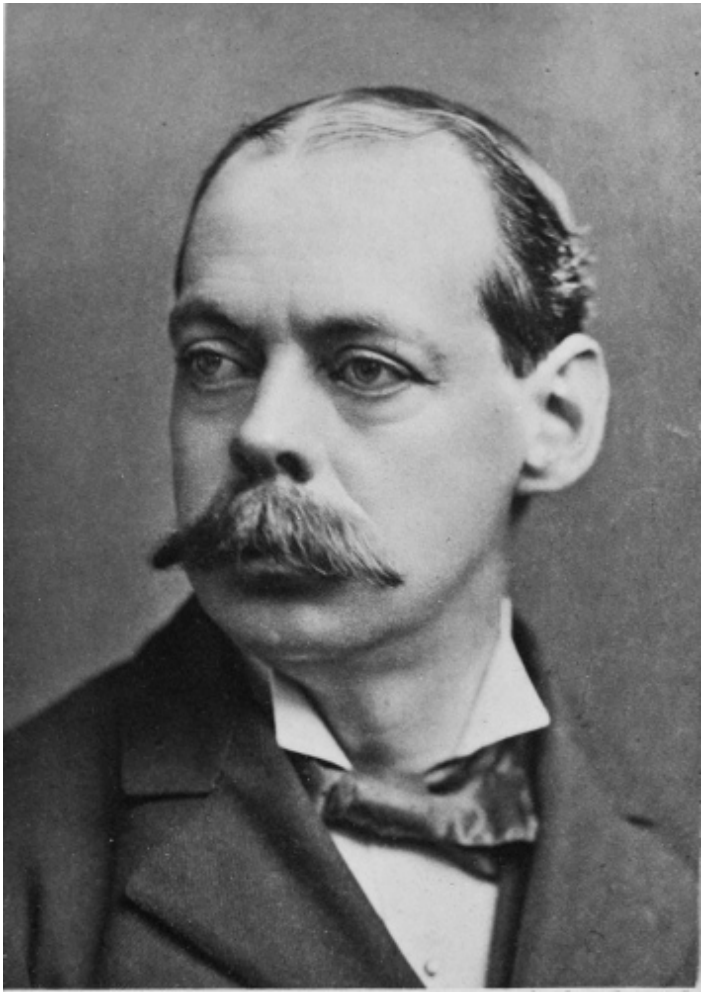
Jaipur: March 3, 1884-5.

We only remained at Delhi two days, as the hotel was piggy, and we moved to the Club at Agra, which is very comfortable, with excellent food and wine. This also gave us the opportunity of seeing the 'Taj' by moonlight, which we were not able to do last time, and which is an unequalled sight. Also we went to dine at the house of a native judge—a very interesting and clever man; we met a most curious collection of native notabilities. The natives are much pleased when one goes to their houses, for the officials out here hold themselves much too high and never seek any intercourse with the natives out of official lines; they are very foolish.

We go on to-night to Baroda, where the Guicowar is organising a tiger hunt. I almost think I am getting a little tired of travelling, and shall be glad to find myself on board ship.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

VOL II.



Lord Randolph Churchill,
1886.

BY
WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL, M.P.
AUTHOR OF
'THE STORY OF THE MALAKAND FIELD FORCE, 1897'
'THE RIVER WAR,' 'LONDON TO LADYSMITH VIA PRETORIA,' ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES

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CHAPTER XII

THE TWENTY-SIXTH OF JANUARY

'When it was said that the noble lord, the member for Paddington, had not declared a policy, he pointed, and he was justified in pointing, not to a sentence, nor even to a phrase, but to a date, and he said, "Our policy is the 26th of January."'—*Speech of Mr. Gladstone, Second Reading Government of Ireland Bill, May 10, 1886.*

ACCORDING to Mr. Morley, the month that followed the General Election was passed by Mr. Gladstone 'in depth of meditation.' The questions which he revolved were vast and grave. Important and even vital factors in their decision were hid from him. He saw that the Liberal party was ripe for schism. He faced the united demand of Nationalist Ireland. He knew that the balance of power was held by Mr. Parnell. But he could not know whether the Government would meet Parliament or not; whether they wanted to be dismissed or not; whether they would seek to gain Whig and Liberal support, or would try to preserve the combination which had placed them in power; nor what, in the last alternative, was the Irish policy Ministers would be prepared to offer or parties disposed to accept. Yet time was short and the country waited tip-toe on his deliberations.

The suspense was not prolonged. The results of the elections could not be estimated till after November 30 and were not determined until another week had passed. But on December 17, after ten days of whisperings and rumour, a public announcement of his Home Rule scheme, apparently authentic in character and circumstantial in

detail, appeared simultaneously in Liberal and Conservative papers. Mr. Gladstone was prompt to repudiate, as a mere 'speculation' upon his opinions, this premature and unfortunate disclosure. But the next day he was writing to Lord Hartington, who had asked for explanations, a frank and full account of his 'opinions and ideas,' which shows how closely newspaper assertion corresponded with the workings of his mind. The process by which his conversion was effected, has been at length laid bare. His internal loathing of the Coercive measures he had been forced to impose during the past five years; his suspicion and entire misconception of the cold-blooded manœvres by which his Government had been overturned; his hope of repairing, remoulding and consolidating the great party instrument which he had directed so long; the desire of an 'old Parliamentary hand' to win the game; the dream of a sun-lit Ireland, loyal because it was free, prosperous and privileged because it was loyal—the crowning glory of an old man's life—all find their place in that immense decision. And then the whole mass of resolve, ponderously advancing, drawing into its movement all that learning and fancy could supply, gathering in its progress the growing momentum of enthusiasm, wrenching and razing all barriers from its path, was finally precipitated like an avalanche upon a startled world! All has been set forth. What communications Mr. Gladstone made to his colleagues; how he addressed himself to Lord Granville, to Lord Spencer, to Lord Hartington, to Mr. Chamberlain; and how he was variously met, have now become matters of published fact. An authoritative analysis of the workings of his mind has been published and may be checked or extended by a score of conversations, letters and chance remarks, all carefully recorded. Judgment may be formed of the part he played, upon evidence perhaps more full and accurate than attaches to any similar transaction. But a veil

of mystery and even suspicion still hangs over the inner councils of Lord Salisbury's Government. What were the leaders of the Conservative party thinking about during these anxious weeks? What plans did they resolve, what difficulties did they face within the secrecy of the Cabinet? Their final decision was declared on January 26. But what alternatives were they weighing meanwhile in conclave or consultation? How far were they prepared to go in satisfaction of Irish demands? What purpose lay behind Lord Randolph Churchill's silence at Sheffield or lurked in Lord Carnarvon's 'empty house'? Upon these much-disputed matters it may now be possible to cast some light.

Lord Randolph's view of the policy which the Conservative party should pursue in Irish matters is described with the utmost candour in a letter which he had written to a friend of mark before the result of the General Election was known:—

Private.

2 Connaught Place, W.: October 14, 1885.

I have no objection to Sexton and Healy knowing the deliberate intention of the Government on the subject of Irish Education; but it would not do for the letter or the communication to be made public, for the effect of publicity on Lancashire might be unfortunate and might cripple the good intentions of Her Majesty's Government.

...It is the Bishops entirely to whom I look in the future to turn, to mitigate or to postpone the Home Rule onslaught. Let us only be enabled to occupy a year with the Education Question. By that time, I am certain, Parnell's party will have become seriously disintegrated. Personal jealousies, Government influences, Davitt and Fenian intrigues will all be at work on the devoted band of eighty: and the Bishops, who in their hearts hate Parnell and don't care a scrap for Home Rule, having safely acquired control of Irish education, will, according to my calculation, complete the rout.

That is my policy, and I know that it is sound and good, and the only possible Tory policy. It hinges on acquiring the

confidence and friendship of the Bishops; but if you go in for their mortal foes the Jesuits on the one hand, and their mortal foes the anti-clerical Nationalists on the other, for the purpose of humiliating and beating back Archbishop Walsh and his colleagues, this policy will be shattered.... My own opinion is that if you approach the Archbishop through proper channels, if you deal in friendly remonstrances and in attractive assurances, ... the tremendous force of the Catholic Church will gradually and insensibly come over to the side of the Tory party.

Lord Randolph furthermore openly avowed and defended his Irish policy during these months—in its general scope—on March 4, 1886, in the House of Commons *after* the election and after the accession to power of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Government. 'I am not going to deny,' he said, 'that at one time I had an idea that the Tory party might co-operate with the Irish party. I have often worked with Irish members. I hope to be able to do so again. I have never concealed in the last Parliament that I thought it possible that on many Irish subjects the Tory party might co-operate with the Irish National party.... It always appeared to me that the Tory party were well qualified to deal with many questions of Irish interest in a manner agreeable to the Irish people and not in the least dangerous to the general welfare of the British Empire. I particularly allude to the question of education and to the question of the land. Judging by past history, I imagined that the cry of Repeal might be raised as strongly as ever and that Irish members might say again: "Live or die, sink or swim, we go for Repeal." Still, I imagined that might merely turn out to be a sentiment for keeping together a powerful political party; and that, if Repeal were shown to be absolutely against the will of the Imperial Parliament, the policy of Repeal would be dropped.' Whatever may be thought of the merits of such a policy, there is nothing disingenuous or obscure either in its private handling or its public declaration.

Lord Randolph's Irish opinions were not altered by the

verdict of the constituencies. His natural delight at the Tory victories in the boroughs led him to form a more sanguine estimate of the mood of the counties than the event sustained. But even his highest anticipations did not place the number of Conservative members at more than 300; and his mind turned at once towards a Whig coalition: —

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

2 Connaught Place, W.: November 29, 1885.

Dear Lord Salisbury,— ...If we have any luck this week we ought to number 300 in the House.

I saw Sir Erskine May yesterday—very grumpy. He said the first trial of strength would be a vote of want of confidence. I said that did not follow; that the first trial of strength in a new Parliament often took place on the election of a Speaker. He said: 'What, oppose Mr. Peel!' I intimated that, though we were very fond of Peel, he had no prescriptive possession of the Chair, and that his election would require something in the nature of a *quid pro quo*. I also gave him to understand that we have quarrelled with the Irish, and, having put these and various other false ideas into his head, left him in a state of exasperated perplexity.

I hope you may be a little in town next week, for the future seems to require the most careful consideration before any policy is submitted to the collective luminosity of the Cabinet. I think you ought to negotiate with the other side, giving Hartington India, Goschen Home Office and Rosebery Scotch Office. You will never get Whig support as long as I am in the Government, and Whig support you must have. I should like to contribute effectively to your getting it, for my curiosity as to the internal and mysterious mechanism of Government is completely satiated. Very indifferent health makes me look forward irresistibly to idleness regained. If you wanted another bait for the Whigs, ——'s elevation to the Lords might supply it, for I hear on the very best authority that chaos and the —— Office are at present indistinguishable. I believe that by some process of this kind you could institute a Government which would keep the Parnellites and Radicals at bay for years; and, after all, that is what must be arrived at.

Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Lord Salisbury's answer reads strangely in the light of after-events:—

November 30, 1885.

My dear Randolph,—I am afraid your patriotic offer of giving place to Goschen for the sake of making a coalition will be of little avail. They hate me as much as they hate you—and if retirements are required for the sake of repose and Whig combinations I shall claim to retire with you in both respects.

The time for a coalition has not come yet—nor will, so long as the G.O.M. is to the fore. But I don't expect we shall be long in office this time. I must try and see you some time this week about our future measures. Are you staying in town? I have not yet had time to read your Burma papers, but will send them you back, with any comments that occur to me, when I have.

Yours very truly,
Salisbury.

Lord Randolph, however, held tenaciously to the idea of a coalition. The fact that the accession of Lord Hartington to the leadership of the House would block his own path effectively and that the acceptance of office by important Whig Ministers must diminish his personal influence, does not seem to have affected this self-seeking and unscrupulous man; and about December 4 or 5 he sent the Prime Minister a formal and elaborate account of his views, which is for many reasons worthy of attention:—

MEMORANDUM.[46]

Assume that the supporters of the Government will number 300.

Under ordinary circumstances Government would probably resign at once, there being a clear majority of seventy against them. The 370 opponents of the Government are so singularly disunited that there is no reason to suppose the Government need be placed in a minority, and there is every reason to suppose that no other Government could command so large a following as the

present Government.

Constitution of the 370 Opponents.

It is almost certain that there are in this number some twenty-five members who without doing any violence to their political principles would habitually support the Government. It may be reckoned that 200 will follow the lead of Lord Hartington as long as he remains leader of the Liberal Opposition. The party more immediately under the control of Messrs. Chamberlain, Dilke, Morley and Labouchere may be estimated at sixty-five votes. There remain eighty Nationalists under the leadership of Mr. Parnell.

It is certain that no Vote of Censure or of Want of Confidence will be moved at the assembling of Parliament because—

1. Neither Mr. Gladstone, nor Lord Hartington, nor Mr. Chamberlain could form a Government.

2. Without the support of the eighty Nationalists a Vote, of Censure or otherwise, would be heavily defeated.

3. The support of the Nationalists would demand a heavier price than any large portion of the Liberal party would be prepared to pay.

On what occasion can a trial of party strength arise?

1. On the election of Speaker.

2. On the question of Parliamentary Oath.

Speakership.

The Irish are hostile to Mr. Peel.

The Whigs equally strong in his favour. The Government can displace Mr. Peel with the help of the Irish. The Whigs will be bitterly alienated. On the other hand, the Government can support Mr. Peel and carry his election. The Irish will find their revenge in voting for Mr. Bradlaugh. The triumph of Mr. Bradlaugh would be a shaking blow to the Tory Government and party. The alienation of the Whigs by the defeat of Mr. Peel would certainly in the course of a few weeks or months destroy the Government.

Which course to choose?

Seeing that the Irish support can never be other than momentary, seeing that by no possibility can [that] support be clothed with any elements of stability, seeing that the alienation of the Whigs from the Government must lead to great evils,

seeing that Whig support, if attained, is honourable, stable, and natural, in my own mind I pronounce for the re-election of Mr. Peel and for running the risk of the triumph for Mr. Bradlaugh.

We have proceeded thus far.

The Whigs will not be displeased by the election of Mr. Peel. The Whigs will not be indignant at the seating of Mr. Bradlaugh. Is it possible to convert this negative frame of mind of non-hostility into one of positive co-operation?

Three methods suggest themselves.

1. The offer of places in the Government.

2. The production of a large, genuine and liberal programme.

3. After such a programme has been produced and proceeded with satisfactorily, the renewal of the offer of places in the Government.

I think that all these three methods should be honestly tried in their order. The first must be done with liberality. The leading members of the Whig party who should be offered places in the Government are Lord Hartington (with the lead of the House of Commons), Mr. Goschen, Lord Rosebery and Sir Henry James.

I do not imagine that these offers would be now accepted. Nevertheless the fact that they have been honestly made may before long be a powerful weapon in the hands of Lord Salisbury, either as influencing his own party or the public. The making of these offers in a generous spirit cannot possibly do harm.

II. THE PROGRAMME.

On foreign questions there does not at present appear to be any difference of opinion, nor on colonial questions. Attention may be concentrated on domestic questions. I suggest that the programme should include:—

1. Parliamentary Procedure	—Executive.
2. Departmental Reform	
3. Indian Inquiries. (H. of C. Committee)	
4. Education Inquiries. (Royal Commission)	
5. Local Government	—
6. Land Laws	

7. University (Ireland) Education

8. Codification of Criminal Law

Parliamentary Procedure.

The following measures might be informally submitted to the leaders of parties in the House of Commons:—

A. The Resort to Autumn Sessions.—The session at present is too long and too short—too long for a consecutive session; too short for the decent and efficient transaction of executive, financial and legislative business.

If this is granted, the following reform suggests itself:—

That Parliament should meet not later than the first week in February, and, with the usual Easter and Whitsuntide holidays, should continue in session not later than the first week in August. That an adjournment should then take place to a period not later than the second week in October, and that the annual session should formally be brought to an end by prorogation not later than the first week in December.

B. The Alteration of Hours of Business.—That the House should meet four days in the week at 1 P.M., adjourn from 7 P.M., and rise at midnight.

C. Clôture.—That, in addition to existing regulations, it shall be within the right of the Minister to demand a division on the subject under discussion a quarter of an hour before the adjournment of or rising of the House.

D. Questions.—That the Speaker should appoint a Committee of three, not being Privy Councillors, who shall decide what questions can be answered in the House, and which in the votes; and that no question shall be put without notice, other than explanatory questions, except by the leave of the House on the demand of 100 members.

E. Adjournment, Motion for.—That the existing rule be altered, substituting the number 100 members for the present number 40.

F. That Grand Committees deal with the report stage of any Bill referred, as well as with Committee stage; and that all Bills be referred to Grand Committees after second reading.

G. That the bulk of private business relating to local development and local enterprise be transferred to local boards whose proceedings must be sanctioned by provisional orders.

Departmental Reform.—That Committees of the House of Commons be appointed to examine and report upon the constitution, staff, work performed, comparative cost of all public departments, with a view to the effecting of economies and the rearrangement of salaries, promotions and retirements.

Indian Inquiry.—This has been agreed upon.

Elementary Education Inquiry.—This requires no further notice.

Legislative.

Local Government.—Two essentials: (1) purely popular election by ratepayers; (2) large and liberal measure of executive and local legislative powers. Workhouse management need not be touched, nor education arrangements. But all Quarter Sessions business, all sanitary matters, registration of votes, survey of land and registration of titles should be among the duties of the local boards. Also powers might be given, as in Ireland, to local boards to advance money on security of rates for purchasers of small holdings and allotments.

Land Laws, Reform of.

1. Abolition of primogeniture in cases of intestacy.
2. Compulsory registration of title.
3. Enfranchisement of future leaseholds.
4. Enfranchisement of copyholders.
5. Enfranchisement of lands held in mortmain.

University (Ireland) Education.

This should take the form of—

1. The transference of Cork College to a Catholic board of management.
2. The endowment of the Catholic University College in Dublin.
3. The establishment of a Catholic College in Armagh.
4. The transference of the Belfast College to a Presbyterian board of management.

Codification of and Reform of Criminal Law.

This can never be attained if it is left to the action of Parliament entirely. The procedure suggested is:—

1. The proposing and carrying of certain general resolutions

through both Houses.

2. The appointment by statute of jurisconsults with full power under aforesaid resolutions to codify; and

3. That the code as drawn shall, after lying on the table of either House for six months, become the criminal code of the United Kingdom.

This, as above, is my second method for attracting Parliamentary support from the ranks of the nominal Opposition. Should this programme, or one more or less closely analogous to it, be introduced, generously received by the bulk of the Whigs and honestly supported, a further offer of places in the Government might with advantage be made.

'The success of foregoing,' concluded Lord Randolph, 'turns upon Ireland. I assume two facts:

'1. That Coercion is impossible now.

'2. That anything in the nature of an Irish Parliament is impossible always.

'*Similarity* of treatment between England and Ireland in respect of Local Government:

'*Liberality* of grants from Treasury towards Irish objects:

'*Concession* to the Roman Catholic hierarchy on education questions:

'These are the main lines of a policy towards Ireland which will secure a great amount of Parliamentary and public concurrence and will, if vigorously and boldly followed, bring about inevitably the disintegration of Mr. Parnell's party. The great size of this party is its chief danger. Its members are open to various influences—jealousy of each other and of Parnell; want of funds; Ministerial influences, priestly influences; and last, but not least, the capricious, unstable and to some extent treacherous character of the Irish nature. If that party is boldly dealt with at the outset it will soon dissolve. I do not consider that the cry for an Irish Parliament now need be more dangerous than was the cry for Repeal in the days of O'Connell. As that latter danger altogether disappeared, so may this present danger if the Government is strong in Parliament, undivided in council and unwavering in action.

'I wish to express my firm conviction and belief that if the

general spirit of this Memorandum could be acted up to, the Queen's Government might well be carried on with dignity and efficiency, and the Parliament will have every reasonable chance of running a normal course and of being the means of benefit to the people.'

Lord Salisbury did not answer until the 9th:—

Private.

Foreign Office: December 9, 1885.

My dear Randolph,—Lord Melbourne used to say that if you only would let a letter alone, it would answer itself. Your very interesting memorandum is not quite in that condition: but some important parts of it have been answered by events. After Hartington's speech of Saturday, there can be no longer any question of offering office *just yet* to the Moderate Liberals; and, therefore, no question of your or my resigning to facilitate that operation. He evidently said what he did to prevent his friends from suspecting him of any intention, under any circumstances, to join us. His resolves are not eternal, but he has effectually debarred himself from any such course until some little time has passed or something new has happened. Then, again, I don't think the Irish will expect us to upset the Speaker; but, if they did, I quite agree with you in thinking that it would be poor policy to do so.

But we shall have to make a Queen's Speech—at least, I can hardly imagine the Cabinet resolving on an immediate resignation. It would be deliberately excusing the other side from the necessity of showing their hand.

In making this Queen's Speech I entirely agree that our leaning must be to the Moderate Liberals, and that we can have nothing to do with any advances towards the Home Rulers. The latter course would be contrary to our convictions and our pledges, and would be quite fatal to the cohesion of our party.

But in leaning towards the Moderate Liberals we should take note of the fact that the moment for bargaining with them has not yet come. Whenever it does come, two results will follow: (1) Our own people will recognise the political necessity of admitting a somewhat stronger ingredient of Liberal policy into our measures, and (2) the Moderate Liberals will require some such

concession as a condition of their joining us and as a proof to their own friends that they have not been guilty of any *apostasy* in so doing. That being so, the extra tinge of Liberalism in our policy will be part of the bargain when it comes, and must not be given away before that time comes. If we are too free with our cash now, we shall have no money to go to market with when the market is open.

In this view I should offer one or two suggestions in revisal of your programme. The abolition of primogeniture is in itself of no importance except on strategic grounds—it is not worth the trouble of resistance. But it is a bit of a flag. The concession would be distasteful to a certain number of our people now, and it might be acceptable as a wedding-present to the Moderate Liberals whenever the Conservative party leads them to the altar. I would not proffer it, therefore, now; though, if carried against us, I should make no serious fight over it.

The proposition of Leasehold Enfranchisement in the future requires more thrashing out. I doubt whether it would effect your object, which is that more occupiers should be owners of the houses they inhabit. I quite agree in the object. I should be more disposed to follow the Irish precedent and give local authorities the power of advancing (on the security of the tenement) some large fraction of its value at low interest, limiting the advance to cases where the occupier was owner of the whole lease—and, of course, confining it to voluntary purchase. This for existing leaseholds. For future buildings the most effective plan would be to allow exemption from the rates and house tax for five years in all cases where the occupier was also the owner. (3) With respect to Local Government, I admit that a general ratepaying franchise may be difficult to avoid; and, on the whole, I think the Local Government Bill should be mentioned in the Queen's Speech. But I should mention in the same sentence, and as part of the same subject, a London Local Government Bill, which might be drawn in a very popular manner. The multiplication of municipalities—say eight or nine—would please the local leaders, who hope to figure in them and become Mayors. I should introduce this before the big Local Government Bill. If we are turned out, we shall be able to fight the question better for not having shown our hand.

I should be disposed—subject to counsel—to introduce a

Church Reform Bill giving an easy method for getting rid of criminous clergy, and perhaps also of incompetent clergy; but that craves wary walking. Then a Bill for making the sale of all corporate land easy; a Bill to enable marriages to take place in Dissenting chapels without the presence of the Registrar; and, perhaps, a Bill for dealing with the Scotch marriage law, but that is doubtful. With respect to the other articles of your programme —such as Parliamentary Procedure, Criminal Code, and Roman Catholic Education—I need say nothing, because I generally agree with you. I have inflicted on you an abominably long letter, but I thought it better to put my thoughts before you....

Lord Randolph replied:—

India Office: December 9, 1885.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—It will be a great pleasure to me to wait upon you to-morrow afternoon at three o'clock at the Foreign Office.

It is very kind of you writing to me at such length; but as this will require no answer, other than what you may give in conversation to-morrow, I venture a few additional observations.

As to offer of places to Whigs.

I can imagine a crisis supervening, to deal with which might require heroic measures and a great appeal to your followers in both Houses of Parliament for confidence and support. Under such circumstances the fact of the offer having been made and sulkily or arrogantly refused would be of great moral value to you. A proper recognition of two leading features of the situation seems to me almost to compel you to make an attempt *now* at such a negotiation, even though you may be certain that it will fail:—

1. The fact that your Government is in a minority in the House of Commons.

2. The division in the Opposition, so glaringly and so recently shown by Mr. Chamberlain's speech at Leicester and Lord Hartington's in Derbyshire.

I submit with great deference that, your task being to carry on the Queen's Government, it is incumbent upon you to take advantage of every apparent circumstance which may be made to contribute to the efficiency and solidity of the Government; nor

ought you, under such grave conditions as now exist, to shrink unduly from any reasonable sacrifice of friends or colleagues which might enable you honourably to attain the end in view. Having put your hand to the plough under the uninviting conditions of June last, it is hardly possible to look back, or to act as if the responsibility for Government was not upon you.

It is very pleasant to me to learn that my suggestions with regard to Parliamentary Procedure, R.C. University Ireland, Education, and criminal law reform and codification meet with your general concurrence; and that being so, I allow myself to risk a few arguments which seem to me to militate somewhat against the views expressed in your letter on the question of the programme generally, and in particular the questions of Local Government and Land Law reform.

If I apprehended your meaning rightly, you would make your programme rather rigidly orthodox Tory, with a view of expanding it into Whig heresy when the time for a fusion should seem to have arrived. Now I hold very strongly that in that case the moment for a fusion will never arrive. If the Newport programme is not at once presented to Parliament in a large and generous measure, the Whigs will be justified in their contention that it did not signify real progressive legislation—that they were right and discriminating when they mocked at it. That has been Lord Hartington's cry all along, which he reiterated with emphasis last Saturday. The difference between the Newport programme and the concrete portions of the Midlothian address was not easy to be distinguished, and I doubt its existence. That being so, if you produce the former, without timidity, skimping, paring, or scraping, and if the Whigs turn you out, obviously their motive is office, and office only. The country will not be deceived or edified by such purely party manœuvres. And as by your administrative record, so with your legislative programme, you will have laid up for yourself treasure in the constituencies, you will have cast bread upon the waters which you will find after many days.

This is indubitably the lesson of 1835.

I do urge as strongly as I may that you should decide in your mind how far you can go in legislation—not under Whig pressure, not with a view solely of gaining Whigs, but solely with a view of what appears to be best for the country without

infringement of any great Tory principle; and that, having so decided, you should offer the result to Parliament without delay, without stint, without qualification, and with all confidence. It is, I am convinced, by 'showing your hand,' by showing how many good trumps you have in it, that you will gain support—if not immediate, at any rate in the near future. It is by hiding your hand —by giving cause for the belief, or ground for the accusation, that it is a poor hand and that you have no trumps, that you will lose support now and make it most difficult to gain later. The boroughs have gone for you so strongly because they believe in the fulness and genuineness of the Newport programme. Our task should be to keep the boroughs, as well as to win the counties; this can only be done by an active progressive—I risk the word, a democratic—policy, a casting-off and a burning of those old, worn-out aristocratic and class garments from which the Derby-Dizzy lot, with their following of county families, could never, or never cared to, extricate themselves.

This being so, in my mind, I find the suggested postponement of rural Local Government a course open to the deepest suspicion; the preference given to London government an error in tactics of the largest kind. No one in the country, or in London either, cares a damn about a London municipality, nor would many municipalities attract them. But county government, involving as it does a redistribution and relief of burdens, to which every man of our party is deeply pledged, is without doubt anxiously expected by the constituencies, and will not brook delay. So I would say about land law reform. I am very sure that the feeling of the boroughs is in favour of extensive changes in our land system, on the ground that the labour in the towns is depreciated by agricultural migration, and that this latter is the effect of an antiquated land system. This, rightly or wrongly, is the notion in the manufacturing minds, and failure on our part to come up to their legitimate and reasonable expectations would produce incalculable disappointment and mortification.

If you decide that the large constructive measures which the times seem to demand are beyond the capacity of the Tory party, or the scope of their political principles, though I should regret the decision I would accept it without demur. But in that case I would press upon you the advisability of prompt resignation, on the ground that the country had for the time decided that the

function of the Tory party would be more usefully displayed in Opposition, in efforts purely critical, in attempts to amend Liberal legislation and moderate Liberal zeal. If you show your hand at all, show it fully and show a good one; but if you have no hand good enough for the game or the stakes, place the cards face downwards on the table, decline to play, and leave the Downing Street table. I cannot think there is any safe *via media* between these two courses.

Lastly, I will not conceal my repugnance to dealing with Church reform. Surely the Russell-Gurney-Disraeli Church legislation is a warning. The time of Parliament will be wasted in furious ecclesiastical differences, and votes will be lost on every side by the party responsible for the effort. The Public Worship Regulation Act was one of my first House of Commons experiences, and I cannot forget it. The Nonconformists, so powerful, will offer every opposition; and nothing will be gained except loss of time, of temper, and of strength. If those ornamental but, on the whole, rather useless and expensive Lords Spiritual care to justify their privileges by attempts at legislation, smile on them, beam on them, give them every encouragement for bringing the Lords Temporal into a devout and heavenly frame of mind. Some good may possibly issue from such a source, if such should be the will of Providence. But Church reform which is the product of a Cabinet checked and controlled by party Whips and guided by House of Commons lobbies is surely in its nature a monstrosity, possibly a profanity, certainly a farce.

Please pardon me this long letter. I feel that my constant and lengthy epistolary communications to you may lead you to look forward to resignation of office as an immense relief, but I find my excuse in your kindness hitherto, and am

Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Ireland swiftly overclouded all other projects and puzzles which Ministers might consider. It was late in July that Lord Carnarvon had met Parnell. Four anxious months had passed and the Viceroy had now arrived at definite conclusions. He saw with alarm that the National League was strengthening and expanding every day. The fall in

prices had affected the payment of rents. Serious social and economic discontents stimulated the increasing political excitement. Boycottings were flagrant, pitiless and widespread. Alike by his convictions and his public pledges he felt himself debarred from asking for special legislation. Another policy forced itself upon him with crushing weight. He declared that unless the Cabinet could move in the direction of Home Rule he could not continue their servant. It became a question for the Cabinet whether the retirement of Lord Carnarvon on the grounds stated would be so heavy a blow to the Government and so injurious to their main political position that, if he persisted, it would be better for the Government to resign in a body, ostensibly as a consequence of the election. Lord Salisbury desired his principal colleagues to express their opinion upon Lord Carnarvon's views and intentions.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

December 10, 1885.

Dear Lord S.,—I return you Lord Carnarvon's memorandum, which was carefully considered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Smith, and myself.

We came to the conclusion that if the Lord-Lieutenant insists on the choice being made between the adoption of his policy and resignation, the latter course becomes compulsory on us. If we go out merely on the ground of our Parliamentary position, we remain for the purposes of opposition to Home Rule, as a party, *totus teres atque rotundus*; but if that blessed man sets the signal for concession flying, our party will go to pieces, as it did on the Irish Land Act. The only hope for the country is to keep this present Tory party well together; and unfortunately Lord Carnarvon has it once more in his power, as on two former occasions, to disintegrate, demoralise, and shatter.

However, I wish to say for myself—and I feel pretty certain it will be the view of Sir M. Hicks-Beach and Mr. Smith—that, whatever course you may finally decide upon, I will gladly see it through to the best of my ability, no matter what may be the result.

Yours most sincerely,
R. S. C.

But Lord Salisbury preferred to face the consequences of the Carnarvon resignation, whatever they might be. 'The fact,' he wrote (December 11), 'that Gladstone is mad to take office, will force him into some line of conduct which will be discreditable to him, and disastrous, if we do not prematurely gratify his hunger. The Carnarvon incident is vexatious. I hope he will be induced to stay with us till Parliament meets. But even if he does not, I doubt if his retirement will produce any very serious confusion. He will nominally retire on the ground of health or some private reason. The truth may ooze out. But we shall not mend matters by all retiring with him. The true reason will equally ooze out; and we shall have proclaimed our own impotence very loudly.'

The Irish situation oppressed all minds and from every quarter doubt and foreboding streamed in upon the Conservative leaders. Was it possible in face of Mr. Parnell and his United Ireland, in face of Mr. Gladstone and his ponderous meditations, in face of Lord Carnarvon and his open sympathies, to remain utterly unyielding? Would it not be well to make terms while time remained? Could not a joint conference of parties arrive at some compromise in regard to Irish government? And if not, how could the land be ruled? Everywhere during this month of December the sands were shifting underneath men's feet. Few were firm. Lord Randolph Churchill was a rock.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Chief Justice Morris.

Very Confidential.

December 7, 1885.

My dear Chief Justice,—I am very grateful to you for your letter, which I have sent on to Lord Salisbury for his consideration.

In a memorandum on the situation which I submitted to the Prime Minister a week ago, I laid down as an axiom that with regard to any policy towards Ireland in the nature of, or containing an Irish Parliament, the attitude of the Tory Party could only be an absolutely 'non possumus' one. You suggest a Committee of leading men on both sides to inquire, and you base the suggestion on the proceedings which took place with regard to the Reform Bill.

Two objections seem to me to arise.

1. With regard to Irish Government the Ministers cannot yet with honour or even decency shift the responsibility from off their shoulders on to Parliament. In so great a matter surely Ministers must take the lead and state their policy or abdicate.

2. The precedent of the proceedings on the Reform Bill does not yet, it seems to me, apply at all closely. Those proceedings were taken to extricate Government, Opposition, and Parliament generally from a deadlock and to avert a great constitutional crisis. In this matter of Irish Government neither deadlock nor crisis has yet arisen. In the event of their arising, the co-operation of parties may well be resorted to, but this machinery would, I think, be spoilt by premature recourse to it.

This may happen: Mr. Gladstone may persuade his colleagues and party to a policy which Parnell might think too good to refuse absolutely. The policy might be embodied in an amendment to the Address and carried against the Government by a large majority. What should be the course of Government under such circumstances?

To resign or to dissolve?

I should be strongly in favour of the latter if Royal sanction could be obtained. If the Government resign, Gladstone succeeds in forming an Administration and carrying a Bill through the Commons by great majorities. Then will crop up again the eternal question of resistance of the House of Lords to the will of the people, and an appeal to the people on that ground will cause the essential question of Repeal or no Repeal to be obscured or perhaps altogether lost sight of. By dissolution, a clear issue is presented to English and Scotch constituencies, and the House of Lords is kept out of the battle.

Then there is no reason, it is true, why the agricultural

labourers, revolving many things in their anxious minds, should not gladly agree to Repeal in order to obtain three acres and a cow, and therefore no great change in the state of parties might result, and the Tories would be definitely and decisively beaten on a distinct issue. Well, what then? We should have fought our battle as well as it could be fought, and the Repeal of the Union would be the work of the people, the responsibility resting absolutely upon them and not upon us.

This is my own way of looking at the situation, and why I adhere to the policy, which you think will be 'brushed aside,' of changes in County Government, &c. That policy may fail, but at any rate it is a Conservative policy; the surrender to Home Rule, no matter how you disguise it, is the reverse of conservative as you will be the first to admit. The Disraeli epoch of constant metamorphoses of principles and party has passed away.

Radical work must be done by Radical artists; thus less mischief will arise.

Yours sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

'I cannot say,' wrote Lord Salisbury, to whom this correspondence had been referred (December 6), 'how heartily I agree in the tone of your letter to Morris.'

The whole political situation was considered at a Cabinet Council on the 16th. Decision was taken to go on with the Government, to meet Parliament and await results. The outlines of the Queen's Speech were considered. Lord Randolph was most anxious to assign a foremost place to the reform of Parliamentary Procedure, as described in his memorandum. The Cabinet, having listened to long speeches on Irish matters, were tired and disposed to be irritable. The subject was one with which they were very familiar and on which many of them had already committed themselves. One Minister whom Lord Randolph thought he had conciliated the day before, pronounced absolutely against it. Lord Salisbury practised what he called 'the decorous reserve proper to one who had been so long out of the House of Commons.' The

whole question was abruptly postponed. This defeat filled Lord Randolph with mortification. He loved his own plans ardently. He cared too much for the objects at stake to be skilful in personal diplomacy. He could fight; he could lead; he could drive; but a stolid junta of Cabinet Ministers —'holy men,' as he called them, vexed his soul. He was grievously disappointed at what he took to be the summary dismissal of a most important subject. He wrote in deep despondency to the Prime Minister. Lord Salisbury consoled him in a letter almost affectionate in character. All would come right if he drafted his proposals and chose a better opportunity of taking the sense of the Cabinet upon them.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

India Office: December 17, 1885.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—I am very grateful for your kind letter, and intensely relieved to learn that you consider the question of giving to Procedure a prominent place in our programme as still quite open. I shall do as you tell me, and place on paper elaborated proposals for the more efficient and speedy transaction of 'business.' You are, I know, quite right in blaming me for having been precipitate on Tuesday. I cannot help it, and shall never be able to attain to that beatific state of chronic deliberation which is the peculiarity of * * *, * * * & Co., and also of the Turk.

This I add—that Procedure reform does not necessarily entail rapid legislation. 'Business' includes Estimates, Budget, and Supply. It is the transaction of this that I am more especially anxious to promote. Further, assuming that owing to some miraculous exercise of superhuman control H.M. Government remained in office, I would suggest that there might be very considerable tactical advantages from not plunging immediately into legislation, and from gaining time by setting the House of Commons to work on a difficult question in the consideration and settlement of which no issue of party or of confidence need arise.

Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

The Cabinet did not meet again until the New Year, but Christmas was not a season of unbroken peace and goodwill to Her Majesty's Ministers. Not one, however experienced and imaginative, could penetrate the obscurity of the future or calculate the crisis to which events were hurrying. The election had left them in a large minority. The Government of Ireland was rapidly passing into the hands of the National League. The Viceroy had resigned. Mr. Gladstone was revolving vast and unfathomable schemes. Parliament was to meet for regular business upon January 21. Meanwhile the days were disturbed by every kind of rumour and alarm. Lord Randolph Churchill, who always cultivated the acquaintance of clever men irrespective of their political opinion, had friends in every camp and possessed many special channels of information. All he could gather he wrote to his chief:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

India Office: December 22, 1885.

... Now I have a great deal to tell you.

Labouchere came to see me this morning. He asked me our intentions. I gave him the following information. I can rely upon him: (1) That there would be no motion for adjournment after the 12th, but that business would be immediately proceeded with after three or four days' swearing. On this he said that, if we liked to go out on a motion for adjournment, he thought the other side might accommodate us. I told him that such an ineffably silly idea had never entered our heads. Then he told me that he had been asked whether he could ascertain if a certain statement as to a Tory Home Rule measure which appeared recently in the *Dublin Daily Express* was Ashbourne's measure, and if the Tories meant to say 'Aye' or 'No' to Home Rule; to which I replied that it had never crossed the mind of any member of the Government to dream even of departing from an absolute unqualified 'No,' and that all statements as to Ashbourne's plan were merely the folly of the *Daily News*. Then I was very much upset, for he proceeded to tell me that on Sunday week last Lord Carnarvon had met Justin McCarthy, and had confided to him that he was in favour of Home Rule in some shape, but that his

colleagues and his party were not ready, and asked whether Justin McCarthy's party would agree to an inquiry, which he thought there was a chance of the Government agreeing to, and which would educate his colleagues and his party if granted and carried through. I was consternated, but replied that such a statement was an obvious lie; but, between ourselves, I fear it is not—perhaps not even an exaggeration or a misrepresentation. Justin McCarthy is on the staff of the *Daily News*. Labouchere is one of the proprietors, and I cannot imagine any motive for his inventing such a statement. If it is true, Lord Carnarvon has played the devil. Then I told Labouchere that if the G.O.M. announced any Home Rule project, or indicated any such project, and by so doing placed the Government in a minority, resignation was not the only course; that there was another alternative which might even be announced in debate, and the announcement of which might complete the squandering of the Liberal party, and that his friend at Hawarden had better not omit altogether that card from his calculations as to his opponents' hands. Lastly, I communicated to him that, even if the Government went out and Gladstone introduced a Home Rule Bill, I should not hesitate, if other circumstances were favourable, to agitate Ulster even to resistance beyond constitutional limits; that Lancashire would follow Ulster, and would lead England; and that he was at liberty to communicate this fact to the G.O.M.[48]

Meanwhile Mr. Gladstone, although embarrassed and forestalled by the disclosures in the newspapers, was deep in his Irish schemes. A chance conversation which he had had with Mr. Balfour in the middle of December had encouraged Mr. Gladstone to make a proposal to Lord Salisbury. He wrote (December 20) of the 'stir in men's minds' and of the urgency of the question, how it would be 'a public calamity if this great subject should fall into the lines of party conflict.' Only the Government could deal with such a question, and on public grounds he specially desired that the existing Government would deal with it. If Lord Salisbury and his friends would bring forward 'a proposal for settling the whole question of the future government of Ireland,' he would desire to treat it in the

same spirit as he had shown in respect to Afghanistan and the Balkan Peninsula.

We are assured that Mr. Gladstone laid great stress upon this proffer of support. He had told the Queen two years before that the Irish question could only be settled by a conjunction of parties. He seems to have imagined that such a proposal would be regarded us a fair and magnanimous undertaking, and would receive, as some may think it deserved, the unprejudiced deliberation of the Cabinet. He had received full information—denied to Lord Randolph Churchill—of Lord Carnarvon's interview with Parnell. He believed in all sincerity that the Conservative Government were seriously considering, even if they were not already committed to, a policy of Home Rule in some form or other. He remembered the conferences on the Reform Bill, and the support which he had lately given to the new ministry. Neither he nor his friends seem fully to have appreciated the fear and aversion with which his opponents regarded him. His letter was treated with contempt. No other word will suffice. 'A public calamity,' forsooth! 'If this great question should fall into line of party conflict!' 'His hypocrisy,' wrote a Minister to whom this letter had been shown, 'makes me sick.' In the Tory Cabinet there was but one opinion about him. He was 'mad to take office'; and if his hunger were not 'prematurely gratified,' he would be forced into some line of conduct which would be 'discreditable to him and disastrous.'

Mr. Gladstone wrote again on the 23rd, pressing for a definite answer. 'Time,' he said, 'was precious.' Lord Salisbury suavely replied through Mr. Balfour, in a letter which has since been made public, that a communication of the views of the Government would at this stage be at variance with usage. As Parliament would meet for business before the usual time, it was better 'to avoid a departure from ordinary practice which might be misunderstood.' There, of course, the matter ended; and

thus idly drifted away what was perhaps the best hope of the settlement of Ireland which that generation was to see. Mr. Gladstone tarried no longer. On December 26[49] he drafted a memorandum for submission to the various noblemen and gentlemen with whom he proposed to act, setting forth with all possible precision his immediate intentions. If the Government were ready to deal with Ireland in a manner that would satisfy him and satisfy the Irish Nationalists, he would support them. If not, he would turn them out at the earliest convenient opportunity; and if in consequence entrusted with the duty of forming a Government, he would make the acceptance of a plan of 'duly guarded Home Rule' an indispensable condition.

Ministers meanwhile preserved an impenetrable silence. No one knew in what spirit, with what intention or with what allies they would meet Parliament. The Queen's Speech still engaged the attention of the Cabinet. Lord Randolph Churchill was indebted to a friend for a happy suggestion, which he did not delay to forward to Lord Salisbury:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

India Office: January 14, 1886.

Mr. Buckle has just been to see me, full of an idea of his own which struck me as good, and which I persuaded him not to spoil by bringing it out in to-morrow's *Times*.

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He wishes the Queen's Speech of 1833 to be imitated, when, after the agitation of O'Connell, the Government declared in the Speech their intention of maintaining the Union. I send you the paragraph and also the paragraphs from the Speech of 1834, which seem still more to the purpose. Mr. Buckle very forcibly argues that some declaration of such a kind will force on the question at once, and prevent Gladstonian shuffling being resorted to successfully. The Irish would be obliged to meet such

a challenge, and all parties would have to declare themselves....

The paragraph which was finally adopted was modelled on the lines of the Speech of 1834:—

The King's Speech, Feb. 4, 1834.	*The Queen's Speech, Jan. 21, 1886.*
But I have seen, with feelings of deep regret and just indignation, the continuance of attempts to excite the people of that country to demand a repeal of the Legislative Union.	I have seen with deep sorrow the renewal, since I last addressed you, of the attempt to excite the people of Ireland to hostility against the Legislative Union between that country and Great Britain. I am absolutely opposed to any disturbance of that fundamental law, and in resisting it I am convinced that I shall be heartily supported by my Parliament and my people.
This bond of our national strength and safety I have already declared my fixed and unalterable resolution, under the blessing of Divine Providence, to maintain inviolate by all the means in my power.	
In support of this determination I cannot doubt the zealous and effectual co-operation of my Parliament and my people.	

But the Tory leader was meditating a more decided challenge. He proposed to meet Parliament with a declaration of a Coercion policy which should disperse all doubts as to the relations of his Government with the Parnellites and should throw upon the Opposition the

odium of defeating a Government upon a measure affecting law and order. He may have been led to this decision partly by a desire that the armies should face each other squarely in the coming battle. Partly, no doubt, he was persuaded thereto by the growing clamour and pressure of those sections of his own party who are always powerful to urge repressive measures. Sulky murmurs at the Carlton; loud complainings in the *Times*; trumpeted advent of Loyalist and Orange deputations claiming the protection of the Crown—all the storm-signals were flying. But there was a considerable case upon the merits. When Lord Randolph Churchill had visited Ireland in October he found the Viceroy anxious and alarmed by the growing power of the National League, and that organisation was now greatly extended. Throughout those parts of Ireland where the National League was supreme, liberty and law were gravely endangered. There was not, indeed, that kind of treasonable organisation which had existed in 1865 and 1867; nor was there such an amount of capital crime as culminated in the Phœnix Park murders; but a sullen, widespread, and well-organised spirit of resistance to the laws of property had taken possession of the Irish people and grew worse week by week. 'There were in Ireland, and there are in Ireland now,' said Lord Randolph at Paddington (February 13, 1886), 'two governments—there is the Government of the Queen and the government of the National League—and the Government of the Queen is not the stronger government of the two in many parts of Ireland.'

Lord Salisbury first mentions the subject on January 13. 'I am very perturbed,' he writes, 'about the state of Ireland.' Three days later he met the Cabinet with definite proposals. Lord Ashbourne had prepared a Coercion Bill, and the Prime Minister had drafted a paragraph for the Queen's Speech announcing its immediate introduction. The Cabinet was startled. Lord Randolph Churchill and Sir

Michael Hicks-Beach had not prepared themselves for such a departure, grave as they knew the situation in Ireland to be. They were not satisfied that a case for special legislation was disclosed, still less that it could be sustained in the House of Commons. Both remembered their speeches of the previous summer. Neither responded sympathetically to the militant and autocratic temper of the mass of the party. The council was long and stormy and Ministers separated without having come to any decision. Meanwhile the resignation of Lord Carnarvon was publicly announced.

The decision of Lord Salisbury's Administration to introduce a Coercion Bill in January 1886 has been the subject of much hostile criticism. It has been censured as a resort to extra-constitutional measures, not for the sake of public safety, but as a party manœuvre. It has been denounced as the callous and unscrupulous reversal of a policy of conciliation so soon as the Irish vote had been cast at the election. There is a degree of justice and truth in these harsh accusations, but it is only a degree; and if the Ministers concerned require a defence, that defence is best supplied by their own secret letters during these days of perplexity and stress.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

Carlton Club: January 16, 1886.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—I cannot resist writing to you on Ireland while the proceedings of to-day's Cabinet are fresh in my mind. As far as I could ascertain, the exact difference of opinion between the view which you hold and the view which I ventured to express amounts (in the measure of time) to a month at the outside. You would announce and produce a Bill at once. It appears to me that at present there is no sufficient Parliamentary case for a Bill, estimated by the weight of facts adduced; and that the Bill which you may decide upon now, upon your incomplete grounds, may and will in all probability be utterly insufficient to meet the facts which you will have to deal with in abundance in a period of time which may be calculated by weeks and even days.

What I would like to know, if I am not asking too much, is this —What influence or information not yet disclosed is compelling you to lay such a heavy burden on your sadly inefficient colleagues in the House of Commons? I assume as indubitable that you consider, and almost entirely guide your action by, the state of parties in the House of Commons—that is involved in the decision come to in December to carry on the Government—yet I am certain that you know that none of us could sustain a case for Coercion. Yet you press it on us—for we could have come to an agreement to-day on Lord Cranbrook's suggestion, only that evidently it was not acceptable or good in your eyes.

I wish I knew what you really wanted, and how you wished it to be worked out. I have never thought of anything except the success, or at least the credit, of *your* Government; and, knowing how much depends on the House of Commons, I am at the present moment only occupied in imagining how the action which you seem to favour could be effectively sustained from a House of Commons point of view. I do not think you will accuse me of arrogance or conceit if I avow my belief that, unless you show me the way very clearly, that action must fail disastrously. I do not want it to fail so. I know how very great and high your position is, what a really fine party you have behind you, how great their confidence in you is (on these points I do not believe I am capable of making an error), and I am most anxious that that great instrument on which depends not merely the item of Ireland, but also the interests of the entire Empire and home community, should not be damaged or blunted by weak and inefficient House of Commons action such as the immediate demand for Coercion will in practice involve.

One word as regards the Government of Ireland. You think the situation so serious that it demands a Coercion Bill. That necessitates a strong Irish Government. That Government you have not got. I think there are three men in the Government who would answer to the requirements of the position—Lord Cranbrook, Mr. Smith, and (please don't be shocked) myself. Of the three I greatly prefer Mr. Smith. But, assuming that you have decided it is your duty to carry on the Government until you are turned out, I implore you not to think of [the arrangement Lord Salisbury had suggested]. No extra laws could make that good or stable. I hope you won't be vexed with me for writing so freely. I

am only anxious to find myself on Monday loyally and strenuously supporting whatever you may think best to be done; but I admit I have not been able hitherto to refrain from shrinking to take part in an enterprise desperate in its nature, involving certain and immediate Parliamentary death, and which, if determined on, will only leave you without one or two of your most faithful supporters in the House of Commons. Not that they will refuse to obey what you order, but that the order itself will be their ruin.

Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Confidential.

Foreign Office: January 16, 1886.

My dear Randolph,—I cannot say how much touched I am by the great kindness and loyalty of your letter. I cannot help feeling how little I deserve it. I will tell you at once what my dominant feeling is. It is that we should be a united Cabinet—if possible with a united party. I have been throughout ready to postpone my individual opinion to this primary consideration. We have no right to the luxury of divided councils in a crisis such as this. It is evident that the great majority of the Cabinet—and, I believe, the great majority of the party—wish earnestly for a policy which will show that we do not shrink from the duty of government, and that we mean to stand by the Loyalists. The disaster I am afraid of is that we should be driven from office on some motion insisting on the necessity of a vigorous step, and our position in Opposition would then be very feeble and we should be much discredited.

I really feel very strongly and deeply all the kindness you have shown to me, and the great and most successful efforts you have made to sustain the Government. I should differ from you and Beach with the most extreme reluctance. But do not let us take any line which will brand us in the eyes of our countrymen—or will enable our opponents to do so—as the timid party, who let things float because they dared not act. The time is coming on us when people will long for government: do not let us get a character of shrinking from responsibility.

The question of the *personnel* of the [Irish] Government must be considered, but the Speech presses for settlement in the first instance. I should have thought that the notorious growth of this 'second government' throughout Ireland, overshadowing the law and the Queen's authority and securing its power by organised terror, would have sustained a case for such a Bill as Gibson produced. If you remain of the opposite opinion, let us consider whether some such phrase as the enclosed could unite us.[50] It is merely a suggestion. I confess I have a heavy heart in the whole matter. I have serious doubts whether I am doing my duty. But my train is going. Perhaps I may write again from Hatfield.

Ever yours very truly,
Salisbury.

Lord Randolph now surrendered his view altogether. Never before or afterwards did the two men stand in such cordial relationship. A comradeship in anxiety had drawn these contrasted natures, each so vehement and earnest after its own fashion, very close together:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

India Office: January 16, 1886.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—I am very grateful for your letter, which enables me to enter more fully into the position from which you view things than I have been able hitherto to do. I greatly like the paragraph suggested, and believe firmly that it meets with wisdom, tact, and courage the necessities and the possibilities of the situation. But, *after all*, you are the head of the Government, and have had a very long experience of public affairs; and if you think it absolutely incumbent to go further—well, then, further we must go. A collapse of the Government at the present moment would be a catastrophe too hideous to contemplate.

I have said all that occurs to me at much too great length and with far too much reiteration. *Kismet.*

Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

There is a passage in the speech of Sir R. Peel on the Address in '33, where the constitutional position required before a Coercion demand is very clearly and weightily

laid down.

He wrote to Beach accordingly. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was more unyielding and his letter shows the variety of strong characters arrayed against Mr. Gladstone: —

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach to Lord Randolph Churchill.

January 17, 1886.

My dear Churchill,—Of course I should readily accept the sentence Salisbury suggests. But though his letter touches and influences me, it does not persuade me to anything more; and I am sorry your reply goes so far. I do not in the least believe that, with such Irish paragraphs as we are all ready to accept, any motion insisting on the necessity of a vigorous step would be ever proposed, much less carried, against us. I do not think in such a matter we ought to be governed by the ignorant wish of 'the great majority of the party' or be forced to action we do not approve for fear of being branded as the 'timid party.' If these are Salisbury's reasons for Coercion, my opinion remains the same.

But his last sentences require explanation. If by 'serious doubts whether I am doing my duty' he means that he is himself persuaded that the moment has come when the government of Ireland cannot be carried on without it, and that he ought not therefore to agree to delay, that is another matter. I would yield my opinion, strong as it is, to his convictions, but *only to his convictions*. And in that case he *must* have a man to govern Ireland.

Yours sincerely,
M. E. Hicks-Beach.

Monday's Cabinet was united upon the Queen's Speech. Lord Salisbury decided to entrust the Irish Office to Mr. Smith. Lord Randolph Churchill, who had acquired much influence with him, was chosen to press it upon him. The task was thankless and unpromising; the occasion momentous; but the post of difficulty and peril was also the post of honour. Gravely and reluctantly Smith accepted, and Lord Cranbrook became Minister of War in his stead. 'I saw Mr. Smith this morning,' wrote Lord Randolph to

the Prime Minister (January 20), 'and used every argument to persuade him to take in hand the government of Ireland. The appointment should be settled to-day and announced to-morrow morning without fail. If there is any weakness in our attitude on Coercion (which I do not at all admit) it will be more than contradicted by the appointment of Mr. Smith. This of itself will do much to restore confidence. Please do not, if possible, allow any delay. On second thoughts,' added Lord Randolph mischievously, 'would Lord Iddesleigh like to go as Lord-Lieutenant?'

The appointment of the new Irish Secretary was announced on the morning of the 21st, and that same day formal business, including election of Speaker, having been previously completed, Parliament was opened in state and the Session began.

The Government prolonged a precarious existence for five days. Both parties were in a turmoil. On the one side Whigs and Moderate Liberals endeavoured, without success, to extract from Mr. Gladstone definite declarations upon Ireland. In the Tory camp the demand for a Coercion Bill was loud and insistent. Although the party as a whole had been beaten in the elections, the bulk of its members came fresh from remarkable victories in the big towns. Their temper was aggressive. They welcomed the declaration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that Mr. Smith would go to Ireland at once to consider what special measures were necessary.

We are told that Mr. Gladstone did not resolve to overturn the Ministry until they definitely declared for Coercion on January 26. That act, he considered, imposed the responsibility of government upon him. But Lord Randolph Churchill's correspondence shows that he had information as early as January 13 that some independent member would move an amendment to the Address regretting that no announcement was made of provision for the wants of the agricultural population. Whether this

would fail, or would gain the support of a united Opposition, could not be ascertained till the House met. A few hours of Westminster were, however, sufficient to convince the Tory leaders that the temper of the majority was adverse to them, that virtual and effective agreement existed between Mr. Gladstone and Parnell, and that Whig and Moderate Liberal support would almost certainly be insufficient to sustain them. They had decided on Coercion; they resolved, if possible, to place the details of their policy and the case in support of it before the country. The adroit and experienced Parliamentarians on the Treasury Bench used all their wits to obtain the necessary delay. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had given notice on the 21st that immediately on the conclusion of the debate on the Address he would move resolutions for the Reform of Procedure and that these would be pressed to the exclusion of other matters, 'subject to the intervention of any specially important or urgent business.' On the following day Lord Randolph Churchill suggested that the general debate on the Address should be brought to a conclusion and that the reforms in Parliamentary Procedure, the consideration of which Mr. Gladstone had declared in his election address ought to take precedence of legislation, might be decided before the amendments to the Address were considered. The changes which Ministers proposed were in themselves sufficiently startling to have absorbed the House in calmer times; and Lord Randolph no doubt calculated upon this. But Mr. Gladstone found no difficulty in persuading his party that Procedure reform might safely be a little delayed. Lord Randolph's proposal was ignored and the debate continued.

On the 23rd Mr. Smith started for Dublin, which he reached on the morning of the 24th. The imminent defeat of the Ministry had now become certain. An amendment relating to Burma was moved on the 25th. Mr. Gladstone, though recommending that no decision should be taken

upon it, as other more convenient opportunities of discussing Indian matters would occur, indulged in acid criticism of the Burmese policy. 'Shall I answer him now?' asked Lord Randolph, taking up the red box in which the India Office papers reposed, 'or shall I wait for the Indian Budget?' 'Now or never,' answered the Leader of the House; and Lord Randolph thereupon, using the precise information of a great department with the skill of a practised debater, made a vigorous rejoinder. Upon the spur of the moment he managed to cite a number of instances from the record of the late Government where they had themselves been drawn into warlike operations, with, as Lord Randolph contended, far less justification than was presented in Burma. Mr. Gladstone was much provoked by such comparisons. He could not speak again himself, and as the Secretary for India proceeded he was observed repeatedly turning to those about him and behind him, explaining how this did not apply; how that was wholly unfounded: how this, again, was a travesty; and so forth. The Conservatives were delighted at Lord Randolph's prowess. The attack was repelled. On the next amendment the Liberal Front Bench abstained, and the Government survived by twenty-eight. But this was the end.

Faced by approaching destruction, the Government cared only to rally their friends, to make one last bid for Whig support, and to declare plainly the issue on which they were to be dismissed. The Cabinet which met on the morning of the 26th desired the immediate introduction of a Coercion Bill. But Mr. Smith was not inclined to be hustled. He could not realise the rapid developments which had taken place in his absence. Harassed by telegrams, he appealed to Lord Randolph. The friendship between them was steadily ripening. Of all the characters with which this story deals, scarcely one improves so much upon acquaintance as this valiant and honest man. He was the

true type of what Disraeli calls ‘an English worthy.’ Here is his letter:—

Mr. Smith to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Private.

Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin Castle: January 25, 1886, 6 P.M.

My dear Churchill,—I have had a telegram from Salisbury which affords evidence of pressure for what is termed 'prompt action,' and I have replied by letter. Another telegram has just come in from Beach, which cannot be deciphered before post leaves.

There is only one opinion here—that the League must be suppressed and large powers obtained to protect life, property and public order, unless the Government is prepared to treat for terms of capitulation with the Parnellites. But the Land Question is at the bottom of the trouble, and gives all the force to the agitation. As at present advised, I should be unwilling to ask for large repressive powers unless I had authority to promise a large land scheme.

But these telegrams indicate restlessness in my colleagues. So big a question cannot be decided offhand. It is more than peace or war with a foreign Power. We are at a crisis in the relations of the Imperial Government with Ireland. I may very possibly fail to do any good, but I will not be hurried into a positive decision on such momentous issues by the party or the papers; and if my colleagues think the three or four days I propose to take too long, I will return to London with pleasure. Let me hear from you either by telegraph or post.

Yours sincerely,
W. H. Smith.

The correspondence was continued by cypher telegrams:—

Lord R. Churchill to Mr. Smith.

January 26.

Greatly obliged by your letter.

Absolutely necessary for Government to state to-night their intentions with regard to Ireland—viz. suppression of National League followed by Land Bill. This is the only method of averting defeat on Jesse Collings. Notice should be given to-day

of introduction of repressive Bill on Thursday, coupled with revival of rules of urgency. Telegraph to me your views. I would earnestly press your return to London.

Mr. Smith to Lord R. Churchill.

I think proposed action looks precipitate. There is no excessive urgency here, and great care is required in framing and describing measure. I should prefer, if possible, to provide against the intimidation of League than denounce it by name. I cross to-night.

Lord Randolph replied from the House of Commons at six o'clock the same day:—

Your telegram received half-hour after Cabinet separated. Beach has just announced introduction of Bill by you on Thursday for suppression of National League and other dangerous associations, for the prevention of intimidation and for the protection of life, property and order in Ireland.[51] Of course, great sensation.

It is not improbable, however, that we shall be defeated to-night, in which case we shall resign. I showed your wire to Lord Salisbury. We both agreed you would not wish unanimous decision of Cabinet modified.

Mr. Smith arrived in London with the daylight, to read upon the early placards that the Government was out.

The famous Jesse Collings Amendment produced an interesting debate; but as the members listened to the opposing views of Mr. Chaplin and Mr. Joseph Arch, of Mr. Goschen and Mr. Bradlaugh, of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Hartington, they knew that behind the relevant arguments of the speakers, behind all the talk of peasant-proprietors, allotments, vegetables, and cows, stood a far greater issue. 'If the result of this division,' said the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 'should be unfavourable to Her Majesty's Government we shall accept that decision without regret. We assumed office reluctantly, and we shall leave it willingly as soon as we are assured that we do not possess the support of the House. But the success of this

motion will have another and graver effect.... It will not only be a defeat of Her Majesty's Government, but it will be a defeat of the policy ... which they believe it to be their duty to pursue with respect to Ireland.'

The Government were beaten on the division by seventy-nine votes, notwithstanding that sixteen Liberals, including Lord Hartington, Mr. Goschen and Sir Henry James, voted with them and fifty-six others stayed away. The next day Lord Salisbury's Cabinet resigned.

Thus, after a brief but exciting reign, fell the 'Ministry of Caretakers.' They had confronted enormous difficulties with small resources. They existed at the caprice of their enemies. They had office, but not power. Yet they faced their task and their opponents with courage and skill. Their Administration was defended by powerful oratory; it was sustained—except in its dying moments—by sedate and efficient Executive action. In a few short months the Conservative party were freed from the reproach of irresponsibility and their capacity for government was recognised by the country. The peace of Europe was preserved amid grave embarrassments and under their guidance the nation emerged safely and honourably from the Russian crisis. They legislated with unexpected good fortune. They inaugurated a new policy, never since abandoned, of Land Purchase in Ireland. They restored and greatly strengthened the defences of India. They laid the foundations of Australian Federation, and by a successful, inexpensive and almost bloodless military expedition added a vast and fertile province to the dominions of the Crown.

CHAPTER XIII

HOME RULE

‘Vote it as you please. There is a company of poor men that will spend all their blood before they see it settled so.’—Carlyle, *Cromwell*.

On the last day in January Mr. Gladstone undertook to form his Administration. Its complexion was indicated by the first of the new appointments: for Mr. Morley became Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant. This was followed, without delay, on the one hand by the statement that Lord Spencer had acquiesced in the new Irish policy and would be Lord President of the Council; and upon the other by rumours of Whig refusals. For some days negotiations were protracted with Lord Hartington, Mr. Goschen and Sir Henry James; but, whatever signs of hesitation had marked their previous course, their action now was decided. Sir Henry James was offered successively both the Lord Chancellorship and the Home Secretaryship, and even more important Executive offices were pressed upon the others. All were declined. Doubt and reluctance were also manifested by Mr. Chamberlain and Sir George Trevelyan and both required and received assurances that they were not committed, by joining the Government, to the support of any Irish policy which involved the creation of a separate Parliament. For the rest it may be noticed that Sir William Harcourt became Chancellor of the Exchequer; that Lord Rosebery went to the Foreign Office; and that neither Lord Derby nor Mr. Forster was included in the Government.

The traveller who visits an old battlefield can never fully understand what its various natural features meant to the combatants. He is shown, perhaps, a rocky ridge which is called the key of the position. He reads that it was taken and repurchased on hard terms more than once during the day. But it is an ordinary object in the landscape. A dozen such eminences have been seen during the morning’s ride. Was it really so important? Were the fortunes of kingdoms actually for some hours involved in the possession of those

few acres of rank grass and scattered stone? As he stands serenely on ground where once the bravest soldier hardly dared to crawl, he can scarcely believe it. Yet, to the men who fought, those rocks meant much more than life or death. Duty was there; honour was there; and in the end victory. And if the smoky curtain that hangs about the field were lifted and the view enlarged, it might be seen that great causes of truth, or justice, or freedom, and long tranquil years in smiling lands depended indeed upon this ragged ridge, made famous by the blundering collision of two armies, worthless except for the tactical purpose of the moment and probably ill-adapted and wrongly selected even for that.

The actual provisions of the Home Rule Bill do not at all convey the magnitude of the issue or explain the gravity with which it was regarded. A proposal to establish by statute, subject to guarantees of Imperial supremacy, a colonial Parliament in Ireland for the transaction of Irish business may indeed be unwise, but is not, and ought not to be, outside the limits of calm and patient consideration. Such a proposal is not necessarily fraught with the immense and terrific consequences which were so generally associated with it. A generation may arise in England who will question the policy of creating subordinate legislatures as little as we question the propriety of Catholic Emancipation and who will study the records of the fierce disputes of 1886 with the superior manner of a modern professor examining the controversies of the early Church. But that will not prove the men of 1886 wrong or foolish in speech and action.

The controversy of 1886 can never be resolved. Whatever may happen in the future, neither party can be brought to the bar of history and proved by actual experience right or wrong. The cases of Catholic Emancipation, of the Great Reform Bill, of the Repeal of the Corn Laws, are differently placed. We know that in

certain circumstances a great change was made and that that change was immediately vindicated by events and afterwards ratified by posterity. The opponents of the change stand condemned. No such assured conclusion of the Home Rule Question of 1886 can ever be reached, unless by some unthinkable coincidence the actual circumstances of that time were reconstructed.

Mr. Gladstone ultimately succeeded in convincing not only his personal friends and half his fellow-countrymen of his entire sincerity, but his most capable opponents also. Yet at the time his motives were impugned, and not without much reason. Concessions to Ireland made by any British Government which depends for its existence on the Irish vote, will naturally and necessarily be suspect. There must always be a feeling in English minds that such a government is not a free agent, that it is trafficking for personal or party advantage with what belongs to the nation. In 1886 Mr. Gladstone's Administration lay under deep suspicion. His own appeals for an independent majority at the election; the sudden conversion of his principal colleagues; the absolute dependence of his power upon Mr. Parnell's followers; the precipitate haste with which he had taken office; all tended to confirm the distrust and prejudices of his opponents. Whether his Bill was proposed upon its merits or not, it was not considered, and could not be considered, upon them. It looked like surrender—not advance; and surrender made shameful by the party advantage that was its first-fruits. The violent scenes in the House of Commons, the declarations of hatred towards England reiterated by Irish Nationalism, however historically excusable, the long nightmare of outrage and unrest through which Ireland was struggling, the American gold, the dynamite explosions, the bloody daggers in the Phœnix Park, had bitten deep into British minds and memories. The tireless conflicts of Catholic and Protestant, of landlord and tenant, provoked and disquieted

statesmen of every complexion. Some there were who rose to Mr. Gladstone's level of enthusiasm, who shared his consciousness of unswerving rectitude and dreams of glorious achievement; but by most of the eminent men in England the Irish proposals of 1886 were regarded as the surrender of national heirlooms at the compulsion of public enemies, involving an act of practical secession with potential consequences of revolution and civil war. And once this conviction was adopted, all chance that the plan itself would be fairly weighed was inevitably destroyed. Radicals who, like Mr. Chamberlain, were committed to all sorts of schemes of devolution, who looked with favour upon National Councils or Legislatures of the Canadian provincial type, were, by the stroke of crisis, united with the ultra-Conservatives and authoritarians. A state of war existed and political leaders selected their positions upon tactical reasons alone. Here it was good to fight; there it was bad. At this point a stand might be made; that it would be well to concede. All question of a reasonable settlement vanished. Every man chose his ground and fought upon it to win. 'Never,' said Lord Randolph in after years to a friend, 'have we approached the Irish Question *avec de bonnes paroles et de bons procédés*.'

Thus it happened that in the tremendous enterprise upon which Mr. Gladstone had now determined to embark, he found arrayed against him nearly all the leading men and most of the strongest forces in England and Scotland. When a party has been for many years supreme in the State, it draws into itself by its prestige and authority many men who are not really with it in sympathy and opinion. The Whigs and many moderate Liberals had long been estranged. They were held by the force of party associations alone and most of them welcomed a shock which ended the strain and freed them from obligations they could no longer faithfully discharge. The wealthy Whig Peers were glad to escape from Radical associates

and to be ranked in the mass of their order. Statesmen of the old school like Mr. Bright, Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen, with many followers whose talents adorned the Liberal party, were quite unprepared to adapt themselves to the new conditions which a democratic franchise had imposed. The Home Rule proposals—already in themselves a sufficient cause for final separation—were, besides, a convenient opportunity. All this was to have been expected, and no doubt the Irish accession was estimated to fill the gap. But a Radical defection was utterly unforeseen.

Of all the men who followed Mr. Gladstone into the Lobby on the night when the Jesse Collings amendment dismissed the 'Ministry of Caretakers' from office, Mr. Chamberlain stood to gain the greatest profit, both in the furtherance of his political opinions and in his personal advancement, from the turn events were taking. For five years he had battled with the Whigs in the Cabinet; for five years they had checked him. He had declared he would not serve with them again. Now they were going. Their influence alone had enabled the Prime Minister to moderate the Radical demands, of which he was the champion. In the place of that influence was now to be substituted the party of Mr. Parnell. If Mr. Chamberlain had been powerful before, what would he be in the Liberal Governments of the future? If Mr. Gladstone had yielded much to his insistence in the past, what must he concede thereafter? At the very moment when the Radical movement was growing in strength, after an election in which the 'Unauthorised Programme' had saved the counties from the Tory triumph in the towns, the whole composition of the Liberal party was to be changed—and changed wholly in his favour. The Prime Minister was a very old man. The path was already almost clear. The future of the party lay at the feet of the leader of thorough, precise and militant Radicalism.

And if in one direction all prospects looked so bright, the other seemed entirely barred. He was in acute antagonism with Lord Hartington. Lord Salisbury had just called him 'Jack Cade.' The Whigs regarded him as the cause of their undoing. To the Tories he was a warning of the wrath to come. By many acts of his public life, by a hundred speeches, by the affirmation of important principles and the support of definite measures, he had cut himself off from Whigs and Tories alike. Many men will wrestle with their own party or change to another party, but few will face political extinction. That such a man, careless perhaps of office, but ambitious for power, should in such circumstances quarrel with Mr. Gladstone, tear his own Radical following to pieces and go forth into the night-storm almost alone, was a fact not in human wisdom to be known or imagined in dreams. Yet his reply to Parnell's demand had been prompt and plain. 'If these, and these alone, are the terms on which Mr. Parnell's support is to be obtained,' he declared as early as September, 'I will not enter into the compact.'

That Lord Randolph Churchill was consistent and sincere in his opposition to Home Rule was at the time much questioned by both sides, and some shadow of that suspicion has remained. He it was who had rendered possible the co-operation between the Irish party and the Tory Opposition, which had placed and maintained the late Government in office. He was known to hold liberal views on Irish problems. He was described as being unscrupulous in Parliamentary manœuvre. He had opposed the renewal of Coercion. He had defended the Maamtrasna inquiry. If it were true that the Conservative Government had had any Home Rule dealings as a Government, he was reputed their agent. If any Minister had trafficked independently, he was that Minister. Many Home Rulers and Orangemen, agreeing in nothing else, agreed in believing that he at any rate had been ready upon a Home Rule basis to bargain

with Parnell. These suspicions are injurious. No man was more vigorous in his public resistance to Home Rule or more vehement in his language than Lord Randolph Churchill; and if in the midst of his denunciations of Mr. Gladstone, while he was rousing England and inflaming Ulster, it had been true that he was fortified by no real conviction, and had been ready a few months before to sell all that he now declared sacred, an odious charge would have been brought home.

The documents printed in preceding chapters constitute an unassailable defence. No Unionist politician has a clearer record. Lord Randolph Churchill was perfectly willing to work with the Irish members. He understood how much they had in common with the Conservative party, and with the best part of the Conservative party. He had no prejudices and many sympathies in their direction. But his arrangement with them, or with any of them—for he counted on dividing their forces—would have been social, religious or economic in its character. It would never have been of a National character. To give the Irish the educational system they desired, to court and coax the Bishops, to win the Catholic Church to the side of the Conservative party—these were objects which all his life he faithfully pursued. The first political pamphlet he wrote was on Irish intermediate education. Whether as a Minister in 1885, or out of office in 1888 and 1889, he will be found deep in schemes of Catholic conciliation by Irish educational reform—primary, intermediate and university. One of the last letters this account contains returns to and reiterates this long-cherished idea. Almost his last speech in the House of Commons was in defence of Catholic schools. But to the repeal of the Parliamentary Union he was always unalterably opposed. He did not even think it worth while to consider seriously the many modified alternatives in which the times abounded. They might be wise or unwise; but they were not, he thought, within the

functions of the Conservative party. He knew nothing of the Carnarvon incident, and was incensed to discover it. His letter to Lord Morris of December 7, 1885, shows how unyielding he was even to the suggestion of a conference, before the great attempt was made. His correspondence with Mr. Chamberlain, who always inclined to alternative proposals, proves him quite unconvinced in later years by the course of the struggle or by the change in his own position. 'It would require circumstances widely different and pressure of an almost overwhelming kind,' he wrote in August 1887, 'to induce any portion of the Tories to look at any scheme of Home Rule. Gladstone alone can deal with that measure; and I hope that if he does, and when he does, he may be kept in check and controlled by a powerful Opposition.'

The advent of this great crisis therefore threw him for the first time into complete sympathy with the whole Conservative party. All his energies and talents were freely expended in a cause for which he cared intensely. Mr. Gladstone's vast personal power may perhaps be measured by the opponents by whom he was confronted, and by whom he was so narrowly overborne. It would be profitless to compare the relative services of the various distinguished men who now ranged themselves against him; to observe that Sir Henry James made the heaviest sacrifices, that Mr. Chamberlain ran the greatest risks, that Lord Salisbury showed commanding wisdom or that Lord Hartington struck the weightiest blows. But when the history of the famous battle for the Union in 1886 comes to be worthily written, it will be found that no single man fought with effect in more different quarters of the field than Lord Randolph Churchill or was in the heart and centre of more decisive frays.

Outside the walls of Parliament the issue was determined chiefly in the cities of Birmingham and Belfast. The transference of the whole political strength of the great

Midland centre of Radicalism to the Unionist cause and the fierce resistance of the Irish North, were the two most serious obstacles which Mr. Gladstone encountered. In both cities the conflict was marked by every circumstance of passion and excitement. In both Lord Randolph intervened as a leader. He possessed in an eminent degree many of the qualities which may be discovered in a successful military commander. He could detect with almost unerring skill the weak points in his enemy's array. He could make up his mind with bewildering rapidity and act upon the decision so formed with absolute confidence. He knew well how to separate what was vital from what was merely important or desirable. He was quite ruthless in casting away smaller objects for the sake of a greater. Few men were better suited to the storms of violent times. Till the explosion of Home Rule in the early days of December, he was deep in schemes of educational concession to the Catholic hierarchy—schemes which were in themselves delicate and complicated and which, on account of the suspicion they would have excited in Protestant Lancashire, were necessarily secret while a General Election was pending. But no sooner did Mr. Gladstone's intentions become known with certainty than Lord Randolph looked towards Ulster. All plans of Catholic Universities and nice correspondence with princes of the Church had to be unceremoniously stowed away till calmer weather. Christmas found him planning his visit to Belfast. By the New Year the arrangements were completed. The Ulster Hall was prepared and the Orange drums were beating. 'I decided some time ago,' he wrote bluntly to FitzGibbon, on February 16, 1886, 'that if the G.O.M. went for Home Rule, the Orange card would be the one to play. Please God it may turn out the ace of trumps and not the two.... I expect,' he added, 'your old Commission will go to the devil now.'

Lord Randolph was the first of the out-going Ministers

to break silence and in Paddington, on February 13, he defended the violent oscillations in the Irish policy of the late Government—the contrast between the policy of August 1885 and that of January 1886. The reader is already in possession of the main features of that defence, but it is set forth in this speech in a complete argumentative shape; and though it is naturally a partisan account, it will be found to bear a close comparison with the facts now published. The situation in Ireland in August had not, he declared, necessitated the renewal of the Crimes Act. The provisions of the Crimes Act were not suited to deal with the National League; and by January the growth of that organisation required the creation of new and different weapons. 'If the hateful and malignant domination of the National League had been finally and for ever suppressed, if the restoration of order had been effective—then Lord Salisbury's Government were prepared to propose to Parliament measures which would to a large extent have met the legitimate aspirations of the Irish people, whether as regards Local Government or as regards the further settlement of some portions of the eternal Land Question, or as regards those wishes of the Catholics of Ireland on higher education which a large concurrence of the opinion of this country is disposed to look upon as right and reasonable.' He concluded by appealing for the support and encouragement of his constituents in his mission to Ulster upon which he was about to embark.

Lord Randolph crossed the Channel, and arrived at Larne early on the morning of February 22. He was welcomed like a king. Thousands of persons, assembling from the neighbouring townships, greeted him at the port. At Carrickfergus, where the train was stopped, he imitated —almost for the only time—a historic example by addressing a 'great crowd on the platform.' In Belfast itself a vast demonstration, remarkable for its earnestness and

quality and amounting, it is computed, to more than seventy thousand people, marched past him. One who knew Ireland well declared that he had not believed 'there were so many Orangemen in the world.' That night the Ulster Hall was crowded to its utmost compass. In order to satisfy the demand for tickets all the seats were removed and the concourse—which he addressed for nearly an hour and a half—heard him standing. He was nearly always successful on the platform, but the effect he produced upon his audience in Belfast was one of the most memorable triumphs of his life. He held the meeting in the hollow of his hand. From the very centre of Protestant excitement he appealed to the loyal Catholics of Ireland to stand firm by the Union and at the same time, without using language of bigotry or intolerance, he roused the Orangemen to stern and vehement emotion.

'Now may be the time,' he said, 'to show whether all those ceremonies and forms which are practised in Orange Lodges, are really living symbols or only idle and meaningless ceremonies; whether that which you have so carefully fostered, is really the lamp of liberty and its flame the undying and unquenchable fire of freedom.... The time may be at hand when you will have to show that the path of honour and safety is still illuminated by the light of other days. It may be that this dark cloud which is now impending over Ireland, will pass away without breaking. If it does, I believe you and your descendants will be safe for a long time to come. Her Majesty's Government hesitates. Like Macbeth before the murder of Duncan, Mr. Gladstone asks for time. Before he plunges the knife into the heart of the British Empire he reflects, he hesitates.... The demonstrations to-day will have a very useful effect not only upon the public mind in England, but also on the Ministerial mind, and many more of them must be held. And those demonstrations ought to be imposing not only from their numbers, but also for their orderly character.

We are essentially a party of law and order and any violent action resorted to prematurely or without the most obvious and overwhelming necessity might have the most fatal and damaging effect upon the cause which we so dearly value and might alienate forces whose resistance would be beyond all price. The Loyalists in Ulster should wait and watch—organise and prepare. Diligence and vigilance ought to be your watchword; so that the blow, if it does come, may not come upon you as a thief in the night and may not find you unready and taken by surprise.

'I believe that this storm will blow over and that the vessel of the Union will emerge with her Loyalist crew stronger than before; but it is right and useful that I should add that if the struggle should continue and if my conclusions should turn out to be wrong, then I am of opinion that the struggle is not likely to remain within the lines of what we are accustomed to look upon as constitutional action. No portentous change such as the Repeal of the Union, no change so gigantic, could be accomplished by the mere passing of a law. The history of the United States will teach us a different lesson; and if it should turn out that the Parliament of the United Kingdom was so recreant from all its high duties, and that the British nation was so apostate to traditions of honour and courage, as to hand over the Loyalists of Ireland to the domination of an Assembly in Dublin which must be to them a foreign and an alien assembly, if it should be within the design of Providence to place upon you and your fellow-Loyalists so heavy a trial, then, gentlemen, I do not hesitate to tell you most truly that in that dark hour there will not be wanting to you those of position and influence in England who would be willing to cast in their lot with you and who, whatever the result, will share your fortunes and your fate. There will not be wanting those who at the exact moment, when the time is fully come—if that time should come—will address you in words which are perhaps best

expressed by one of our greatest English poets:—

> The combat deepens; on, ye brave,
> Who rush to glory or the grave.
> Wave, Ulster—all thy banners wave,
> And charge with all thy chivalry.'

'As I was bold enough to trouble you about your speech,' wrote Lord Salisbury the next day, 'I may be allowed to say that I thought it singularly skilful. You avoided all shoals, and said nothing to which any Catholic could object—and yet you contrived to rouse a great enthusiasm among the Protestants. And that I gather to be the general opinion. I am sure the effect of the speech will be very great in Ulster.' Lord Salisbury made no secret of his opinion, and on March 3 publicly alluded to the Belfast speech as a 'brilliantly successful effort.' The Ministerialists, upon the other hand, were furious. Lord Randolph was accused of inciting to insurrection and treason and denounced as 'a rebel in the skin of a Tory.' The Parnellites were especially indignant that one whom they had been accustomed to regard with friendly feelings, should so far forget his duty as to make an inflammatory speech in Ireland; and as the delinquent entered the House of Commons the next night, he was greeted by a loud demonstration of hostility from the Nationalist benches, taking, if contemporary descriptions may be trusted, the form of prolonged and dismal groaning.





"Ulster will fight, & Ulster will be right."

On the 26th Mr. Sexton requested the Government to afford an opportunity to the House for discussing a vote of censure upon Lord Randolph Churchill; and the Prime Minister, in refusing, was careful to base himself on the needs of public business alone. Lord Randolph, however, persisted in his courses and a few weeks later, in a letter to a Liberal-Unionist member, he repeated his menace in an

even clearer form: ‘If political parties and political leaders, not only Parliamentary but local, should be so utterly lost to every feeling and dictate of honour and courage as to hand over coldly, and for the sake of purchasing a short and illusory Parliamentary tranquillity, the lives and liberties of the Loyalists of Ireland to their hereditary and most bitter foes, make no doubt on this point—Ulster will not be a consenting party; Ulster at the proper moment will resort to the supreme arbitrament of force; Ulster will fight, Ulster will be right; Ulster will emerge from the struggle victorious, because all that Ulster represents to us Britons will command the sympathy and support of an enormous section of our British community, and also, I feel certain, will attract the admiration and the approval of free and civilised nations.’

The jingling phrase, ‘Ulster will fight, and Ulster will be right,’ was everywhere caught up. It became one of the war-cries of the time and spread with spirit-speed all over the country. The attitude of the Protestant North of Ireland became daily more formidable. The excitement in Belfast did not subside. Dangerous riots, increasing in fury until they almost amounted to warfare, occurred in the streets between the factions of Orange and Green. Fire-arms were freely used by the police and by the combatants. Houses were sacked and men and women were killed. So savage, repeated and prolonged were the disturbances, breaking out again and again in spite of all efforts to suppress them, that they became in the end the subject of a Parliamentary Commission, the evidence and report of which are not pleasant reading and proved, when finally published, damaging to the Orange party.

The subject was not, however, discussed in the House of Commons until May 20. An interlude in the Home Rule debate was required for the passage of an Arms Bill which the state of Ireland generally, and of Ulster in particular, had rendered necessary. Lord Randolph was, of course, the

object of severe attack from the Irish party and especially from Mr. Parnell, who accused him of inciting, unintentionally, to murder and outrage. To this charge, and to a statement of Sir Henry James that his Ulster speech proved him 'half a traitor,' he replied indignantly. He was able to cite the authority of Lord Althorp, Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Morley and of the Prime Minister himself in support of the contention that circumstances might justify morally, if not technically, violent resistance or even civil war. He declined to recede in any way from his words, and the Conservative party cheered him loudly when he said so. Sir Henry James made a soft answer; but the extraordinary feature in the debate was the intervention of the Prime Minister. He did not arrive in the House until after Lord Randolph had spoken, but without delay he launched out upon a sonorous denunciation of his proceedings. He declared that such conduct reminded him of Mr. Smith O'Brien, who in 1848 had risen in his place and announced that, regarding constitutional means exhausted, he would forthwith return to Ireland and proceed to levy war against the Queen. But Mr. Smith O'Brien, argued Mr. Gladstone, was only a private member and a representative of the people. How much more reprehensible was such conduct when displayed by a former Minister of the Crown, by an ex-Secretary of State and by a Privy Councillor! It almost seemed, from the measured severity of the Prime Minister, that he intended to conclude by intimating that he had advised the Queen to strike Lord Randolph Churchill's name from the list of the Privy Council. But he avoided this natural conclusion to his argument. 'If,' he said, 'we were a weaker country, with less solid institutions, such occurrences as this would, in my opinion, have called for severe and immediate notice.' Mr. Plunket from the Front Opposition Bench defended Lord Randolph, but the Irish continued to attack him all the evening in an acrimonious fashion. The next day Lord Randolph wrote to the Prime

Minister, pointing out some inaccuracies in the words attributed to him. Mr. Gladstone replied tartly:—

10 Downing Street, Whitehall: May 21, 1886.

Dear Lord Randolph,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this day, and it would be a matter of great regret to me if I had used words which misrepresented your statements on so important a question as that of resistance to the law.

My words rested mainly on a recollection of your speech in Ulster, and of your letter of May 7 to Mr. Young. To abridge or avoid any controversy which is avoidable, I will at once say I am content to take your opinions as you have yourself expressed them in the closing paragraph of your letter to Mr. Young.

Let us, then, if you please, consider that paragraph as already substituted for my words.

The only difference will be that to that paragraph I should feel constrained to apply the words in which last night I endeavoured to describe your opinions, without any subtraction or modification, in lieu of applying them to the description from memory which on the moment I endeavoured to give.

I remain, dear Lord Randolph,
Faithfully yours,
W. E. Gladstone.

There the matter ended, being crushed in the throng of greater events. Constitutional authorities will measure their censures according to their political opinions; but the fact remains that when men are sufficiently in earnest they will back their words by more than votes. ‘I am sorry to say,’ said Mr. Gladstone in 1884, in defence of Mr. Chamberlain’s threat to march 100,000 men from Birmingham to London in support of the Franchise Bill, ‘that if no instructions had ever been addressed in political crises to the people of this country except to remember to hate violence and love order and exercise patience, the liberties of this country would never have been attained.’

Lord Randolph immediately on his return from Ulster, at the end of February, threw himself heart and soul into his favourite project of a coalition. To bring all Unionists

together in one line of battle, strengthened by trust and comradeship, to spread with roses the path of every man or Minister who would separate from Mr. Gladstone, was his unwearying endeavour. He would not allow personal differences to disfigure that array. As early as January he had made friends with Lord Hartington, who was still deeply offended by the 'boa constrictor' speech.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Hartington.

India Office: January 13, 1886.

Dear Lord Hartington,—I learnt some time ago that you had considered some remarks which I made in Manchester in November concerning yourself in your public position considerably exceeded the proper limits of political controversy. From your manner this afternoon when we met I venture to think that you will not misunderstand me when I endeavour to assure you that in case I am open to blame in this matter I greatly regret it; and indeed will admit that it is probable that on the occasion alluded to I dwelt upon events which I feel must ever be to you of a deeply painful memory in an unguarded and stupid manner.

There was, however, I hope you will believe, no intention on my part to say aught that you could object to on these grounds, and I am very sorry if it is the case that I gave you cause for reasonable and just complaint.

Yours faithfully,
Randolph S. Churchill.

This, of course, put everything right. Lord Hartington replied with much cordiality, and the friendly relations thus re-established were thereafter consistently preserved and improved.

On March 2 Lord Randolph visited Manchester again, was received by enormous crowds in the streets and spoke at almost proportionate length in the evening to upwards of 12,000 people in the Pomona Gardens—a spot now occupied by the central pool of the Ship Canal. Certainly the offer which, with Lord Salisbury's consent, he made to the Whigs and Liberal seceders could not well have been

more fair or handsome. ‘Tell us what you want,’ he said: ‘dictate your terms. We believe in your hearts you are animated only by a desire for the welfare of the country; we believe that you possess the capacity, mental and otherwise, for contributing to that welfare. If you like to form a Government yourselves, we will support you. If, on the other hand, you wish for our personal co-operation in that Government, we will give it you. If there are persons to whom you object and with whom you do not wish to serve, those persons will stand aside cheerfully.’ And then he went on, in a passage which those he so faithfully served ought not perhaps to overlook, to urge the formation of a new party. ‘Do you not think,’ he asked, ‘that the time has arrived—and fully arrived—when we might seriously consider together how we might form a new political party in England? Do you not think that that party might be an essentially English party? I say English from no spirit of prejudice whatever. I mean a party which shall be essentially English in all those ideas of justice, of moderation, of freedom from prejudice and of resolution which are the peculiarities of the English race. Do you not think that such a party might be formed, which might combine all that is best of the politics of the Tory, the Whig or the Liberal?—combine them all, whether they be principles or whether they be men; and might not we call that party by a new name—might not we call it the party of the Union? Members of that party might be known as Unionists. Our opponents are the party of Separation, and they may be known as ‘Separatists,’ because they are a party who, in one form or another, would adopt a policy which would be equivalent to the restoration of the Heptarchy—a policy which would throw back our civilisation for centuries, and a policy which must inevitably destroy that great fabric of empire which those centuries have laboriously erected. I ask you to answer that proposition seriously. Let us go in for a party of Union;

and it is not only to be a party of union of the United Kingdom, but it is also to be a party which supports as its great and main and leading principle union with our colonies and union with our Indian Empire. I offer this without further elaboration to your most earnest attention, because I believe that it is only by the union of all the subjects of the Queen in all parts of the world and by the re-invigorated cooperation, cohesion and consolidation of all parts of the widely scattered British Empire that you can hope to restore to your commerce and to your industries their lost prosperity.'

Meanwhile the preparation of the Irish Bills was jealously guarded from the public eye. Rumours and reports of their character, and of the resistance they were encountering in the Cabinet, multiplied and perished daily. Whigs and Moderate Liberals arraigned before anxious local associations defended themselves in one way or another from charges of 'insubordination' and 'lukewarmness.' Even those who had refused great office were subjected to severe examination. But while the agitation and excitement in the country mounted steadily, the proceedings in Parliament were tame and dull. 'Les jours se passent et se ressemblent,' wrote Lord Randolph. 'Waiting on the G.O.M. is weary work.' Radical resolutions in favour of Disestablishment and the abolition of the House of Lords failed to rouse the smallest interest. All debates on other than Irish subjects were unreal; and as the Government reasonably claimed sufficient time to present their policy in due form, discussion on Ireland degenerated into desultory skirmishing. A Scottish Crofters Bill and the colourless 'Cottage Budget' slipped easily through. An unrestful hush preceded the storm.

In this interval Lord Salisbury retired to the Riviera and Lord Randolph kept him supplied, as usual, with every kind of rumour, chaff, gossip and circumstantial information, which his wide and various acquaintanceship

enabled him to collect. These chatty letters do not lend themselves to reproduction. They are too full of sharp phrases and personal confidences. But in the main they show only the utter uncertainty and confusion that reigned in the political world and how, even to those best able to judge, much that seemed trivial, turned out to be true and important and much that looked substance, proved moonshine.

Lord Salisbury himself was far-sighted, but not sanguine. He was doubtful of a Whig coalition:—

It was said of the Peelites of 1850 [he wrote on March 16] that they were always putting themselves up to auction and always buying themselves in. That seems to me the Whig idea at present. I do not think it is necessary to make any more advances to them. The next steps must come from them.

I have great doubts about *your* being the impediment. I observe that Hartington, whenever he has the chance, dwells with so much conviction upon my 'rashness, &c.,' that I suspect I am more the difficulty than you. I believe the G.O.M., if he were driven to so frightful a dilemma, would rather work with me than with you; but that with Hartington it is the reverse.

And a fortnight later:—

It does not seem to me possible that we should attempt to govern by a majority of which Hartington, Trevelyan and Chamberlain will be important parts. On the other hand, a dissolution by us, as a 'Government of Caretakers,' would be hazardous. It would give both the Chamberlain and Hartington sections an opportunity of wooing back their old supporters by abusing us on some point or other that is sure to arise and so escaping from the necessity of fighting the election campaign mainly on Home Rule. It would be much better for us that the dissolution should take place with Gladstone in power, and upon the Home Rule question. It will then be impossible for the three sections of Liberals to coalesce against us, and the moderate men will be compelled to give us (at the election) some friendly guarantees. But Gladstone may, if he is beaten, decline either to dissolve or to go on. I see no hope of good Parliamentary

government in England unless the right wing of the Liberals can be fused with the Tories on some basis which shall represent the average opinion of the whole mass. But I see little hope of it. The tendency to grouping, caused mainly by the exigencies of various cliques of supporters, is becoming irresistible.

. . . . . .

I doubt any popular stirring on this question. The instinctive feeling of an Englishman is to wish to get rid of an Irishman. We may gain as many votes as Parnell takes from us; I doubt more. Where we shall gain is in splitting up our opponents.

But in the last week of March the situation cleared and hardened. Descriptions more or less accurate and detailed of the Home Rule Bill and its companion measure had leaked out. The division in the Cabinet became open. Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Trevelyan had, it now appears, already wished to resign on the 16th. Mr. Gladstone persuaded them to remain, at any rate until the Irish proposals could be presented to his colleagues in a concrete form. On the 26th the Prime Minister faced his powerful lieutenant for the last time across the Cabinet table. The differences of opinion and mood were not to be reconciled or covered by verbal concessions, however ingenious. Even with goodwill on both sides they could not honestly have come to an agreement. And by this time personal goodwill had ceased to be the determining factor in the decisions of either. The resignations were announced forthwith. Persons were found, as is usual in such circumstances, to occupy rather than to fill their places. Together, in the ensuing five years, Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain could have carried almost any measure of Liberal or Radical reform upon which they were resolved. The champion of Tory Democracy, the cautious leader of the Whigs, the astute Conservative general, would have resisted them in vain. But the separation proved as lasting as it was complete and the war declared upon March 26, 1886, did not cease until after Mr. Gladstone had finally retired from the political arena.

Ever since their reconciliation after the Aston Riots, Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Chamberlain had been good friends. The Radical leader had been the first to offer his congratulations upon the defeat of 'the old gang' in June 1885. He had discountenanced the opposition to Lord Randolph's re-election on taking office, and had been displeased that a contrary action should have been attributed to him. The bickerings and wranglings of the General Election in Birmingham had left their personal relations quite unaffected. They had fought with fairness, and even with courtesy in public speech, and without rancour of any kind. The friendship that existed between them was now to have an important bearing upon the course of events.

In various ways Lord Randolph Churchill was the only prominent man in the Conservative ranks with whom Mr. Chamberlain could easily deal. Lord Salisbury represented opposite ideas, and his antagonism had been so recent and marked that direct association was impossible, even in this great crisis. But Lord Randolph had been so roundly charged, both by his Conservative comrades and his regular opponents, with being 'a Radical in disguise,' and was, in fact, so far advanced on many questions, that Mr. Chamberlain could consort with him without embarrassment or flagrant incongruity. Lord Randolph therefore became a natural and indispensable link. The force of political circumstances was strengthened by personal predilection. Both men liked each other's company. Their moods and ways of looking at things—to some extent their methods—were not altogether dissimilar. Both were popular leaders drawing their strength from democracy. Both were bold, determined, outspoken and impulsive by nature. Both had been joined to their orthodox party colleagues by slender and uncertain bonds. So long as Chamberlain was a Minister, their communications were necessarily restricted; but as soon as

he had resigned, he was free, and the two came together in close and cordial co-operation.

Mr. Chamberlain was not likely to be turned from his purpose by the difficulties and dangers of his position. The determination of such men is only aggravated by these elements. Their doubts are hardened into convictions at the whisper of compulsion. He had made up his mind, and he would certainly not have been bullied out of it. All sorts of ingenious and substantial alternatives occupied his imagination. An Irish National Assembly, sitting at Dublin, 'free to make bye-laws,' but 'subject to the authority' of Parliament—able to levy rates, but leaving 'the Queen's taxes to be settled at Westminster,' would not have driven him away. But on the main point he would not budge, any more than Mr. Gladstone. He would not on any account erect 'another sovereign authority similar to the Imperial Parliament.' Rather than consent thereto he would face political ruin. And, indeed, it might have come very near to that latter conclusion in the summer months of 1886.

Lord Randolph Churchill now set himself to work by every means in his power to make the path of such an ally easy and smooth. To bring 'the great Joe,' as he is so often called in the Churchill-Salisbury correspondence, into the main line of the Union party seemed to him, indeed, a worthy aspiration. He possessed in private life a personal attractiveness and a wonderful manner—at once courtly, frank and merry—which he did not by any means always display. Only his intimate friends saw his best side. He now exerted himself to comfort Mr. Chamberlain in the difficulties by which he was beset, and to make him feel, in the midst of so much anxiety, that he was not without generous friends in the Conservative party, who were ready to work with him in this great fight without conditions or explanations of any kind—without, indeed, one thought beyond the immediate overpowering issue of the hour. The two men dined together often; they

corresponded freely; they consulted almost every day.

The Ministerial resignations and the imminence of the Parliamentary crisis induced Lord Randolph to urge by telegraph Lord Salisbury's return. The latter was, however, not well enough to travel for several days and in the meanwhile his lieutenants were in much perplexity. Lord Randolph wrote to Lord Salisbury on March 29:—

Joe's conversation last night was somewhat to this effect: He has separated from Gladstone on account of the question of keeping the Irish M.P.'s at Westminster. Chamberlain's Parliament or Council would be little more than a kind of central vestry, and the Irish M.P.'s would remain at Westminster as they now are. Gladstone's Parliament is a real Parliament, and contemplates the departure of the Irish M.P.'s. Chamberlain is very anxious, and cannot count for certain on Radical support. He is rather 'drawing a bow at a venture.' He is much exercised because G.O.M. will not let him make any explanation of his resignation until after he has introduced his Bill. Thus G.O.M. has the advantage of first bark. I am going to dine with Joe to-night at his house, *tête-à-tête*, and shall learn more. Last night there were too many others present for much close conversation. Caine, on being asked to stand for Barrow, made a *sine quâ non* that he was to oppose Home Rule, and the Barrow Liberals have accepted him on this platform. This is not without significance. Gladstone declares he will have a majority of 100; the Government Whips say 20; R—— says he will be beaten by 70.

Joe told me he had not exchanged a word with John Morley for six weeks. Ashbourne was commenting last night on the fact that Archbishop Walsh had swallowed John Morley's atheism. 'Ah,' said Morris, 'John Morley spells God with a small *g*; but he spells Gladstone with a big *G*, and that satisfies the Archbishop.'

I shall write to you again to-morrow and tell you what I hear to-night.

March 30.—I hope this will catch you before you leave Monte Carlo. I learnt a good deal from my friend Joe last night. Gladstone's scheme, when Chamberlain retired, was roughly to this effect: An Irish Parliament of one Chamber, with political powers equal to the constitution of Canada, controlling all

sources of revenue, raising any taxes, with Ministers responsible to Irish Parliament. Some kind of shadowy veto reserved to Crown. No other guarantees or safeguards. The fiscal arrangement was to this effect: At present Ireland pays by taxation 8,000,000*l.* to Exchequer; of this England spends 4,000,000*l.* on expenses of Irish Government, and takes the balance towards service of debt, army and navy. In future Ireland is to pay 3,500,000*l.* to the Exchequer towards these three latter objects, and to pay for her Government as best she can.

The land scheme contemplated the issue of Consols to selling landlords at a rate which was the same all over Ireland, but which was to some extent influenced by the size of the holding. If everybody interested in land took advantage of the scheme simultaneously, the amount of Consols to be issued would be 220,000,000*l.*; but by various dodges this was not to take place, and the estimated gross issue of Consols was placed at 120,000,000*l.* On this advance Ireland would have to pay 3 per cent. interest and 1 per cent. sinking fund, or something over 4,000,000*l.* a year. So that the total payments to the Exchequer would be about what Ireland pays now—viz. 8,000,000*l.*—for which she would receive the land of Ireland and political independence. Chamberlain thought the whole scheme might be altered by the G.O.M. between last Friday and Thursday, 8th; but such it was in rough outline when he left them. Can you imagine twelve men in their senses silently swallowing such lunatic proposals?

Chamberlain said he could not support opposition to the introduction of this Bill; so that, I suppose, no such opposition will be pressed. He said that it was everything that the country should see the G.O.M. had had the fairest of fair play. He is going to reply to the G.O.M. on the 8th, and I could see he contemplates a smashing speech—in fact, a speech for dear life.... No doubt Chamberlain's defection has increased Hartington's numerical following, and it has also rather fluttered him, for fear he should be cut out by Chamberlain taking the lead. Chamberlain told me that there was not a chance of his ever serving in the same Cabinet with Goschen. This will make a reconstruction of the Liberal Government under Hartington impossible.

Political apprehension increased as the date for the

declaration of the Irish policy drew near. This event, after various postponements, was finally fixed for April 8. Early in the month Lord Randolph persuaded Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Salisbury to meet. The Turf Club was the neutral ground selected. Thither Lord Salisbury repaired—not, as it appears, without trepidation and misgivings, and in the little dingy downstairs room where visitors are received, was begun that strange alliance afterwards so powerfully to affect the course of history. 'I was very anxious to see you to-day,' wrote Lord Randolph to Mr. Chamberlain on the 5th, 'but learn you are gone home. Your friends, of whom you have many, of whose existence you are not perhaps aware, are desperately anxious that in any reply which you may make to Gladstone on Thursday, you should not commit yourself to, or acknowledge the authorship of, any alternative scheme. It would be a very dangerous piece of manœuvring with such a skilful opponent as the G.O.M., and besides might scatter dissension among the allies without conciliating estranged Radicals or infuriated Irish. Don't be cross with me for troubling you. The situation is so critical for everybody that any genuine opinion is worth consideration.'

And again later from the House of Commons:—

'My anxiety about Thursday forces me to write to you again to remind you, in case of forgetfulness among many other anxieties, that the Queen's consent to a detailed explanation of Cabinet proceedings is required, which consent I am informed on high authority must be asked for in a formal letter.... The G.O.M. is capable of trying to trip you up on any formality.'

Mr. Chamberlain replied on the 6th. He was vexed with Lord Hartington, who had changed his mind about the arrangements of the debate and who now wished to follow Mr. Gladstone immediately. To this Mr. Chamberlain had assented, not without irritation. 'The whole matter,' he wrote, 'is rendered more uncertain by the fact that the

permission from the Queen is curiously worded. It seems to preclude reference to Land Purchase; and as this is bound up with the scheme of Home Rule, I shall decline to say a word unless I am free to tell the whole story. I have written to Mr. Gladstone, but at present have no idea whether or when I shall speak.'

Lord Randolph answered:—

House of Commons: April 7, 1886.

I and my friends pressed very strongly on Hartington and his lot your indefeasible title to speak after G.O.M. if you chose to do so, and last evening they finally agreed to this. Now things are again in confusion ... if we do not act symmetrically and in union, we shall all get muddled up. Lord H. tells me he is going to see you this evening. I want to see you first. Could you meet me at the Athenæum, and, if so, at what hour? Send reply by bearer to Carlton.

Lord Salisbury tells me G.O.M. has no right to prevent you from making a full explanation of your reasons for quitting H.M.'s service, and that if you write direct to H.M. and send it by special messenger he (Lord S.) is pretty certain she will give you leave, and you can snap your fingers at the G.O.M.

The irresolution and indecision of the Whigs is most baffling. I am certain Hartington means nothing but what is right and fair towards you, but you know there are one or two round him who are very jealous of you. Don't blame him, and if you see him this evening before I see you don't let him think you are riled with him.

We shall have a desperate fight with this artful G.O.M., and nothing will win but the wisdom of the serpent.

But in the meanwhile Mr. Chamberlain had abandoned all idea of speaking on the first day. The uncertainty as to whether the Bill had been changed or not seemed to him a good reason for delay. His doubts about the Land Bill had, moreover, been removed. 'Mr. Gladstone,' he writes (April 7), 'makes no objection to my referring to the Land scheme; so this difficulty will not arise.'

The debate was marshalled with the utmost care. Lord

Randolph feared lest some trifle might make the mutual relations of his two powerful allies more difficult than they were already. He understood how easily vast consequences may in times of strain and emergency arise from personal matters.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

Turf Club, Piccadilly, W.: April 7, 1886.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—Hartington is to see Chamberlain to-night, and will let me know the result of the interview here about twelve this night.

He anticipates great difficulty with Chamberlain, because it appears now that he wants himself to move the adjournment on Thursday night, and that he may cut up very rough if again interfered with. Lord H. says if Joe refuses to give way on this point he (Lord H.) will not press it, and will decide to follow on immediately after the G.O.M.

I trust it may be arranged in accordance with my views, because, from my knowledge of the House of Commons under the Gladstone spell, if the angel Gabriel was to follow the G.O.M. to-morrow nobody would report him or care what he said; but by Friday morning all the glamour will have disappeared, and the Hartington brandy-and-soda will be relished as a remedy for the intoxication of the previous evening.

I have written to Chamberlain asking him to see me this evening before he sees Lord H.

I shall send you a line this evening about twelve in case anything of interest 'transpires.'

Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

April 7, later.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—I had a long and most satisfactory interview with Chamberlain this evening. In consequence he met Lord H. in a friendly manner, and arranged as follows: that he (Joe) will move the adjournment on Thursday evening, and that Lord H. is to speak Friday, either before or after dinner—for preference before. Trevelyan will speak to-morrow. Lubbock and

Lymington will also represent Whig impartiality and patriotism if required.

Therefore we have to find dinner-hour speakers, and Plunket as a ten o'clock man. The debate is to be carried into next week. If G.O.M. insists upon Monday for his Budget, Tuesday will be taken for Home Rule.

I hope you may approve of all this.
Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. C.

The famous 'Bill for the better government of Ireland,' after various delays, came before the House of Commons on April 8, and was expounded by the Prime Minister with his usual power and more than his usual restraint. The Chamber, crowded from floor to ceiling with persons of distinction and authority, the purlieus of Parliament invaded by an excited throng, reflected the anxiety of his opponents and enforced the memorable importance of the day. It was discovered that the Irish members had taken possession of many places on the Conservative benches above the gangway. The group of ex-Ministers, clustered together as if on an island, seemed surrounded on every side by the exultant cheers of their opponents. And as they listened to the oratory of their grand antagonist and to the loud applauses which were raised from all parts of the House, more than one heart sank at the onslaught which must now be met.

Mr. Chamberlain did not speak till the following afternoon. Lord Randolph's anxiety about the exact terms of the Royal permission was justified by the event. So soon as Mr. Chamberlain, in the course of his explanation, found it necessary to refer to the Land Bill, 'a very startling proposal, involving the issue of 120,000,000*l.* Consols,' Mr. Gladstone rose at once to remind 'his right honourable friend,' as he was always careful to call him, that the permission obtained from the Queen on his behalf had no relation whatever to the Land Bill, but referred to

the Government of Ireland Bill alone. Mr. Chamberlain at once asserted that he had resigned on the Irish policy as expressed in the two Bills, and his explanation could not be complete unless he was allowed to refer to both. He asserted that he had asked the Prime Minister to obtain for him permission to read his letter of March 15, which dealt exclusively with the Land scheme, and that Mr. Gladstone had consented to this. The Prime Minister suavely observed that he could not recollect what letter was written to him on March 15, and that he had no power to extend the Queen's permission beyond the limits of the Government of Ireland Bill. The situation was painful and acute. Mr. Chamberlain found himself in a position of astonishing difficulty. Quite apart from the painful nature of a misunderstanding upon matters almost of personal honour between distinguished men who had hitherto belonged to the same party, his whole speech—the 'speech for dear life,' on which so much depended—must at every step in the argument be interrupted, restricted and recast. In the hush of a great assembly, stirred by passions the fiercer that they were restrained, surrounded by political opponents and personal enemies, menaced by the rancorous attitude of the Nationalist members, and confronted by the greatest Parliamentarian of the age, the resigning Minister had to make up his mind whether to go on and defy the Prime Minister, whether to sit down at once and refuse to attempt a mutilated explanation, or whether to submit and say what could be said as well as possible. He chose the last, and he succeeded in delivering a speech of nearly an hour which proceeded by steps of close and sustained argument to a triumphant conclusion. Lord Randolph Churchill's admiration for this memorable personal and Parliamentary feat was boundless. 'By a supreme and unequalled effort,' he wrote at once, 'you have reasserted your position as leader of the Radical party, and on questions of Imperial policy you have gained

the confidence of the country. I never heard anything better.'

In spite of all its unexpected restriction the speech of the resigning Minister had proved damaging to Bill and policy. But a more formidable shock was to follow. Mr. Chamberlain has been censured for having joined the Government of 1886 at all; and at the time, while passion was hot, he was freely accused of having joined it in order to wreck it. The letter which he had written to the Prime Minister before accepting office on January 30, asserting his opinions in perfectly unmistakable terms upon the Irish Question, and the 'unlimited liberty of judgment and rejection' which Mr. Gladstone had formally accorded him, are in themselves a powerful defence of his action. But Lord Hartington, who had from the very first held aloof, occupied a far stronger position; and from that position, with the 'hereditary virtue of the whole House of Cavendish,' in his usual temper of sober integrity, and in that style of homely yet profound argument which has always influenced the English mind, he now delivered a tremendous blow. For a long Parliament he had led the Liberal Opposition; for almost a generation he had filled great office; on a hundred important occasions he had been the spokesman of a Government and a party, and yet until he sat down after his speech on the introduction of the Home Rule Bill, no one on either side of the House knew what he could do. Mr. Chamberlain could answer the Prime Minister, Lord Randolph could attack him and fight him, Mr. Goschen could rate him; but Lord Hartington on this occasion did that to Mr. Gladstone which no other living man could do, and which Disraeli himself had seldom done—he rebuked him.

Beside these speeches the rest of the debate, distinguished as it was by so much wit and vigour, lay somewhat in shadow. The Chief Secretary, as the living embodiment of the new Irish policy, was heard with the

greatest attention when he closed the discussion for that evening. In arraigning the late Government for their bewildering changes of mood and action towards Ireland, he fastened upon Lord Randolph a sharp adaptation of a famous verse which was devoid neither of justice nor severity:—

> Stiff in opinions, often in the wrong,
> Was everything by turns, and nothing long,
> And in the course of one revolving moon
> Was green and orange, statesman and buffoon.

Lord Randolph, when he resumed the debate next day, chose, like a good general, other ground to fight upon than that selected by his adversary as suited to attack. He spoke with unusual moderation, paying many elaborate tributes to the Prime Minister's eloquence and glory, and dealing mainly, in laborious detail, with the fiscal and financial proposals of the Bill. He contrived, without actually applying the quotation, to remind the Chief Secretary of Grattan's description of a speech of Lord Clare. 'Great generosity of assertion, great thrift of argument, a turn to be offensive without the power to be severe—fury in the temper and famine in the phrase.' He kept his most effective retort till the end. Mr. Morley had suggested that the consequences of the rejection of the Bill might be an outbreak of crime and outrage in Ireland, and against those responsible for its defeat. Lord Randolph rejoined with force and dignity that such considerations ought not to influence the House. 'Are these new dangers? Have we never known of a "No Rent" Manifesto? Have we had no experience of dynamite explosions? The right honourable member for Bury can tell the House how we were providentially, and almost miraculously, preserved from an awful disaster. But the dynamiters—the people who were inculpated in these atrocities—are now undergoing what has been called a living death.... Then, sir, as to

assassination. Assassination is one of the rarest incidents in modern political life. It used to be a common method of political warfare; but the growth and progress of civilisation has demonstrated its utter folly and inutility. A man in public life ought not to be deterred by the knowledge that by some mischance some day or other he might be the mark of a lunatic or criminal, any more than anybody contemplating a railway journey would be deterred by the fear of an accident.' All this was greatly approved. 'I think you must be quite satisfied,' wrote Lord Salisbury, 'that your care over your speech was not thrown away. Everybody acknowledges it to have been admirably judicious.' But Lord Randolph did not set much store by his effort. 'It appears,' he wrote to his wife, 'to have been rather a *succès d'estime* than anything else; but the Whigs were very grateful to me for not being abusive of the G.O.M. or violent.' And again to FitzGibbon: 'I fear you must have thought my speech dull, but I was under an apprehension of saying anything to hurt the susceptibilities of timorous Whigs and Radicals, which made me very ineffective.'

No division was taken upon the first reading out of consideration for these same susceptibilities, and the debate was terminated on the 13th by Mr. Gladstone in another great oration. The introduction of the Bill being thus formally agreed to by Parliament, the agitation in the country and the fusion of the opposing forces proceeded amain. On the next day a meeting was held in Her Majesty's Theatre, at which Lord Hartington appeared on the same platform as Lord Salisbury. The chair was taken by Lord Cowper, Mr. Gladstone's late Viceroy, and he was supported by such representative men as Mr. Smith, Mr. P. Rylands and Mr. Goschen. The great company who assembled, mainly Conservative in their character, had no difficulty in coming to agreement upon a resolution hostile to the measure. Lord Randolph Churchill, for reasons

which do not appear, thought this demonstration, known to history as ‘the Opera House meeting,’ a mistake, and he describes it in his private letters as a ‘piece of premature gush.’ He was inclined to attach more importance to a private conclave of Whig Peers which was held two days later at Derby House, which he attended, and of which he kept a record. All Mr. Gladstone’s Peers were present, there were scarcely any absentees and much practical business was settled. The Duke of Argyll and Lords Derby, Hartington, Camperdown, De Vesci, Ribblesdale and Selborne, all spoke. Lord Hartington explained that there was no question of a coalition. He said that nothing could exceed the loyalty and good faith of Lord Salisbury and the Tories. In his opinion they were fighting for the unity of the Empire, and not for personal advantage. He could not make any definite statement; but he told them they might take it for granted that the Tory party would loyally support all Unionist candidatures. The Lords were urged not to be afraid to use their influence upon local Liberal leaders; to tell the members that their seats would be unsafe if they supported the Bill; and to attend meetings, if possible, under Liberal auspices. If the Bill ever reached the House of Lords great efforts must be made to reject it unanimously. Meanwhile it was arranged that opposition to the measure was to be fanned by all imaginable means. The meeting separated in much enthusiasm and determination. ‘The feeling against the whole policy,’ wrote Lord Randolph to FitzGibbon the next day, ‘grows steadily; it is an undercurrent which the outside public cannot detect.’

Upon the Parliamentary tactics Lord Randolph had the clearest views:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Hartington.

April 14, 1886.

Dear Lord Hartington,—I hope you will not think me officious or presumptuous if I venture to urge upon you my views of the

enormous desirability of your giving notice to-morrow of your intention to move the rejection of the Bill. Such a move will be the best answer to the event of last night and the logical result of the meeting this evening.

I cannot refrain from expressing the opinion that this Bill ought to be dealt with on its merits, quite apart from any Land Bill, and that delay in giving notice of rejection until after Friday would be open to misinterpretation.

There are many waverers. The only way, to my mind, of leading such persons is by resolute, prompt and decisive action.

Please forgive me for troubling you with these lines.

Yours very truly,
Randolph S. Churchill.

The second half of Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy—the Land Bill—was brought before Parliament on April 16. The Prime Minister had shown no apparent eagerness to make public this plan, and was credited by his opponents with intending to hold it back till after the Easter Recess, in order that the consideration of the Home Rule Bill might not be prejudiced and complicated. Any misgivings which he may have felt, were fully justified by the event. The measure was on all sides ill received. The landlords, whom it was meant to conciliate, would have nothing to do with it. Radicals disliked buying them out at such a price. Economists deplored the drain on national credit. The Irish members denounced the appointment of a Receiver-General. The Press, Metropolitan and provincial alike, was almost uniformly hostile. The Bill scarcely survived its birthday. No further progress was made or attempted with it in Parliament. It perished meanly, and its carcass was kept by enemies only in order to infect its companion.

The Easter holiday was a period of intense political activity. The Prime Minister must, of course, have known from the beginning that the Home Rule Bill would be thrown out in the Lords. The stakes were high. A direct conflict between the two Houses and a dissolution

thereupon was an inevitable and perhaps an indispensable consequence of his policy. A defeat in the Commons would shield the Lords from the responsibility. They would not be concerned in any way. The issue would be confined to Home Rule alone, and democratic wrath could fall only upon the members of a representative assembly. It was therefore vital to Mr. Gladstone to secure the passage through the House of Commons of at least one of the two Bills, and every exertion was made by both sides to win the dissentients who held the fortunes of the struggle in balance.

The machinery of the Liberal party acted as machinery is intended to act. If the changes the leader of the party had proposed, had been twice as vast, and half as reasonable, it would have been equally obedient. If he had been an ordinary politician, instead of a great and famous man, he would, consciously or unconsciously, have controlled it still. Although Mr. Gladstone knew little of its ordinary workings, and would have been disquieted had he known more, it responded readily to his will. All its gigantic force began to grind up against the men who withstood him, and to it was added the fierce wave of enthusiasm that his magic drew from the Radical electorate. Nothing availed his opponents within their own party. Long, distinguished, faithful service, earnest agreement on all other subjects, the comradeship of battles scarcely ended, the chances of victories yet to come—all ceased to be worth consideration. Local Associations hastened to pass resolutions of confidence in the Prime Minister. To all members who were declared or reputed opponents of his measures—right or wrong—a hard and growing pressure was applied. Lord Hartington was required to explain his vote on the Jesse Collings amendment and his presence at the Opera House Meeting to the satisfaction of the Rossendale Liberal Council. ‘I have retracted,’ he said, ‘no word of condemnation or censure which I have uttered in

regard to Conservative policy; and in regard to any question which is at issue between Liberals and Conservatives outside this question of the future government of Ireland, I hold that I am as free and as uncommitted as I ever was. Much as I value the unity of the Liberal party, I value the unity of the British Empire much more, and I will not be prevented by any party consideration from doing what, in my opinion, may be best fitted to maintain that union.' Yet these brave, honest words from a representative so long trusted, preceded as they were by a letter from John Bright himself declaring that Lord Hartington's attitude was thoroughly consistent with true Liberalism, failed to win a vote of confidence, and the most that could be obtained from the Rossendale Liberals was an expression of thanks for their member's address.

The course of events in Birmingham was, for reasons some of which belong to this narrative, more remarkable. In all the arts of political warfare, especially in that which concerns the management of constituencies and electoral machinery, Mr. Chamberlain was unrivalled. The forces at his disposal were small; but he did not throw away a man or a chance. The introduction of the Land Bill gave him the opportunity of reading his letter of March 15 which Mr. Gladstone had formerly denied him, and of making many damaging criticisms upon that measure. Yet the tone which he adopted was more friendly than had been generally expected and his closing words, in which he expressed a hope that the differences between him and the Prime Minister would not prove irreconcilable or lasting, were warmly cheered from the Liberal benches. Mr. Chamberlain has stated with the utmost frankness, in an interview with Mr. Barry O'Brien,[52] that his intention 'all the time' was to kill the Home Rule Bill. 'I was not opposed to the reform of the land laws. I was not opposed to Land Purchase. It was the right way to settle the Land

Question. But there were many things in the Bill to which I was opposed on principle. My main object in attacking it, though, was to kill the Home Rule Bill. As soon as the Land Bill was out of the way, I attacked the question of the exclusion of the Irish members. I used that point to show the absurdity of the whole scheme.' The belief in an accommodation was therefore baseless, and neither Mr. Chamberlain nor the Prime Minister could share the hopes of their followers.

The war on both sides was fair and fierce. Mr. Chamberlain was throughout at heart uncompromising; but he practised a conciliatory manner so that he might carry Birmingham with him. The Prime Minister, on his part, was duly grateful for his ex-colleague's kindness; but he allowed the necessary preparations to go steadily forward for twisting from Mr. Chamberlain's hands the organisations, local and national, he had so long controlled. 'Gladstone,' wrote Lord Randolph to FitzGibbon on the morrow of the Land Bill debate, 'is pretending to make up to Joe, in order to pass his Bill; and Joe is pretending to make up to Gladstone, in order to throw out his Bill. Diamond cut diamond.'

On April 21 the Liberal 'Two Thousand' assembled in the Birmingham Town Hall to hear their member's explanations. The meeting, which densely crowded the building, had been organised by Mr. Schnadhorst, and the exertions of that astute person to obtain a vote favourable to the Prime Minister had been unremitting. The speaker was not slow to understand the dangerous blow by which he was threatened. He excelled himself. If speeches rarely turn votes in Parliament, it is otherwise in the country. The man himself, their fighting leader, their most distinguished fellow-citizen, appealing for support from his own people, using arguments which none could answer, with a skill which none could rival, was irresistible. Mr. Chamberlain turned the meeting. Some were moved by the hopes—

which he was careful not to destroy—that, after all, there would be peace. Others resolved to share with him the fortunes of the struggle. They came to curse; they remained to bless. Before he had finished, it was evident that he had won. The officials on the platform saw themselves almost deserted. In vain they pleaded for delay, for an adjournment, for anything rather than a vote from an assembly so moved. But Chamberlain demanded an immediate decision, and the meeting thought his demand was just. By an overwhelming majority—it is said, with only two dissentients—they passed a resolution of 'unabated confidence' in their member, and later a resolution which, though courteously worded, was in effect a condemnation of the Land Bill.

On May 3 Mr. Gladstone published a manifesto practically declaring that the Land Bill was no longer an essential article of the Liberal faith, and that in the Home Rule Bill all questions of detail were subsidiary to the one vital principle—the establishment of a legislative body in Dublin empowered to make laws for Irish as distinguished from Imperial affairs. On paper this should have met Mr. Chamberlain's principal objections. Yet two days later, without waiting for any fresh declaration from him, the official Gladstonians carried at a special meeting of the National Liberal Federation a series of resolutions pledging that body—upon which Mr. Chamberlain's influence had hitherto been supreme—to an unconditional support of the Government. The policy of making diplomatic concessions while fleets and armies are moving into advantageous positions, seldom leads to peace, and Parliament met after the Easter Recess more confused and divided than ever before.

The Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill had been fixed for May 6, the anniversary, as Lord Randolph Churchill lost no time in pointing out, of the Phœnix Park murders. It was postponed until the 10th, and on that day

began the protracted and memorable debate that ended the Parliament and shattered the Liberal party. Up to the time when the Land Bill was introduced Ministers believed that they would certainly carry Home Rule through the House of Commons. But day by day the Parliamentary situation grew darker. Lord Hartington moved the rejection of the Bill in an impressive speech. Fifty-two Liberal and Radical members met Mr. Chamberlain on the 12th to concert resistance and request him to negotiate no longer. Sixty-four, including thirty-two who had been at the former meeting, assembled at Devonshire House on the 14th. By the 18th Lord Hartington felt himself strong enough to make at Bradford declarations which foreshadowed a hostile vote. On the 22nd the National Liberal Union was formed of the principal Liberal dissentients all over the country; while in Birmingham Mr. Chamberlain actually created an entirely new democratic caucus of his own, to replace the organisation which Mr. Schnadhorst had wrested from him.

But at the last moment everything came near being thrown into the melting-pot again. On May 27 Mr. Gladstone called a meeting of the Liberals at the Foreign Office. Above 260 members attended. The proceedings were harmonious, and the speech of the Prime Minister most conciliatory. He said that the Government desired by a vote on the Second Reading no more than to establish the principle of the measure, which was the creation in Ireland of a legislative body for the management of affairs exclusively and specifically Irish. If the Second Reading were affirmed, no further steps would be taken for passing the measure that session; it would be withdrawn, and could be proceeded with in an autumn session, or reintroduced in a new session with the clauses which presented most difficulty remodelled or reconstructed. Moreover, a vote for the Second Reading of the Irish Government Bill given by an independent member, left the giver absolutely free as

to his vote on the Land Purchase Bill.

The plan was at once practical and alluring. The House was invited to pass little more than an abstract resolution. The controversy of the Land Bill was put aside; many of the controversies of the Home Rule Bill would be relegated to the Committee stage. Yet, once the Second Reading was passed, the Government would be immensely strengthened. A great decision favourable to them would have been taken by Parliament. Above all, there would be delay. Time would be secured to the Government to win back their followers by blandishments and concessions, as well as by the pressure of local organisations. Time was offered to the waverer and the weakling—and among all the plain men jostled and buffeted in this fierce contention there were many such—to put off the evil and momentous hour of decision and to cling for a while to a middle course. Time, too, would be at work among the slender new-formed Unionist alliances. Was it strange that the rank and file of the Liberal party should welcome this easy yet honourable escape and certain respite amid alternatives so full of hazard?

The dangerous character of this manœuvre, not less than its extreme ingenuity, was patent to the Unionist leaders. The Whigs were embarrassed and perplexed, and Mr. Chamberlain's position became one of aggravated and peculiar difficulty. On all sides forces laboriously accumulated threatened to dissolve. In this crisis Lord Randolph Churchill's instinct and resolution were decisive. One course opened perfectly clear and distinct before him. A hot debate must be forced at once and at all costs in the House of Commons. Mr. Gladstone must be stung into reply; and then, what with the taunts and interruptions of the Opposition and the powerful influence of the Irish audience—not represented at the Foreign Office meeting—he would in all probability be driven to a more uncompromising declaration. As soon as he came down to

the House on Friday the 28th, he thrust this forward upon his colleagues on the Front Opposition Bench and urged that Smith or Beach should move the adjournment without delay. The others hesitated. The movers of the adjournment would be on very weak ground and possessed, as it seemed, but a slight and doubtful pretext. The skill of the Prime Minister in explanations soothing to all parties was measureless and unrivalled. A Parliamentary rebuff at such a moment might have the most serious consequences. But Lord Randolph clinched the matter.

At the conclusion of questions Sir Michael Hicks-Beach rose and invited the Prime Minister to declare definitely his intentions in regard to the Bill. Mr. Gladstone's reply was suave, and ended as follows: 'Reference must be made elsewhere before I proceed to give authoritative information to the House; but there is nothing at all improper in asking for that information, and on an early day I may be in a position to give it.' Forthwith Sir Michael Hicks-Beach asked leave to move the adjournment of the House, and in spite of the angry cries of 'No' which were raised by Ministerialists he handed to the Speaker a written notice of motion, which the Speaker somewhat doubtfully accepted. All the members on the Opposition benches and a few on the Government side of the House rose amid much cheering and some laughter in its support. Sir Michael then delivered a vigorous and provocative speech. Mr. Gladstone had said that the Bill was urgent: yet now it was to be postponed for five months. He had declared that the Government had a plan, that no one else had a plan, and that their plan held the field: yet now the House was asked to give an indefinite vote on some undefined principle of autonomy for Ireland, which might mean anything or nothing and was, in fact, a mere abstract resolution. If the Second Reading of the Bill were carried under conditions like that, it would be nothing

more nor less than a 'Continuance in Office Bill.'

This was all received with great Opposition cheering, and Mr. Gladstone laid aside the letter he was writing and rose to reply. He began in his most majestic manner. He was struck by the warmth of the speech to which they had listened. He would not imitate it. The imputation that the Government were considering their own continuance of office was one he would not condescend to discuss. That he left to the generous consideration of his countrymen. But as his speech proceeded, the cheers of his followers and the wealth and splendour of his language and ideas produced an exhilarating effect. 'We have before us a conflict in which we are prepared to go through to the end —(*loud cheers*)—and in which we are perfectly confident of the final issue. (*Renewed cheers.*) But we will not take our tactics from the Opposition.' (*Cheers.*) And then followed a passage which proved of momentous importance. 'The right honourable gentleman says that we are going to give an indefinite vote, and that the Bill is to be remodelled. I think that happy word is a pure invention. I am not aware that there is a shadow or shred of authority for any such statement.'

Lord Randolph Churchill: Reconstructed.

Mr. Gladstone: The noble lord says 'reconstructed' was the word. It is quite true that the word 'reconstructed' was used. (*Loud Opposition cheers and laughter.*) What confidence these gentlemen who use those means of opposition must have in the rectitude of their own cause and the far-seeing character of their own statesmanship! (*Cheers.*) The word 'reconstructed' was used. Does the noble lord dare to say it was used with respect to the Bill?

Lord Randolph Churchill: Yes.

Mr. Gladstone: Never! Never! (*Cheers.*) It was used with respect to one particular clause of the Bill. This grand attack, founded upon the fact that our Bill was to be

remodelled, therefore fails. What a woeful collapse! It is not the Bill that is to be remodelled, it appears, after all. (*Home Rule cheers and laughter.*) The noble lord spoke boldly of my speech, but now it turns out that he read it wrong. (*More laughter.*)

Seldom has rhetorical success been more dearly purchased. If Mr. Gladstone had made a lame and ineffective speech, if he had contrived to sit down leaving the impression that he was hesitating and uncertain, the course of history might have run very differently. The support of wavering friends might have been secured. A word would have reassured Parnell. The Second Reading might have been carried. But the very excellence of his arguments defeated his schemes and his uncompromising statements settled the fate of the Bill. 'Never! Never!' was the last word in the negotiations with the Liberal and Radical Unionists; it was the wrench which broke finally and for ever the many ties of sentiment and interest which bound them to their party: henceforth they looked back no more, and strode forward into the future, anxious but not undecided.

Some realisation of the possible effect of his words seemed to come to the Minister after they were spoken, for he lapsed into ambiguity and reservations; 'and,' said he before sitting down, 'if we had made some great error in the management of this Bill, the right honourable gentleman would not have interposed to-day with his motion for adjournment, but would probably have sat with folded arms, delighted to see how we walked into some one of the many snares set for us.'

Lord Randolph Churchill followed in debate. It was not possible then to know how deep was the impression made upon the Liberal-Unionists by the uncompromising statements of the Prime Minister, and Lord Randolph, in a speech which provoked the occupants of the Treasury Bench, which many mistook for a mere taunting attack, but

which was, in reality, a very adroit and skilful performance, endeavoured with no little success to extort from Mr. Gladstone and the Home Rulers repeated admissions that the division on the Second Reading was to be a real trial of strength and repeated denials that the Bill was to be dropped or reconstructed. To do this it was necessary to assert the contrary in an exaggerated form—yet without exciting suspicion; and anyone who may chance to read the speech from this point of view will discern the artifice lurking in every part. The offer which the Government made to the House was, he suggested, this: 'If you vote for the Second Reading of this Bill, we will withdraw the Bill, and you shall never hear of it again'; and when this excited protests he swiftly changed his ground and declared that the Prime Minister was speaking with two voices—'a voice to the Irish members that the Bill is not to be reconstructed—[*No!*]—a voice to the Liberals below the Gangway that it is to be reconstructed.' [*No! No!*] He asked Mr. Gladstone why he would not 'present a fair issue and stick to his guns,' adding, amid a storm of Ministerial wrath, 'we are being jockeyed.' Why was it necessary to delay the Bill? 'The right honourable gentleman says he has no time. Why has he no time? To whom is it principally due that this debate has been so protracted? Who refused to take it *de die in diem*? Who interposed every obstacle which Parliamentary experience and ingenuity could suggest? Why, sir, if it had not been for the obstacles interposed by the Prime Minister himself, we might have divided on this Bill a week ago. And what is the remedy? "The question," says the Prime Minister, "is very urgent. I still hold to the doctrine of extreme urgency; but we have no time to deal with it this summer and we will therefore put off further dealing with it till the end of the year." [*Mr. Gladstone dissented.*] The Prime Minister is very captious about dates. We will put off dealing with the Bill then to some period in the future

marked out for us by those "limitations which are imposed upon us by the revolutions of the heavenly bodies." The right honourable gentleman complains of want of time, and he says: "We will not send the Bill up to the House of Lords in August." Because why? Because the House of Lords will seek refuge in the excuse that they cannot consider the measure in the time at their disposal. [Mr. Gladstone: 'Hear! Hear!'] Sir, I dare say that the Prime Minister is far better acquainted with Peers than I am. He has made a great many of them—but whatever course the House of Lords may take will not, I am certain, be based upon such frivolous grounds as that, and I am perfectly convinced that he need not have the smallest fear whatever that the question of time will be raised. I have not a doubt about it that the decision of the House of Lords upon this Bill will be serious, calm, immediate and final.' After complaining that information should be given to one group of members at the Foreign Office and refused to the House of Commons as a whole, Lord Randolph proceeded: 'What has been the great bribe offered by the Prime Minister—a bribe as great as any offered at the time of the Act of Union? "If you vote for the Second Reading of a Bill which you do not approve of in your hearts and which you disbelieve in, I promise that at any rate for another twelve months you shall not be sent back to your constituencies." This is the noble policy of the right honourable gentleman, and the noble motives by which he appeals to Parliament: "Vote for anything you like; you are committed to nothing."'

Mr. Gladstone: Oh no.

Lord Randolph Churchill: What? Then they are committed!

Mr. Gladstone: Certainly.

Lord Randolph Churchill: The Prime Minister surprises me. I did not think it possible to be surprised by him. Does he contend, from a Parliamentary point of view, that

members by voting for the Second Reading of the Bill can be committed to the Bill if that Bill dies or is withdrawn?

Mr. Gladstone: The principle of the Bill.

Lord Randolph Churchill: Never was such a view held in Parliament before. I venture to say never; and that is why the Prime Minister holds out to members the bribe that if they will only vote for the principle of the Bill, which they disapprove of, and which is going to be withdrawn and possibly never heard of again, he will consent to give them a little longer lease of political life. The manœuvres of the Government were such as might be expected from 'an old Parliamentary hand'; they were not those which statesmen like Lord Russell, Lord Althorp or Sir Robert Peel would have contemplated; and, having drawn forth one final demonstration from the Ministerial benches by protesting in a concluding sentence against this attempt to 'hocus' the House of Commons, Lord Randolph sat down well satisfied.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer rose to reply. In his most impressive style he undertook to administer a solemn rebuke for the use of such words as 'jockey' and 'hocus.' 'This, sir,' he said portentously, 'is the language of the Derby.' 'No,' retorted Lord Randolph across the table, in one of those penetrating half-whispers with which he so often riveted his hearers, 'it is the language of the Hoax.' It was some time before Sir William Harcourt was able to regain the serious attention of the House.

The manœuvre had indeed been successful—but how successful could not yet be known. Mr. Chamberlain summoned a meeting of his followers for May 31, finally to determine whether to vote against the Bill or to abstain. 'Everything,' he wrote to Lord Randolph (May 29), 'turns on Monday's meeting'; and it is clear from his letter that he had not absolutely decided upon his course. He even states elaborately the reasons which made for abstention instead of a direct vote. Lord Randolph ventured upon a

final appeal. He wrote:—

May 29, 1886.

I feel almost certain that if you remain as firm in the future as you have been in the past the Bill will be destroyed now; otherwise it will only be 'scotched,' and will wriggle about more venomous and mischievous than before. I think you must be satisfied with your decision to delay your meeting and your speech. I am sure that the greater bulk of your followers will stick to you, and stick to you with all the more admiration and fidelity, if you keep your foot down. Every day is showing more distinctly what madness it is to trust the G.O.M.... It seems to me that if you allow your party to give way, now that they know that the Bill in the autumn will not be a reconstructed Bill, but the same Bill, both you and your party will occupy a position of much humility, and you will have missed at the last moment the prize which was actually in your grasp. If you have any who are very weak about their seats let me know the names, and I will do my best to secure them from Tory opposition. But I do implore you to stick to your guns.... You won't mind my troubling you with these lines.

All went well at the meeting. A letter from Mr. Bright is said to have turned the scale. Fifty-five gentlemen attended, and their resolve to vote against the Second Reading doomed the Bill. Radical Associations might assert their loyalty and support; democratic enthusiasm might rise to fever-heat in the country; but, so far as Parliament was concerned, the issue was settled. After this eventful interlude there was little left but to go to a division, and at the end of the next sitting Sir Michael Hicks-Beach announced that the Front Opposition Bench would take no more part in the debate. Yet the discussion was prolonged throughout another week, in the hopes that wavering rebels might return; and to that end every influence which the Government could employ, from the personal power and charm of the Minister to the discontent of local organisations, was sedulously employed.

At last the day of decision came. An anxious crowd hung about the precincts of Westminster. The House was

packed in every part. A final sensation remained. Mr. Parnell had waited till the end of the debate and he had something in reserve which might well have shaken opinion. ‘When the Tories were in office,’ he said, in the course of one of his ablest speeches, ‘we had reason to know that the Conservative party, if they should be successful at the polls, would have offered Ireland a statutory legislature with a right to protect her own industries, and that this would have been coupled with the settlement of the Irish Land Question on the basis of purchase, on a larger scale than that now proposed by the Prime Minister.’

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, when his turn came to conclude the debate on behalf of the Conservatives, met this statement with the bluntest of denials. ‘I must for myself and my colleagues,’ he said, ‘state in the plainest and most distinct terms that I utterly and categorically deny that the late Conservative Government ever had any such intention.’ Parnell’s answer was staggering. ‘Does the right honourable gentleman mean to deny that that intention was communicated to me by one of his own colleagues—a Minister of the Crown?’ ‘Yes, sir, I do,’ said the Leader of the Opposition at once; and then he added prudently, ‘to the best of my knowledge and belief; and if any such statement was communicated by anyone to the honourable member, I am certain he had not the authority to make it.’ ‘Name! name!’ cried the members imperiously in their excitement. ‘Will the honourable member,’ said Sir Michael, ‘do us the pleasure to give the name to the House?’ ‘I shall be very glad,’ replied Parnell, amid renewed cries of ‘Name!’ from all sides, ‘to communicate the name of that colleague when I receive that colleague’s permission to do so.’ Every eye was turned upon Lord Randolph Churchill, sitting on the Front Opposition Bench. But he remained gravely silent, twisting his moustache moodily. Not until Lord Carnarvon’s

explanations two days later in the House of Lords was he relieved from a suspicion so injurious to his character.

This was the end; and after it Mr. Gladstone brought this great debate to a close in a manner worthy of its memorable importance and surpassing all the fire and eloquence which had illumined its progress.

'I do not deny,' he said, 'that many are against us whom we should have expected to be for us. I do not deny that some whom we see against us have caused us by their conscientious action the bitterest disappointment. But you have power, you have wealth, you have rank, you have station, you have organisation, you have the place of power. What have we? We think that we have the people's heart; we believe and we know we have the promise of the harvest of the future. As to the people's heart, you may dispute it, and dispute it with perfect sincerity. Let that matter make its own proof. As to the harvest of the future, I doubt if you have so much confidence, and I believe that there is in the breast of many a man who means to vote against us to-night a profound misgiving, approaching even to a deep conviction, that the end will be as we foresee, and not as you—that the ebbing tide is with you, and the flowing tide is with us. Ireland stands at your bar, expectant, hopeful, almost suppliant. Her words are the words of truth and soberness. She asks a blessed oblivion of the past, and in that oblivion our interest is deeper than even hers. My right hon. friend Mr. Goschen asks us to-night to abide by the traditions of which we are the heirs. What traditions? By the Irish tradition? Go into the length and breadth of the world, ransack the literature of all countries, find, if you can, a single voice, a single book—find, I would almost say, as much as a single newspaper article, unless the product of the day, in which the conduct of England towards Ireland is anywhere treated except with profound and bitter condemnation. Are these the traditions by which we are exhorted to stand? No, they are

a sad exception to the glory of our country. They are a broad and black blot upon the pages of its history, and what we want to do is to stand by the traditions in which we are the heirs in all matters except our relations to Ireland, and to make our relations to Ireland conform to the other traditions of our country. So I hail the demand of Ireland for what I call a blessed oblivion of the past. She asks also a boon for the future; and that boon for the future, unless we are much mistaken, will be a boon to us in respect of honour no less than a boon to her in respect of happiness, prosperity and peace. Such, sir, is her prayer. Think, I beseech you—think well, think wisely, think not for a moment but for the years that are to come, before you reject this Bill.'

The House proceeded immediately to the division. A Whig and a Radical were named jointly tellers for the 'Noes.' The whole Conservative party with two exceptions —one because of divergence and the other through serious illness—passed into the Lobby. Yet such had been the strain of the conflict, so many the uncertainties, so powerful this last supreme appeal, that—pledges, agreements, careful calculations notwithstanding—the issue seemed to hang in the balance; and Lord Randolph Churchill, staring at the crowd as they shuffled by, thought them so shrunken that he loudly exclaimed: 'There are not three hundred men with us.' So great, indeed, was the excitement and apprehension that after they had quitted the Lobby scores of Unionist members, instead of going to their seats in the Chamber, remained massed about the doorway, eagerly counting with the tellers; and when the three hundred and thirty-sixth man was told, and it was certain that the Bill was rejected, such a shout went up as Parliament has seldom heard. The Government was defeated by 341 votes to 311.

Like Sir Robert Peel forty years before, Mr. Gladstone must now face the spectacle, melancholy even to an

opponent, of the break-up of a great party. Few were left to him of all that able band who in such good heart had joined his Government of 1880. Bright had parted from him; Forster was dead; Hartington and Goschen and James were gone; Chamberlain was a bitter and formidable foe. The Liberal party was shattered. The Whigs had marched away in a body. The Radicals were torn in twain. The Parliament so lately returned in his support had destroyed itself, almost before it had lived, rather than follow him further. His friends estranged, his enemies united, the faithful in jeopardy, the deserters confident; the wealth, the rank, the intellect of England embattled and arrayed against him; the Bill on which he had set his heart cast out by the House of Commons; what wonder, then, that this proud old man, feeling that the years were drawing to a close, yet remembering his triumphs and conscious of his power, should reach out for the sledge-hammer of democracy, and fiercely welcome the appeal to the people!

Parliament was dissolved on the twenty-seventh of June.

CHAPTER XIV

LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

'Solos imperantium Vespasianus mutatus in melius.'—Tacitus.

'It is an assured sign of a worthy and generous spirit whom honour amends.'—Bacon.

THE General Election of 1886 surpassed, in the importance of the issue, in the confusion of parties and the sincerity of the combatants, any election since the first Reform Bill. Partisanship had grown rancorous during the eventful course of the controversy; rancour was fanned into passion by the excitement of decision; and to all was added the extra and unusual bitterness of a party split. The Liberal dissentients were brought at once to the uttermost wrench.

Everywhere their own organisations turned against them. Everywhere they struck back with all their force. Everywhere they and the bold minority who stood by them, looked for the aid of their former opponents. The Conservative leaders, on their part, grudged nothing and neglected nothing that could contribute to the strength of the seceders. To every member who voted against the Bill they had promised whole-hearted support; and such was their authority and the discipline of their followers that in nearly every case the local associations obeyed them. Tory candidates withdrew patriotically in favour of their late antagonists. Others were frowned and hustled from the field. Old comradeships and old prejudices faded together. Life-long friends drummed each other out of political clubs. Life-long opponents fought side by side. Home Rule was the one and vital test. The whole force of the machinery of the Liberal party—national and local—was used uncompromisingly. No Liberal-Unionist who could be attacked with any prospect of success, was spared. The purge was complete.

The Home Rulers entered upon the struggle in good hopes. They were assured of the obedience of the organisations. They saw the intense enthusiasm—'never before equalled'—of the Liberal and Radical masses. They counted vastly upon the Irish vote in the English boroughs; and, above all, they trusted in Mr. Gladstone's mighty personality. But the forces against them were tremendous. The statesman who would effect a revolution in Great Britain must not only persuade a party, he must convince the nation; and opposed to Mr. Gladstone were almost all the men whose names were widely known or had been long respected—John Bright, by himself a tower; Salisbury and Hartington; Beach and James and Goschen; Chamberlain and Churchill! All the protagonists of former conflicts were formed in one line of battle.

Lord Salisbury in the closing years of his life once said

that Mr. Gladstone in struggling for Home Rule, ‘awakened the slumbering genius of Imperialism.’ Beneath the threshold of domestic politics during the long years of Liberal prosperity the modern conception of Britain as a world-power, the heart of an Empire, the inheritor and guardian of a thousand years of sacrifice and valour, had lived and grown. It had been cherished by the somewhat tardy recognition of Lord Beaconsfield. It had been violently stimulated by the disastrous events of the Parliament of 1880. Although Lord Randolph Churchill was never what is nowadays called an Imperialist and always looked at home rather than abroad, his followers in the Tory Democracy were already alive with the new idea. A single touch sufficed to rouse it into a vital and dominant activity which for nearly twenty years has shaped the course of British history, and in spite of extravagances, puerilities and even turpitudes, has left a permanent imprint upon the national mind. It was this rising temper of opinion that Mr. Gladstone’s Irish policy, embodied in his own majestic personality, seemed now to challenge directly.

The personal element was the keynote of Lord Randolph Churchill’s address. That surprising document was made public on June 20, and as a specimen of savage political invective is not likely soon to be excelled.[53] It will no doubt be severely judged, now that nothing remains except the ashes of the great blaze of 1886. At the time many eminently respectable people who stood some distance from the actual fighting, as eminently respectable people are apt to do, were horribly shocked. Even Mr. Chamberlain was startled. ‘Your manifesto,’ he wrote, ‘was "rather strong"; but I suppose the Tories like it.’ But if the Tory candidates blushed when they read it in the morning paper, they did not forget to quote it at the evening meeting. Its jingles and its arguments—for it abounds equally in argument and in abuse—ran like

wildfire along the skirmish lines. The working man laughed over them in his home and disputed with his mate upon them in the workshop. People remembered epithets who could remember nothing else, and uttered taunts when other ammunition failed. One phrase at least, 'An old man in a hurry,' has become historic. If the address was vulgar, it was also popular. If it was reprobated, it was also used. The anger of that time has cooled, and its expression is worth preserving, though it may now provoke nothing worse than a smile.

Lord Randolph spoke only twice during the election, for the exertions of the Session forced him to seek a rest. He visited Manchester on June 28 and, although he had been there often in the last three years, so great were the crowds that the traffic of the city was completely suspended while he made a triumphal progress through the streets. Two days later he addressed his own constituents in Paddington. His most important work, however, in the 1886 election lay in Birmingham, where only six months before he had led the Conservative attack against Mr. Bright and Mr. Chamberlain. The Tory party in that city, by tremendous efforts, then first asserted itself as a political force; and, although beaten in every division, their minorities were well organised and enthusiastic and amounted in the aggregate to more than 20,000 voters. They did not easily forget that for years and years they had been kept by the Caucus and by the genius of Mr. Schnadhorst in a condition of political subjection. They had almost triumphed in 1885. The turn of events now threw their arch-enemies absolutely into their hands, and there were not wanting among their leaders those to whom the divided state of the Radical party offered the strongest temptations. It was fortunate for the Unionist cause that there was at hand an influence to which the whole Conservative party in Birmingham would readily respond.

Disagreeable speeches made by local politicians filled

Mr. Chamberlain with anxiety, and the difficulty and isolation of his own position inclined him at first to take a gloomy view. Lord Randolph hurried down to Birmingham on June 19, and by his influence and that of Mr. Rowlands, the leader of the Conservative party in Birmingham, all difficulties were smoothed away. 'I have seen the Birmingham Tories to-day,' he wrote to Mr. Chamberlain (June 19). 'Henry Matthews has consented, after much pressing, to stand against Cook. We shall run no other candidate and shall give all our support to the Liberal-Unionists, asking for no return and making no boast or taunt.' This letter he signed 'Yours ever'—an unusual subscription with him. Again the same day: 'I will engage that all your Unionist candidates shall have the full support of our party. I have telegraphed to Rowlands to see me on Monday. Schnadhorst's only chance is that you should seem to be afraid of him. Why does not Mr. Bright intervene? I am looking forward most anxiously to the account of your meeting and speech to-night. I think there is a great deal of froth about the Gladstone proceedings, and all my information up to now makes me confident that the voting will be heavy against him. Don't get down-hearted.'

'Thanks to your intervention,' replied Mr. Chamberlain (June 20), 'matters look better here. The meeting last night was a tremendous success. Only fifty or one hundred dissentients out of 4,000, all electors marked off on register. This meeting will, I hope, have a great effect in other divisions, and I think we shall get Collings chosen in Bordesley. If so, we ought to carry seven Unionists for Birmingham....'

'I was greatly relieved,' replied Lord Randolph (June 21), 'to see by your letter this morning that you were in better spirits. Your meeting was indeed a tremendous success, and your speech, as usual, most excellent. I hope my address has not given you a fit. I have only said what

you and Hartington are longing to say, but dare not.... My own opinion is that we shall roll the old man over.'

So in the end it proved. The elections began on July 1, and from the very first the results were disastrous to the Liberal party. The enthusiasm of the Liberal and Radical masses and the obedience of the organisations were unavailing. They sufficed only to drive from the Liberal ranks into irreconcilable opposition every man who would not accept the Irish policy. They were unable to secure a majority for Home Rule. They wrought havoc, but failed to achieve victory. The bulk of both parties voted in the ordinary way, according to their colours and their watchwords; but in every constituency men who had hitherto fought for the Liberal cause fought fiercely against it. The margin in many seats was so narrow that the resolute resistance of individuals and their adherents turned the scale. The dissentient Liberals with their personal following, supported by the whole Conservative vote, proved the most secure of any class of candidates. Of ninety-four who had voted on June 8, sixty-three were returned to the House of Commons. It had been asserted, and to some extent believed, that the Irish vote would turn the balance in forty constituencies. It was, however, discovered that the entire Irish vote in Great Britain could scarcely exceed 40,000 persons, of whom three-fourths were resident in London, Liverpool and Glasgow, while the remainder were too scattered to be effective. The great city of Birmingham returned a solid body of Unionists in the place of an equal number of Liberals elected in 1885. London became overwhelmingly Tory. The English and Welsh boroughs, which in the previous autumn had returned 118 Conservatives and 118 Liberals, now returned 169 Unionists and only 67 Liberals. The counties were not less remarkable. The 1885 election had returned 152 Liberals and 101 Conservatives; six months later the results showed 81 Liberals and 172 Unionists. Even in

Scotland, Mr. Gladstone's stronghold, his immediate followers fell from 61 to 43. The British Gladstonians (191), with the Nationalists (85), were in a minority of 40 as compared with the Conservatives (316), without counting on either side the 78 dissentient Liberals who followed Lord Hartington or Mr. Chamberlain. The opponents of the Irish policy numbered 394, as against 276 in its favour, and the Unionist majority was therefore 118. Face to face with this decision, which in such a short space of time had altered—and altered, as it proved, for more than a generation—the whole complexion of the English constituencies, Mr. Gladstone did not linger. A Cabinet Council assembled on July 20 and formally decided to resign. The resignations of Ministers were accepted the next day, and Lord Salisbury was for the second time summoned by the Queen.

Lord Randolph, who was himself returned for Paddington by a majority of more than three to one,[54] did not wait for the results of the elections. While politicians crowded around the tape machines in the London clubs or harangued excited meetings in the country, he fled silently and swiftly abroad, and by a Norwegian river awaited the result without impatience or anxiety. To his wife he wrote:—

Torresdal: July 10, 1886.

It is certainly a tremendous journey up here. We arrived last Wednesday, at about eleven o'clock at night, after a very long drive, in carrioles, of seventy miles. We calculate we are about 1,500 miles from Connaught Place. I caught three fish on Thursday—12 lbs., 12 lbs., and 15 lbs.—and lost three; yesterday I killed three—20 lbs., 18 lbs., 20 lbs.—and lost one. The weather has been rainy and raw, but on the other hand we have no flies; I believe, if it is hot, the flies here are terrible. I have heard no election news since Tuesday, when things seemed to be going well. This is doing me a lot of good. I felt very seedy leaving London, and it took me some days to get right.... This is a most delightful spot, and very solitary; no tourists, no natives. The

house, which is rough to look at, is comfortable enough inside, and Tommy is as amiable and charming as ever. On Saturday, by law, you may not fish after six in the evening till six on Sunday evening. It certainly is very curious having broad daylight at midnight. Fishing after dinner is very pleasant if the night is fine, and I am very glad to have seen this part of the world.... Post has just come in with telegrams from Moore and Rothschild. Certainly most satisfactory news, which confirms all my expectations.... I believe my address did no end of good, but, of course, no one in London will agree. I expect the Tories will now come in, and remain in some time. It seems to me we want the 5,000*l.* a year badly. But really we must retrench. I cannot understand how we get through so much money....

From Norwegian delights he was soon recalled to the business of Cabinet-making.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Justice FitzGibbon.

Very private.

2 Connaught Place, W.: July 25, 1886.

It was very pleasant to me to find on my return yesterday morning your very interesting letter. I showed it to Smith and Beach, who were much impressed. Things at the present moment are chaotic, and will not commence to resolve themselves into order until Lord S. returns from Osborne to-morrow.

Hartington and Co. definitely decline to join us, but will be the most efficient buttress. They mean to have their own Whips and their own organisation and probably will sit below the gangway on the Ministerial side of the House. If we play our cards well, we ought to remain in office for a long time. I am much in favour myself of the immediate resumption of the policy of January 26, and going on at once with the remaining business of the Session, instead of waiting till October. It will be a big fence to clear, but the horse is fresh; and, once cleared, the government of Ireland would be much simplified.

I fear the 'periplus' is very doubtful this year, and might have to be undertaken under the auspices of the R. I. Constabulary assisted by Scotland Yard. Possibly Londonderry will become Lord-Lieutenant. All this, besides being very doubtful, is quite

secret.

Lord Salisbury accepted the commission from the Queen in 1886, with leave to resign it, if necessary, to Lord Hartington. Forthwith he strongly pressed the leader of the Whigs to form a Government and assured him, if he did so, of Conservative support. Lord Hartington knew that any Government he could form would be practically Conservative in its composition, and must be called by that name. He believed that in these circumstances the Liberal Unionist party would dissolve, Mr. Chamberlain and the Radical section splitting off and probably rejoining the Liberals. He therefore declined; but the fact that the offer had been fairly made placed him in much closer relation with Lord Salisbury, and seemed to secure for a Conservative Administration definite assurances of Whig and Liberal Unionist support. Lord Salisbury, having explained these proceedings to the satisfaction of a meeting of his party at the Carlton Club, then proceeded to form a regular Conservative Ministry. As is usual on these occasions, every rumour found its believers and every conceivable appointment had its advocates. Lord Randolph was variously named for the Indian, the Irish and the Foreign Secretaryships. It was also spitefully suggested in many newspapers that an intrigue in his interests was on foot to eject Sir Michael Hicks-Beach from the Leadership of the House of Commons.

After the meeting at the Carlton Lord Salisbury sent for Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and Lord Randolph Churchill. ‘I declined,’ wrote Sir Michael Hicks-Beach in after years, ‘to continue Leader of the House of Commons. I felt that Lord Randolph Churchill was superior in eloquence, ability and influence to myself; that the position of Leader in name, but not in fact, would be intolerable; and that it was better for the party and the country that the Leader in fact should be Leader also in name. Lord Salisbury very strongly pressed me to remain, saying that character was of

most importance, and quoting Lord Althorp as an instance; but I insisted. I had very great difficulty in persuading Lord Randolph to agree. I spent more than half an hour with him in the Committee Room of the Carlton before I could persuade him, and I was much struck by the hesitation he showed on account of what he said was his youth and inexperience in taking the position. He insisted on my going to Ireland, pointing out that I could only honourably give up the Leadership by taking what was at the moment the most difficult position in the Government.' The matter was arranged accordingly, and Lord Randolph became in addition Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Leadership of the House of Commons having been settled, other appointments proceeded rapidly. Lord Randolph secured the appointment of Mr. Henry Matthews to the Home Office. Mr. Raikes took the Post Office 'with a growl.' Mr. Chaplin indignantly declined the Presidency of the Local Government Board[55] because the offer was unaccompanied by a seat in the Cabinet; and Lord Salisbury, having consulted with Lord Randolph, appointed Mr. Ritchie to that office. Mr. Chaplin received from the Chancellor of the Exchequer a fatherly letter of remonstrance, written more in sorrow than in anger, which he may have read over with satisfaction by the light of subsequent events. One letter on these delicate matters may, perhaps, be printed without impropriety:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

2 Connaught Place, W.: July 30, 1886.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—Your letter received this morning contains so much good news that I am encouraged to press you very earnestly to consider—if possible, favourably—the arrangement of Stanhope for India, Holland for the Colonies, with Gorst as Education Minister. I feel certain that this arrangement would be agreeable to all your colleagues and encouraging to the party, while to the general public it gives an appearance of symmetry to the Government which the appointment of —— would hopelessly disfigure....

I do not press Gorst for Education, because, if Stanley takes the Board of Trade, you may want to put Ritchie or Forwood at the Education Office; but I feel certain you would be pleased with the effect of Holland and Stanhope in the two high offices. In case you should wish to see me, I shall be in town until four o'clock this afternoon.

Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Lord Randolph Churchill accepted the responsibilities of his high offices without elation. 'How long will your leadership last?' asked a Liberal friend. 'Six months,' replied Lord Randolph gaily. 'And after that?' 'Westminster Abbey!' He had neither the time nor the inclination to dwell upon the many twists of fortune that had served him or the dangers and obstacles he had escaped. If he had cherished the ambition of leading a great party, he had not scrambled for place. He had driven Sir Stafford Northcote from the House of Commons, but he had not counted upon being his successor. He would have been perfectly content to serve under Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. He had fought fiercely and ruthlessly for his opinions and to have things settled as he thought they should be settled; but not consciously for his own interests. These had followed in the track of the fighting. His advancement had been the result, and not the reason, of his exertions. Real leaders of men do not come forward offering to lead. They show the way, and when it has been found to lead to victory they accept as a matter of course the allegiance of those who have followed. His personal ascendency was not the result of calculations. It was natural; and it was everywhere recognised, even by those who disliked and distrusted him—and that was a numerous band—as a fact ascertained and indisputable. It could not have been created by any process of scheming. Indeed, as this account has witnessed, he had more than once offered to stand aside to promote a coalition which must have

excluded him for years from any chance of leading the House of Commons. He had lingered at his salmon-fishing, after the election was determined, in the expectation of a coalition and anxious not to disturb it.

It is easy to deal with men whose motive is self-interest. Others can cypher out the chances, too. The influence which Lord Randolph Churchill exerted upon the men with whom he came in closest contact, upon Lord Salisbury and upon Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, could never have been acquired by a self-seeker, however brilliantly endowed. A veil of the incalculable shrouded the workings of his complex nature. No one could tell what he would do, or by what motive, lofty or trivial, of conviction or caprice, of irritation or self-sacrifice, he would be governed; and in these good days of fortune the double fascination of mystery and success lent him an air of authority which neither irreverent language nor the impulsive frankness of youth could dispel. He became Leader of the House of Commons, not because he had schemed for it, nor because it was his right in lawful succession, not assuredly because the Conservatives loved him or felt they would be safe in his hands. He *was* the leader at that moment—natural, inevitable and, as it seemed, indispensable.

Yet the world, when confronted with the result, was astonished. No appointment—not all the appointments together—created such a stir of interest and dispute. Not only at home, but in Europe and in the United States, it was universally the subject of anxious or sympathetic comment. In the House of Commons, where men eye each other so narrowly and where capacity can be judged so exactly, the fact was accepted without demur. It was right, it seemed, that the prizes of that assembly should go to those who were in fact its leading spirits. The part he had played in the decision of the Home Rule battle had been unsurpassed in importance. He had never wavered. He had named the Unionist Party. He had been a principal agent in

the electoral compact on which it was based. He was the link with Chamberlain. His authority had roused Belfast and soothed Birmingham. His dexterous energy had foiled Mr. Gladstone's last attempt at compromise. Much, though not all, of this was understood by politicians.

To the Tory Democracy no news could be so good as his success. The English like to be governed by men they know. The working-class electors, who had voted at two rapidly succeeding elections against Mr. Gladstone, saw in Lord Randolph Churchill their favourite and champion. They recalled the disasters and depression of their party in the past and the political convulsion from which it had at length emerged. They saw it triumphant where it had lately been despised. They saw it united where it had lately been distracted; and, with what measure of reason the reader can judge, they attributed this revolution to Lord Randolph Churchill more than to any other man.

But other classes have to be considered in Great Britain besides politicians and working men. All sorts of persons of influence and station in their different spheres had been offended by the very process which had attracted the democracy. 'An insular people,' wrote Disraeli in 'Endymion,' 'subject to fogs and possessing a powerful middle class, requires grave statesmen.' And there were many who saw in Lord Randolph only an audacious fellow, whose methods were shocking to serious folk, whose violence impaired the dignity of public life and whose headlong career seemed strewn with the wreckage of overturned authority. How, they asked, was such an impatient person to endure the vexations of a Parliamentary session? How could a young man of thirty-six possess or obtain the knowledge necessary to deal with the varieties of complicated questions upon which a Leader is required to pronounce? How was this spirit of strife and revolt to reconcile differences between colleagues and exact discipline from a party? How was the flagrant

obstructionist of 1884 to direct the course of business in 1886? How was the writer of the letter to Lord Granville and the erstwhile leader of the Fourth Party to maintain the dignity and principles of Unionist and Imperial administration? To all these questionings an answer was found even in the very short time that remained.

Much was also said of his going to the Treasury. It is amusing to read, by the light of after days, the lectures, kindly yet severe, in which the Times sought to warn him against fiscal temptations. 'A Budget on ordinary lines, framed with the aid and advice of experienced permanent officials,' would alone avoid 'injurious innovations' and 'the raising of disquieting problems.' He was adjured to remember how utterly fatal to the Unionist alliance any departure from 'sound principles of finance, understood and acted upon by successive Administrations, Conservative as well as Liberal,' would inevitably prove. For the sake of the Liberal-Unionists, for the sake, at least, of Mr. Chamberlain, he must forbear. Other newspapers reminded him of his declarations in favour of economy. 'The first and most vital interest of the nation,' he had said, 'is finance. Upon finance everything connected with government hinges. Good finance ensures good government and national prosperity; bad finance is the cause of inefficient government and national depression.' And, again: 'I should like to see the House of Commons devote one or even two entire sessions to nothing but finance. I should like to turn the House of Commons loose into our public departments on a voyage of discovery. I should like to see every one of our public departments rigorously inquired into by small Committees of about seven experienced and practical members of Parliament each.... I firmly believe that such an inquiry would demonstrate that those useful arrangements of economy of time, economy of labour and economy of money are absolutely unknown in our public departments.' How

would all these fine opinions fare now that he was himself the Minister responsible? And the Liberal papers did not delay to prophesy ‘his certain repudiation in office of every principle of economy and of that policy of inquiry which he had so eloquently professed in Opposition.’ And that, again, was a matter which time would soon resolve.

One shrewd warning came from a friend. ‘Can Goschen by any means whatever,’ wrote Lord Justice FitzGibbon on July 27, ‘be induced to take the Exchequer? I suppose you think me uncomplimentary in such a suggestion. I am not. Age and financial experience have immense weight in that post out-of-doors, and I confess I fear that you would bring down upon yourself a weight of hostility from the front, and would have a dead weight of jealousy from behind and beside you, that might make the place unbearable to yourself or so laborious that you could not stand it. Of course, if "the lead" must not be separated from the Exchequer, it can’t be helped; but if I were you I would rather not be obliged to carry as Leader the financial reputation of the State in addition to the rest of the load. The English are your sheet-anchor, and finance is their pole-star; and a middle-aged commercial Chancellor would make them easy in their minds, when you could not.’ Of this more anon.

The re-election of Mr. Matthews on his appointment to the Home Office caused various embarrassments in East Birmingham and elsewhere. His opponent, Mr. Alderman Cook, who had been defeated as a Gladstonian Liberal at the General Election, now promised to oppose anything like the Land Bill of the late Government, to insist upon the retention of the Irish members at Westminster and to grant to Ireland only a Parliament subordinate to the Parliament of the United Kingdom. Mr. Chamberlain was thus placed in a position of extreme difficulty, for it was clear that without his support the Home Secretary would probably be defeated; and yet how could Mr. Chamberlain

oppose the Radical candidate who had almost exactly adopted his platform? Lord Randolph Churchill, however, put the greatest possible pressure upon him. 'The election of Matthews,' he wrote (August 7), 'is almost *vital* to me; and I feel sure, if other things are equal, you will stretch a point in my favour.' And again on the 9th: 'This much arises clear and plain out of all that is doubtful and dark in Birmingham politics. If Matthews wins, the credit goes to you; it is your victory. If he loses, it is Schnadhorst's victory, and a pretty hulla-balloo he will make.' Thus exhorted Mr. Chamberlain took a very definite and decided step forward. The Radical Unionists refused at his instance to support Mr. Cook, and the Home Secretary was ultimately returned unopposed. 'I am delighted,' wrote Lord Randolph (August 12). 'I expect the Midland Conservative Club will put up a statue to you, which I shall have to unveil.'

Mr. Matthews' appointment caused heart-burnings in another quarter.

The Secretary of the Scottish Protestant Alliance wrote in haste to Lord Randolph Churchill:—

I have the honour to inform you that at a meeting in Glasgow yesterday of the directors of the Scottish Protestant Alliance the recent appointment of a Roman Catholic to the Cabinet office of Home Secretary was considered, when the following resolution was unanimously adopted: 'That as the Papacy claims universal supremacy over all Sovereigns and their subjects, as Roman Catholics can no longer render an undivided allegiance to Protestant Princes, and as the avowed aim of the Papacy is to reduce Britain to the subjection of the Vatican, this meeting protests against the elevation of Roman Catholics to positions of power and trust in the British Empire.'

The Chancellor of the Exchequer sent an answer without undue delay:—

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall: September 9.

Sir,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter enclosing a copy of a resolution passed by the directors of the Scottish Protestant Alliance, and, in reply, to remark that I observe with astonishment and regret that, in this age of enlightenment and general toleration, persons professing to be educated and intelligent can arrive at conclusions so senseless and irrational as those which are set forth in the aforesaid resolution.

I am, Sir,
Yours faithfully,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Of the two courses which lay open—to reassemble in October for an autumn session or to sit through August and obtain enough money at once to last till February—the Cabinet selected the second. In the interval necessitated by the re-election of Ministers the policy to be submitted to Parliament was settled.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Confidential.

10 Downing Street, Whitehall: August 20, 1886.

My dear Randolph,—It has occurred to me, thinking over the list of measures of private members you read to me this morning, that if we have to make up our Cabinet mind over all of them we

shall have a great deal of trouble and possibly some friction. A difficulty arises specially in the case of the Peers. With these small measures the Peers can practically do what they like. But what they like may very often be inconvenient for the Cabinet to profess and act upon in the House of Commons. It may often happen that some of the followers, or even of the members, of the Government in the Commons could not, without offending their constituents, take the line which the Conservative Peers would naturally take, and which they will not be withheld from taking without a great deal of discontent. I want you to think whether the following *modus vivendi* might not be possible. Our position as a Ministry is very peculiar. We have not a majority except on certain vital questions. Might we not fairly say that we will only be responsible for the guidance of Parliament on the questions which we ourselves submit to it? All questions submitted by independent members, unless they affect our Executive action or the measures we have proposed, we shall treat as open questions, taking no collective responsibility for the decision of Parliament upon them. This is in the sense of Chamberlain's recommendation that we should have *no* vital questions. We cannot go quite as far as that, but it is sound advice up to a certain point. Open questions were much more common when I entered Parliament than they are now; but as we are entering again upon the period of precarious majorities the system will have to be resumed. Pray think of this. I see great difficulties if we have to decide, as a Government, on all the fads.

Yours very truly,
Salisbury.

The new Parliament, having re-elected Mr. Peel Speaker on August 5, met for the transaction of business on the 19th. The Royal Speech briefly declared that the ordinary work of the year had been interrupted, 'in order that the sense of Her Majesty's people might be taken on certain important proposals with regard to the government of Ireland,' and that the result of that appeal had been 'to confirm the conclusion to which the late Parliament had come.' In view of the 'prolonged and exceptional labours' to which the members had been subjected, the Sovereign

abstained from recommending any measures except those which were essential to the conduct of the public service during the remaining portion of the financial year. As, furthermore, the Chancellor of the Exchequer drily announced that 'for the convenience of honourable members' the Government would take on themselves the responsibility of putting down notices of opposition to all the private members' Bills and notices of motion which appeared on the order paper, the only task demanded of the House of Commons was to terminate the provisional arrangements which had been made for Supply and to vote the remaining Estimates of the last Parliament.

The Address to the Crown was moved by Colonel King-Harman. Lord Randolph Churchill arranged that Mr. Maclean, the member for Oldham, who had formerly opposed him at such a critical moment on the Council of the National Union, should second it. Mr. Gladstone spoke with admirable temper, as not forgetting 'what is due to a Government which has just taken office.' But the interest of the assembly was concentrated upon the young Minister who had cut so swift and strange a path to power. When Lord Randolph rose, as Leader of the House, to follow Mr. Gladstone, an intense hush of expectancy and anxiety prevailed. In spite of all his skill and ease as a speaker, his nervousness was apparent. Mr. Smith dwells on it in a letter to his wife which has since been published. But he spoke with dignity and strength and his lucid, ordered statement left no feeling of inequality in the minds of those who had just listened to the greatest of Parliamentarians. Although the Irish were inclined to interrupt derisively, the House was generally sympathetic; and loud and long were the Tory cheers when the speaker ended.

The policy towards Ireland which he declared, was definite and simple. It is the same policy which the reader will already have remarked in a memorandum to Lord Salisbury after the election of 1885, from which during the

remainder of his life Lord Randolph never diverged either in one direction or the other. The Irish Question presented itself, he said, in three aspects—social order, the Land question and Local Government. The late Administration were of opinion that these three questions were indissolubly connected and their policy was to deal with them all by one measure. The new Government proposed to treat them to a very large extent as separate and distinct. The law was to be uncompromisingly maintained, whether against Orangemen in Belfast, which was still distracted by savage riots, or against Nationalists in Kerry, where a grave increase in 'Moonlighting' and boycotting had been recorded. Sir Redvers Buller would be sent forthwith to take all necessary measures. In regard to land—which subject a Royal Commission was also to examine—the Government would not encourage any extension of the principle of revision of rent by the direct interposition of the State; but would rather aim at the creation of a general system of single ownership by the influence and leverage of the credit of the State. The material resources of Ireland were to be developed after inquiry by grants from the British Exchequer in three distinct channels: first, the creation of a deep-sea fishing industry on the west coast of Ireland by the construction of harbours of refuge and the connection of those harbours with the main lines of rapid communication; secondly, the improvement and extension of the railway, light railway and tramway system; and, thirdly, the construction of those great arterial drainage works for the Shannon, the Bann, and the Barrow, which prosperous agriculture seemed to require, but which were far too considerable to be attempted by the resources of single localities.

Upon Local Government, decisive action would be taken. 'When Parliament reassembles at the beginning of February next, the Government are sanguine that they will be prepared with definite proposals on that large question.

Their object will be, as far as possible, to eliminate party feelings and to secure for the consideration of the question as large an amount of Parliamentary co-operation as can be obtained; so that whatever settlement may be arrived at may not be regarded as a political triumph of either party, but rather in the nature of a final and lasting settlement.... The great sign-posts of our policy are equality, similarity and, if I may use such a word, simultaneity of treatment, so far as is practicable, in the development of a genuinely popular system of government in all the four countries which form the United Kingdom.' He ended by declaring in simple terms that the verdict of the constituencies for the maintenance of the Parliamentary Union must be considered final and irreversible.

Such was the policy which Lord Randolph Churchill was permitted to declare with the assent of the Prime Minister and of the Cabinet. In order that there might be no misunderstandings, he took the precaution of writing out the actual words and submitting them beforehand to the principal Ministers. It was the policy of his own heart. It is the policy which, in spite of some lamentable lapses, of many purposeless and vexatious delays and of more than one incident of prejudice or even tyranny, has upon the whole, as history records, been carried laboriously forward by Unionist Administrations during nearly twenty years and which in the end, whatever problems it has left unsolved, has notably advanced the social, political and economic stability of the Irish people.

Lord Randolph Churchill was much praised for his speech. The Conservatives were in high spirits, and the newspapers next morning emphasised the favourable impression which had been produced. Yet he does not seem himself to have been much affected by these tributes; for on being asked the next day 'whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce any changes in the fiscal laws of the country by placing duties on imported

manufactures, by taxing foreign corn, by countervailing bounties or in any other respect,' he replied, with an odd gleam of foresight or of humour: 'The ways and means for the year 1887-8 which the Government will propose to Parliament, will be communicated to the House on or about March 31 next by the person—whoever he may be—who at the time happens to be Chancellor of the Exchequer.'



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THE GRAND YOUNG MAN.

Shade of 'Dizzy,' loquitor:

You stand—at your age—where I stood after years
Of waiting on Fortune and working on fools.
Not forty! Unwearied by failures or fears.
To him who can use them are ever the tools,
But there's an advantage you'll scarce understand
In having the tools ready shaped to your hand.

Punch, August 7, 1886.

The debate on the Address and its amendments was protracted. It had opened with much calmness; but as it progressed the smouldering fires of the great encounter began to sparkle. In this flicker the deep antagonisms which the election had made permanent between friends and parties, became visible. Lord Hartington's speech on the third night was uncompromising. Standing in the midst of his old colleagues on the Front Opposition Bench, with much formal courtesy and weighty argument he made it plain that he would exert his whole strength to sustain the Ministry in power. He was heard by his party in moody silence, broken from time to time by Irish interruptions and Tory applause. Mr. Parnell, who moved next day an amendment of his own, took pains to cast back disdainfully, as trash unworthy of notice, the material aid to Irish resources which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had proffered. He spoke of the 'dishonesty of bolstering up the system of landlord and tenant in Ireland by the expenditure of large sums of money the repayment of which is quite uncertain and highly problematic,' and of the 'folly of building harbours of refuge for fishing-boats that do not exist.' He derided the proposal to spend three-quarters of a million on the arterial drainage of the Bann and the Shannon, where nothing less than ten millions would suffice. Fed by such fuel, an ugly glow grew gradually in the House.

The sixth day of the debate on the Address was stormy.

It began with an unexpected motion for the adjournment of the House as a protest against the despatch of Sir Redvers Buller to Kerry. The member who moved it, Mr. Edward Russell, made an elaborate and indignant speech. He enlarged on the iniquity of employing a military officer accustomed to dealing with savage tribes to discharge duties which properly belonged to the civil magistrate. Lord Randolph dealt with this motion in a summary and even audacious manner. 'In the opinion of the honourable gentleman,' said the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 'the appointment of Sir Redvers Buller is a startling innovation in our Constitution, a serious blow to civil and religious liberty, a wilful invasion of the immutable principles of justice, and other things of that serious kind. He holds strong opinions and he prophesies the most alarming results. He declares that all Kerry will immediately take an active part in the proceedings of the "Moonlighters" and that all Ireland will very shortly be involved in a general conflagration. Now, sir, I do not complain of the honourable member holding these opinions; they are opinions he is perfectly entitled to hold and to express. What I want the House to do is to compare the opinions he holds with the course he suggests. What is the course he proposes? He proposes that the House of Commons should immediately adjourn. What will be the effect of that course on Sir Redvers Buller or his appointment? Absolutely none. The House would adjourn, if they agreed with the honourable member, and, like the Emperor Titus, might exclaim that they had lost a day; but, before the House met again, Sir Redvers Buller would be well on his way to Kerry.

'As to employing military officers in civil positions, had not Mr. Gladstone after the London riots appointed Sir Charles Warren, an officer on the active list, liable to be called away at any moment on military service, not to look after "Moonlighters," but after the civilised inhabitants of

London?' He suggested that the motion had been brought forward to delay the speech which Mr. Chamberlain, who had obtained the adjournment on the previous night, was known to be about to deliver. No greater compliment could be paid to a member than that his opponents should show that they feared what he was going to say. 'I have to announce,' he concluded, 'that Her Majesty's Government entirely decline to take any part in the discussion.'

This was hard hitting, but it succeeded. 'Lord Randolph Churchill,' said the *Times* the next day, 'pricked the bubble with a Disraelian dexterity of touch.' Angry speeches in reply failed to sustain the debate. The fate of the motion was never for a moment doubtful, and on a division it was rejected by a majority of 241 against 146.

The motion for the adjournment being thus brushed aside, the consideration of Mr. Parnell's amendment was resumed. The treatment accorded to Mr. Chamberlain's speech afforded some foundation for Lord Randolph's charge. He was repeatedly interrupted both from above and below the gangway. Mr. Speaker was invited to notice the smallest deviation from the strictest relevancy. Cries of fierce derision saluted him from the Irish benches. The men around him did not conceal their discontent. And in his turn he struck back with dexterous severity. Ceremonious language, much 'right honourable befriending,' smoothly-turned sentences, soft, purring accents, ineradicable antagonism; such was his speech. It was the first of many similar episodes in this new Parliament. Yet some respect is due to the forbearance of the Liberal majority. For six weary years the Liberal-Unionist leaders sat on the Front Opposition Bench. Their followers held the balance of every division. Their authority sustained the Conservative Government. Their debating skill was always at hand when all else failed. They supported Coercion; they justified Mitchelstown; they even defended the Special Commission; and with

decisive effect. Yet never once, not even at times of sharpest indignation, were they denied by those who surrounded them their freedom of debate.

The Government were naturally delighted at this decided support. 'You made a splendid speech last night,' wrote Lord Randolph to Mr. Chamberlain (August 27). 'It is curious, but true, that you have more effect on the Tory party than either Salisbury or myself. Many of them had great doubts about our policy till you spoke.'

On September 1, Mr. Sexton brought forward an amendment drawing attention to the Belfast riots, and this, of course, served as a convenient peg on which to fasten an almost interminable series of attacks upon Lord Randolph Churchill. At least twenty-five persons had been actually killed in the streets and many hundreds injured or arrested. All was attributed to the epigram, 'Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right.' Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was able to make a good defence. In spite of a long and solemn denunciation from Sir William Harcourt, the Chancellor of the Exchequer remained silent; but the debate ran on, full of life and spite, until on September 3 Mr. Labouchere sought to provoke him by embodying a direct charge in a special amendment. 'Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird,' said Lord Randolph piously; 'and of all the unskilful and clumsy Parliamentary fowlers of whose manœuvres it has been my lot to be a witness, I never met a sorrier practitioner than the honourable member. In the various snares and wits and wiles with which he distinguished himself in the last Parliament he only succeeded in this—that he made himself the laughing-stock of the Parliament and of the public; and he appears to be desirous to add to-night to his already great reputation.' 'There was not,' the speaker declared, with some boldness, 'a shred of a shadow of a shade, or a shade of a shadow of a shred' of foundation for such charges. So the attacks were brushed contemptuously away, and the Government

majority did not fail in the Lobby to endorse their Leader's disdain.

On September 3 the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved a resolution securing precedence for the Committee of Ways and Means and of Supply. So far as form was concerned, he based himself upon the precedent of 1841. But he ventured further upon an earnest yet restrained appeal to the House. 'We have pledged ourselves as a Government to produce at the meeting of Parliament next year such schemes of legislation as we may be able to decide upon and mature in the autumn and winter. If the proceedings of this session were to be greatly protracted and if the energies of members and Ministers were to be greatly exhausted by them, it would become very difficult for the Government to summon Parliament as early next year. I ask no consideration on behalf of the Government, but in the interests of Parliament and of the country. This motion is intended to wind up, with as much expedition as is reasonable and decent, the business of the session, and to allow members to separate in time for the annual recess. I would not for a moment wish the House to understand that I am advocating a rapid or slovenly discussion of the Estimates. I have always protested against that and always shall. I ask only that the House will concentrate its attention on the Estimates and proceed without unusual dilatoriness and loss of time. The difficulties which lie in the future before the Government, are very great indeed. No one can be more deeply impressed with their magnitude than my colleagues and myself; and certainly I see no possibility of arriving at anything like a solution of those difficulties unless the House is prepared to give a reasonable amount of time during which the Government may take thought for a future so anxious and grave.'

The effect of this appeal, conjoined as it was with a promise that Mr. Parnell should have an opportunity for bringing forward his Tenants' Relief Bill, was to induce

the House to consent without a division to endow the Government with full control over public time. Lord Randolph, however, thought it proper to write a special letter of explanation to Lord Hartington, fearing apparently lest the Whig leader should become suspicious of any compact with the Nationalist party:—

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W.: September 5, 1886.

Dear Lord Hartington,—You will have observed in the papers that the Government gave a promise to Parnell to afford him facilities (*i.e.* a night) for laying his land proposals in the form of a Bill before Parliament.

Whether this promise was a wise one or not, I will not say. There were no doubt grave objections to any concession to Parnell of any sort or kind, but I think if you had been in the House last week you might have been of opinion that the objections to a course of stolid resistance on the part of the Government were perhaps greater.

However this may be I own that I am extremely anxious that (if possible) when the Bill does come on, the Government may receive your support in opposing it. Of course the Bill will only be Parnell's original amendment to the Address in another form, and the Government will not give way an inch to him under any consideration.

But Parnell has undoubtedly hopes, which if they are unsound cannot be too clearly and speedily demonstrated to be unsound, that he can make out a case so plausible for the tenants on the score of inability to pay that he may secure the support or at least the abstention of the Liberal Unionists; and of course if he were successful in this the moral strength of the Government would be seriously diminished, with corresponding disadvantage to other, greater and more common interests.

I therefore trouble you with these few lines now, though I do not suppose the discussion on the Bill can arise till next week at the earliest.

Believe me to be
Very faithfully yours,
Randolph S. Churchill.

A friendly message emboldened the Minister to write

more freely of his difficulties:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Hartington.

Private.

September 13, 1886.

The position of this Government must always be most precarious. It may have a long life; but it is a rickety infant, requiring the most careful handling. The condition of the House of Commons, the recklessness and utter lack of all sense of responsibility on the part of the Opposition, their guerilla character and the want of a leader who can control, is most alarming. There is no precedent that I know of in our history of such a combination of ominous circumstances. I hear you are going to India; and if this means your absence from the House till March or April, I think it right to tell you that without your support in Parliament this Government cannot last. The assaults of an Opposition unrestrained by your presence will be too desperate for me to sustain. A state of great confusion will arise; the Government will go, and you will have to try your hand. I feel awfully alone in the House of Commons, and am glad to grasp an opportunity of placing things before you as I look at them.

Lord Hartington to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Private.

Brantingham Thorpe, Brough, Yorkshire: September 14, 1886.

My dear Churchill,—I received your letter this morning before leaving London, and am glad to know so fully your opinions on the position in the House of Commons. It is quite true that I have some doubt, which I expressed to Sir M. Hicks-Beach, as to resisting the whole of Parnell's Bill. I do not think that you can leave expediency out of the question in dealing with the rights of Irish landlords. They have very few friends; and if they are encouraged to strain their rights, and if disorder could justly be put down to their account, they would have still fewer.

It is quite clear that the intention is to fight the Nationalist battle on the question of the land during next winter, and it will be to Parnell's advantage that there should be as many evictions as possible. Your best chance is that he will not succeed in inducing tenants who can pay to risk eviction. But if landlords

evict wholesale tenants who cannot pay, he may succeed in getting up another very dangerous agitation. I thought, therefore, that this was to a great extent a question for the Irish Government, and if they considered a check on eviction necessary I should have been inclined to grant it. But, as I understand, they think that the Courts have already a considerable discretion which may be sufficient, and undoubtedly any concession to Parnell would do harm unless the evil of resistance is still greater.

I do not think that I misunderstood your action in giving Parnell a day for discussion of his Bill, though I do not know the exact reasons for the decision. But I certainly thought that, while you were quite right to keep your absolute freedom of action in regard to the Bill, you were not precluded from accepting any part of it which the Irish Government might on further consideration think necessary.

I shall always be very glad to communicate with you on Parliamentary matters when you think it desirable, and can very well understand the anxiety and responsibility of your position.

Yours very truly,
Hartington.

The Address was disposed of in the first week of September and the House plunged at once into Supply. Forthwith obstruction became patent and flagrant. A select, determined and well-organised band, among whom Mr. Labouchere was the best known, took charge of national interests. They did not disdain trifles, however small; nor grudge study, however laborious. It was the last chance of a minority under the unreformed procedure. No Supply Rule, automatically fixing limits, regulated the votes. No Closure aided the Minister. The Committee debated to their hearts' content, and on after that till they were sick and weary. Business crawled forward on its belly in the small hours of the morning. Any attempt on the part of the Leader of the House to accelerate its passage was met by alternate motions to report progress and to adjourn. Lord Randolph was teased with mischievous satisfaction upon

all the former manœuvres of the Fourth Party. It was a severe, if appropriate, expiation. Nothing but imperturbable temper and physical endurance availed. The Leader of the House was always in his place. He listened to all the discussions. He defended every detail of the Civil Service Estimates himself. On warlike stores, on public accounts, on salaries in the House of Lords, on secret service and town holdings and polluted rivers, on poor ratepayers and gold coinage, he was found suave, adroit, and well informed.

'The Chancellor of the Exchequer,' observed the *Times*, not always a friendly critic (September 17), 'is making great progress in the art of so answering questions as to keep the House in a good temper. This he does sometimes by judicious concessions, sometimes by a sly turn of humour, sometimes by a touch of good-natured irony.' Indeed, he used every Parliamentary art and all the resources of his many-sided character. Sometimes he coaxed and sometimes he complained. Sometimes he resisted with vehemence only to make surrender an hour or two later more valued. Once, as has been shown, he appealed earnestly and with success to the House. Once he rapped out that the tactics of the obstructionists were 'not conceived in the public interest,' and after an angry debate made a reconciliation with them and secured incidentally some progress. He knew the House in all its moods. He humoured it and offended it and soothed it again with practised deliberation. Yet he always appeared to be its servant. Ministers and Governments were but the respectful stewards of the public service. Parliament had rights and authority over them, to which, however capriciously asserted, they must bow: 'My own opinion,' he said when his attention was roughly drawn to a criticism of the Public Accounts Committee on some departmental practice, 'is that the Comptroller and Auditor-General and the Public Accounts Committee, acting together, ought to

be a superior authority to the Treasury; and that, if they distinctly lay down a rule as to the expenditure of money, it is the business of the Treasury to acknowledge that authority as superior to their own.' The member, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, who had complained, was so contented with this soft answer that, after congratulating the Chancellor of the Exchequer 'upon the breadth of view with which he always looks at matters of this kind,' he withdrew his motion for the reduction of the vote. Thus, inch by inch, Supply crept forward.

The Irish members watched Lord Randolph hourly. He and they had obstructed so often together that both sides knew enough of each other's ways not to be deceived by blandishments or manœuvres which would captivate the innocent spectator. Soured and indignant as they were—not unnaturally—by the turn of events, in their hearts they nourished a certain secret sympathy for the conqueror. They enjoyed seeing the game played scientifically, and they realised how different their new antagonist was from the prosaic authoritarians who chafe the hearts of Celtic peoples. At last the Estimates were done. 'It is due to the Chancellor of the Exchequer,' said the *Times* (September 16), 'to say that no Leader of the House of Commons in recent years has met obstruction, open and disguised, with more exemplary patience.'

The general satisfaction of the Conservative party at Lord Randolph's management of the House of Commons found expression in much solicitude for his health. 'Don't worry yourself and get knocked up,' wrote Mr. Chamberlain (September 1). 'I do not believe that the Irish will keep you sweltering very much longer.' 'You really must take more care of yourself,' Mr. Balfour insisted. 'Now that the main business of the Address is got over, I cannot see why you should spend so much time in your place in the House.' And Lord Salisbury on the 14th: 'I am afraid your work is getting intolerably hard. Don't sit up

too much.'

'I am particularly commanded,' said Lord Iddesleigh, writing from Balmoral on the 16th, 'by the Queen to say that Her Majesty was greatly amused by the contents of your box last night. I suppose you won't understand this message without the gloss—there was a sprinkling of tobacco in it.

'Her Majesty is very sympathetic over the sufferings of our friends in the House of Commons. You have indeed a very hard task and it is not very clear how it is to be lightened.'

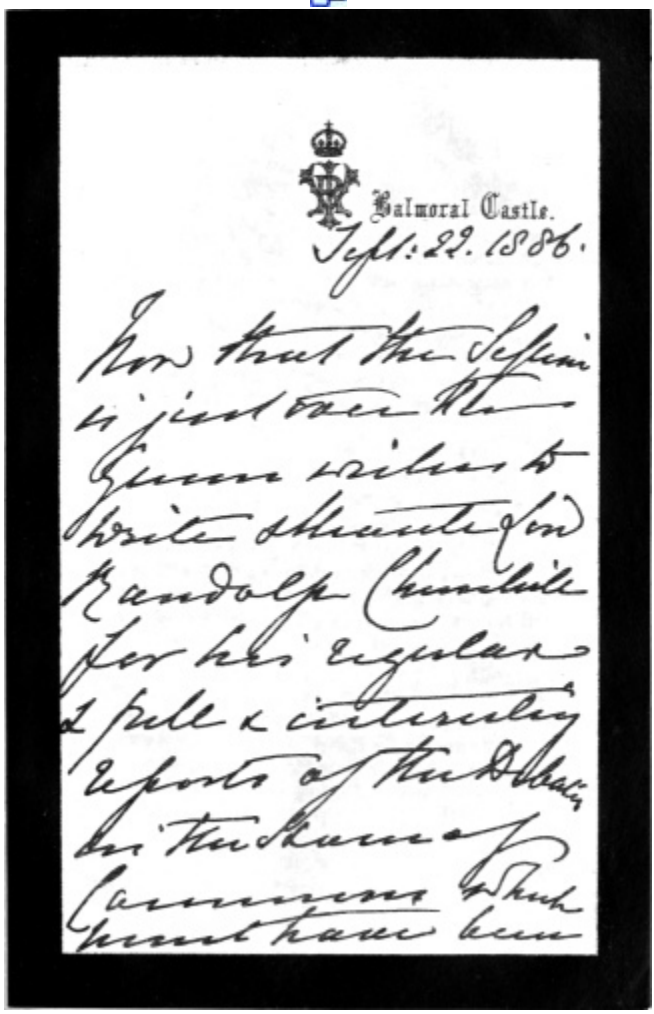
Only Mr. Parnell's Bill remained after the Estimates were passed. Two days (September 20 and 21) were occupied in its discussion. The Bill was badly drawn. Mr. Gladstone supported it in principle; but was forced to object to nearly every detail. Lord Hartington was severe in his condemnation. The Government declared they would have nothing whatever to do with it. Mr. Morley alone was fortunate in his advocacy. It was rejected by 297 to 202. Ministers were much advantaged by having persuaded their opponents to expose themselves to the perils of constructive policies.

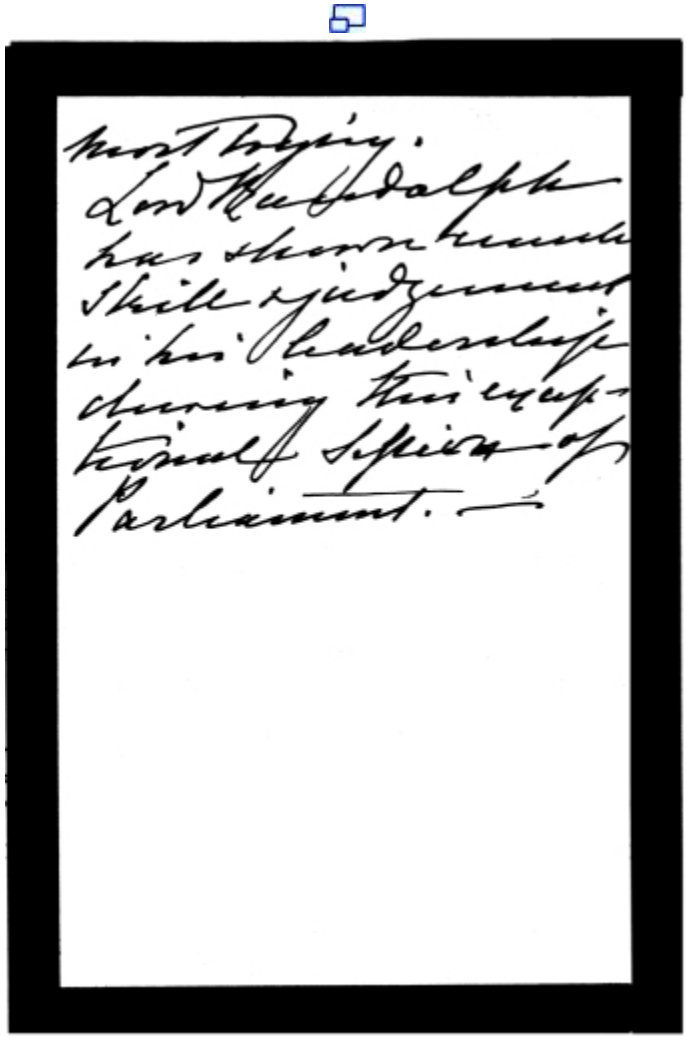
Lord Randolph Churchill ended the session amid golden opinions. Congratulations and goodwill flowed in upon him from all sides. He himself was in high spirits. 'You must find it very hard work,' said an admirer, 'leading the House and at the same time being at the Exchequer.' 'Not half such hard work as it was getting there,' was the droll answer. The party newspapers were loud in their praises. All doubts about his tact and patience were dispersed, and Conservative members hurried off to the country feeling that a great man had arisen among them, and that 'Elijah's mantle' had lighted upon no unworthy shoulders. The Sovereign wrote him an autograph letter of exceptional favour:—

Balmoral Castle: September 22, 1886.

Now that the session is just over, the Queen wishes to write and thank Lord Randolph Churchill for his regular and full and interesting reports of the debates in the House of Commons, which must have been most trying.

Lord Randolph has shown much skill and judgment in his leadership during this exceptional session of Parliament.





Difficulties abroad were soon added to the difficulties at home. At the end of August foreign affairs in Eastern Europe were suddenly plunged into crisis through the kidnapping of Prince Alexander by Bulgarian officers under Russian influence, and his consequent abdication. The Chanceries of Europe throbbed with excitement and

apprehension. To Lord Randolph Churchill the news was specially unwelcome. He did not concern himself too much about Constantinople, and cared nothing at all for Turkey. The sentiments which had in 1878 induced him to write to Sir Charles Dilke, offering, if the Liberals would support him, to move a vote of censure upon Lord Beaconsfield's foreign policy, were unaltered. The freedom and independence of the Slav, Bulgarian and Hellenic peoples seemed to him still a wise and lofty object; but any sympathies which he had for stifled or struggling nationalities were strictly controlled. Great Britain should not shrink from her share in the responsibilities of Europe; but no duty of isolated intervention lay upon her. He had, moreover, been deeply impressed by the satisfactory manner in which the Afghan frontier dispute had been settled. He had become much more hopeful of a good understanding with Russia than when he had first gone to the India Office. Above all, he was resolved to offer no wanton provocation which might lead by Russian reprisals in Asia to the reopening of a question of such grave importance to the tranquillity of the Indian Empire.

The proceedings of the Foreign Office seriously disquieted him. As early as September 4 he wrote to Lord Salisbury: 'I have just read Lord Iddesleigh's telegram to Lascelles, telling him to prevent Alexander from abdicating and to cause him to appeal to the Great Powers. I think this is very unfair on Alexander. Iddesleigh knows perfectly well that the Great Powers won't move a finger, and he knows we cannot act outside a most Platonic range. I am afraid of our incurring moral responsibilities towards the Prince and his people which may lead us on far without previous calculation.... I do most earnestly trust that we may not be drifting into strong and marked action in the East of Europe. It will place us in great peril in the House of Commons, politically and financially.' And again on the

6th: ‘Iddesleigh’s last telegram to Lascelles is really *un peu trop fort*. I do think we ought to have an immediate Cabinet before such messages are sent. I look at the series together; the two first were startling, but recognised European concert, which the last altogether flings aside. W. H. Smith concurs strongly that the Cabinet ought to meet. Any moment it may leak out at Sofia that we are taking strong action.... Lord John Manners made a remark to me at 4.30 this afternoon symptomatic of surprise that there had been no Cabinet. As you know I loathe Cabinets, you will feel that this is disinterested; but I own to being frightened.’ The Prime Minister consented to summon his colleagues, adding merely that he and Lord Iddesleigh were agreed as to the policy, but that the Cabinet could overrule them if it thought fit. The Cabinet, however, cleared the air and led to better understandings.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W.: September 15, 1886.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—Another desperate night in the H. of C. You may imagine how bad was the Irish conduct when Beach’s last words to me were: ‘I am now all for a strong Clôture.’ ...

M. de Staal has just been to see me. He declaimed against White.... I said that in view of our occupation of Egypt it was necessary that we should have a representative at Constantinople of character and resolution. He said the Bulgarians had done something or other rude to the Emperor’s portrait at Sofia. He spoke of the great difficulty Russia had in coming to an understanding with Austria on account of the Hungarians, who thought of nothing but ‘49.’ He tried to ascertain my views as to our interests in the Balkan territories; my reply was (speaking only for myself) that our chief interests were Egypt and India, and that anything which affected our interests in those countries would necessitate very strong action on our part. Speaking generally, I said that with Ireland on our hands, our foreign policy, except under great pressure, would naturally be pacific. He asked about the position of the Government. I told him that Gladstone was hopelessly out of it, and was no longer young enough to get into it again; that his principal supporters were

hopelessly discredited and divided; that Hartington possessed great balancing influence, but could not look to forming a Government himself; that whether this particular Government lasted or no, power was with the Conservative party, whose political organisation and strength were increasing and improving every day; that such a fact as London returning forty-three Conservatives against four Gladstonians ought to have great weight with him in appreciating the Conservative position.

Finally, I hinted at an understanding with Russia by which she should give us real support in Egypt, abandon her pressure upon Afghanistan, in which case she might settle the Balkan matters as she would—or, rather, as she *could*!

Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

A few days later Lord Salisbury was able to retire to his villa near Dieppe, although the situation still continued critical and obscure. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, delighted by Lord Salisbury's proposal to change the British Agent at Sofia, seems to have made great efforts to bring his opinions nearer to those of his chief. On the 23rd he reports an interview with Count Hatzfeldt. 'I told him that I had been thinking much over what had passed between us about the East of Europe, and that I had come to this conclusion as a member of the House of Commons and from a House of Commons point of view: Any anti-Russian policy which involved England taking the lead ostensibly on the side of Turkey, either about Bulgaria or even Constantinople, would probably place the Unionist party in great peril, might fail to receive the support of the constituencies, and would be savagely assaulted. An anti-Russian policy, however, in which Austria took the lead supported by Germany, we could, I thought, well fall in with, and hold our own easily in the House of Commons. He said: 'That is all very well; but what will be wanting, will be Germany's support of Austria. Our eyes are riveted on France.' I said, if that was really so, of course we could not play; but that it occurred to me that it was not

impossible that if Germany and Austria took the lead against Russian advance and in defence of Bulgarian independence, and we followed and joined loyally and thoroughly, I thought that would seem to entail logically action on our part, diplomatic or otherwise, against France if she tried to be nasty. He seemed much interested by this, and I impressed upon him at parting not to forget that it must be to Germany's interest that the Unionist party and the Government should endure and remain strong; that foreign policy on our part which followed the lead of Germany and Austria would not try that strength too high, and might be carried far; but that foreign policy against Russia in the East of Europe which left the initiative to England would be a policy too dangerous, seeing the other great interests we had to defend, for us to contemplate. I told him these were mere House of Commons views, for his own private information for whatever they were worth, and that he was not to consider them in any other light.

'I don't know whether you will think this expression shows any change of views from what I have expressed to you recently. I do not think it does really....'

'If Russia attacked Constantinople,' wrote the Prime Minister in a letter approving generally of this discourse, 'and all the other Powers refused to intervene, I am rather disposed to the idea that we should have to act in the Dardanelles; but I hope the contingency is too improbable to require us to trouble about it.' The Chancellor of the Exchequer replied meekly that he would be quite agreeable to 'a piratical seizure of Gallipoli.' 'There is,' he adds, 'a practical flavour about such a step which would commend it to the most Radical and peace-loving House of Commons.' Lord Salisbury detected a flavour of levity in this answer.

'You are naturally sarcastic,' he wrote on the 28th, 'on my Dardanelles, and I hope the matter will not come up in our time. But the possession by Russia of Constantinople

will be an awkward piece of news for the Minister who receives it. The prestige effect on the Asiatic populations will be enormous, and I pity the English party that has this item on their record. They will share the fate of Lord North's party.

'At the same time I know the great military objections there are to the Dardanelles scheme.'

Further activity at the Foreign Office renewed the correspondence. On the 30th Lord Randolph wrote again urgently to the Prime Minister:—

I have read with the utmost dismay Iddesleigh's telegram to Lascelles instructing him to inform the Bulgarian Government that our Government approve of the reply sent by them to the Russian Note.

What is the reason for this apparently isolated and certainly most risky action? I cannot make out that an opinion was ever asked for directly, which makes such instructions all the more strange. Have we any right to express approval in so pointed and uncalled for a manner, without at the same time letting those poor Bulgarians know that beyond the merest diplomatic action we cannot go? I thought, when you told me some days ago that Lascelles was to be changed that that meant a modification of policy. I see no use in changing the agent in this case, if the policy to which objection has been taken is to be even more accentuated.

Why cannot Iddesleigh consider the propriety of trying to act at Sofia in conjunction with the Austrian, German and Italian Governments, and, if joint action is for the moment impossible, abstaining from any action at all? We shall never get joint action while Iddesleigh keeps rushing in where Bismarck fears to tread. What I would like to see aimed at would be a Second Berlin Memorandum—this time addressed, not to Turkey, but to Russia, and England joining in. But all chance of such a document, which would imply irresistible forces, fades further and further into the distance.

Our action with Austria means war with Russia. Our action with Austria and Germany means peace. But I feel sure that our present niggling, meddling, intriguing, fussy policy is gaining for

us the contempt and dislike of Bismarck every day. I do pray you to consider these matters. It was supposed that Lord Iddesleigh would act under your direction. I feel certain that much that he has done has been done on his own account. After all, it is very fine for him now; but the day of trial will come when all this has to be explained and defended in the House of Commons.

Now I have risked your wrath by inflicting this jeremiad upon you, but it is the last, for I go abroad Sunday and shall know no more till I return.

'Like you,' replied Lord Salisbury from Puys, on October 1, 'I am not happy about foreign affairs, but not entirely for the same reason. I do not wholly take your view about our attitude towards Russia. I consider the loss of Constantinople would be the ruin of our party and a heavy blow to the country: and therefore I am anxious to delay by all means Russia's advance to that goal. A pacific and economical policy is up to a certain point very wise: but it is evident that there is a point beyond which it is not wise either in a patriotic or party sense—and the question is where we shall draw the line. I draw it at Constantinople. My belief is that the main strength of the Tory party, both in the richer and poorer classes, lies in its association with the honour of the country. It is quite true that if, in order to save that honour, we have to run into expense, we shall suffer as a party—that is human nature. But what I contend is, that we shall suffer as a party more —much more—if the loss of Constantinople stands on our record.... I am therefore rather uneasy about foreign affairs —for I am afraid you are prepared to give up Constantinople: and foreign Powers will be quick enough to find that divergence out. On the other hand I sympathise with you in some uneasiness as to the course of the Foreign Office. Many things, I fear, are not done—and I am disquieted at the result ... when I get back to England I may be able to exert a stronger influence.'

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W.: October 3, 1886.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—I was not able to write yesterday and thank you for your letter, as I had to go down to Dartford.

You must not think that I in any way disagree from what you urge about Constantinople. It is only that I have a great doubt whether the particular method and scheme of policy which was carried out at the time of the Crimean War, and again to a great extent in 1876-78, is the best. I doubt whether the people will support that method; and it seems to have this enormous disadvantage, that it enables Austria to lie back.

We can, I think, perfectly defend Constantinople by going in for the independence of Bulgaria; and we can best obtain that independence by persuading Austria to take the lead.

But no doubt the proceedings of Lascelles, and the probable proceedings at Constantinople of Sir W. White, are more in accordance with the old policy, which I fear is now impracticable, than with a modification of that policy.

Please do not suspect me of indifference to a matter on which you feel so strongly. My only business and object are to bring, in the best way I can, any policy which you wish carried out into favour with the House of Commons and the constituencies, so far as it may be possible for me to influence either. You must remember that you have not spoken on these matters either in the Lords or the country, and I am only anxious that you should find a *terrain* well prepared.

I am off to-morrow night and out of reach of everybody till 23rd.

Lord Randolph Churchill's speech at Dartford (October 2) was probably the most important of his life. Upwards of twenty thousand Conservatives were gathered to receive him. Nearly a hundred addresses from all parts of the country were presented to him by deputations. The town was bright with flags by day and fireworks by night. Standing upon an improvised platform among the picturesque glades of Oakfield Park, and backed by the solid phalanx of Conservative members which Kent had returned to Parliament, the Chancellor of the Exchequer unfolded to an audience, variously computed at from

twelve to fourteen thousand persons, the future legislative programme of the Government. He extolled the loyalty of the Unionist Liberals. He reiterated the declarations upon Ireland which he had made to the House of Commons. In order that the Unionist party might legislate, as he described it, upon ascertained facts and not, like Mr. Gladstone, by intuition, he recounted the appointment of the four Royal Commissions on Irish Land, on Irish Development, on Currency and on Departmental Expenditure. He urged a complete reform of House of Commons procedure, including the institution of the Closure by a simple majority. He announced that the Government would introduce a Bill which should provide facilities, through the operation of local authorities, for the acquisition by the agricultural labourer of freehold plots and allotments of land. And in this connection he spoke gratefully of the pioneer work which Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Jesse Collings had performed. He held out the promise of an alteration in the law of tithe, so that payment should, in the first instance, be demanded of the landlord; and a threat to remodel railway rates so that the home producer should not be undercut by the foreigner. He mentioned a Land Bill for making the transfer of land easy and cheap; a broad reorganisation of Local Government with a new assessment and application of local taxation; and finally he said: 'I will not conceal from you that my own special object, to which I hope to devote whatever energy and strength or influence I may possess, is to endeavour to attain some genuine and considerable reduction of public expenditure and consequent reduction of taxation. I shall be bitterly disappointed if it is not in my power after one year, or at any rate after two years, to show to the public that a very honest and a very earnest effort has been made in that direction.' Such was the Tory Democratic programme. Nor should it be supposed that these were the unauthorised views of a single Minister. All these

legislative projects had received the consent of the Cabinet. Nearly all have since been passed by Conservative Administrations into law.

Then the speaker turned to foreign affairs, and here he contrived, without doing violence to his own convictions, to support faithfully and effectively in its general tenor Lord Salisbury's policy: but he used very different arguments from those which Conservative audiences were accustomed to applaud.

'We had every reason to hope,' he said, 'that the union of Eastern Roumelia with Bulgaria under the sovereignty of Prince Alexander would develop a prosperous and independent nation, in the growing strength of which might ultimately be found a peaceful and true solution of the Eastern Question. Those hopes have been for the moment to a great extent dashed. A brutal and cowardly conspiracy, consummated before the young community had had time to consolidate itself, was successful in this—that it paralysed the governing authority of the Prince and deprived Bulgaria of an honoured and trusted leader. The freedom and independence of Bulgaria, as well as of the kingdoms of Servia and Roumania, would appear to be seriously compromised. It has been said by some, and even by persons of authority and influence, that in the issues which are involved England has no material interest. Such an assertion would appear to me to be far too loose and general. The sympathy of England with liberty and with the freedom and independence of communities and nationalities, is of ancient origin, and has become the traditional direction of our foreign policy. The policy based on this strong sympathy is not so purely sentimental as a careless critic might suppose. It would be more correct, indeed, to describe such a policy as particular, and, in a sense, as selfish; for the precious liberties which we enjoy, and the freedom of Europe from tyranny and despotism, are in reality indissolubly connected. To

England Europe owes much of her modern popular freedom. It was mainly English effort which rescued Germany and the Netherlands from the despotism of King Philip of Spain, and after him from that of Louis XIV. of France. It was English effort which preserved the liberties of Europe from the desolating tyranny of Napoleon. In our own times our nation has done much, either by direct intervention or by energetic moral support, to establish upon firm foundations the freedom of Italy and of Greece.... A generation ago Germany and Austria were not so sensitive as they are now to the value of political liberty. Nor did they appreciate to its full extent the great stability of institutions which political liberty engenders; and on England devolved the duty—the honourable but dangerous duty—of setting an example and of leading the way. Those were the days of Lord Palmerston; but times have changed, and the freedom and the independence of the Danubian Principalities and of the Balkan nationalities are a primary and vital object in the policy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Those things being so, it may well be that England can honourably and safely afford to view with satisfaction that Power whose interests are most directly and vitally concerned, assuming the foremost part in this great international work. We must, of course, take it for granted, as I am doing, that the liberty-giving policy of the Treaty of Berlin will be carefully and watchfully protected. Whatever modification this great fact may enable us to make in our foreign policy, whatever diminution of isolated risk or sole responsibility this may enable us to effect, you may be certain of one thing—that there will be no sudden or violent departure by Her Majesty's present Government from those main principles of foreign policy which I have before alluded to, and which for nearly three centuries mark in strong, distinct and clear lines the course of the British Empire among the nations of the world.

'There are Powers in Europe who earnestly and honestly

desire to avoid war and to preserve peace, to content themselves with their possessions and their frontiers and to concentrate their energies on commercial progress and on domestic development. There are other Powers who do not appear to be so fortunately situated, and who, from one cause or another which it is not necessary to analyse or examine, betray from time to time a regrettable tendency towards contentious and even aggressive action. It is the duty of any British Government to exhaust itself in efforts to maintain the best and the most friendly relations with all foreign States and to lose no opportunity of offering friendly and conciliatory counsels for the purpose of mitigating national rivalries and of peacefully solving international disputes. But should circumstances arise which, from their grave and dangerous nature, should force the Government of the Queen to make a choice, it cannot be doubted that the sympathy—and, if necessary, even the support—of England will be given to those Powers who seek the peace of Europe and the liberty of peoples, and in whose favour our timely adhesion would probably, and without the use of force, decide the issue.'

It would be hard to say whether this speech made more stir at home or abroad. For more than a week the declarations upon British foreign policy were the chief theme of the Continental press. And in Berlin, Vienna and Rome they received a measure of welcome which grew as their phrasing was more carefully examined. Lord Randolph's outspoken condemnation of the Bulgarian kidnapping conspiracy was declared to give a satisfaction to the moral feelings of Christendom which had been looked for in vain in the late utterances of European statesmen. The announcement that Great Britain would take her part in the work of preserving international peace, and that her influence would be exerted upon the side of the Central Powers—not for the sake of the old pro-Turkish policy, but in the name of the liberties of the

Balkan peoples—was accepted with the utmost satisfaction in Berlin. The style of the declaration created an impression of calm authority; and 'Palmerston Redivivus' is an expression which repeatedly appears in the foreign despatches and articles of that time.



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'YOUTH ON THE PROW AND PLEASURE AT THE HELM!'
Punch, August 14. 1886.

At home the Conservative party was too much astonished to give vent immediately to any effective opinion. The party newspapers generally applauded the proposals and tone of the speech as 'temperate, reasonable, and practical.' The *Times* observed that the programme in its scope and fulness 'recalled the palmy days of Mr. Gladstone.' The Opposition, with evident disgust, denounced the Chancellor of the Exchequer as 'an unscrupulous opportunist' who had stolen the policies of his Radical opponents and had calmly appropriated their famous motto of 'Peace, Retrenchment and Reform.' It was not until some days had passed that the perplexed

anxiety in Tory circles found expression in grumblings that the Prime Minister was being effaced by his lieutenant. But even then no sign could be discerned in any quarter of a wish or intention to repudiate the policy declared.

From all this buzzing, friendly and unfriendly alike, Lord Randolph fled secretly and silently. For more than a week he was lost to the public eye. It was rumoured that he had passed through Paris and Berlin on October 7; but it was not until the 12th that 'Mr. Spencer,' an English tourist, who with his friend Mr. Trafford had been looking at picture galleries, museums and theatres at Dresden and Prague, was identified with the orator of Dartford.

Few things were more remarkable in Lord Randolph Churchill's brief career than the quickness with which he acquired a European reputation. All over the Continent he was already regarded as the future master of English politics. The tension in the East was unrelieved and the diplomatic skies were grey and shifting. Here was the second personage in the British Cabinet, fresh from a most important public statement, travelling *incognito* through Germany and Austria. What had he done in his passage through Berlin? Had he a mission to Bismarck? Had he been to Varzin or not? From this moment his movements were watched with the most minute and provoking curiosity and the fullest details were telegraphed to every capital. The press revived memories of Gambetta's journey to Frankfort, and perhaps beyond, two years before his death. We learn from the foreign intelligence of the *Times* of October 13 that 'Mr. Spencer' and Mr. Trafford, 'the two travellers whose every step is watched by the European press,' have been 'residing at the Imperial Hotel [Vienna] since yesterday.' They had been received by a crowd at the station, and several persons who had seen Lord Randolph Churchill in England had 'maintained most positively' that 'Mr. Spencer' was identical with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. We are told that 'Mr.

Spencer' looked somewhat fatigued, and retired to rest after telling the landlord 'in emphatic terms' that he had come to Vienna for nobody, and proposed without exception to receive no one; that he walked about the town both in the morning and afternoon, and visited among others the shop of Herr Weidmann 'where the most exquisite Vienna leather goods are made'; that in the evening he had heard Millöcker's operetta 'The Vice-Admiral' at the Theater an der Wien; and that he was everywhere dogged by journalists, who gave the public elaborate descriptions of his person, the shape of his hat and the colour of his coat.

'I am hopelessly discovered,' wrote Lord Randolph to his wife (October 12). 'At the station yesterday I found a whole army of reporters, at whom I scowled in my most effective manner. Really it is almost intolerable that one cannot travel about without this publicity. How absurd the English papers are! Anything equal to the lies of the *Daily News* and *Pall Mall* I never read: that *Pall Mall* is most mischievous.... W. H. Smith is here, and we had a long talk last night. I have got him to go and see Paget—who wanted me to go and dine with him—and tell him that as I saw no one at Berlin I did not wish to see anyone here. The reporters have been besieging the hotel this morning, but I have sent them all away without a word. The weather is fine and bright, though there is an autumn chill in the air.... This pottering about Europe *de ville en ville* suits me down to the ground, if it were not for the beastly newspapers.'

His holiday was a short one. On his way back through Paris he had an interview which would certainly have interested those curious folk who had pried so zealously upon his unguarded leisure:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Iddesleigh.

Hôtel Bristol, Paris: October 19, 1886.

Dear Lord Iddesleigh,—This morning Count d'Aunay called upon me. I think, from what he said, that he had been sent by

Freycinet, I used to know D'Aunay very well when he was in London. I left him to begin what he had to say, and kept talking about *la pluie et le beau temps*. At last he rapped it out. He said the Egyptian Question was going to be 're-awakened.'

I asked what question.

He said the reorganisation of the administration, the tribunals, the customs, the army.

I said I did not see that any of these pressed; that Wolff and Mukhtar had got to make their report, which would take some time to consider; that, in the meantime, everything was going on quietly; that the country was progressing; that the payment of the coupon in full would be resumed next year; and that I could not conceive what object there was in raising the Egyptian Question in a critical manner now.

He said that the French were most desirous to co-operate with England in the re-establishment of Egypt; that they wished to be perfect friends with us, but that M. de Freycinet felt that Egypt was a continual *pierre d'achoppement*, and that there would always be great difficulties until it was got out of the way; that public opinion in France was now much agitated on the question; that they suspected we meant to take Egypt altogether; and that they must know what we intended to do about retiring.

I replied that it was impossible to reconcile this great desire on M. de Freycinet's part for friendship with the tone of the French Press on the proceedings of French agents at Constantinople; but that, in any case, of this he might be certain—that these things did not influence our policy in the least; that we did not intend to retire from Egypt until a stable Government had been constituted there, able to maintain itself and to pay its way; and that we should not 'budge an inch' from that resolution *pour quoi que ce soit, ni pour qui que ce soit*; that the work would take a long time, perhaps three years, perhaps five years, or perhaps ten years, or longer; but that till it was done our occupation of Egypt would continue.

He appeared much pained and upset by this, and argued for a long time that we could do nothing in Egypt on any question without French assistance.

I said we were most anxious for French assistance, although up to now we had managed to rub along without it; but that if there

was to be any understanding for the solution of Egyptian questions between the two Governments, it must be upon the basis of our continued occupation of Egypt until certain definite and practical results were obtained which would be a reward to us for all the loss of money, men, time and trouble which our occupation had entailed on us.

He said we ought to fix a date for evacuation; that that would remove all suspicion of bad faith; that the French were obliged to press the point on account of their enormous interests and their numerous colony; that in the time of the 'condominium' they had occupied a perfectly satisfactory position, which they wished to regain.

I reminded him that they had deliberately abdicated that position when M. de Freycinet was Minister before; that they had left us all the trouble and all the danger, and that they must accept the logical results of that policy; that I saw no good in fixing a date for evacuation; that I did not think such a step would be honest, as we might not be able to abide by our pledge; that it was much better to define the work which had to be done, and to adjourn all questions of retirement until the completion of the work.

He went on pressing about the date in a curiously imploring manner. He said that it might be *aussi éloigné que vous voulez*, but that if we would only fix a date M. de Freycinet *sera parfaitement satisfait*, that he would work loyally with us, and that all would go differently.

I then said that this question of the date, to which he evidently attached so much importance, was a new one to me; that I could not tell what your opinions were, nor Lord Salisbury's; that personally I saw immense and insuperable objections to such a course; that it would really introduce a new element of uncertainty, and probably lead to great trouble. In conclusion, I entreated him not to be under any illusion as to our determination to remain in Egypt and to pursue our work there steadily; that the present Government, unlike Mr. Gladstone's, was very strong in Parliament, and would not yield to pressure; and that, till the French thoroughly grasped this fact, they would fail to understand the A B C of the Egyptian Question.

He said he should tell M. de Freycinet all I had said. He asked

me if I wished to see M. de Freycinet, to which I replied in the negative.

I thought you would wish to know all this, and I hope you will approve of what I said. I return to town on Tuesday.

Yours very truly,
Randolph S. Churchill.

'You seem to have defended the pass well, and the position you hold is a sound one,' replied Lord Iddesleigh in a letter which appears to be the last that passed between them.

Short as his absence from England had been, Lord Randolph found some difficulties aggravated on his return. The orthodox portions of the Conservative party had become articulate. Mr. Chaplin was denouncing the Closure by a simple majority as unconstitutional and improper. The *Times* had made up its mind against such a change, which it regarded as 'irreconcilably at variance with the fundamental principle of freedom of debate.' It expressed itself anxious to know what would have been the opinion of the former leader of the Fourth Party on the proposals of the new Chancellor of the Exchequer. The 'Dartford programme,' as the principles and measures expounded in Kent had already come to be called, notwithstanding the full approval which it had previously received from the Cabinet, had been exposed to various attacks in quarters usually believed to derive their information from official sources. The Carlton Club was reported to be vexed and sulky. Everywhere the question was asked: What would the Chancellor of the Exchequer say to the conference of Conservative Associations at Bradford? Would he be discovered in retreat or standing to his guns? Would he enlarge upon the Dartford programme or would he explain it away?

The conference met at Bradford on October 26. Lord Randolph made three speeches during the day. At the evening meeting he said he was very sorry he had made

the Dartford speech. ‘If I had not made it at Dartford three weeks ago, I might have made it here to-night.’ He stood to the policy then declared in every detail. He welcomed Mr. Jesse Collings as an ally in the Allotments Bill. He asserted that Closure by a simple majority was the ‘motor muscle’[56] of any reform in Parliamentary Procedure. He ridiculed the complaints of the Liberal party. ‘All they can do apparently is to exclaim with impotent rage, "How unfair! how shameful! how unprincipled! You have stolen our programme." Why "their programme," I should like to know? Since 1880 they have been in office, and they did not make an attempt to carry out a single item. They tell us that the programme I sketched at Dartford is a Radical programme; that the Tory party have turned their coats and abandoned their principles and adopted the principles of the Radical party; and quantities of sentences of that kind and of equal stupidity. All I know about the programme of policy, foreign and domestic, which I endeavoured to outline at Dartford three weeks ago is this—that it was a mere repetition of the programme of Lord Salisbury at Newport in 1885. All I know about my speech at Dartford which I can say in reply to what I am told as to its being a total adoption of Radical principles and measures is this—that it was a mere reiteration and elaboration of the Queen’s Speech of January last, when Lord Salisbury’s first Government was in office, and of the speeches of the Ministers who supported the policy which was contained in that speech.’

These statements were greeted by the loud and continuous acclamations of an audience of Conservative delegates representing, it was calculated, fully a million and a half electors.

This determined speech and its thunderous endorsement silenced for the moment all hostile criticism. Some of Lord Randolph’s colleagues expressed to him their disapproval of the attacks upon him from within the Conservative

ranks. Others assured him of their agreement. Even the Lord Chancellor was satisfied. 'I have just finished reading your speech at Bradford,' he wrote (October 27). 'There is not a word that is not sound, good Toryism—aye, and old Toryism, too. The truth is that the enemy have been so long dressing up a lay figure which they have invested with their notions of what a Tory ought to be, that they do not recognise the genuine article when they see it.'

It is a pity not to end the story here. Lord Randolph Churchill seems at this time to have been separated only by a single step from a career of dazzling prosperity and fame. With a swiftness which in modern Parliamentary history had been excelled only by the younger Pitt, he had risen by no man's leave or monarch's favour from the station of a private gentleman to almost the first position under the Crown. Upon the Continent he was already regarded as the future master of English politics. His popularity among the people was unsurpassed. He was steadily gaining the confidence of the Sovereign and the respect and admiration of the most serious and enlightened men of his day. His natural gifts were still ripening and his mind expanding. The House of Commons had responded instinctively to the leadership of 'a great member of Parliament.' Alike in the glare and clatter of the platform and in the silent diligence of a public department he was found equal to all the varied tasks which are laid upon an English Minister. If he were thus armed and equipped at thirty-seven, what would he be at fifty? Who could have guessed that ruin, utter and irretrievable, was marching swiftly upon this triumphant figure; that the great party who had followed his lead so blithely, would in a few brief months turn upon him in abiding displeasure; and that the Parliament which had assembled to find him so powerful and to accept his guidance, would watch him creep away in sadness and alone?

Still, for an interval the sun shone fair. The clouds were

parted to the right and to the left, and there stepped into the centre of the world's affairs—amid the acclamations of the multitude and in the hush of European attention—the Grand Young Man.

CHAPTER XV

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER

'Those who live to the future most always appear selfish to those who live to the present.'—Emerson.

At the Treasury the appointment of the new Chancellor of the Exchequer had been received with no little apprehension. Every great department has an atmosphere and identity of its own. No politician, however popular in the country or influential in Parliament, can afford to be indifferent to the opinion formed of him by the Civil Servants through whom and by whom he works. Concealed from the public eye among the deeper recesses of Whitehall, seeking no fame, clad with the special knowledge of life-long study, armed with the secrets of a dozen Cabinets, the slaves of the Lamp or of the Ring render faithful and obedient service to whomsoever holds the talisman. Whatever task be set, wise or foolish, virtuous or evil, as they are commanded, so they do. Yet their silent judgments of their masters and their projects do not pass unheeded. Although the spell still works, it loses half its potency if these spirits are offended or alarmed; and padded walls of innumerable objections, backed by the masonry of unanswerable argument, restrain the irreverent or unworthy from the fullest exercise of the powers they may have won by force or favour.

Over all public departments the department of finance is supreme. Erected upon the vital springs of national prosperity, wielding the mysterious power of the purse, the

final arbiter in the disputes of every other office, a good fairy or a perverse devil, as 'My Lords' may choose, to every imaginative Secretary of State, the Treasury occupies in the polity of the United Kingdom a central and superior position. No school of thought is so strong or so enduring as that founded on the great traditions of Gladstonian and Peelite finance. Reckless Ministers are protected against themselves, violent Ministers are tamed, timid Ministers are supported and nursed. Few, if any, are insensible to the influences by which they are surrounded. Streams of detailed knowledge, logic and experience wash away fiscal and financial heresies; and a baptism of economic truth inspires the convert not merely with the principles of a saint but—too often—with the courage of a martyr.

To many who had spent their lives at the Treasury, Lord Randolph's arrival was a shock. They regarded him, we are told, as 'an impossible man,' as 'one whose breath was agitation, and whose life a storm upon which he rode.'[57] They had instinctively resented the assaults he had delivered against Mr. Gladstone, 'the best friend the Civil Service ever had.' They remembered that, not long before, Lord Randolph had made himself the mouthpiece of a harsh attack upon one of their number. He was known to have expressed privately a candid opinion that they were 'a knot of damned Gladstonians.' Lastly, they had read his Fair Trade speeches; and, notwithstanding the reputation he had made at the India Office as a departmental chief, he still appeared in the eyes of Treasury officials as a Minister who would ride roughshod over their habits and violate all their most cherished financial canons.

This mood was short-lived. The disquieted officials found a Minister assiduous and thorough in work and scrupulously patient and quiet in discussion. He possessed the very rare gift of keeping his mind exclusively devoted to the subject in hand, and impressed on all those with

whom he worked the idea that the business on which they were employed was the only one of interest to him. No time spent with the Chancellor of the Exchequer was ever wasted. No interruption of any sort was suffered. No one ever left his room after an interview without having at any rate gained a clear knowledge of his views and intentions. Around all played an old-fashioned ceremony of manner, oddly mingled with a sparkle of pure fun, which charmed everybody. In a month the conquest was complete. Every official worked with enthusiasm in his service and all their mines of information were laid open to his hand. It has often been said that Lord Randolph won his popularity among permanent officials by his subservience to their views. This is by no means true. If he cast away altogether as vicious and unpractical the Fair Trade opinions which he had urged, and which commanded so much support among the Tory democracy, it will also be seen that he was able to enlist the interest and positive support of his subordinates in schemes far outside the orthodoxy of the official mind. His stay at the Treasury was short; but his memory was long respected. He left behind him golden opinions and dearly treasured reminiscences. He took away with him friendships which lasted him his life.

'Our anxiety,' wrote Lord Welby in 1896, 'as to our new chief was soon dispelled. He met us from the outset with perfect frankness, which soon became cordiality; and I cannot recall a word or a line of his during his autumn office which I should have wished unspoken or unwritten. Not that he was an easy or an unexacting chief. He expected subjects to be laid before him fully, clearly and intelligently; and he was keen to mark default. He was, in short, a Minister of the type that Civil Servants appreciate. He ruled as well as reigned. He had a mind, and made it up; a policy, and enforced it. He was quick in acquiring information, quick in seizing the real point, quick in understanding what one wished to convey to him,

impatient in small matters and details and contemptuous if one troubled him with them. Above all, he was accessible; ready and willing to hear what one had to say, whether it accorded with his own views or not. Doing business with him was most interesting. Not being a respecter of persons he criticised freely and pointedly men and matters.... In "chaff" he was unsurpassed. He was singularly free from affectation of knowledge he did not possess. Could one fail to take an interest in a chief "who always showed us sport"?'

Many tales of Lord Randolph in these days have been preserved. We have a glimpse of his first meeting with a rather dismayed subordinate in the historical Board Room at the Treasury—the stiff and formal cut of his frock-coat, the long amber cigarette-holder, so soon produced, the eternal cigarette, and 'an old-world courtesy of manner' which surprised and disarmed a preconceived dislike. We see him going down to the City with Sir Edward Hamilton to lunch formally with the Governor and Directors of the Bank of England and hovering for half an hour outside in a panic of nervousness which robbed him for the time of his self-confidence. We see him once, and once only, when the Court of Exchequer, presided over by its Chancellor, settles the list from which Sheriffs are selected, in his robes of office—those imposing and expensive robes which seem to assert the opulence which should result from thrift, rather than thrift itself. His cynicism was disarming. We are told how, when the dreadful subject of bimetallism cropped up, he turned to Sir Arthur Godley and said: 'I forget. Was I a bimetallist when I was at the India Office?' When he received an influential deputation of sugar-refiners and sugar-planters in protest against the foreign Sugar Bounties, he created general consternation by inquiring, with immense gravity, 'Are the consumers represented upon this deputation?' We are even told how he complained to a clerk who put some figures before him

that they were not clear and he could not understand them. The clerk said that he had done his best, and, pointing them out, explained that he had reduced them to decimals. ‘Oh,’ said Lord Randolph, ‘I never could make out what those damned dots meant.’ But this was surely only to tease.



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BELLEROPHON JUNIOR.
‘I THINK THIS’LL FETCH ’EM!!’

> ‘The Chancellor of the Exchequer states to the Board that Her Majesty’s advisers desire to satisfy themselves that the clerical establishments of the Civil Service, of the Naval and Military Departments, and also of the Revenue Departments, are organised generally upon a principle which secures efficiency without undue cost to the public.’—Treasury Minute, Sept. 14.
> Punch, September 25, 1886

From the very commencement of his career at the Treasury Lord Randolph began the exertions for economy to which he felt himself bound by his electoral pledges. In his private affairs he was usually extravagant and often unbusiness-like; but public money seemed to him a sacred trust. The character and extent of Treasury control over expenditure is very often misunderstood. It is represented sometimes almost as a statutory or constitutional power over the other departments. Such an idea is a complete delusion. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is able to exert his influence in two ways: first, over administration. In small matters not connected with policy, the Treasury acts upon a set of well-defined rules and principles, which the spending departments recognise and endeavour not to infringe and which are enforced more or less strictly, according to the relative authority of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the other Ministers concerned. Secondly, there is the wide domain of policy; and in all great matters

the control of the Treasury is neither more nor less than the personal influence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer upon the Cabinet. Of Lord Randolph's attempt to assert that influence the next chapter must give some account; but in the meanwhile he laboured with industrious severity to effect administrative economies. On September 14 a Treasury Minute announced the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the establishment and organisation of the great spending departments: 'The Chancellor of the Exchequer states to the Board that Her Majesty's advisers desire to satisfy themselves that the clerical establishments of the Civil Service, of the Naval and Military Departments and also of the Revenue Department, are organised generally upon a principle to secure efficiency without undue cost to the revenue.' A variety of petty economies were effected by his personal authority. He discovered, among other things, that Government specie had to be conveyed in merchant ships, at much expense, because an old custom entitled naval officers to a high percentage. His indignation at hearing that Her Majesty's gold could not be conveyed in Her Majesty's ships because of claims by Her Majesty's officers led to immediate action, and the practice was reformed forthwith.

A remark by the Comptroller and Auditor-General in one of his reports to Parliament drew his attention to another abuse. Of old times sums were issued out of the Civil List to the Secretary of the Treasury for secret service. No public account was rendered of the money thus expended. In 1783, many evils being alleged, Parliament, under the influence of Burke, was persuaded to limit this grant to 10,000*l.* a year; and that amount was yearly issued to the Secretary of the Treasury from 1783 to 1886. This branch of secret service was, of course, political and was quite distinct from that which is ordinarily known as foreign secret service. The money was used for the

purposes of political organisation by the party which happened to be in power. Such a custom could not on any valid ground be defended. Yet for over a century the grant had never been seriously questioned. It might have been urged that the Liberals had always profited by this sum during their long period of power and that many famous men had assumed responsibility for it. Lord Randolph brushed such wire-puller's arguments aside. Before he had been in office a month he introduced a Bill, which passed rapidly through Parliament, abolishing this payment altogether, and it has never since been renewed.

Until 1886 there had existed an octroi duty on coal coming into the Metropolis, the proceeds of which were divided between the City and the Metropolitan Board of Works. The principle of this duty was not unpleasing to the Conservative party. Its abolition was roundly denounced by the *Standard* and in high Tory circles. The Metropolitan authorities were glad to get money in an easy and painless manner. Powerful interests objected to a rise in the rates, while the abolition of a duty upon a necessary of life which affected the poor consumer, did not elicit much enthusiastic support. Lord Randolph took some time to make up his mind. He decided that an octroi duty was out of date, that it was a survival of a financial policy that had been emphatically condemned. He declined to countenance its renewal. His speech to the deputation may be read with profit by any who care to see the arguments against such an octroi put tersely, forcibly and without reserve. His impressions at the Treasury seem to have stimulated his mind to great activity and to have aroused in him a keen financial instinct. All sorts of plans were being moved forward by his agency towards and into the sphere of political action. He contemplated the purchase of Irish Railways by the State and their use as an instrument of economic development and of political and strategic control; and Lord Salisbury himself seems to have been

persuaded by his arguments. He paid the closest attention to the coinage, and harboured a deadly design against the half-sovereign—'that profligate little coin'—which he believed was an expensive and unnecessary feature of British currency. But there was one great scheme which overshadowed all the rest.

Parliament had no sooner risen than Lord Randolph turned to the preparation of his Budget. He knew that the duties of leadership in the next Session would demand his whole attention and physical strength; and, in spite of the labours of the memorable year, 1886, he succeeded, by what Sir Algernon West has described as 'a performance never equalled,' in getting ready and laying before the Cabinet his financial proposals for the year 1887-8. For nearly twenty years his projects have been veiled in mystery. The silence of the Treasury has remained unbroken. The few high officials who were admitted to his confidence and whose sympathy was enlisted in his plans, have kept their own counsel. Lord Randolph did not choose in any public speech to reveal what he had purposed. He is the only Chancellor of the Exchequer who never introduced a Budget; and in his lifetime rumour alone asserted that he had ever formed one. The time has now come when the abandoned Budget of 1887-8 may be fully unfolded in the form in which, during November, 1886, it received the provisional assent of Lord Salisbury's Cabinet.

The reader who has accustomed himself to the giant Budgets of modern times must turn his mind and contract his fancy to the humbler figures of a vanished age. The cost of governing the United Kingdom and of providing for the defence of the Empire during the early 'eighties fluctuated between eighty and ninety millions a year. This was in itself a distinct increase on the estimates of Lord Beaconsfield's Administration; and Tory speakers were wont to dwell with genial malice upon the fact. The

various wars which had disturbed Mr. Gladstone's rule had left their marks upon the economy of the Army. The money raised by the Vote of Credit in 1885 had been scattered with a lavish hand, and prominent men in both parties were concerned to notice some apparent relaxation in the strictness of Treasury control. Few, indeed, thought so seriously of the future as Lord Randolph Churchill, and his prediction that a 'Hundred-million Budget' would be an event of the future was generally regarded as unduly pessimistic. But nevertheless the times were not unfavourable to retrenchment, and there was a healthy demand for departmental reform. With estimates standing at under ninety millions small economies were not disdained. The Ministers of those days had not learned to expand their view of the public resources. A saving of a hundred thousand pounds was regarded as a matter of legitimate congratulation. A reduction of a million was an achievement.

Yet at the same time the narrow scrutiny to which expenditure had been so long subjected and the habitual reluctance of statesmen to enlarge its bounds, left no very obvious opportunities to the new Chancellor. The field had, except for some small patches, been well and thriftily gleaned. Nor did it seem at first sight that the system of taxation which had for five years received Mr. Gladstone's approval would readily lend itself to striking or sensational treatment.

On the other hand, however, more than one great tendency to change was apparent. The whole question of the Sinking Fund was ripe for reconsideration. The remodelling of the death duties thrust itself before every Chancellor each succeeding year. Above all, the inevitable and swiftly approaching departure in Local Government, involving as it did a complete readjustment of national and local finance and the transference of large responsibilities and resource from Whitehall to the County and Borough

Councils, required a strong and daring mind at the Treasury.

Certainly Lord Randolph Churchill's plan did not err on the side of timidity. He contemplated nothing less than a complete reconstruction of the revenue. The general rate of expenditure and the whole condition of the National Debt were examined anew by a searching and audacious eye. Hardly a single tax was left untouched. The death duties, the house duties, the stamp duties, the wine duties, were all the subject of reform. Immense reductions were proposed in existing taxes. Numerous new taxes were devised. All these changes were not a mere meddlesome and vexatious shifting of burdens from one shoulder to the other. They were each and all essential parts in a vast financial revolution.

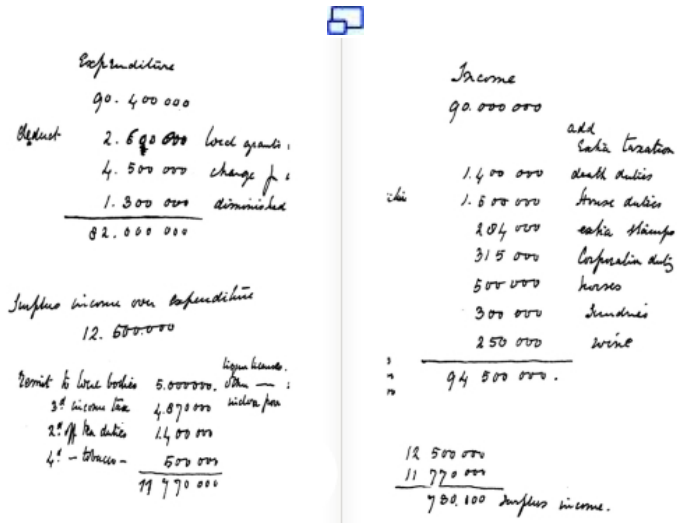
The first object of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was to effect a large and substantial reduction in taxation. He desired especially to diminish those taxes which fell upon the lower middle class. He laboured to transfer the burdens, so far as possible, from comforts to luxuries and from necessaries to pleasures. He applied much more closely than his predecessors that fundamental principle of democratic finance—the adjusting of taxation to the citizen's ability to pay. His second object was to provide a much larger sum of money for the needs of local bodies, so that the impending measure of Local Government might be wide and real in its character. His third object was to effect a certain definite economy in the annual expenditure.

The estimates with which he was confronted amounted to 90,400,000*l.* The income which the existing taxes were expected to yield was 90,000,000*l.* The Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to augment his income by extra taxation aggregating 4,500,000*l.*—namely, by an increase in the death duties of 1,400,000*l.*, and in the house duties of 1,500,000*l.*; by extra stamps to yield 284,000*l.*; and by a wider application of corporation duty, worth 315,000*l.*; by

the revival of a tax on horses to produce 500,000*l.*; by an increased tax on wine to produce 250,000*l.*; and by certain minor taxes, to be considered later, which were estimated to produce 300,000*l.* He proposed to diminish his expenditure by withholding the 2,600,000*l.* local grants-in-aid, for which a new provision was to be made; by a reduction in the charge for the debt of 4,500,000*l.*; and by a direct economy of 1,300,000*l.* He had, therefore, raised his income to 94,500,000*l.*, and reduced his expenses to 82,000,000*l.*, thus becoming possessed of a surplus income over expenditure of 12,500,000*l.* This surplus he intended to distribute variously. 5,000,000*l.* were to be available for the purposes of Local Government, in lieu of the old grants-in-aid of 2,600,000*l.* The indirect taxpayer was to be relieved by a reduction of the tea duties from 6*d.* to 4*d.*, costing the revenue 1,400,000*l.*; and by a reduction of 4*d.* in the tobacco tax, costing 500,000*l.* The income-tax payer received the greatest advantage, for by a remission, costing no less than 4,870,000*l.*, the rate of the income-tax was to be lowered from 8*d.* in the pound, at which it stood in 1886, to 5*d.* in 1887. These outgoings together aggregated 11,770,000*l.*, and the Treasury was left with a final surplus of 730,000*l.*

These proposals require to be more closely examined. The principal feature of the new taxation was the re-grading and increase of the death and house duties. The death duties in force in 1886-7 were four in number—namely: (1) Probate duty upon the *personal* property passing on the death of any person, irrespective of destination; (2) the account duty, imposed since 1881 chiefly as a preventive to evasion of probate duty, and chargeable in respect of personalty included in voluntary settlements—death-bed gifts, &c.; (3) the legacy duty, upon benefit derived by the successor to *personal* property of the deceased at rates according to consanguinity; and (4) the succession duty, upon benefit derived by the successor

to settled personalty and to the *real* property of the deceased, also at rates depending on consanguinity, chargeable, however, on the life interest and not on the capital value. Lord Randolph Churchill approached this complicated system of taxation with the double object of obtaining a larger revenue by a simpler method. He wanted more money and less machinery, fewer taxes and an increased return. His early inquiries at Somerset House and the discussion of the first suggestions which, coming fresh to the subject, he



put forward, served to convince him that a higher symmetry and co-ordination were required. He saw that any scheme which involved four or five different duties, and which attempted to deal with *personal* estate by means of a graduated *ad valorem* tax on the estate as a whole, and later with *real* estate by means of consanguinity on individual benefits, would not bear controversial examination. The death duties had grown up in a series of successive expedients. They were an admitted patchwork, but a patchwork to which the House of Commons had

become accustomed. So long as they were left untouched, their anomalies and entanglements would be tolerated, or even admired; but if they were to be remodelled, re-graded and, above all, increased, they would have to stand fire, their whole structure would be criticised, and a new plan would be damned because it resembled an old plan long respected. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, therefore, began next to inquire as to the 'possible effect of a graduated *ad valorem* tax on *real* estate corresponding to the graduated tax on *personal* estate,' and his mind was soon determined in favour of such an assimilation of the death duties on the two classes of property. The method by which to achieve this object involved, of course, the whole question of graduation. Should graduation be regulated by the total mass of property passing by any one death, whether composed of realty or personalty; or partly of one and partly of the other; or should it be governed by the total benefit received by an individual on succession, whether out of realty or personalty, or both combined? Should the rate of duty depend upon the total wealth of the testator or upon the respective windfalls of the heirs? These questions have been long and fiercely debated. The Childers Budget of the year before had aimed at an equalisation of the death duties on *real* and *personal* property by means of an extension of the account duty, but it contained no element of graduation. The rate of duty was to be the same for large properties as for small (except very small) estates, and was to apply equally to realty as to personalty. Lord Randolph did not adopt this idea. His scheme was to graduate the duty according to the value of the individual succession. What the living man got, not what the dead man left, was to be the unit of graduation.

If, for example, by the death of A., X. took 2,000*l.* *personalty* and 3,000*l.* *realty*, Lord Randolph would have combined the two, and have applied the rate (say, 3 per cent.) levied on a succession of 5,000*l.* If by the same

death Y. took 20,000*l.* *personalty* and 30,000*l.* *realty*, Lord Randolph would have applied the rate (say, 6 per cent.) for a succession of 50,000*l.*; and so on, always graduating the rate according to any one person's succession; so that the successor to a small benefit would pay a low rate of duty, and the successor to a large benefit a high rate of duty. In short, Lord Randolph was for a graduated succession duty instead of a graduated estate duty. The Finance Act of 1894 has asserted and established the opposite principle. Sir William Harcourt looked simply at what a dead man left or liberated, and on the aggregate of that amount the graduation now in force depends. Thus it may very well happen, and often does happen, that a successor to a small benefit—perhaps a succession worth no more than 500*l.*—pays the highest rate (8 per cent.) of estate duty; because his succession is part of an aggregate estate worth one million. The principle which governs the Finance Act of 1894 was laid very plainly before Lord Randolph in 1886. But he rejected it in favour of the graduation on the individual succession, saying, after one long discussion at Somerset House, 'My instinct tells me that it is wrong.' It is curious that his instinct, whether right or wrong on the technical question, anticipated the principal objections which Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain urged against Sir William Harcourt's Bill, and indicated the line of principle to which the whole Conservative party was subsequently committed.

This choice being made, the Chancellor of the Exchequer turned his attention to the principle of consanguinity. Why should graduation be regulated by kinship? Does not kinship find its adequate expression in the dispositions made by the testator? Does not the testator naturally select his wife and children as the objects of his bounty in preference to relations of remoter degree? Why should the State complicate its affairs by recognising the principle of consanguinity in a taxing statute? Lord

Randolph Churchill therefore proposed to discard the principle of consanguinity altogether. All existing duties on properties of whatever kind, passing by death after a given date, and in dispositions taking effect after that date, were to be swept away. Real property was to be placed on the same footing as personalty, and chargeable no longer on life interest, but on capital value. The one graduated succession duty, graduated on amount of benefit received and not depending at all upon consanguinity, was to replace them all. The old probate, account, legacy, inventory (Scotland) and succession duties were to be left to work themselves out by lapse of time, that process being accelerated by a liberal system of discounts.

It is, perhaps, of some interest to contrast this scheme with that which now holds the field. We now enjoy a duty called ‘estate duty’; an extra duty, levied in certain circumstances on settled property, called ‘settlement estate duty’; and, finally, the legacy and succession duties, depending on the consanguinity existing between the donor and the donee. We now assert the vicious principle of taxing property instead of persons. We try to tax the dead instead of the living. The State refuses to consider for purposes of graduation anything so personal as the sacrifice of the heirs, and bases itself on the mass of the inheritance. Conjoined with this in utter contradiction we have a cumbrous and elaborate recognition of such a purely personal and private principle as consanguinity.

Lord Randolph would have replaced these four or five duties of great complexity by one intelligible tax. He would have substituted one Act of Parliament for thirty or forty. He would have secured a far greater flexibility in case further increases of direct taxation were necessary. A vast simplification of the accounts required would have notably diminished the expenses of lawyers, valuers, accountants and actuaries, now attendant on the payment of death duties. The just complaint of the small inheritor

from a great estate would have been prevented; and for various illogical or contradictory methods the one simple principle would have been erected, that taxation should be proportioned to ability to pay and to benefit received. The increase which Lord Randolph contemplated in the death duties would have been unpopular with the Conservative party. He was informed that the estate of nearly every member of the House of Lords would have been prejudicially affected thereby. But, in view of what befell in 1894, it is clear that wealthy people would not have been in the long run the losers by an early settlement.

The tax upon inhabited houses was respectably ancient in its origin. It had been first imposed in 1696, and had continued at various rates till 1834. Repealed in 1834, it was reimposed in 1851 by Sir Charles Wood on the abandonment of the duty on windows, and at the rate of 6*d.* for shops, beer-houses and farmhouses, and 9*d.* for dwelling-houses (those under 20*l.* annual value being exempt), it yielded in the financial year 1885-6 1,867,377*l.* to the revenue. Lord Randolph proposed to repeal the existing Act, thus cutting away the many important exemptions it contained, and by a new Act to restore the house duty to what it formerly was—namely, a tax on all houses inhabited either by day or night. He intended to revert to the old principle of graduation, to the old definition of an inhabited house and to the old lowest limit of taxable value. The new Act would further have repealed the provision in the law under which only one acre was to be included with the house for purposes of valuation—excepting the case of agricultural lands attached to farmhouses. Mills and warehouses used for storing goods were to be exempt; but it was provided that any person on the register of voters in respect of the occupation of a tenement should be liable to assessment for that tenement or part of a building; including even all who were entitled to vote under the service franchise as occupiers of

apartments in Militia or other barracks. The scale of duty was lower for shops than for private houses, and progressed rapidly as the value increased. Value under 20*l.*: shops, 3*d.*; cottages, 4*d.* Value over 20*l.* and under 50*l.*: shops, 6*d.*; private houses, 9*d.* Value over 50*l.* and under 150*l.*: shops, 1*s.*; private houses, 1*s.* 6*d.* Value over 150*l.* and under 300*l.*: shops, 2*s.*; private houses, 3*s.* Value 300*l.* and upwards: shops, 2*s.* 6*d.*; private houses, 3*s.* 6*d.* This new tax was estimated to produce, on existing valuations, an additional revenue in the first year of 1,500,000*l.*, and, what was of even more importance (having regard to future Budgets), was estimated to rise to 2,380,000*l.* in the second and subsequent years.

Under the heading of 'extra stamps' the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed: (1) An alteration in the scale of duty upon patent medicines. The scale then in force under an Act of George III., and continued to this day, presses rather heavily on the 1*d.* and 2*d.* boxes, &c., of medicines sold in poor neighbourhoods. Lord Randolph's new scale would have afforded relief to these small parcels, and have more than recouped itself on the larger and more costly.[58]

The yield of the old duty had been steadily increasing in later years. In 1869-70 it had produced 72,000*l.*; in 1879-80, 135,000*l.*; in 1885-6, 178,000*l.* It was estimated that Lord Randolph's duty would produce an increase of between 50,000*l.* and 70,000*l.* in the first year (not, of course, complete) and of 100,000*l.* in the second year. But the yield of the future would have been much richer. The old scale of duty still in force produced in 1904-5 not less than 331,000*l.* Had Lord Randolph's scale been in force the extra revenue would probably by now have exceeded 250,000*l.* a year.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer also proposed: (2) A 2*s.* per cent. stamp duty on the share capital of joint-stock companies. He estimated this to produce 100,000*l.* yearly, and 58,000*l.* in the year 1887-8. This plan was adopted by

Mr. Goschen in 1888. The results exceeded expectation, and the tax yielded in the first year 158,000*l.* In 1899 the duty was increased to 5*s.* on share capital, and extended at half-scale to loan capital. The yield for 1904-5 was 388,000*l.* from share capital and 73,000*l.* from loan capital.

(3) A group of proposals comprising an extension of receipt duty to sums between 10*s.* and 2*l.*; the repeal of certain exemptions, such as a receipt written upon a bill of exchange, or upon a duly stamped instrument, acknowledging receipt of consideration money therein expressed; a duty on tickets of admission to places of amusement (French plan) and upon certain documents in the nature of vouchers, e.g. those given to persons making purchases at stores and other large trading establishments; a duty on certificates of proprietorship of shares, and upon letters of application for stock; and an assimilation of the duty on transfers of debenture and ordinary stock. This last has been since effected. The others, with all that may be urged in their behalf, must stand upon their mere recital. This group of revised duties was estimated to produce an additional 150,000*l.* a year, and the whole of the alterations in the stamp duties would have yielded 284,000*l.* in the first year and above 400,000*l.* in the next.

A yearly tax of 5 per cent. was imposed in 1885-6 on the income of corporations as an equivalent for the death duties, which they escape. The yield in the first year was 34,000*l.* Municipal corporations were, however, exempted, although they paid income-tax on their realised property. By repealing this exemption Lord Randolph Churchill would have considerably increased the yield of the duty. Taking the accounts of ten municipal corporations of mixed sizes and importance, it was found that the average income derived from rentals, waterworks, gasworks, tolls, &c., exclusive of interest on investments, was 38,000*l.* Assuming there were 275 corporations—an assumption

which left an ample margin—the gross income assessable would have been 10,450,000*l.*, yielding a revenue of 522,000*l.* From this, however, a large deduction had to be made for interest paid on loans raised on the security of the property apart from the rates, leaving as the result of the tax a net addition to the revenue of 315,000*l.*

The Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed also to revive the tax upon horses and the special tax on racehorses which had been abandoned by Sir Stafford Northcote in 1874, from which a sum of 500,000*l.* would accrue to the State. In 1888, when Mr. Goschen endeavoured to re-introduce this duty, no serious objection was raised by the House of Commons. Strong opposition was, however, excited by the wheel and van tax which he suggested at the same time. In the hope of carrying the unpopular tax by linking it with one more favoured, Mr. Goschen declared that the two taxes must stand or fall together.

But the House was not to be cajoled. Both projects were withdrawn, and the transfer which has since taken place of all analogous duties to local authorities, seems permanently to have interfered with any attempt to secure this convenient source of revenue for Imperial purposes.

Two other classes of proposed extra taxation remain to be considered. If every one of the 70,000,000 cartridges which were used each season had a 1*d.* revenue stamp pasted over the shot end, the national resources would be enriched by 280,000*l.*[59] in a complete year. The sportsman whose unerring aim never required a second barrel, except for another bird, would in poetic justice enjoy a comparative immunity. But while his unskilful companion blazed away he might remember that at each discharge the stamp blown to pieces by the explosion would carry its tribute to the public treasury. Besides this, mainly with a view to putting a stop to their reckless use by boys and others, pistols were to be taxed 1*l.* a year and pistol-dealers 20*l.* a year; and brokers, whose responsible

functions seemed to deserve some recognition from the State, were to be duly licensed at 5*l.* a year. By these sundries 300,000*l.* would be secured immediately, and about 400,000*l.* in a complete year. The augmentation of the wine duties by various devices, falling chiefly upon the higher quality wines, so as to yield an additional quarter of a million, raised the total of the new taxation to 4,500,000*l.* in the first year, with a considerable natural growth in prospect.

Of the steps by which Lord Randolph designed to diminish his expenditure only one need be considered here; for the transference of the 2,600,000*l.* grants-in-aid to another and larger fund is a matter chiefly of book-keeping, and the definite economy of 1,300,000*l.* which he regarded as so important belongs to another part of the story. But the proposal to reduce the Sinking Fund by no less than 4,500,000*l.* is startling enough to compel attention.

The condition of the National Debt was in 1886 peculiar. When Sir Stafford Northcote, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, in 1875 reorganised the service of the debt, he had, in order to make 'steady and continuous efforts for its reduction,' assigned a fixed annual sum of 28,000,000*l.*, covering both interest and Sinking Fund, and payable, unless Parliament should in the meantime otherwise determine, as long as any debt remained outstanding. On March 31, 1875, the National Debt amounted to 769,000,000*l.*; and if Sir Stafford Northcote's scheme as it stood on the statute book had remained unaltered, if no war or other disturbing element had intervened, this debt, without any addition to the yearly charge of 28,000,000*l.*, would have been entirely paid off about the year 1930. This was the arrangement which Lord Randolph now proposed to revise, and it therefore requires closer examination. The full charge of 28,000,000*l.* came into operation in 1877-8. It was divided between interest and

Sinking Fund. At the outset the proportion assignable to interest and management was between 23,000,000*l.* and 24,000,000*l.*, and the proportion assignable to Sinking Fund between 4,000,000*l.* and 5,000,000*l.*; but this proportion steadily changed by the automatic working of the scheme. Year by year as the debt capital was reduced by the amount of successive Sinking Funds, that part of the 28,000,000*l.* required for interest diminished, and that part available for Sinking Fund proportionately increased. According to the moderate computations of Sir Stafford Northcote when presenting his scheme to the House, 230,000,000*l.* of the debt would have been paid off by the present year—1904-5. In that case the capital of the debt would now stand at about 540,000,000*l.*, the interest proportion of the 28,000,000*l.* would amount to sixteen and a half millions, and the Sinking Fund proportion to about eleven and a half millions. Thus the scheme, which in the beginning imposed a charge on the taxpayer equivalent to 2½*d.* in the 1*l.* for the purposes of a Sinking Fund, automatically progressed until that burden would have become equivalent to 5*d.* in the 1*l.* at the present time, and rising further to 1*s.* or more in the 1*l.* before it reached its consummation. While already himself attaining a high degree of financial virtue, Sir Stafford Northcote indicated to his successors a standard three and four and five times as exalted.

Each generation, almost each decade, claims its right to revise its standards; and as the rate of human improvement was less rapid than the growth of Sir Stafford Northcote's Sinking Fund, it had in 1886 become clear that the public would not acquiesce in the logical result of the 1875 scheme, or regard as a sacred obligation the exact fulfilment of a plan which, snowball fashion, rolled on with ever-accumulating weight and ended by requiring the exaction from the taxpayer during a small number of years of an amount in repayment of debt which sound reasoning

could not justify. Already the scheme itself had yielded to the pressure of a passing emergency. Mr. Childers had suspended the Sinking Fund in great part during the Egyptian War and the Russian panic of 1885-6; Sir William Harcourt had permitted a smaller suspension in 1886-7. Indeed, Sir Stafford Northcote seems to have felt that his scheme could not be maintained in its fulness to the end, and that when the Sinking Fund had risen to a certain figure, the taxpayer of the day would claim to share with it the benefit resulting from the progressive diminution in the interest of the debt. If, then, it were conceded that the Northcote Sinking Fund could not be maintained in its entirety till 1930, the revision of the scheme became simply a question of the manner, the measure and the tune.

These considerations were strengthened by another set of arguments. In 1887 the funded debt amounted to 637,000,000*l.* A large part of this debt—probably 150,000,000*l.*—was held by public departments; another large part was held by banks, insurance companies and by trustees. It was computed later by skilled authorities that the holdings on this account were not less than 200,000,000*l.* As these holdings were practically not offered on the market for sale, the field for purchases of stock was comparatively narrow. If a large amount of Sinking Fund were applied to purchases of stock in this narrow field, the prices of Consols would be quickly and unnaturally inflated. This condition was actually reached in later years, when the public credit was so esteemed that the State enjoyed the privilege of paying 113*l.* to redeem 100*l.* of its own debt.

Lord Randolph decided that the time had come for a revision of the Northcote scheme. He found himself possessed of a lever capable of exerting on one occasion—and on one occasion only—a giant's power. He was anxious that it should be made the instrument of great and

substantial reform, and not wasted gradually for the sake of convenience or popularity. For the purposes, therefore, of effecting a reduction and a general readjustment of taxation and as an integral part of his Budget scheme, Lord Randolph proposed to reduce the total immediate charge of the debt from 28,878,000*l.* to 24,417,000*l.*, thus effecting a saving of 4,461,000*l.*, or, roughly, four and a half millions. The Northcote Sinking Fund would thus have been reduced by two-thirds to 2,160,000*l.* The reduction of such a great weapon of financial reserve as the Sinking Fund has proved in tunes of warlike emergency was practically replaced by the gain in expansive power supplied by an income-tax as low as 5*d.* The positive economy on naval and military estimates clears the Chancellor of the Exchequer from any charge of laxity or indulgence. His judgment on the main question of revision was ratified within two years by the high and severe financial authority of Lord Goschen, and was further confirmed eleven years later by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. The former reduced the fixed charge from 28,000,000*l.* to 25,000,000*l.*; the latter reduced it again from 25,000,000*l.* to 23,000,000*l.*, at which figure it stood when the South African War broke out. But these reductions, aggregating 5,000,000*l.* a year, were enforced, the one for the purpose merely of affording a petty relief to the taxpayer of the year, and the other to find ways and means for the growing expenditure of a Government, and not, as Lord Randolph had designed, for the sake of a large and harmonious reform.

By these methods, however they may be regarded, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have become possessed of a surplus of noble proportions. And the distribution of the 12,500,000*l.* which he had secured is the coping-stone of the whole financial scheme. Tea and tobacco are familiar friends to the students of Budgets. Year after year their fortunes fluctuate in sympathy with those of the nation. In the year 1886-7 tea was taxed 6*d.* in

the pound and yielded 4,514,874*l.* A reduction of 2*d.* upon tea is a generous boon to every poor household. The tiny packet is a farthing cheaper. The careful spoonfuls may be more freely bestowed; and the relief is gratefully acknowledged by an immediate increase in consumption. Lord Randolph had estimated that his reduction would cost the revenue 1,400,000*l.*; but this seems to have been an over-estimate, for when Mr. Goschen four years later was able to make this desirable change the loss to the revenue was only 1,100,000*l.*, owing to the greater indulgence of the people.

Who is there, of those who pay it, that will not look back with envy from these days of 1*s.* income tax, almost as a permanent charge in times of peace, to times when a tax of 8*d.* was regarded as abnormally high; when one Chancellor of the Exchequer was resolved to reduce it to 5*d.*, and when his successor (Mr. Goschen) declared that, except for purposes of war, 6*d.* was a proper limit? Of all Lord Randolph's proposals none, it may be safely said, would have been greeted with more general approval than his intended reduction of the income-tax from 8*d.* to 5*d.* At that time incomes below 150*l.* a year were exempt, but incomes of 150*l.* and less than 400*l.* were allowed an abatement of 120*l.* Incomes of and above 400*l.* a year had to pay on the full amount. Official statistics have always been silent as to the total number of income tax payers, it being apparently impossible to frame a trustworthy estimate. It is nevertheless probable that the bulk of persons who are called upon to pay this impost are included in the 150*l.*-400*l.* class. It was to this considerable class, composed mainly of persons emerging into an independence they have earned for themselves, and rising by their own industry from the level of exemption to that of income-tax-paying means, that Lord Randolph's sympathies were directed. The small householder, pinched by having to pay in the early days of January the landlord's

tax under Schedule A, which he cannot recover till he pays his rent at the end of March; the petty tradesman or struggling professional man who defends a precarious respectability by a systematic thrift too often unknown to the burly wage-earner; these are the special beneficiaries from such a reduction, and they share in a peculiar degree in the general expansion of comfort and energy which must follow when five millions of money are surrendered by the State and left to fructify in the pockets of the people.

The largest claim upon the surplus was in respect of Local Government. Lord Randolph proposed to assign the revenue received from a large number of Excise licence duties to the various local authorities about to be established. As it was undesirable to saddle the new-born authorities with the difficulty and expense of collecting many duties for which they possessed no adequate machinery, he arranged that a large number were still to be collected by the State, and the proceeds, less the cost of collection, were to be afterwards transferred. Dogs, guns, game, carriages, servants, armorial bearings, auctioneers, hawkers, patent medicine vendors, plate dealers, refreshment houses, pawnbrokers, tobacco and sweets dealers, beer, wine and spirit dealers, and the new tax on horses, aggregating in all 2,700,000*l.*, were to be thus for the time being reserved. But all licences which the local bodies could collect without any additional cost or trouble were to be handed over at once. 1,544,000*l.* worth of liquor licences fell into this latter class. They were to be granted, as heretofore, only on the production of a magisterial consent, and nothing was simpler than to make the paying of the duty and the obtaining of the consent simultaneous. Lord Randolph's schemes on this point travelled beyond both the Budget and the Local Government Bill, and embraced local option in the drink traffic. He believed that the liquor laws ought to be intimately connected with

Local Government. He wished to entrust local authorities with very large powers to regulate the sale of liquor in their districts; and he thought that if the revenue which arose from liquor licences was made an important source of revenue for the local authority, a salutary check would be provided against hasty or fanatical action, leading perhaps upon a popular impulse to total prohibition, and upon the rebound to an unrestricted sale. 'When you are legislating,' he said a year later at Sunderland (October 27, 1887), 'about subjects which interest human beings, it is just as well not to leave altogether out of account human nature.' The transfer by different methods of these sources of revenue, together with the contribution of 800,000*l.* in aid of the indoor poor, provided the round sum of 5,000,000*l.* as the foundation upon which Local Government was to be erected.

The preparation of such a Budget required an extraordinary exertion. Scheme after scheme was formulated, only to break down in discussion and to be dismissed. Many days—wrested by an effort from other pressing occupations—were consumed in study and reflection. But at length all was in order and the plan was in detail settled and complete. In every respect—in the definite economy, in the reduction in the expenditure on armaments, in the increase in the proportion of direct taxation, in the immense diminution of public burdens, in the enormous simplification of the death duties and the introduction of a logical system of graduation, in the ample provision for the needs of Local Government—it was a democratic Budget. Yet it was cunningly contrived. The importance and cohesion of the scheme would have secured it a momentum of its own. Objections upon detail could at every point have been answered by general principles. The low income-tax balanced the diminished Sinking Fund. The economies in public charges justified the remissions of taxation. The tremendous appeal to the

middle classes of a 5*d.* income-tax would have provided the driving power needed from within the Conservative party. Nevertheless, it was in a grave and nervous mood that the young Chancellor introduced it to the Cabinet in the early days of December. He spoke long and earnestly. He exerted all his power of luminous and attractive exposition. The whole proposal was unfolded. His colleagues seemed for the moment fascinated. Objections and doubts were silenced together. No one cared to assail in detail a scheme all parts of which hung so closely together and which, in the mass, displayed such novel and spacious outlines. Even Lord Iddesleigh, the creator of the threatened Sinking Fund, consented to its dissolution for the sake of the integrity of the scheme. Lord Randolph had come prepared for an uncertain and protracted battle. He seemed to have won the victory at a single charge.

His friends at the Treasury waited anxiously for his return. Startled as they had been by some of his views, foreign to their traditions as was his treatment of the debt, they had been drawn into the momentum of what was, after all, a great design. They were prompt to offer their congratulations upon the Cabinet acquiescence. But Lord Randolph was far from confident. The silence of his colleagues oppressed him. 'They said nothing,' he told Lord Welby, 'nothing at all; but you should have seen their faces!' He proceeded to give instructions for checking every figure and recasting every calculation from the beginning, as if he apprehended some tardy attack, against which preparations should be made. This arranged, as was his habit he pushed the whole matter from his mind. 'There,' he said grandly to Sir Algernon West later in the day, 'are the materials of our Budget. They are unpolished gems; put the facets on them as well as you can; but do not speak to me on the subject again until the end of the financial year.'

CHAPTER XVI

RESIGNATION

Happy the man, and happy he alone,
He who can call to-day his own—
He who, secure within, can say:
'To-morrow do thy worst, for I have lived to-day.
Come fair or foul, or rain, or shine,
The joys I have possessed, in spite of fate, are mine.
Not Heaven itself over the past hath power;
But what has been has been, and I have had my hour.'

Lines from Dryden copied out by Lord Randolph Churchill about 1891.

On the morning of December 23 all who took an interest in politics—and in those days these were a very great number—were startled to read in the *Times* newspaper that Lord Randolph Churchill had resigned the offices of Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons and had retired altogether from the Government. As the news was telegraphed abroad, it became everywhere the chief subject of rumour and discussion, and Cabinet Ministers—dispersed on their holidays—hurried back to London to find out the truth of the matter and to prepare for the changes that must follow. To the political world the event came as a complete surprise. No important issue had arisen in foreign or domestic affairs; no great question likely to lead to such a breach was before the country; there had been hardly a whisper of Cabinet dissension. But if the reader has followed this account with any considerable measure of agreement or sympathy, he will see in this resignation no inexplicable mystery, no deep-laid intrigue, no explosion of temper; but the logical and

inevitable consequence of all that had gone before.

Everything may go well with a liberal-minded man who belongs to the Tory party while his party is in Opposition. The natural disagreements which arise upon so many questions between the Government of the day and their political opponents make a broad platform on which the Democratic Tory and the old-fashioned Conservative can fight side by side in combination. When to those disagreements were added the danger of an Imperial disaster, acutely realised, and the antagonism which Mr. Gladstone inspired in all who did not worship him, the combination ripened into comradeship; and out of comradeship was born a sense of agreement which, after all, was pure illusion. It is not until men who really differ, try to work together at the business of government that their worst troubles begin. Even in the short Administration of 1885 the divergence between Lord Salisbury and Lord Randolph Churchill had been plain. But the 'Ministry of Caretakers' was in a minority. It was in a sense an Opposition rather than a Government. It had never exercised power. The disruption of the Liberal party and the decision of the electors had vitally altered the political situation. The Conservative party, with their Unionist allies, were now supreme. They had achieved great power. What would they do with it?

Many of the letters which passed between Lord Randolph and the Prime Minister during their varied and eventful association have been printed here. A change, distinct and palpable, is to be noticed in the tone of their communications after the election of 1886. It is still friendly and open; Lord Randolph's letters still preserve their unvarying air of respect towards a higher officer of State and of deference to an older and far more experienced man. Yet it is less the correspondence of a lieutenant with his chief and more like that between separate authorities. The two men were, in fact, sustained

by two different, and to some extent conflicting, sets of forces, and they stood for different ideas. Nor were those forces on which Lord Randolph Churchill counted so inconsiderable as the event might seem to prove. Tory Democracy had gained repeated victories in the past three years over the more Conservative element in the party. Lord Salisbury himself, under pressure, personal and of circumstances, had advanced vastly from his political position in the early 'eighties. He had gone as far as Newport. He had gone as far as Dartford. It did not seem improbable that, if pressed, he would go still further and that without any serious damage to party unity the liberalizing process which had already effected so much in the composition, character and prospects of the Tory party might continue. The 'old gang' was now widely scattered. Some had retired; some were in the Lords. Others had not been included in the Government. The Cabinet had been largely formed of men whose speeches and general views were democratic. The younger and more active elements in the party were adventurous and progressive. Many of the members returned by the constituencies, and especially by the boroughs, had given pledges to the electors at which 'high and dry' Tories stood aghast.

A careful examination of the Conservative majority in the House of Commons justified the belief that it was neither unfitted nor unwilling to be the instrument of large constructive reforms. It seemed, moreover, that the alliance with the Unionist Liberals and Radicals, on which the existence of the Government depended, would strengthen powerfully the more Liberal elements in the Conservative ranks and would even require an increasing measure of Liberal legislation as a condition of support. Mr. Chamberlain and his immediate followers were also a very important factor; and Lord Randolph, as the principal link which united them to Lord Salisbury's Government, had every reason as well as every inclination to study their

wishes. Looking broadly at the situation during the autumn of 1886, it was not unreasonable to hope that an era of domestic reform might be safely and prosperously inaugurated. But, in any case, Lord Randolph's own position was perfectly well understood. His declarations had been clear and full. He had made no secret of his opinions; and upon finance, upon Local Government, upon Ireland, upon land and liquor, upon questions connected with property and labour, they were unmistakably declared. Yet with the full knowledge of his opinions and every indication which the past could supply that he would fight sternly for them, the Prime Minister had invited him to undertake the second post in his Government, and Lord Randolph's acceptance had been, with unimportant exceptions, endorsed and even acclaimed by the whole party. Why should it ever have been supposed that he would have abandoned forthwith all his liberal views, would have repudiated or ignored all his pledges of economy and would have settled down to the adroit manipulation of a Parliamentary majority for strictly Conservative ends and the elaboration of ingenious excuses for departmental and administrative scandals. The Prime Minister and the party must have known—and they did know when Lord Randolph Churchill was called to lead them in the House of Commons—that he could only lead them in one direction, and that direction, so far as domestic affairs were concerned, a Liberal direction.

It is no doubt true that he rated his own power and consequent responsibility too high. Like many a successful man before him—and some since—he thought the forces he had directed in the past were resident in himself, whereas they were to some extent outside himself and independent. But this error was shared by his colleagues and by the Prime Minister. They had no idea what he could do, or how hard he could hit if he were assailed. They remembered his previous withdrawals and how he had

always come back stronger than ever. They saw how often in the last few years his judgment had proved right and how he had always won in the end, no matter how slender were his own resources and how strong the confederacy by which he was opposed. They feared him greatly. But they were Tory Ministers; and they did not intend, whatever happened, to be dragged out of their own proper sphere and committed to large reforms and democratic Budgets. Better far Lord Hartington and the Whigs! Better even the Grand Old Man!

In all that concerned the management of individuals, Lord Salisbury excelled. No one was more ready to sacrifice his opinion to get his way. No one was more skilful in convincing others that they agreed with him, or more powerful to persuade them to actual agreement. His experience, his patience, his fame, his subtle and illuminating mind, secured for him an ascendency in his Cabinet apart altogether from the paramount authority of First Minister. The Leader of the House of Commons, triumphant in Parliament, almost supreme in the country, found himself often almost alone in the Cabinet. The disproportion perplexed and offended him. He believed that he had got the majority together. He wanted to see it used well and boldly in correcting abuses, in carrying great reforms, and moving always onwards. He believed that unless the Conservative party gave proof of their zeal for popular causes the constituencies, so painfully won over, would revert to Radicalism, that the Unionist alliance would collapse and that Mr. Gladstone would return to power. And he would be held responsible for the disaster!

From the very outset the new Administration was uneasy. Discord stirred restlessly behind the curtains of Cabinet secrecy. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach had his own views about Ireland and Irish landlords, and they differed from those of the Prime Minister. He was, so Lord Randolph described him to Lord Salisbury in a letter on

August 22, 'afraid of being forced to administer Ireland too much on a landlord's rights basis.' He had been upset by the Chancellor of the Exchequer's statement that any revision of rents by State interposition was altogether excluded from Conservative policy. He would not agree to the principle that any permanent guarantee of the judicial rent was conveyed to the landlord in 1886. Lord Randolph, however, persuaded him that these questions did not arise seriously for immediate decision.

The autumn Councils were not harmonious, whether upon foreign or domestic affairs. The proposed changes in Parliamentary procedure, and especially the question of the Closure, provoked awkward differences, nearly every prominent member of the House of Commons holding strong personal opinions based on long personal experience. One Minister felt unable to be responsible for proposing Closure by a simple majority, and recommended that the Government should leave the matter as an open question to the House. Others disputed on the relative merits of a two-thirds or three-fifths majority. The tangled controversies connected with the details of English and Irish Local Government proved even more troublesome. To lighten the ship it was decided to confine the Bill to county government alone. For a long time it seemed impossible to reconcile the divergent views of the Prime Minister and the Irish Secretary, and, as it was intended that Sir Michael should himself take charge of the Bill, the difficulty was grave. 'I wish there was no such thing as Local Government,' wrote Lord Salisbury pathetically to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, after an elaborate 'eirenicon' which he had proposed had been abruptly rejected by his colleagues.

Besides these internal differences, the alliance with the Liberal-Unionist leaders, upon whose goodwill the existence of the Government depended, required careful and unremitting attention. In November Lord Hartington,

who felt the need of meeting Mr. Gladstone's demand for a constructive Irish policy with positive proposals, if the Liberal and Radical Unionists were to be kept solid against the Home Rulers, pressed that a Local Government Bill for Ireland should be promised in the Queen's Speech. He suggested that this should provide for the establishment of Irish County and District Councils, with liberty to two or more to act together for certain specified purposes affecting their several jurisdictions; but no further. He pointed out that, as Irish Local Government would necessarily proceed on more 'Conservative' lines than English Local Government, the Irish settlement, if first effected, would afford a safer model for the English measure. This argument much impressed the Prime Minister; but Lord Randolph Churchill, who also appreciated its force, objected for that very reason to giving Irish Local Government precedence over the English Bill, and he succeeded, by the influence of a friend, in persuading Lord Hartington to abate his Irish claims. Mr. Chamberlain also intimated, through Lord Randolph, that while prepared to give the Government policy a generous consideration, whether on foreign affairs or on the necessity for Coercion, he could not support anything that he considered reactionary in Local Government. The principal members of the Cabinet, including the Prime Minister, Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Smith, then agreed upon an extensive proposal for England, with the understanding that an Irish Local Government Bill should be promised in the Queen's Speech, but introduced *after* England and Scotland had been dealt with.

One difficulty was thus removed; but, as the month drew on, continual divergences arose on questions of domestic policy. The Dartford programme was indeed, like the Budget—in principle, at least—accepted formally by Ministers. But their reluctance to embark on such policies betrayed itself in all sorts of small objections. The

survivors of the 'old gang' were not inclined to forget the treatment they had received. The 'Plan of Campaign' against the payment of rent, which had been started in Ireland as the Nationalist reply to the refusal of Home Rule, was spreading; and the difficulties of the Irish Government, divested of the exceptional coercive powers of former years, were such that Beach, on whom Lord Randolph counted greatly, was often obliged by his Irish duties to be absent from meetings of the Cabinet. The Chancellor of the Exchequer felt sorely the want of a friend. His delight when, at his continued request, Lord Salisbury brought Mr. Balfour into the Cabinet led him (November 17) to send the news to the *Times* before the Queen's consent had been obtained, and a breach of etiquette was narrowly averted.

Many of the lesser members of the Government were Tory Democrats; and much of the draft legislation that came before the Cabinet was Liberal in its character. Lord Randolph, however, had to fight single-handed for every point. A Minister who was called to one of the Cabinets on the Local Government Bill described to me the pleadings and arguments by which the Chancellor of the Exchequer strove tirelessly to extend its scope to the widest limits. 'We must not overweight the Bill,' said the Prime Minister at length. 'It is a heavy Bill already.' 'A heavy Bill!' repeated Lord Randolph, balancing the draft upon his fingers and letting it flutter to the ground, while everyone else sat silent. 'A heavy Bill!' He was, in fact, always the devil's advocate. 'I am appalled,' he wrote to the Prime Minister (December 2), 'at the strength of your disapproval of poor Long and Onslow's Allotments Bill. We shall have to cut it down like anything.' The concessions which were made to his insistence, disturbed his colleagues without satisfying him. The deference which he often showed to high Tory views, was forgotten amid disagreements so many and grave. When the last word had been said, no

matter what compromise had been reached, this fundamental difference remained—that he regarded Liberal measures as things good and desirable in themselves; while many of his colleagues, and certainly his chief, looked upon them as so many unholy surrenders to the powers of evil.

'Alas!' wrote Lord Randolph sadly to the Prime Minister on November 6, 'I see the Dartford programme crumbling into pieces every day. The Land Bill is rotten. I am afraid it is an idle schoolboy's dream to suppose that Tories can legislate—as I did, stupidly. They can govern and make war and increase taxation and expenditure *à merveille*, but legislation is not their province in a democratic constitution.... I certainly have not the courage and energy to go on struggling against cliques, as poor Dizzy did all his life....'

Lord Salisbury replied with great care and kindness; but he had little consolation to afford, and this letter seems to have been his last attempt:—

November 7, 1886.

My dear Randolph,—I did not get your note of yesterday till I got to town in the afternoon—and then it was too late to catch you. I saw Beach, however, and ... led him to tell me what had passed with Ritchie. It appears that the latter has abandoned the ground plan which he told me in September he was fully resolved on—namely, that if owners are to have half the taxation they should have half the representation too. This, as you remember, was a principle for which Beach contended vigorously last winter —and which was generally accepted by the then Cabinet. Beach thinks the abandonment of it would have specially injurious influences in Ireland.

For the rest, I fully see all the difficulties of our position. The Tory party is composed of very varying elements, and there is merely trouble and vexation of spirit in trying to make them work together. I think the 'classes and the dependents of class' are the strongest ingredients in our composition, but we have so to conduct our legislation that we shall give some satisfaction to both classes and masses. This is specially difficult with the classes—because all legislation is rather unwelcome to them, as tending to disturb a state of things with which they are satisfied. It is evident, therefore, that we must work at less speed and at a lower temperature than our opponents. Our Bills must be tentative and cautious, not sweeping and dramatic. But I believe that with patience, feeling our way as we go, we may get the one element to concede and the other to forbear. The opposite course is to produce drastic, symmetrical measures, hitting the 'classes' hard, and consequently dispensing with their support, but trusting to public meetings and the democratic forces generally to carry you through. I think such a policy will fail. I do not mean that the 'classes' will join issue with you on one of the measures which hits them hard, and beat you on that. That is not the way they fight. They will select some other matter on which they can appeal to prejudice, and on which they think the masses will be indifferent; and on that they will upset you. My counsel therefore is strongly against this alternative; and it would be the same if I had no interest in the matter, and was merely an observer outside the Ministry advising you. Your *rôle* should be rather that of a diplomatist trying to bring the opposed sections of the party

together, and not that of a whip trying to keep the slugs up to the collar....

Yours very truly,
Salisbury.

Yet the first session of a Parliament and the first year of an Administration are the most critical. Men are not really bound together in a Government until they have made mistakes in common and defended each other's failures; and it is possible that, unless definite and urgent disagreements had arisen, the evil hour might have been long averted. But Lord Randolph Churchill was not only responsible for the House of Commons; he was responsible for national finance. And from the Treasury a second set of questions necessarily involving sharp differences with his colleagues now began to arrive.

The reader will not fail to recognise how vital a definite economy was to the character and success of Lord Randolph Churchill's Budget. The reduction of the Sinking Fund and of taxation generally could only be defended in association with a lower expenditure. Circumstances now within our knowledge seem to show that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's margin was larger than he had dared to expect. But so many novel sources of revenue, tapped for the first time, introduced uncertain factors into his calculations. His public declarations before the general election had been unmistakable. He was pledged to the hilt in the cause of economy, and the actual conditions fortified his sentiments. Even before the Bradford meeting, the tension was apparent.

Mr. Smith to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Confidential.

Greenlands, Henley-on-Thames: October 24.

My dear R. C.,—I shall probably see you in Arlington Street to-morrow, but I may not have an opportunity of begging you not to indicate too precisely at Bradford the results you may anticipate from economies in army administration. I shall do

everything I can in that direction, but I am anxious, as you must be, as to the aspect of affairs, and I think the policy you are anxious to carry out is best supported by the organisation of the strength we possess than by allowing the present unready condition to continue.

As to this I must have a serious talk with you when you come back from Bradford. I contemplate method, management, arrangement—rather than large present expenditure; but, unless you see your way through the difficulties in Turkey and as to Egypt easily and peaceably, it would be unwise, I think, to announce reductions in military Budgets which would be interpreted, as the Paris *Temps* suggests, as presaging a withdrawal of England from the positions she has taken up. It may be necessary to take such a course, but it can only be done after the most grave deliberation: it almost involves a recognition of the fact that we are no longer one of the Great Powers.

I prefer to say these things to you alone than to talk of them before Salisbury. Our diplomacy is no doubt very weak, but this does not entirely explain our powerlessness in Europe....

Yours very sincerely,
W. H. Smith.

All through the month of November the annual conflict between the Treasury and the spending departments was maintained with unusual vigour and with varying fortune. On the 3rd a Treasury Minute accelerated the preparation of the estimates:—

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W.:
November 3, 1886.

In view of the probability of the meeting of Parliament being fixed for the middle of January, the First Lord of the Treasury and I are of opinion that the Army and Navy Estimates should be considered by the Cabinet before Christmas. Will you therefore kindly direct that the estimates decided upon by the War Office should be ready by the first days of December? We shall then be well ahead of our work.

'Do you observe,' wrote Smith on the 7th, 'that under pressure our people in Egypt see their way now to a great

reduction of military expenditure? Only a fortnight ago they were the other way minded.' And again on the 20th, when some Treasury probing had touched a tender spot:—

'This departmental extravagance is not mine, but my predecessor's, and full *private* notice has been given repeatedly since August. I hope I may yet save something, but the cake was eaten before I got here. We will talk about it when we next meet.'

Other departments had to face a not less searching examination, and the Navy and Colonial Office estimates were the subject of prolonged and animated correspondence. There was, of course, nothing unhealthy, or even unusual, in all this. It is the business of the Treasury to canvass all proposals which involve expenditure and to compel those who bring them forward to show, not merely that they are necessary and desirable, but that they are more necessary and more desirable than other necessary and desirable projects. Without such severe controversial examination of estimates, the finances of the wealthiest country would soon be in disorder and the money of the taxpayer squandered irretrievably. But it may well be believed that, with all the good-will in the world, the month of November is a stormy period for the Chancellor of the Exchequer and brings him daily into acute antagonism with his colleagues. In such circumstances only the closest sympathy and support from the Prime Minister can sustain him. He is one against many, and must otherwise submit or resign. But on this occasion, when there should have been the most intimate alliance, there opened vast and comprehensive differences; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer became continually more isolated and from that very cause more combative. The money clauses of the Local Government Bill—affecting as they did so many settled interests, interwoven as they were with the whole finance of the year—led to vexatious and protracted discussions. Behind all loomed

the vague yet formidable shadow of the Budget itself. By the end of the month it was evident that a crisis was approaching.

'Salisbury,' wrote Lord George Hamilton on the 25th, 'is getting to the position where he will be pressed no more. If a rupture takes place, it will damage us almost irretrievably; for he would carry with him a large portion of the party, and your position would be very much, as you yourself said, like to that of Sir Robert Peel, who, though he carried Free Trade, was without a party afterwards. Gladstone cannot live for long and if we only hold together we shall utterly foil him.

'I write feelingly, for if we break up, my vocation of peacemaker between the different sections of the party is gone and I should take up some other line of work than politics. Things are, I fear, worse than we thought two days back; however, you will see for yourself and act accordingly.'

The definite collision took place just before the estimates of the Navy and Army were finally presented. Lord Randolph Churchill insisted upon some reduction and made no secret that he would set his official existence on the issue. Hamilton replied that 50,000*l.* was the utmost further variation that could be expected at the Admiralty. Smith wrote as follows:—

Private.

December 14, 1886.

My dear R. C.,—I am very sorry to say that the first review of my figures affords no hope whatever of any reductions in W. O. estimates as compared with 1886-7.

We lose 100,000*l.* of Indian money, and have to meet extra charges for leap year—Volunteers, Reserve, and other automatic increases—which are enough to drive one wild, without entering upon the questions of giving small-arm ammunition and defence.

I shall be able to give you a rough idea of the probable gross estimate on Thursday or Friday, but it will not be a pleasant one.

Yours very sincerely,
W. H. Smith.

And again on the 16th, in a remarkable letter showing that he, too, was prepared to go to extremes:—

Private.

December 16, 1886.

My dear R. C.,—I have been thinking a good deal over your letter of yesterday.

I am as much committed to economy as you are, but I cannot be the head of a great department in times like these and ask for less than the absolute minimum required for the safety of the country.

I will go into figures with you if you like—but it is out of the question for you to talk of retiring. If one of us goes, I shall claim the privilege; and you may rest assured that if a man can be found to take my place, I shall be delighted to give all the help in my power to a successor brave enough to assume responsibility which I am not prepared to bear.

I will speak to you after the Cabinet to-morrow.

Yours very sincerely,
W. H. Smith.

Bear in mind that in the House—if I am there—I do not ask you to defend my estimates or to excuse them.

'You will shortly have to decide,' wrote Lord Randolph in a good-humoured letter to the Prime Minister, December 15, 'whose services you will retain—those of your War Minister or those of your Chancellor of Exchequer.

'Smith informs me of his inability to make reductions in the Army Estimates; I have informed him of my absolute and unalterable inability to consent to any Army Estimates which do not show a marked and considerable reduction.

'George Hamilton has made me a reduction in the Navy Estimates of over 700,000*l.* If these things can be done at the Admiralty, the attitude of the War Office becomes intolerable. Generally speaking, however, I am anxious to

submit to you to-morrow the draft of a Treasury minute to the public departments calling their serious attention to their increasing expenditure and requiring marked and immediate economies.'

Lord Salisbury's reply indicated clearly the side to which his sympathies inclined:—

Hatfield: December 15, 1886.

My dear Randolph,—I will be in Downing Street at half-past three. I have got to go to Windsor at a quarter to five. There was nothing for it but to consent to the Egyptian expenditure, though it is very lamentable—all Gladstone's fault. The Cabinet, happily, not I, will have to decide the controversy between you and Smith. But it will be a serious responsibility to refuse the demands of a War Minister so little imaginative as Smith, especially at such a time. It is curious that two days ago I was listening here to the most indignant denunciations of Smith for his economy—from Wolseley. I am rather surprised at George Hamilton being able to reduce so much. I hope it is all right.

Ever yours very truly,
Salisbury.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, however, showed no signs of yielding and his colleagues, feeling that the crash was coming, evidently took counsel with one another and broadened the ground upon which they stood and might have to fight. The Budget had meanwhile been passed through the Cabinet. But now doubt and hesitation seemed to have overtaken those Ministers who were concerned in the Estimates dispute. On the 18th Lord George Hamilton wrote that he thought the Budget 'exceedingly well balanced and comprehensive,' but on that very account the more likely to be attacked by the various interests concerned, and he asked for certain returns as to the incidence of taxation. It is significant that Mr. Smith wrote a similar letter on the same day, and Lord Salisbury on the day following:—

Mr. Smith to Lord Randolph Churchill.

War Office: December 18, 1886.

My dear R. C.,—I think you should send us a printed memorandum of your Budget proposals, in order that they may be considered carefully during our short holiday.

They are too large and important to be determined upon after a conversation across the table. It would not be fair to you nor to your colleagues, some of whom may not have fully realised all your proposals.

Yours very sincerely,
W. H. Smith.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Hatfield House, Hatfield, Herts: December 19, 1886.

My dear Randolph,—In the course of discussions on the Local Government Bill you have two or three times expressed the belief that the country gentlemen would be consoled for all they might lose under that Bill by the financial arrangements which were to be proposed; or, as you expressed it, that 'the pill would be gilded.' I think you have overlooked the fact that your local taxation proposals will relieve the towns more than the rural districts. At least, I have looked up the figures for Hertfordshire, Suffolk, and Devonshire, and enclose a statement of them. The result is (if I rightly understood your proposals) that the ordinary country gentleman will have an extra burden of ninepence in the pound—which is gilding of a negative kind.

Ever yours truly,
Salisbury.

The situation was fast becoming acute. At a dinner on the 18th, when the Prime Minister was Lord Randolph's guest, shrewd observers had noticed, underneath much personal courtesy, an air of harsh political antagonism. The effect of these letters was decisive. Lord Randolph forwarded the figures which Lord Salisbury had enclosed to the Treasury and called for a memorandum in reply. His pencilled comment on the paper is, 'Lord Salisbury's figures are incomprehensible.' The Treasury answer required a little time to prepare; but the next day Lord Randolph wrote back:—

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W.: December 20, 1886.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—I know the country gentlemen, like the farmers, always think they are being plundered and ruined. The facts are, however, that whereas the ratepayers used to receive in gross three millions from the taxes, they would in future under my scheme receive over five millions. Of course the towns will get the bulk of the indoor pauper contribution.

Real estate pays succession duty on an average about once in thirty years. We do not estimate that the change in the succession duty will add more than a million a year to the present yield of 800,000*l.*, and it will take at least twelve years to work up to this amount. When the succession duties were first voted by Parliament, they were estimated to produce 2,000,000*l.* I believe the produce has never exceeded 900,000*l.* The assimilation of the incidence of death duties on real estate to that which falls upon personal estate has not of late years been resisted in principle even by the strictest sect of the Tories.

I enclose you the G.O.M.'s reply to my communication. I hear rumours that he is contemplating the policy of throwing over the Home Rulers.

Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

That same afternoon the Chancellor of the Exchequer was summoned to Windsor. Travelling thither, he met by chance in the same railway carriage Lord George Hamilton. Lord Randolph, who was in excellent spirits, said briskly that he intended to resign that day. Hamilton was much shocked, and urged patience, delay and so forth. Lord Randolph remained inscrutably gay. That night the Queen showed him most gracious favour, and kept him long in conversation. He spoke of many matters of policy —of the new Procedure rules, of Ireland, even of the prospects of the coming session—but of his determination not one word escaped him. It was late when he retired, yet he proceeded forthwith to write his letter of resignation to Lord Salisbury. Hamilton, who came to press him once again, was treated with extreme good-humour, and had it

all read out to him before it was despatched:—

Windsor Castle: December 20, 1886.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—The approximate Estimates for the Army and Navy for next year have been to-day communicated to me by George Hamilton and Smith. They amount to 31 millions —12½ millions for the Navy, 18½ millions for the Army. The Navy votes show a decrease of nearly 500,000*l.*, but this is to a great extent illusory, as there is a large increase in the demand made by the Admiralty upon the War Office for guns and ammunition. The Army Estimates thus swollen show an increase of about 300,000*l.* The total 31 millions for the two Services, which will in all probability be exceeded, is very greatly in excess of what I can consent to. I know that on this subject I cannot look for any sympathy or effective support from you and I am certain that I shall find no supporters in the Cabinet. I do not want to be wrangling and quarreling in the Cabinet, and therefore must request to be allowed to give up my office and retire from the Government.

I am pledged up to the eyes to large reductions of expenditure, and I cannot change my mind on this matter. If the foreign policy of this country is conducted with skill and judgment, our present huge and increasing armaments are quite unnecessary, and the taxation which they involve perfectly unjustifiable. The War estimates might be very considerably reduced if the policy of expenditure on the fortifications and guns and garrisons of military posts, mercantile ports and coaling stations was abandoned or modified. But of this I see no chance, and under the circumstances I cannot continue to be responsible for the finances.

I am sure you will agree that I am right in being perfectly frank and straightforward on this question, to which I attach the very utmost importance: and, after all, what I have written is only a repetition of what I endeavoured to convey to you in conversation the other day.

Believe me to be

Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Early the next morning both Ministers left Windsor and

returned to London. Lord Randolph bought, as was his custom, a number of newspapers, but found that neither he nor Hamilton had any change. The train was about to start, and the bookstall keeper, who knew both his customers by sight, cried: 'Never mind, my lord—when you come back next time will do.' Lord Randolph looked sideways at his companion and said, with a quaint smile, 'He little knows I shall never come back.'

It happened that at this time Sir Henry Wolff was at home from his Egyptian mission, and he and Lord Randolph consorted together daily. Both went down to the City on Wednesday, the 22nd; for the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to pay an official visit to the Master of the Mint. Lord Randolph proposed returning by the Underground Railway, and it was while they were pacing the platform, waiting for a train, that Wolff asked some chance question about the Treasury intentions. 'Upon my word,' said Lord Randolph abruptly, 'I don't know now whether I am Chancellor of the Exchequer or not.' But otherwise he never told a soul—not Beach, his trusted friend; not Chamberlain, his ally; not his mother; not even his wife. Lord Salisbury's answer did not come till eight o'clock on Wednesday. He had delayed in order to write to his principal colleagues, sending copies of Lord Randolph's letter, made laboriously with his own hand, and perhaps just in order to delay. It is certain that he did not regard the matter as settled. He wrote to Beach on the 21st that he was not sure whether Lord Randolph would persist. He sent no word to the Queen. Yet his answer, when it came, seemed conclusive. It proposed no compromise; it did not even suggest an interview; and the expression of regret with which it closed might apply either to the actual resignation or to the expressed intention to resign:—

Hatfield House, Hatfield, Herts: December 22, 1886.

My dear Randolph,—I have your letter of the 20th from

Windsor. You tell me, as you told me orally on Thursday, that 31 millions for the two Services is very greatly in excess of what you can consent to; that you are pledged up to the eyes to large reductions of expenditure, and cannot change your mind in the matter; and that, as you feel certain of receiving no support from me or from the Cabinet in this view, you must resign your office and withdraw from the Government. On the other hand, I have a letter from Smith telling me that he feels bound to adhere to the Estimates which he showed you on Monday, and that he declines to postpone, as you had wished him to do, the expenditure which he thinks necessary for the fortification of coaling stations, military posts and mercantile ports.

In this unfortunate state of things I have no choice but to express my full concurrence with the view of Hamilton and Smith, and my dissent from yours—though I say it, both on personal and public grounds, with very deep regret. The outlook on the Continent is very black. It is not too much to say that the chances are in favour of war at an early date; and when war has once broken out, we cannot be secure from the danger of being involved in it. The undefended state of many of our ports and coaling stations is notorious, and the necessity of protecting them has been urged by a strong Commission, and has been admitted on both sides in debate. To refuse to take measures for their protection would be to incur the gravest possible responsibility. Speaking more generally, I should hesitate to refuse at this time any supplies which men so moderate in their demands as Smith and Hamilton declared to be necessary for the safety of the country.

The issue is so serious that it thrusts aside all personal and party considerations. But I regret more than I can say the view you take of it, for no one knows better than you how injurious to the public interests at this juncture your withdrawal from the Government may be.

In presence of your very strong and decisive language I can only again express my very profound regret.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,
Salisbury.

Lord Randolph Churchill never doubted the meaning of the answer he had received, and treated it as a formal acceptance of his resignation. He concluded, as will appear, that the delay had been due to communications with the Queen, and that the whole matter was now ended. He sat down at once and wrote to Lord Salisbury a letter of farewell:—

Carlton Club: December 22, 1886.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of to-day's date accepting my resignation of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer.

I feel sure you will believe me when I express my deep and abiding appreciation of the unvarying kindness which you have shown me, and of the patience and indulgence with which you have always listened to the views on various public matters which I have from time to time submitted to you.

The great question of public expenditure is not so technical or departmental as might be supposed by a superficial critic. Foreign policy and free expenditure upon armaments act and react upon one another. I believe myself to be well informed on the present state of Europe, nor am I aware that I am blind or careless to the probabilities of a great conflict between European Powers in the coming year. A wise foreign policy will extricate England from Continental struggles and keep her outside of German, Russian, French or Austrian disputes. I have for some time observed a tendency in the Government attitude to pursue a different line of action which I have not been able to modify or check.

This tendency is certain to be accentuated if large estimates are presented to and voted by Parliament. The possession of a very sharp sword offers a temptation, which becomes irresistible, to demonstrate the efficiency of the weapon in a practical manner. I remember the vulnerable and scattered character of the Empire, the universality of our commerce, the peaceful tendencies of our democratic electorate, the hard times, the pressure of competition and the high taxation now imposed; and with these factors vividly before me I decline to be a party to encouraging the military and militant circle of the War Office and Admiralty to join in the high and desperate stakes which other nations seem to be forced to

risk.

Believe me, I pray you, that it is not niggardly cheese-paring or Treasury crabbedness, but only considerations of high state policy which compel me to sever ties in many ways most binding and pleasant.

A careful and continuous examination and study of national finance, of the startling growth of expenditure, of national taxation resources and endurance, has brought me to the conclusion from which nothing can turn me, that it is only the sacrifice of a Chancellor of the Exchequer upon the altar of thrift and economy which can rouse the people to take stock of their leaders, their position and their future.

The character of the domestic legislation which the Government contemplate in my opinion falls sadly short of what the Parliament and the country expect and require. The foreign policy which is being adopted appears to me at once dangerous and methodless; but I take my stand on expenditure and finance, which involve and determine all other matters. And reviewing my former public declarations on this question and having no reason to doubt their soundness, I take leave of your Government, and especially of yourself, with profound regret, but without doubt or hesitation.

Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

After writing this letter he went down to the *Times* office, imparted his priceless information to Mr. Buckle, authorised him to make it public, and so to bed. Lord Salisbury received this second letter at half-past one in the morning of the 23rd, and realised that the breach was definite. He posted the news at once to the Queen; but he was already too late. With the first light of the morning the announcement appeared in the *Times*.

This action of Lord Randolph Churchill in resigning the office he held in such a manner and on such an occasion has two aspects—a smaller and a larger. Both are partly true: neither by itself is comprehensive. The smaller aspect is that of a proud, sincere, overstrained man conceiving

himself bound to fight certain issues, at whatever cost to himself—believing at each movement that victory would be won, and drawn by every movement further into a position from which he could not or would not retreat. The larger aspect deserves somewhat longer consideration. The differences between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his colleagues were matters of detail and might easily have been compacted. The difference between the Leader of the House of Commons and the Prime Minister was fundamental. It must be plain to the reader who has persevered so far. It glows through the correspondence included in this chapter. It was a difference of belief, of character, of aspiration—and by nothing could it ever have been adjusted. There were many considerations and influences which worked powerfully for their agreement. In the Union they found a common cause; in Mr. Gladstone they faced a common antagonist. Lord Randolph's fiercest invective did not jar upon the 'master of flouts and jeers.' Neither could be insensible to the personal fascination of the other. Both rejoiced in a wide and illuminating survey of public affairs; both dwelt much upon the future; both preserved a cynical disdain of small men seeking paltry ends. But the gulf which separated the fiery leader of Tory Democracy—with his bold plans of reform and dreams of change, with his record of storm and triumph and slender expectations of a long life—from the old-fashioned Conservative statesman, the head of a High Church and High Tory family, versed in diplomacy, representative of authority, wary, austere, content to govern—was a gulf no mutual needs, no common interests, no personal likings could permanently bridge. They represented conflicting schools of political philosophy. They stood for ideas mutually incompatible. Sooner or later the breach must have come; and no doubt the strong realisation of this underlay the action of the one and the acquiescence of the other.

I have tried to show that this profound difference found expression on many specific points. The Cabinet of 1886 had sat together only five months, yet here already were five important matters of disagreement:—The policy to be pursued in the East of Europe; the complexion of the Local Government Bill; the attitude towards the Whigs; the character of the Budget; and lastly, the direct cause of rupture, the expenditure upon armaments. Longer association threatened merely a multiplication and aggravation of divergences. But though patience could not have ended in agreement, it might have brought disagreement to another end. And it is from this point of view that Lord Randolph Churchill's action requires most careful examination.

The differences upon specific points, regarded singly, were serious; and together they became vital. But they were differences less of principle than of degree. No clear and abrupt dividing-line was presented; and the questions were always of 'more or less,' not of 'yes or no.' Why should Lord Randolph Churchill not, then, have kept his offices? Would he not, by so doing, have had a much better chance of imparting to Conservative policy the complexion he desired? Much was to be gained by waiting. Every day his position was becoming more assured. At every stage and turn of Cabinet discussion he could have laboured to deflect the course of legislation; and the House of Commons might be guided more easily than his colleagues. In a hundred small ways he could, without any breach of confidence, have served the ends he had in view. But his gorge rose at it. It was almost impossible to him to defend courses of which he disapproved: and in the position he held every act of the Government must be constantly and whole-heartedly defended by him. Imagination might foresee this new Administration, which he more than any man had called into being, drifting irresistibly towards military ambitions and European

entanglements, ending perhaps at last in war: and in all this he must be the principal agent—the man who had to make the House of Commons consent. No—at the very outset a decision must be taken and a pacific and progressive domestic policy established. Without that assurance the honours and amenities of power—and no one enjoyed them more—seemed valueless; and the money—a matter, as we have seen, in itself from other points of view of much consequence—a thing not to be considered for a moment.

Of course, he hoped the others would give way—would, at any rate, make some considerable concession, which would leave him proportionately strengthened. 'With respect to Local Government,' he wrote to Mr. Chamberlain on the 19th, 'I pressed Lord Salisbury and Mr. Goschen very hard to give up the idea of *ex officio* representation, and' (a significant sentence) 'possibly my arguments may not be altogether without effect.' How could they do without him? Who was there to fill the Treasury? Could Smith make head against Gladstone in Parliament? Was Lord Salisbury the man to maintain the alliance with the Chamberlain of 1886? Would Stanhope vindicate the Government in the constituencies? Balfour was unknown: Beach was ailing: Goschen was 'very hard to please': and the Whigs doubtful and contrary. Beyond all question he was the most powerful and efficient instrument at the disposal of the Prime Minister—probably, as it seemed, the only instrument which would be effective. And since so powerful and necessary, and moreover being possessed of a complete scheme and temper of political thought largely accepted among the people, he was bound to put it to the proof whether he should not exert an influence upon policy compatible with his public pledges and proportioned to his usefulness to the Government. But still a more patient man would have waited.

Undoubtedly he expected to prevail. What he asked was in itself a small thing: 'Cannot this vote for coaling stations, for instance, stand over till next year?'—some petty economy; but still an economy, and an economy in armaments. He knew that if they had wished to meet him, they could easily have compounded. Reductions greater than would have kept him, were made after he was gone. And since it was thus revealed that his colleagues did not wish to act with him, what a prospect of vexation and disappointment and special pleadings the future unveiled! —unless the matter could be settled at the very beginning and a peaceful and progressive policy assured.

It seems, however, very surprising that Lord Randolph Churchill should at this period have overlooked the anger and jealousy that his sudden rise to power had excited. In little more than a year two Administrations had been formed from the Conservative party. In the making of both of these his influence had been almost supreme; and it had been an influence which, from the point of view of ordinary Parliamentary promotion, had been disturbing and even revolutionary. Men who in quieter tunes would have received office had been disappointed. Others who had enjoyed what they considered almost prescriptive right, had been forced out. The former leader of the Conservative party had been driven from the House of Commons. Mr. Matthews had been raised from private life to one of the highest posts in the Cabinet. This one, hitherto unknown, had been jumped up: that one, so long respected, had been thrust down. Malice proved a stronger motive power than gratitude; and, although unquestioned success had crowned the struggle, bitterness and resentment gathered behind the conqueror.

Nor, indeed, do we think he should have counted much upon the good-will of the plain member. He was often—and seemed to be, more often still—in things political a hard man, reaping where he had not sown, severe to exact

service and obedience, hasty in judgment, fierce in combat; and many a black look or impatient word had been remembered against him by those of whose existence he was perhaps scarcely conscious. Friends he had in plenty —some of them true ones; but, for all the personal charm he could exert at will, his manner had added to his enemies. Venerable Ministers saw a formidable intruder who had entered the Cabinet by adventurous and unusual paths. Austere Conservatives shrank from this alarming representative of the New Democracy. Worthy men thoughtlessly slighted, tiresome people ruthlessly snubbed, office-seekers whose pretensions had been ignored, Parliamentary martinets concerned for party discipline, all were held in check only so long as he was powerful. His position had been won by the sword, and he must be armed to keep it.

Yet at this moment, when he proposed to try conclusions with all the strongest forces in the Conservative party, he seems to have taken no single precaution to safeguard himself. He gave the Cabinet long and ample notice of his intention. He reiterated his determination at intervals through the autumn. He knew that Smith and Hamilton took counsel together: he knew that they had prevailed upon Lord Salisbury; and that if in the end they should resist stubbornly, their resistance would not be ill-considered or unprepared. Upon the other hand, he made no effort to rally his own friends. A third at least of the Government were men of his own choice. Beach would have made great exertions on his behalf. But no one was consulted. He was in constant and intimate intercourse with Chamberlain. Their views at this tune were almost identical; their relations most cordial. Yet he gave him no knowledge of the situation, nor dreamed of inviting his support: so strictly—quixotically even—did he interpret the idea of Cabinet loyalty.

Few men then alive were more skilled in political

tactics, or knew better how to deal with a crisis. If he had made up his mind to break with the Government, there were many ways in which the severance might have been made effective. First, as to time. I have said a more patient man would have waited; a more unscrupulous man would most certainly have waited. The power of a Leader of the House of Commons whose chief is in the House of Lords, always immense, is far greater when Parliament is sitting. He is the general in the field at the head of the army. The other waits at home, trying to make what he can of the despatches. Moreover, the House of Commons, for all its staid and sober qualities, is sometimes, and was particularly in times like these, an organism of impulse. A sudden announcement; a brilliant and persuasive speech; powerful support coming from an unexpected quarter; panic, emotion, or excitement, and fine majorities may crumble into dust.

He could with perfect ease and candour have postponed the issue; and had he done so the danger to the Government must have been enormously increased. He resigned, however, at Christmas-time, when politicians were scattered far and wide on their holidays, when the temperature was low, and when three clear weeks intervened before the reconstructed Government would have to meet Parliament, and before he would have an opportunity of explanation. It was scarcely possible to have chosen a season better suited to the interests of his colleagues or more unpromising to his own.

Then as to the ground of battle. I have tried to show that this insignificant reduction of a military vote, on which he insisted, was the peg upon which the tremendous issues of a peaceful domestic administration as against an ambitious foreign policy supported by growing armaments depended. But what a bad peg to have chosen! Granted a divergence not to be compacted between Lord Randolph and the Cabinet, how many more promising issues presented

themselves! Questions of Local Government, questions of Coercion, questions of taxation, rose thorny and menacing on every side. Indeed, it is clearly evident that Lord Randolph neither formed a deliberate plan nor expected to supplant Lord Salisbury or overthrow the Government; but that, on the contrary, in so far as he was careful at all, he was more careful of their interest than of his own.

There is scarcely any more abundant source of error in history than the natural desire of writers—regardless of the overlapping and inter-play of memories, principles, prejudices and hopes, and the reaction of physical conditions—to discover or provide simple explanations for the actions of their characters. It would be a barren task to set forth the motives of this affair in a schedule. Yet the main causes emerge—shadowy perhaps, but unmistakable. Lord Randolph Churchill did not think of himself as a man, but rather as the responsible trustee and agent of the Tory Democracy; and this temper, overpowering even the most attractive personal associations, impelled him by deliberate steps—yet not without deep despondency—towards a fateful issue: and all the while a feeling, partly of sombre pride, partly of loyalty, forbade him to take the necessary and obvious steps to protect himself. Ambushes, intrigues, cabals, might suit the free-lance of Fourth Party days; but an official leader of a great party could only state the terms on which his assistance could be obtained, and, if it were not worth while to grant them, could only go.

It may no doubt be observed that this was the highest imprudence; that it agreed very little with much that he had done before, and not at all with the impression formed in the public mind. If he had put away for a season his pledges and his pride, both might have been recovered with interest later on. As it was, he delivered himself, unarmed, unattended, fettered even, to his enemies; and therefrom ensued not only his own political ruin, but grave injury to the causes he sustained. Yet it is noteworthy that

he never repented of the course he had taken. Bitterly as he regretted the consequences, and felt the abuse and misrepresentation of which he was the object, and the exclusion from the fascinating and exciting life into which he had been drawn, he was not wont by word or letter to admit that he was wrong to resign, or assert that, having again the opportunity, he would do otherwise. He looked upon the action as the most exalted in his life, and as an event of which, whatever the results to himself, he might be justly proud. 'I had to do it—I could be no longer useful to them.'

It should, indeed, not escape notice that there was among the principal characters in English politics during this momentous time a high and disinterested air, very refreshing in contrast with the humiliating antics of the place-hunters and trinket-seekers who surrounded them, and more admirable than the selfish ambitions of the statesmen of a sterner age. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach refuses the Leadership of the House of Commons, and insists upon serving under a younger man who in his opinion can better fill the place. Sir Stafford Northcote in the interests of party union voluntarily effaces himself in a peerage. Lord Salisbury twice offers to be a member of a Hartington Administration, and Lord Hartington twice refuses to be the First Minister of the Crown. Sir Henry James on a matter of principle severs himself from Mr. Gladstone and refuses the Woolsack. Lastly, Mr. Chamberlain leaves the party of which he must one day have been the leader, relinquishes the great office and power he had already obtained, and, confronted at every step by distrust and pursued at every step by obloquy, sets forth upon his long, eventful pilgrimage. Among all these indications of the healthy and generous conditions of English public life, so full of honour for our race and of vindication for its institutions, the resignation of Lord Randolph Churchill need not suffer by any impartial

comparison.

CHAPTER XVII

THE TURN OF THE TIDE

'The rising unto place is laborious; ... the standing is slippery, and the regress is either a downfall or at least an eclipse which is a melancholy thing.'—Bacon.

Lord Randolph Churchill had divested himself by a single short letter of all that authority which is centred in a political chief and a Minister of the Crown. The solid array of Conservative members who had stoutly sustained him, 'proud to follow a leader who was proud to lead them on'; the wise and busy secretaries of a great department with their hives of fact and counsel; hundreds of sharp pens, thousands of friendly voices; the vast, pervading, persisting machinery of party, all hitherto obedient in his service, now in a moment fell away. He was only the representative of a Metropolitan constituency who possessed some skill in speaking and a small house overlooking Hyde Park. He had cast away all advantages. He had neglected every preparation. He had chosen bad ground and the worst time. Moreover, as shall be seen, he had bound himself hand and foot. Yet such was the personal importance this man had acquired, so highly were his services valued, so much was his hostility feared, that for a time the British Government tottered and his place remained unfilled.

Mr. Chamberlain to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Highbury, Moor Green, Birmingham: December 23, 1886.

My dear Churchill,—Whew! The cat is among the pigeons with a vengeance.

My sympathies are entirely with you, and I think you may rely on my cordial co-operation, if it can be of any value.

I have to speak to-night, and must express my first thoughts on what is an entirely changed situation.

I wish I was able to communicate with you beforehand, but if you have any wishes or ideas as to immediate action let me know. If necessary we will arrange a meeting, and I will run up to London again.

The Government is doomed, and I suspect we may have to reform parties on a new basis. You and I are equally adrift from the old organisations.

Yours ever,
J. Chamberlain.

Mr. Chamberlain to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Highbury, Moor Green, Birmingham: December 26, 1886.

My dear Churchill,—Yours of 24th with its very interesting enclosures only reached me to-day.

The breach was inevitable. There is much to be said *pro* and *con* about the estimates, but you were altogether in a false position. You had to fight—alone and single-handed—for every point, and were necessarily condemned to gain on each a partial victory, which left you with all the responsibility, but without a consistent and thoroughly defensible policy.

You will have a hard time to go through. Your case will be mine almost exactly, and I can tell you it is a bitter pilgrimage which is in prospect. The party tie is the strongest sentiment in this country—stronger than patriotism or even self-interest. But it will all come right in the end for both of us.

I assume that you will maintain an independent position, and in that case you will be a power that your party cannot ignore. The *Standard* has a right to be angry, and the Caucuses will denounce you; but in their hearts they know you are indispensable, and when they find they cannot bully you into submission they will come to your terms. Next time, however, that either you or I join a Cabinet we must be certain of our majority in it.

My speech has fluttered the dovecotes tremendously, and my correspondence shows that many of the Gladstonians are very uncomfortable and anxious to come to terms. But I do not believe that there will be any practical result. Mr. Gladstone does not give way on the main point—neither will I.

Whenever I come to London I will let you know, and we will have another talk. Meanwhile you have made the situation intensely interesting.

With all good wishes,
Yours sincerely,
J. Chamberlain.

Mr. Labouchere to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Private.

10 Queen Anne's Gate: December 23.

Dear Churchill,—In your own interests think it over. This would have been all very well if you had not been Leader of the House, or if you had been Leader for some years. In the former case, you might have upset your friends and been Leader; in the latter case you would have become a fetish.

Parties just now do not hang together by principles. They are gangs greedy of office. You got your lot in—there is a wide difference between this and aiding in getting them out.

You and Chamberlain seem to me both to make the same mistake. You ignore the power of the 'machine.' It has crushed many an able man—Horsman, Lowe, Goschen, and Salisbury himself.

Whether Hartington joins or not, he will not be sorry that you have resigned, and he will be all the more inclined to help the Government. They only want thirty Unionists to have a good working majority. The tendency of the Government will be to yield a little more to him in order to revenge itself on you.

Joe is of no good to you. You have no idea of the feeling of the Radicals against him. There is a good deal of sentiment in these things; and just as Gladstone is their Christ, Joe is their Anti-Christ. They will laugh to scorn his 'Grand Councils.' They are, indeed, absurd. There are only two policies for Ireland—Coercion, or a domestic legislature, &c. All else is intrigue. You are not a Radical; on that line Joe will always cut you out.

I don't think that the occasion you have selected is a good one. There is a strong public opinion, even amongst Liberals, for an expenditure on armaments. It is true that Salisbury may wish to obtain the money in order eventually to join in some absurd European war, but this cannot be proved, and the basis of politics

is ‘hand to mouth.’

I should have thought that your game was rather a waiting one. Sacrifice everything to becoming a fetish; then and only then, you can do as you like. Hartington must go to the Lords. There is no such thing in politics as burning boats, until there have been explanations in the House of Commons. A Conservative Government must spend, and generally a Liberal Government suffers from not spending.

I write this—not, as you will perceive, in the interests of my party, but in your individual interests. Surely when it is a question of figures, and the figures are not known, there are the elements of an arrangement.

Yours truly,
H. Labouchere.

Lord Randolph Churchill’s resignation had been received with universal surprise; but astonishment was swiftly succeeded by anger. His enemies—and they multiplied rapidly—raised an exultant chorus of ‘I told you so!’ His friends everywhere found themselves without an answer. The Unionist Press was unanimous in its censures, and the London clubs were loud in their abuse. The cohorts of tale-bearers and gossips on the flanks of a Government were eager to impute the worst and meanest motives, and his action, already difficult to vindicate, was variously attributed to temper, to treachery, and to both. The whole strength of the party organisation was exerted against him. The public was informed through a thousand channels that he had aimed a deadly blow at the Union upon an impulse of personal ambition or of personal spite. His rupture with Lord Salisbury was utter and complete. The Queen was grievously offended by his premature disclosure to the *Times*; and in the mood that was abroad he found, like Macaulay before him, that to write on Windsor Castle paper may sometimes be accounted as a crime. Yet, although he was thus the object of so much reproach, he was of course unable to defend himself. He requested permission to publish his letters of resignation.

'I cannot agree,' replied Lord Salisbury by telegraph. 'It would be entirely at variance with the accepted practice, according to which such explanations should be reserved for Parliament. You clearly cannot do it without the Queen's leave.'

'Obviously,' rejoined Lord Randolph, 'the letters have been shown to the *Standard*.'

'No,' was the answer. 'Your supposition is incorrect; the letters referred to have not been seen by anyone.'

The Prime Minister was plainly within his rights in his refusal; yet while Lord Randolph Churchill was prevented by constitutional observance from publicly anticipating the explanation to be made in Parliament, and so from making any effective reply to his traducers, that explanation was being discounted in a dozen informal versions, disparaging sometimes by lavish falsehood, sometimes by ungenerous truth.

After accepting the resignation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer Lord Salisbury turned at once to Lord Hartington. He had hitherto, as we have seen, resisted the introduction of the Whigs into the Ministry; but the situation was now critical, if not indeed desperate, and he accepted the necessity. He therefore telegraphed to Lord Hartington, who was in Rome, and invited his co-operation, offering either to make such Cabinet arrangements as might suit him and his friends, or to serve under him if he would himself undertake to form a Government. Above all, he pressed for his immediate return to England. Lord Hartington responded to these appeals without alacrity. He tarried in Rome till the night of Sunday the 26th. Thence he proceeded to Monte Carlo 'to pick up his letters.' On the 28th he resumed his journey. It was not until the evening of the 29th that he arrived in London. His deliberation was justified by events.

The Prime Minister, having collected his Cabinet

together from all parts of the country, met them on Tuesday, December 28, with a statement of his views upon the situation. 'Master of tactics,' as Lord Randolph called him, he rigidly confined the dispute to the single special question of the Estimates. The Ministers responsible for the defence of the Empire demanded a certain sum. The Minister responsible for the finances had refused that sum. The head of the Government, having to choose between them, was bound as a patriot to stand by the Empire. In the face of a vast Imperial issue and of the grave crisis in European affairs, the ordinary disputations of party politics —and, indeed, all personal predilections—must stand aside. The coaling stations, on which the British fleet depended for its world-wide mobility, were at stake. To defend them or not to defend them—that was the question: and who would hesitate in his answer, especially when the sum involved was remarkably small? Such, at least, was the version semi-officially communicated to the public and faithfully reproduced in every form of artistic variation by the party press, from the *Times* newspaper to the remotest ramifications of the provincial and local journals.

Lord Salisbury also informed his colleagues that he was in communication with Lord Hartington, and he laid before them the nature of the offers he had made. The proceedings of the Cabinet were reported to be so harmonious that the *Times* and many other Ministerial journals came to the conclusion that a Coalition with the Whigs was certain, and devoted many columns of print to preparing the minds of their readers for so excellent an arrangement. It was not until the next day that it dawned upon the journalistic world that numerous and influential members of the Government were very much averse on public grounds—the Empire, and, no doubt, the European crisis—from that 'wide reconstruction' which a Coalition or a Hartington Administration incidentally, but necessarily, involved. This reluctance was shared, not without reason, by the

Conservative party generally, and voiced by the large number of members of Parliament whom the crisis had drawn to the Carlton Club. The Conservative party, although wanting thirty-five of an absolute majority in the House of Commons, were nevertheless by far the strongest and most compact party in the country; and they were by no means ready to acquiesce in their leader's disinterested willingness to surrender the chief place in the Administration and to work on equal terms with a party which only numbered seventy. By the time that Lord Hartington's train reached Charing Cross, on the night of the 29th, a Coalition Government had become excessively unpopular, and the *Times* was forced to admit, with a blush for the frailty of political mankind, 'that Lord Salisbury's foresight and patriotism were a good deal above the level of the rank and file.' Lord Randolph Churchill had counted upon Tory Democracy. It was not Tory Democracy that stopped the Coalition; but Tadpole and Taper.

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By December 31 all prospect of a Coalition Ministry had been definitely abandoned. Lord Hartington's prudent and dignified delay had alone prevented him from being placed in a false position. During the whole of the 30th he consulted his friends and considered the reports which reached him of the temper of the Conservative party. He had no difficulty in coming to a decision. Even if the opinion of the Tory party had been as favourable as it was unfavourable, it was certain that the Liberal Unionists were not ripe for a Coalition, and that any attempt to force them forward would lead to their disruption, and certainly end in a separation from Mr. Chamberlain and his followers. There was another obstacle—small, but not insignificant. Lord Hartington's position at Rossendale was not so secure

as to make his re-election certain. A Coalition was, in fact, so difficult and undesirable that it could only be attempted in the last resort. And until Lord Salisbury's Government had been defeated in the House of Commons no one could say that all alternatives had been exhausted. Lord Hartington therefore declined, on January 1, the various propositions which Lord Salisbury had made to him.

Three courses were now, according to the *Times*, open to the Prime Minister: 'To endeavour to induce Mr. Goschen to take the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer; to come to an understanding with Lord Randolph Churchill; or to reconstruct the Ministry from the Conservative ranks.' All three were strenuously debated throughout the country. The idea of a reconciliation on some compromise between Lord Randolph Churchill and Lord Salisbury obtained powerful support. Rumour was tireless in formulating the terms on which peace might be made—was to be made. The *Morning Post*, always an ardent and faithful friend to Lord Randolph Churchill, never ceased to urge reunion with all the weight of its unimpeachable Toryism. Every movement of the Prime Minister and his late colleague was watched with cat-like attention. No one could call at Arlington Street or Connaught Place without the closest scrutiny; and when it became known that Lord Abergavenny, Lord Rowton and Sir Henry Wolff had visited both houses, the gossips and quidnuncs of the clubs thought the dispute as good as settled.

It was pointed out at this time that the circumstances of Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation bore a very curious resemblance to those in which Lord Palmerston had resigned the Home Secretaryship in 1853. Lord Palmerston had resigned on December 15, ostensibly on certain details of the Reform Bill. It was asserted that he differed from the Cabinet upon its policy in Eastern Europe; and this was strenuously denied by the adherents of the Ministry. Lord Palmerston's resignation was made public before he had

heard that it had been accepted by the Queen. Inspired articles attacking Lord Palmerston appeared in the *Times*. Lord Derby, writing to Lord Malmesbury, observed that Lord Palmerston is 'much, and justly, annoyed' at this. 'As *his* lips are sealed, Aberdeen has no business to speak through the newspapers.' To cap all this, there were on both occasions heavy falls of snow, which made communications difficult and slow. After some days of suspense Lord Palmerston was prevailed upon to withdraw his resignation and to resume office. Would the parallel be completed?

Lord Randolph Churchill had so little expected to fail in his conflict with the Cabinet that he had not clearly thought out how he would stand in that event. Lord Salisbury's acceptance of his resignation, without interview, remonstrance, or offer of compromise, had surprised him; but he faced the situation calmly. Not to be behindhand in determination, he had clinched matters by himself publishing the news. He realised at once how serious were the consequences and how narrowed and difficult his position had become. He found himself, alone and unprepared, on ground most unfavourable; yet he did not seek to avoid the issue. He made no suggestions of reconciliation. Even after the failure of the Hartington coalition he would lend himself to no overtures. He forbade his friends to concern themselves in the affair. He rebuked Wolff with unnecessary violence for an unauthorised attempt, not ill-received by Lord Salisbury, to make peace: 'Do you think you can manage me like one of your Cairene Pashas?' During the whole fortnight that the Cabinet was in flux he abstained from the slightest action, covert or overt, which could aggravate the crisis.

To remodel the Government and to allow the excitement to cool down, Ministers prorogued Parliament from January 13—the date which Lord Randolph had fixed—till January 27, and the time when an explanation could be

offered was further delayed. But in face of harsher misrepresentation and abuse than has been directed against any politician since, Lord Randolph remained absolutely silent to the public. He said nothing, he did nothing: and yet there were many close observers of politics who thought more than once that all would fall back into his hands, that Lord Salisbury would be forced to invite him to rejoin upon terms or leave him to form a Government of his own.

To Chamberlain, who had spoken of him in words of warm appreciation a few days before—saying, among other things, that Lord Randolph Churchill's position in the Government had been a guarantee that they would not pursue a reactionary policy—he wrote with complete candour:—

December 24, 1886.

Your letter just received and your speech gave me equal delight. I told you that a Ministerial crisis was coming when you dined with me, but I own I did not think that I should have failed to persuade Lord S. to take a broad view of the situation. I had no choice but to go; he had been for weeks prepared for it, and possibly courted the crash. I did my best for his Government while I was in it, but I had ceased to be useful.... Their innate Toryism is rampant and irrepressible.

Party papers seem to think the most awful crime which a modern politician can commit is to have a spark of principle or a regard for former pledges.... I feel much in the dark as to the future; my position is completely *déclassé*. I hear the Carlton would like to tear me limb from limb; and yet does no blame or responsibility attach [to Lord S.?] The anxiety of the last two days has made me very seedy.

His mother had, as usual, a somewhat more hopeful account.

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall: December 28, 1886.

I have as yet no news. Hartington may join. Goschen is to meet him in Paris to-morrow; it all depends whether he can be re-

elected or not. Wolff is too faithful for description. I am pleased with the general tone of the Press. I expected it to be much worse. I can't bear to leave this room, where I can sit and think and hear everything quickly. The matter is very critical, but by no means desperate, and may drag on indefinitely for some days.

I am very well and in very good spirits. Please do not worry about me or put off your journey.

The pleasant party at Howth, to which he had been looking forward, must be forsaken.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Justice FitzGibbon.

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W.: December 24, 1886.

You see my Irish hopes are shattered. I mean the Howth hopes. I have nothing to do but to keep very quiet for the moment, and pleasure is out of the question.

I hope you do not blame me hastily. It was certain to come, and delay produced danger.

I should like to tell you all about it; it is too long to write.

I feel rather seedy, as the anxiety has wearied me awfully; so do not write more.

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W.: December 26, 1886.

I cannot manage Howth this year, though you must know what a disappointment to me it is not to join you. But I should be a wet-blanket altogether, and, moreover, I could not stand the 'Tutissimus.'[60] He would drive me wild with his airs of moral triumph and success.

What a time we are having! Lord S. has committed a capital blunder in again prostrating himself before Hartington. Why did he not set his back to the wall and go on, *coûte que coûte*? Still, you must not think I have any illusions about myself. In inflicting on the old gang this final fatal blow, I have mortally wounded myself. But the work is practically done; the Tory Party will be turned into a Liberal Party, and in that transformation may yet produce a powerful governing force. If not, G.O.M., Labby, anarchy, &c., are triumphant.

Interesting times, my dear FitzGibbon! I wonder what old Ball says.

So far as the political world was concerned, he contented

himself with writing a private letter to Mr. Akers-Douglas for the assurance of his political friends and for the information of Conservative members of Parliament who might inquire. It is remarkable that this letter has never yet been published:—

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W.: New Year's Day, 1887.

My dear Douglas,—Having noticed in the newspapers this morning a variety of mischievous nonsense taking the form of statements as to my reasons for quitting the Government, my views as to what would be necessary to secure my return to the Government, and suggestions as to terms of reconciliation, I think it proper in the public interest, and as much for purposes of future record as for any other more immediate object, to lay before you my views on the position.

The primary object of all government at the present moment is to maintain the Union, to maintain it not for a session or for a Parliament, but for our time. The maintenance of the Union is, to my mind, in no way a question of men, but entirely a question of measures and administration. Mr. Gladstone has identified the Liberal party with the policy of Repeal; he has behind him Scotland, Wales and Ireland, and no inconsiderable portion of England. In the event of the Conservative Government and party pursuing in the coming session a policy, foreign and domestic, which for one reason or another becomes unpopular with, and is discredited in the eyes of, that great portion of the English electorate which, after a tremendous struggle, has been kept true to the principle of the Union, the inevitable result will be that at the next election Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party will return to power, pledged to immediate Repeal, and in a position to give immediate effect to their pledge.

The composition of the present Parliament renders it a matter of no insuperable difficulty to carry on the government of the Queen for a session or two, or even longer, *tant bien que mal*; but such a proceeding, so limited and so narrow in its view, would be, to my mind, the most fallacious and dangerous of statesmanship. From the time when I joined the Government I have never taken my eyes off the next General Election. My one desire has been that Lord Salisbury should be in a position to go

boldly to the country at any moment, confident of popular support. To this end every word of advice on any subject which I have ever offered him has been directed, and it was only when it was forced upon me that these views did not practically commend themselves either to him or his colleagues that I took the grave and serious step of releasing myself from all responsibility for a policy which in two or three years would, as far as human judgment may be exercised in such a matter, have led straight to Repeal.

A foreign policy which may at any moment involve this country in a European war; a domestic policy which would be marked by stagnation rather than progress; free expenditure, necessitating continued high taxation, when combined with the defence of the Union, would without doubt weigh down and crush out of all popular life that great and vital Imperial principle. Not only so, but a policy of which the above were the main characteristics not only involved so insignificant a person as myself in a marked violation of pledges given to the public, but also to all intents and purposes the entire Conservative party in the House of Commons. From 1880 to 1885 every Conservative speaker on every public platform has proclaimed, with every variety of style and paraphrase, that the Liberal party have been false to their traditions, and that 'Peace, Retrenchment and Reform' could only be practically given effect to by the Tories. Nor can it be doubted that this persistent iteration of a political position which, so far as the Liberals were concerned, could be demonstrated by facts, produced an immense effect upon the masses in the great English towns. Should, however, the results of a year or two of Tory government show that the accusations against the Tory party so constantly made by the Liberals—namely, that the Tory party are the war party, that they are the extravagant party, that they are the do-nothing and obstructive party—can be demonstrated by actual facts and events, it seems certain that the great town electorate, which we have had so much trouble in winning, will sway back violently to the Liberal party, their earlier love, and that the disaster of 1880 will be repeated on a larger scale and with more deadly effect.

To avert such a disaster there is nothing I would not do, nothing I would not sacrifice; but if the catastrophe must come, I will not that anyone shall be able to say that any large portion of

responsibility rested upon me.

It was if possible by a desperate effort (so profoundly was I convinced of the magnitude of the peril into which the Tory Government and party were drifting by looking too much to tiding over the difficulties of the moment, and not at all to the next General Election) to rouse my friends to a sense of the position that I resigned my office and incurred with much equanimity the tornado of slander, obloquy and every variety of misrepresentation that friends, and possibly even colleagues, have let loose upon me.

I seek for no re-entry into the present Government; I decline to commence any undignified or unworthy bargaining and huckstering as to the terms of reconciliation; but this I say—that if by any coalition, fusion or reconstruction a Government is formed which by its composition and its policy will be an earnest and a guarantee to the country that a period of peaceful progressive administration has in reality set in, I would serve that Government with the utmost loyalty in any capacity, however humble, either as a member or a follower, only too glad that by any sacrifice or any action of mine I might possibly have averted danger to the State.

Furthermore, this I add: that whatever course the Prime Minister may take at this moment, he need not for one moment fear the smallest opposition, direct or indirect, from me, in Parliament or in the country. I shall make no further attempt to defend my action, lest by any such attempt I might, even by one iota, increase the difficulties which surround him; but, recognising to the full my great fallibility of judgment, I shall watch silently and sadly the progress of events.

Believe me to be
Very sincerely yours,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Mr. Chamberlain's comment was characteristic:—

Highbury, Moor Green, Birmingham: January 3, 1887.

My dear Churchill,—I return your very interesting Memorandum. If I had been you I do not think I should have added the last paragraph. When a man says that in no case will he return a blow, he is very likely to be cuffed.

However, I dare say Lord Salisbury will not take you too literally at your word, and will avoid any extreme test of your most Christian disposition.

I heard before I left that Goschen was likely to join. He will certainly carry no one else with him, but he may be able to commit Hartington to a more unqualified support than he would otherwise have given to a purely Tory Government.

I understood that one cause of his hesitation was his fear that you would be actively hostile, if he took your place. Probably he has since been reassured by a sight of your letter to Akers-Douglas.

I do not know yet whether anything will come of negotiations between the Gladstonians and the Radical Unionists. I never felt less like 'a surrender' in my life, and Labouchere and his crew may put what interpretation they like on the matter, but they will not be able to show that I have advanced one iota from the position of my telegram to the Unionist meeting, extended as it was by my speech in Birmingham.

The future is still obscure to me, but the game is exceedingly interesting at this moment.

Yours sincerely,
J. Chamberlain.

Another explanation was not neglected:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Sir Henry Ponsonby.

2 Connaught Place, W.: January 13, 1887.

Dear Sir Henry Ponsonby,—I saw His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to-day, and from an observation which he made I learnt for the first time on authority that the publication of the news of my resignation took place before the matter had been made the subject of official communication to Her Majesty, and that in so far as my action was responsible for such publicity the Queen had cause for displeasure with me.

I am much grieved at this news, and anxious to place on record the facts bearing upon the matter as they are known to me. On Thursday, December 18, I had a long conversation with Lord Salisbury, in which I intimated to him that the expenditure proposed for the Army and Navy was considerably higher than what I could be responsible for in view of my reiterated public

pledges as to the necessity for and possibility of retrenchment. On Monday, the 20th, I had a long conversation with the Secretary of State for War, and a written communication from the First Lord of the Admiralty which confirmed me in the views which I had communicated to Lord Salisbury on the previous Thursday.

On Monday, the 20th, in the evening, I wrote from Windsor to Lord Salisbury intimating my desire to withdraw from the Government.

It would have been a source of immense relief to me if I had been able to acquaint Her Majesty with what was passing when I had the honour of dining at Windsor, but my great want of experience of official life led me to believe that had I initiated so grave a matter in the conversation which Her Majesty was graciously pleased to hold with me I should have been guilty of a most unusual breach of etiquette and of Ministerial practice and decorum: all the more as no opening presented itself for bringing up the subject, though in truth my mind was entirely absorbed by it.

Lord Salisbury received my letter early Tuesday morning, the 21st, and no answer from him reached me till eight o'clock on Wednesday evening—a considerable interval, remembering the proximity of Hatfield either to Windsor or London. Lord Salisbury's answer was of a most definite character, accepting my resignation; and bearing in mind the interval which had elapsed, I made perfectly certain that the fullest communications on the subject had passed between Her Majesty and Lord Salisbury, and that Lord Salisbury's answer was written with Her Majesty's knowledge. In fact, it never crossed my mind that the reverse could be the case, and I thought myself justified in no longer making any secret of the fact that I no longer had the honour of belonging to the Government. If I erred in this, it was from ignorance and from misunderstanding, and not the least from design and I would be intensely distressed if it might be supposed that by any action of mine I had been wanting in that profound respect to Her Majesty which it is the high and grateful duty of all to render, and which Her Majesty's most gracious treatment of myself on several occasions doubly and trebly imposed upon me.

Perhaps indeed I am doing wrong in making you this communication. If so, I trust to your kindness to inform me on the subject before making any use of this letter.

Believe me to be
Yours very truly,
Randolph S. Churchill.

The reply was frigid:—

Sir Henry Ponsonby to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Osborne: January 15, 1887.

Dear Lord Randolph,—The Queen has read your letter relating to the announcement of your resignation before it had been accepted by Her Majesty; and commands me to thank you for your explanation.

Yours very truly,
Henry Ponsonby.

It was about this time, when many from whom he might have expected service were falling away, that Lord Randolph received the sympathy and support of an able man with whom during the next four years he was to be associated, and from whom he was ultimately destined to part in very gloomy circumstances. Mr. Louis Jennings, the Conservative member for Stockport and a full-blooded Fair Trader, looked upon 'Tory Democracy' as a living political faith. He was a man of strong character and extensive information who had reached the House of Commons late in life, after a varied career. He had travelled widely, and had taken an active part in the politics of other countries than his own. As the editor of the *Times of India* he had been largely concerned in the agitation which had led to the suppression of the Juggernaut ceremonial. With the *New York Times* as his weapon he had broken up, by a prolonged and pitiless audit of their accounts, the Tammany Ring in 1871; and, after a struggle in which his life was said to be in danger, he had hunted the notorious 'Boss' Tweed to the gaol in which he died. Taught alike by experience and study, a man of action and a writer, Mr. Jennings was well fitted to become an effective political force, and, as the editor of the Croker papers, he did not lack recognition in the world of

letters. He now made himself known to Lord Randolph Churchill in a style which expresses the sincerity of his feelings and reveals the slenderness of their acquaintance: —

73 Elm Park Gardens, S.W.: December 31, 1886.

My Lord,—At a time when all the busybodies and nobodies in the country are thrusting advice upon you I am very reluctant to appear to join the throng. I hope, however, you will permit me to assure you that I have tried to keep my own constituency from committing the gross injustice of condemning a man before he is heard. For my own part, it will take a great deal to convince me that in the great sacrifices you have made, and the grave responsibilities you have incurred, you have not been actuated by a high sense of duty and by the purest and best motives. If this be so—as I feel sure it is—there will be a reaction against all this wild clamour, and the people will do you justice.

I am, my Lord,
Yours very truly,
L. J. Jennings.

Lord Hartington's determination having been made public, Lord Salisbury next turned to Mr. Goschen. Mr. Goschen's position was different and distinct from that of Lord Hartington. He was not tied to any particular constituency, and in respect of a seat could avail himself of the large resources of the Conservative party. He had for several years been out of tune with the Liberal policy and, more than any other Whig, he had been alarmed and estranged by the growing influence of Radicalism. He had not joined the Government of 1880, and he was free alike from responsibility for its failures and resentment towards its assailants. Lord Hartington was the leader of a party with the obligations and restrictions of leadership. Mr. Goschen was eminent, but detached. Moreover, his high financial authority would strengthen the Government at the very point where it had been most seriously weakened. He was now invited to go to the Treasury, and it was generally

believed that, whatever temporary arrangements were made, the leadership in the Commons would soon devolve upon him.

Mr. Goschen nevertheless showed some hesitation in joining the Government. To participate in a regular Coalition in company with political friends wore a different complexion from entering the Cabinet of the opposite political party alone. He desired most strongly to preserve his relations with Lord Hartington and his character as a Liberal; and even when reassured on these points he stipulated that two other Whigs should be included in the Cabinet to give him countenance and support. Places were thereupon offered to Lord Northbrook and Lord Lansdowne. But at this the Conservative party, so far as it was represented by the Carlton Club, again showed such disapproval that these peers felt it their duty to decline office, and in the end Mr. Goschen was fain to join without them. For the rest, Mr. Smith became First Lord of the Treasury, with the leadership of the House of Commons; Stanhope took the War Office and Sir Henry Holland the Colonies; while Lord Salisbury himself assumed, none too soon, the direction of foreign affairs.

Mr. Goschen's acceptance of office definitely put an end to the Cabinet crisis. 'The new Chancellor of the Exchequer,' observed the *Times* tartly, 'will take Lord Randolph Churchill's place in more senses than one.' The Government was completely reconstituted, and no expectation of overtures or reconciliation could be entertained. It has in consequence often been represented that this appointment was to Lord Randolph a contingency utterly unforeseen. The saying, so often attributed to him, 'I forgot Goschen,' is interpreted as a key to deep designs. In an elaborate calculation he had overlooked a vital factor. In the moment of success he was ruined by an inexplicable neglect. The evidence upon these pages does not sustain this view. He marshalled no forces against the Prime

Minister. With an imprudence born of repeated success, he prepared no combination, either of circumstances or men, to support his demands. He went into battle without allies or armour. He set his unaided personal power—as he had often done before—to back his opinions, and awaited the issue with an easy mind. He had not, of course, considered Mr. Goschen's financial reputation in connection with a vacancy at the Exchequer; but, so far from forgetting Mr. Goschen himself, he was constantly solicitous for him. A Coalition with all or any of the Whigs had been for three years his consistent and persistent aim. After the election of 1885 he was willing to resign, that Mr. Goschen might join the Administration. In his memorandum written before the first meeting of Parliament in 1886 he again strongly pressed upon Lord Salisbury that places should be offered to the Whigs, including Mr. Goschen. In November he was concerned that Mr. Goschen should be elected to Parliament and urged Lord Salisbury to put him forward for a seat which might soon be vacant. And lastly, on December 18, two days before his letter of resignation, when the dispute in the Cabinet was at its height, both Lord Salisbury and Mr. Goschen were his guests at a dinner the avowed object of which was to bring them together. However decisive, however disastrous to Lord Randolph the inclusion of Mr. Goschen in the Government at this time may have been, it was no surprise; for he had always been its advocate. It was not fatal to his schemes; for there were no schemes.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Dunraven.

2 Connaught Place, W.: January 12, 1887.

My dear Dunraven,—I consider honestly that you are quite as good a judge as to what the political position requires from moderate progressive politicians as I am. You have seen all the correspondence between me and Lord Salisbury, as well as my letter to Akers-Douglas, about which last Lord S. says it makes the breach unbridgeable. Therefore my explanation, when it

comes, will add little or nothing to your knowledge.

With respect to persons like ——, ——, &c., whom I look upon as my friends, I have been most careful to check any tendency to follow my example, for resignation might be fatal to their political career, on which they depend almost for social existence, and I was most fearful of any responsibility attaching to me for having led them to extinction.

With you I feel in a different position. You have a social and political position of your own, which the holding of a minor office in the Government by no means enhances, and which the loss of such an office would by no means affect.

Tory Democracy may be a bad name, but it represents to you and me and many more certain distinct political principles which you and I hold very strongly. That those principles are in the utmost peril just now there can be no doubt. We know what Lord Salisbury is, and we know what Goschen is, and we know that our views are regarded by both with unrelenting distrust and aversion.

On the whole, I think you are in a position to try a bold course; and you must not undervalue your strength in the country, where you are well known, followed by many, and greatly regarded by all. However, let us talk it over this afternoon at the Carlton.

Yours ever,
Randolph S. C.

Eventually Lord Dunraven decided to resign the office which he held, of Under-Secretary for the Colonies; but his partnership with Lord Randolph Churchill proved in the end more noticeable at Newmarket than at Westminster.

Perhaps some day it may be possible to publish in a complete form the letters, some of which have been quoted in these pages, which passed between Lord Salisbury and Lord Randolph Churchill during their eventful association. Although the period scarcely extended above two years, the correspondence would attain considerable dimensions. Yet the reader would be wise to persevere: for when we consider the easy yet forceful pens employed; the profound and secret knowledge of political movements and forces at

work which both possessed; the importance, range and fascinating variety of subjects; the changing relationships and antagonisms of the writers; above all, the free and candid style of their intercourse—whether in regard to men or things—one cannot imagine any compilation which would more truthfully illuminate the dark and stormy history of those times. All that, however, is a matter for the future. Such as it had been, the correspondence was now to close, for hardly any communication—and that only of a formal nature—was desired on either side in the years which followed. Nevertheless, its conclusion was not unworthy.

Lord Iddesleigh had been apparently forgotten in the reconstruction of the Cabinet. In the strife and excitement of these harsh days this unwarlike figure had dropped out of men's minds. Lord Salisbury's assumption of the Foreign Office necessarily displaced him; and he was, perhaps not unreasonably, offended to read the first news of it in the daily papers of January 12. It was said by the wags that 'Randolph had driven him from the House of Commons in his rise, and from the Cabinet in his fall.' Tragedy, never very far behind the curtain, came forward swiftly on the heels of this. That same afternoon Lord Iddesleigh called upon Lord Salisbury at Downing Street, and, being overtaken in the anteroom by the heart disease from which he had so long been afflicted, he expired in the presence of the Prime Minister.

The disputes between Lord Randolph Churchill and Sir Stafford Northcote have been very fully recorded in this story; and I fear their harsh features cannot truthfully be softened or smoothed away. They must be judged as a whole and in relation to the circumstances of the time. Here is the last word upon them:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

2 Connaught Place, W.: January 13, 1887.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—Although a great and wide political difference has separated me from you officially, I cannot refrain (even possibly at the risk of being misunderstood) from writing you a line to express how greatly I grieve for the shock you must have experienced owing to the melancholy occurrence of yesterday afternoon. It seems very hard on you that this grave event should have come now to add its own weight to the many other troubles and worries which circumstances purely political have occasioned.

I felt much the old Lord's death, for he had for years past gone through much bother, disappointment, and probably vexation, nor can I conveniently repress the reflection *quorum pars magna fui*. But this I can say from my own knowledge, consisting of the recollection of many facts and conversations, that never in public life did any man have a truer friend and colleague than Lord Iddesleigh had in you; and certainly if rewards, honours and the praise of men are sources of satisfaction, Lord Iddesleigh enjoyed them in a fuller measure than any other contemporary, and that he did so I consider to be mainly owing to the unwavering loyalty with which you invariably supported him, checked all depreciation, and stimulated constant recognition of his public services.

I like to place this on record, though possibly it may be deemed somewhat presumptuous, for it has been my fortune in the last two or three years to see as much almost perhaps as anyone into the inner and more concealed working of our party life.

Believe me to be, with much sympathy,

Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Hatfield House, Hatfield, Herts: January 14, 1887.

My dear Randolph,—I am very grateful for the kind sympathy expressed in your letter of yesterday, and very much touched by it. Your testimony to my bearing towards our old friend in the past is thoughtful and generous.

It was a very painful scene that I witnessed on Wednesday in Downing Street. I had never happened to see anyone die before—

and therefore, even apart from the circumstances, the suddenness of this unexpected death would have been shocking. But here was, in addition, the thought of our thirty years' companionship in political life; and the reflection that now, just before this sudden parting, by some strange misunderstanding which it is hopeless to explain, I had, I believe for the first time in my life, seriously wounded his feelings. As I looked upon the dead body stretched before me I felt that politics was a cursed profession.

I have received very kind and considerate letters from his family.

Thanking you again for the thoughtfulness of your letter,

Believe me
Yours very truly,
Salisbury.

As the time for the meeting of Parliament drew near, it was necessary for Lord Randolph to think very carefully upon the explanation he would offer for the unexpected events of the Recess. Circumstances complex and adverse made his position one of extreme disadvantage. It was hardly possible for him to move in any direction without estranging friends or exposing himself to enemies.

The spirit of his differences with Ministers was vital, but the actual matter in dispute could only be regarded as trivial. Two courses therefore presented themselves at the outset: either to fight on the large ground of the unsatisfied aspirations of Tory Democracy, as set forth in his letter to Mr. Akers-Douglas, or upon the small ground of the Estimates. The first involved a downright assault upon the Conservative Government, an irreparable breach with its leaders, and the breaking of many old friendships and associations. The second whittled the difference down to a question of not very important figures, on which Parliament must soon decide. The one promised a chance of successful strife, the other offered a prospect of reconciliation; the one led soon into very deep waters, the other lay among the shallows. But, in all respects save one, the first was the path of courage, of consistency and

perhaps of prudence also. It suited his nature. It freed his hands. It justified and explained his action in a manner which the people could easily understand. ‘I fondly hoped to make the Conservative party the instrument of Tory Democracy. It was "an idle schoolboy’s dream." I must look elsewhere.’

No doubt that was the road to tread. It might have ended in Liberalism; but from that he would not at a later date have shrunk. Chamberlain and Rosebery were better friends to him personally and politically than Smith or Hamilton or Balfour could ever be. To act with the Conservative party meant political paralysis, perhaps for years. To stand independently, or upon a moderate Liberal platform, putting away once and for all any thought of reconciliation, meant usefulness, support and growing power. But one great barrier interposed. The Union was a cause to which he was pledged, not only by memorable votes and speeches, but by profound and unalterable conviction.

So this first course, with its various chances, was forbidden. The second was scarcely more satisfactory and far less congenial. In whatever proportion he restricted the dispute to a mere question of expenditure, he deprived himself of the power of defending his resignation, and therefore weakened his position with the country. To fight on finance alone, when the other differences were known to his late colleagues, looked like repentance and admission of error. It was a course which counted on generosity where generosity was lacking; which counted on gratitude for past services, while in politics present and proximate utility is mainly considered; and it was a course requiring in an unusual degree patience and restraint. But, so far as outside influences could avail, this course was made easy for him. His friends and his family besought him not to break with his party. Ministers addressed him in terms uniformly friendly and considerate. ‘The subject on

which he parted from us,' wrote Lord Salisbury to the Duchess of Marlborough on January 11, 'is one which the House of Commons must decide one way or the other very shortly, and no one would dispute that its decision, once gained, must be accepted. After that it will be quite open to Randolph to rejoin this or any other Conservative Ministry as soon as opportunity occurs.'

And Mr. Smith on the 13th:—

> You have a perfect right to hold the views you expressed to me in my room. I differed then and now from you, but it may turn out that you are right and that I am wrong, and I shall accept a demonstration of that fact without the very slightest personal annoyance.
>
> But, however that may be, all that has happened is an incident in the career of a young politician of quite a temporary character, and, unless my life is cut short as Northcote's has been, I look forward with confidence to a future—and the sooner it comes the better—when I shall be in the retirement I long for, and you will be leading a great party with prudence and firmness and courage.

Lord Randolph chose to follow the second course; he avowed himself an independent supporter of the Government, and his formal request for permission to explain made no allusion to differences on foreign policy or legislation.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

2 Connaught Place, W.: January 18, 1887.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—May I ask you to be so kind as to obtain for me Her Majesty's permission to make to the House of Commons the necessary explanation of my reasons for quitting the Government? I propose, if this permission is granted, to state briefly the nature and amount of the expenditure to which I objected, to answer with equal brevity certain precipitate criticisms on that resignation to which many Members of Parliament and much of the Press are committed, and to conclude by reading the three letters which passed between us, viz. mine of the 20th, yours of the 22nd, and my reply of the same date.

Believe me to be

Very truly yours,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Randolph Churchill.

10 Downing Street, Whitehall: January 19, 1887.

My dear Randolph,—In pursuance of a message I got from you through Douglas I asked and obtained the requisite permission when I was at Osborne the other day. The form in which you propose to give your explanation seems to me quite correct.

Believe me
Yours very sincerely,
Salisbury.

Mr. Goschen having failed to secure election at Liverpool, Parliament met upon January 27 without a Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Speaker had indicated the proper time for explanation; and when Lord Randolph Churchill rose, immediately after the notices of motion, from the second bench above the gangway, the appearance of the House was a proof of the interest with which that explanation was awaited. He followed punctiliously the course he had indicated in his letter to the Prime Minister; and his tone, though a little sarcastic, was not at all unfriendly to the Government. As a statement his speech was unexceptionable in all respects; as an explanation it was necessarily inadequate. Little was added to the knowledge of the public; and although the calm antagonism of the letters on both sides was not without its effect upon the House, the general feeling when he sat down was of disappointment. This impression, which was deepened by a most dreary fog which invaded the chamber, found abundant record in the prints of next day.

He spoke again three days later in the debate on the Address, following, as it happened, in succession to Mr. Bradlaugh. Preserving throughout a jaunty air of independence, he nevertheless made it perfectly clear that he intended to remain a supporter of the Union and of the Conservative Administration. He derided the Plan of

Campaign, and defended and eulogised, with humour and effect, the policy of the Chief Secretary, who had been, as usual, assailed by the violence of one Irish party and by the suspicions of the other, and who was, moreover, suffering from the severe affection of the eyes which was soon to necessitate his retirement. He pointed out that the Procedure proposals, for which he had been personally so much attacked, were in precisely the same form as when he resigned, and that the legislative programme of the gracious Speech 'bore a strong family resemblance to that set forth in a certain speech made in Kent not long ago.' He noticed the revival of the old paragraph that the Estimates had been framed *with due regard to economy and efficiency*. 'They must have been greatly altered,' he observed, 'since I left the Cabinet.' He spoke, in characteristic words—the truth of which has not been unpaired by time—of the difficulties which the House of Commons encounters in any attempt to control or even criticise expenditure.

But the passage of greatest significance referred to the Chamberlain overtures and negotiations with the Gladstonian Liberals, which were at that time taking the form of the celebrated Round Table Conference. 'I notice,' he said, 'a tendency of the party of the Union to attach too much importance to precarious Parliamentary alliances, which are as transient and uncertain as the shifting wind, and too little to the far more important question how to keep the English people at the back of the party of the Union. When I was in the Government I made it my constant thought and desire to make things as easy as possible for the Liberal Unionists, to introduce such measures as they might conscientiously support as being in accordance with their general principles, and to make such electoral arrangements as might enable them to preserve their seats. But I frankly admit that I regarded the Liberal Unionists as a useful kind of crutch, and I looked forward

to the time, and no distant time, when the Tory party might walk alone, strong in its own strength and conscious of its own merits; and it is to the Tory party, and solely to the Tory party, that I looked for the maintenance of the Union.' He went on to say that Mr. Chamberlain, in these negotiations, was pursuing 'an erroneous and mistaken course.' 'The Tory party will, I think, never follow a line of policy which by any reasonable construction can create in Dublin anything in the nature of an Irish Parliament. That is our clear position, from which, under no pretence of local self-government, shall we depart; and it would be well for the right honourable gentleman the Member for Birmingham, who is now indulging in such extraordinary gyrations, to recognise that, whatever schemes of Home Rule for Ireland may commend themselves to him, they are not, under any circumstances, likely to commend themselves to members on this side of the House.'

These somewhat discursive observations were in themselves brilliantly successful and were heard by the House with keen pleasure and attention. 'Very many thanks for last night,' wrote Beach; 'you are a good friend.' But in spite of this, and although the intervention attracted so much notice from subsequent speakers as to excite the remark that the debate proceeded less upon the Queen's Speech than upon Lord Randolph Churchill's, it cannot be called well conceived. The weak, and at the same time the strong, point was the 'crutch.' Those who were independent of such support laughed and laughed again; but the Liberal-Unionist members, and those who owed their seats to Liberal-Unionist votes, were at once offended and alarmed. Although intended in a spirit of sober candour, it had about it a suspicion of reckless mischief, which his many opponents were not slow to turn to profit. Mr. Chaplin belaboured him vigorously in reply. The Unionist newspapers adopted uniformly an attitude of solemn rebuke; and while Government speakers in a long

succession denounced or deplored such disrespect of loyal allies, Mr. Jennings alone among his friends was able to offer an effective defence. Moreover, the Liberal Unionists at this stage of their transition were the natural and legitimate associates of a Democratic Tory. They looked to the progressive elements in the Conservative party to make the Unionist alliance easy in Parliament and to give them countenance in the constituencies. Their leaders were far from being unsympathetic to the cause of economy; and Chamberlain especially, who had shown himself willing and anxious to co-operate in various ways, and whose position at this time was difficult, delicate and insecure, had, it must be admitted, good grounds for his complaint.

Mr. Chamberlain to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Private.

40 Prince's Gardens, S.W.: February 2, 1887.

My dear Churchill,—Why will you insist on being an Ishmael —your hand against every man? Why did you go out of your way on Monday to attack me?

You know that I am the mildest of men, but I have a strong inclination to hit out at those who strike me, and my experience teaches me that no private friendship can long resist the effect of public contest.

You and I have plenty of enemies. Is it not possible for us each to pursue his own way without coming into personal conflict?

Surely we shall have our hands fully occupied without tearing out each other's eyes.

Yours sincerely,
J. Chamberlain.

Lord Randolph seems to have realised that there was for the moment nothing that he could usefully do; and on the morrow of his speech he came suddenly to a decision.

To his Mother.

2 Connaught Place, W.: February 2, 1887.

After great reflection and balancing of everything I have decided upon a little holiday abroad and am off to-morrow night.

I shall be away, I expect, about six weeks, and H. Tyrwhitt and I contemplate going to Algiers, Tunis, Malta, Palermo, Naples, and so home. It will, I think, be a grand rest for me, and good for the nerves. I don't see that I can do any good by hanging on here day after day. The Address will go on for a long time; then will come Procedure, then Coercion; so that when I come back they will not be much further ahead than they are now. I think my speech last night did a lot of good, and H. Chaplin's violent attack shows how much the enemy is alarmed. I am told H. C. did not go down very well, and Jennings answered him capitally. George[61] will watch after my interests, and I shall ask him to take charge of my correspondence.

I have no information as to what is passing inside Ministerial circles, but I have an instinctive feeling that all is not right and that they will come to grief. Beach was very grateful to me for what I said about him.

I wish I could have seen you before going, for a farewell talk over everything. I have a lot to do to put things in order and to get ready.

To Chamberlain he wrote (February 3) in amicable terms, not withdrawing in any way from his discouragement of the Round Table Conference, but indicating his difficulties and announcing his project. 'I do not think I said anything which ought even to ruffle our private friendship, which—though it may seem a paradox to say so—is one of the chief and few remaining attractions of political life. For the moment I am quite tired and worn out. "Many dogs have come about me, and the council of the wicked layeth siege against me." Therefore I seek a temporary refuge and repose in a flight to the south and to the sun.'

His friends, for the most part, thought him right to go. 'Be of good cheer,' wrote the warm-hearted Jennings; 'you are by no means alone. As for the men whom you have put into office, or who would not be in office but for you, their conduct makes me sick. I am very glad you are going away for rest and change. It will give time for events to shape

themselves; and when you are gone, you will be missed, and kinder feelings will enter into the consideration of your position. You could not do much good just now, and anything that went wrong would be laid on your shoulders. You will come back in time to save both party and Ministry from the consequences of their own incapacity. My deepest sympathies will always be with you in your unequal, but just and honourable, struggle. I would stake my life upon your ultimate success.' Sometimes, perhaps, these wagers are accepted.

The next night—February 3—Lord Randolph left England, and I shall not offer to the reader other accounts of his wanderings than his own.

To his Wife.

February 9, 1887: Hôtel Régence, Algiers.

...It is certainly very pleasant getting away from the cold and worry of London. I have hardly given two thoughts to politics since I left; but I wonder whether there is still much carping going on against me, or whether my flight has disarmed my enemies.

To his Mother.

Biskra: February 15, 1887.

I suppose this will find you back in London. I was so glad to get your letter, long and interesting, from the Castle. I expect you must have found it pleasant there on the whole. If anything could remove any lingering doubts I may have had as to the prudence of leaving the Government, it would be the charm of this place, which I should not have experienced except for that rather strong proceeding.

The weather is beautiful—the air quite cold, and the sun not too hot. We shall remain here till the end of the week. Harry Tyrwhitt is a most amiable companion, and possesses the additional qualification of being fond of chess, so we are never at a loss to pass the time.

We had a long drive from Batna, twelve hours, but through an attractive and varied country. This place is right in the true desert, and is a great grove of palm-trees of all sorts, shapes and sizes,

difficult to get to, but well worth the trouble. In another two years they will have finished the railway right up to here, and then the quiet of the place will probably be spoilt.

We shall leave Friday or Saturday for Constantine, and then on to Tunis. I saw in a French paper that Goschen had got in, but it did not give the numbers. However, I confess I do not think much of politics, and rejoice over my freedom and idleness—which I hope will not shock you.

To his Mother.

Constantine: February 21, 1887.

I was so glad to find here, on arrival last night, your two letters of the 10th and 12th. I read and pondered very carefully all you wrote about what Ashbourne said. But I do not think there will ever be any question of my rejoining the present Government. When the old gang with their ideas are quite played out and proved to be utter failures, then, perhaps, people will turn to the young lot. Till this time comes, and I do not think it is far off, I must wait patiently. I consider my position a very good one, and, though it may seem a strange thing to say, better than if I was in my old place in the Government. I am not mixed up or responsible for their policy or their proceedings, which are, I think, faulty and feeble and hopelessly inadequate to what the times require. I am very glad Dunraven resigned. He is a man of considerable importance, and has made a position for himself with the working men.

I am so glad you liked Ireland, and I delight to hear of Castlereagh's success. I always felt sure he was admirably fitted for the post. George writes me invaluable reports on House of Commons affairs. I should like to form a Government, if only to give him a real good place; his letters are most able. If you are giving any little dinners, I wish you would ask Jennings, M.P. He is a very clever man, and would interest you.

This is certainly a pleasant and amusing country to travel in, if only the hotels were a little better. The weather, though bright, is not warm, and I wear thick clothes, as in England.

We go to Tunis to-morrow. I am feeling very well, I am thankful to say, and keep blessing my stars I am not in the House of Commons. If people only knew how little official life really attracts me, they would judge one's actions differently.

To his Wife.

Tunis: February 25, 1887.

We have decided to go on to Palermo to-night, for there is no other boat till to-day week; and if it was stormy weather then, we should have to cross whether we liked it or no—whereas now the weather is beautiful and calm, so we take advantage of it to get over the Mediterranean and hope to arrive at Palermo Saturday evening.... This is a more interesting place than any we have yet seen—much more truly Eastern. The old native bazaar is delightfully curious. I bought you a few pieces of stuff which will serve to cover cushions or to make portières. Having once seen the town, there is nothing much more to see, and I do not know how we should pass a week here.... We passed through much beautiful country coming here from Constantine; it is all well worth seeing. Last night we went to see Aïss Sawa, an extraordinary troop of fanatic Arabs who dance and yell, cut themselves with swords, and eat nails, broken glass and scorpions. I think there is a good deal of humbug and trickery in it; but it was very curious and very barbarous, and for noise a pandemonium....

To his Wife.

Palermo: March 2, 1887.

I have to-day got hold of a whole week's file of the Times, down to the 25th, which has posted me up in political matters. I think the Government are earning a rather second-rate kind of *succès d'estime*, but I fancy I detect signs of feebleness and inefficiency, which will become obvious when real difficulty arises. I own W. H. Smith has done better than I expected, for I expected a complete breakdown; but, having made that admission, his speeches read to me most commonplace, and I think before long the House and the party will get much bored with him. I am amused at the Government surrender about my Army and Navy Estimates Committee in reply to a question from George C.[62] I expect the Burnley election quickened their sluggish economic impulses. The election I look upon as very significant, and as bearing out what I wrote to A. Douglas. They may plod on in Parliament, but they are losing their hold on the imagination and enthusiasm of the country generally. However, all this is speculation. In any case, I am in no hurry to come home

—and am, too, thankful I went away. Really I have had a nice time hitherto....

To his Mother.

Messina: March 9.

Here we are, caught like rats in a trap. Just as we were packing up yesterday to leave for Naples it was announced that on account of cholera at Catania quarantine had been imposed in Sicily, and that we could not leave. This is a great blow, for we do not know how long we may be detained here. There is nothing to see or do, and the hotel is dirty and uncomfortable. We are in despair....

To his Wife.

Naples: March 12, 1887.

I send you the enclosed under what the Foreign Office calls 'Flying Seal,' which means you are to read it and send it on; it will tell you of our proceedings. At last we have got here, but without either servants or luggage; goodness knows when they will come. Harry T. and I made up our minds we would not stand being detained prisoners indefinitely at Messina. We made a fruitless application to the Ambassador at Rome to be exempted from quarantine; all regular steamboats had been taken off, and even if we had got a passage we should have had to do five days' quarantine at Gaeta—a horrible prospect. So we went to the Consul—a character he is! He introduced us to a man who knew a man who knew some Sicilian fishermen who for a consideration would put us across the Straits. *Nous n'avons fait ni un ni deux*, but pursued the project. We embarked in an open boat at eight o'clock on Wednesday evening in Messina harbour, with nothing but a tiny bag and a rug, with a dissolute sort of half-bred Englishman and Sicilian, to act as interpreter and guide, and six wild, singing, chattering Sicilian fishermen. We reached the Calabrian coast about 9.30; but the difficulty was to find a landing-place where there were no gendarmes or coastguards or inhabitants awake. The last danger was the greatest, for the peasantry are awfully superstitious about cholera, and are a wild, savage people; and we might have had rough treatment if any number of them happened to see us.

At last we found a little fishing village where all was quiet. In we ran, out we jumped, and off went the boat like lightning. After

clambering up some precipitous rocks, fortunately without waking anyone or breaking our necks, we found temporary shelter in a miserable inn, where we represented ourselves as having come by boat from Reggio, and being unable to get back on account of the strong Sirocco wind which was blowing. We had to wait about an hour here all alone, with two wild men and a wild woman, while our guide was quietly endeavouring to find a conveyance. At last he got a common cart, and about eleven o'clock we started for the house of an Englishman at San Giovanni who has a silk mill, and to whom we had a letter from the Consul. The innkeeper and his companions asked a lot of tiresome questions and seemed very suspicious, but in the end let us go quietly. Just after starting we met two gendarmes, and afterwards two coastguards, but fortunately, they asked no questions; so everything went well for some four or five miles, except for the awful jolting of the cart, which exceeded anything in the way of shaking you ever dreamt of. All of a sudden the peasant who was driving the mule ran the cart against a great stone, and sent us all flying into the road. I never saw such a sprawling spill. Fortunately we were only shaken and dirty, but the driver was much hurt, which served him right, and he groaned and moaned terribly for the remainder of the journey; being a big fat man, he had fallen heavily, and I should not be surprised if he had since died.

At last, at one in the morning, we reached the house we were looking for, and had a great business to awaken the people; nor did we know how we should be received, arriving in so strange a manner. The Englishman, however, was very good, took us in, gave us supper, and we lay quiet until the evening of the following day, when we slipped into the direct train for this place, which we reached without further trouble. But what a thing it is to have an evil conscience! I kept thinking that every station-master and gendarme on the road scrutinised us unnecessarily; and what a trouble and scandal it would have made if we had been arrested and put in prison! However, all is well that ends well, and I had the delight of finding an immense bundle of letters from you and others at the post here. We had to buy shirts and socks and everything, for we were without change of any kind; and what the hotel people here thought of us I cannot imagine. But they were civil and made no remark. Our quarters are very

comfortable after the filth of Messina, and I think that our journey was adventurous enough to have taken place a hundred years ago.

I can quite understand the political situation, having read all you and Curzon and Jennings wrote. For me it is not unsatisfactory; but for the general Tory prospects it is most gloomy. What a fool Lord S. was to let me go so easily!

Give Winston the enclosed Mexican stamp.

To his Mother.

Naples: March 14, 1887.

I was very glad to get your letter of the 7th the day before yesterday. We are very comfortable and happy here. The weather is lovely and the hotel most comfortable.

We have heard nothing yet of our servants and luggage, and conclude they are still at Messina, unable to get away. How fortunate it was for us that we made the bolt we did! I have not seen anyone here I know, except one of the FitzGeorges. We have been to the opera and the circus; both very good. We amuse ourselves by contemplating excursions to Pompeii and even Vesuvius; but we are both such lazy sightseers that I doubt whether we shall ever go there. Sitting in the gardens listening to the band, or driving along the coast, is more our line.

I have just received a long and most interesting letter from George. I cannot think for what political reasons anyone should wish me to return; I could do no good. I make out from the papers that since I left the Government the Estimates—Army and Navy, supplementary and annual—have been reduced by over 700,000*l.* If this is so, some friend in the House should proclaim it. If George looks at two letters from Jackson[63] just after I went out, among my papers, and at my speech on resignation, and compares them with the Estimates actually produced, he will find out if I am right in my supposition. He might ask Jackson, privately, as a friend, the truth of the matter. You see, the Government have adopted my suggestions as to the printed statements of Estimates and as to Parliamentary Committee; so altogether my action is not unjustified by events.

Smith seems to make a poor Leader as far as debate goes. He seems to leave the management of procedure to Raikes and Ritchie and to be unable to take any part himself. I think they were very foolish to accept that amendment of Hartington's; it

makes them look more than ever like a patronised and protected Government. Coercion will be very difficult for them in view of the reported evidence of the Cowper Commission. Many Tory M.P.s are pledged against Coercion, and fear to lose their seats. Beach is a great loss to them in respect of this question. However, all these things do not interest me much. *Che sarà sarà.*

I shall probably stop a few days in Paris, so as to let the House rise for the Easter holidays, before I get back. I suppose I must make a speech in Paddington in the holidays. George might ascertain from Fardell what would be a good day.

How men may for a time prosper continually, whatever they do, and then for a time fail continually, whatever they do, is a theme in support of which history and romance supply innumerable examples. This chapter marks such a change in the character of the story I have to tell. Hitherto the life of Lord Randolph Churchill has been attended by almost unvarying success. His most powerful enemies had become his friends. His instinct when to strike and when to stay was unerring. Fortune seemed to shape circumstances to his moods. The forces which should have controlled him became obedient in his service. The frowns of age and authority melted at his advance, and rebuke and envy pursued him idly. All this was now to be changed. During the rest of his public life he encountered nothing but disappointment and failure. First, while his health lasted, the political situation was so unfavourable that, although his talents shone all the brighter, he could effect nothing. Then, when circumstances offered again a promising aspect, the physical apparatus broke down. When he had the strength, he had not the opportunity. When opportunity returned, strength had fled. So that at first, by sensible gradations, his political influence steadily diminished; and afterwards, by a more rapid progress, he declined to disease and death.

When a politician dwells upon the fact that he is thankful to be rid of public cares, and finds serene contentment in private life, it may usually be concluded

that he is extremely unhappy. Although Lord Randolph's letters to his mother, to give her pleasure, were written in a cheery and optimistic vein, there is no doubt that he felt very bitterly the sudden reversal of his fortunes and the arrest of his career. During this voyage, of which he gives so gay an account, he was afflicted by fits of profound depression and would often sit by himself for hours plunged in gloomy thought. And I think he had good reason to be dejected; for although he had parted from his colleagues under all guise of courtesy and good-will, he knew well that enormous barriers were building themselves against him, and that no talents, no services, no needs—short of the bluntest compulsion—would induce them to share their power with him.

Lord Randolph Churchill procured by his resignation almost every point of detail for which he had struggled in vain in the Cabinet. The reductions of 700,000*l.* in the Navy Estimates, which had been conceded to his insistence, were ratified and maintained by his successor. The Estimates for the Army, which had been declared utterly irreducible, were reduced by 170,000*l.* after his resignation. The Supplementary Estimate of 500,000*l.* for the defences of the Egyptian frontier, to which he had long demurred, was promptly rejected by Mr. Goschen as an unauthorised charge on British funds. He might therefore claim with perfect truth that he had saved the taxpayers 1,400,000*l.*; and although our sense of financial proportion has been largely modified by time, this was considered in those days a not insignificant sum. It is not necessary here to examine the policy of these economies. It is sufficient that they were strongly resisted, in spite of his advocacy, while he was a member of the Government, and admitted on their merits after he had resigned.

The coaling stations—of such vital urgency in December 1886—were left untouched by additional expenditure until 1888, and strengthened then only to an

inconsiderable extent. Seven coaling stations which figured in the estimates presented to Lord Randolph Churchill—namely, Halifax, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Esquimault, Ascension, Trincomalee and Sierra Leone, have been in the light of modern experience reduced (1905) by Conservative Ministers, the heirs of the Government of 1886, to 'skeletons,' on which no money is to be spent in peace time.

The objections which Lord Randolph had entertained to the Eastern policy which Lord Iddesleigh seemed inclined to pursue, were justified by Lord Salisbury's action at the Foreign Office. All idea of interference in the internal affairs of the Balkan States vanished so completely from the minds of Conservative statesmen that it was held libellous to assert that it had ever existed; and the instructions that were sent by the new Foreign Minister to Sir William White, were of such a nature that Lord Randolph could say of them, 'the English people may now be certain that they are not likely to be involved in any European struggle arising out of Bulgarian complications.' The new Procedure rules, which he had been accused of forcing upon unwilling colleagues, were presented to Parliament unaltered; the Local Government Bill took the extensive form he had desired; the introduction of a Whig element into the Cabinet was secured; and the Dartford programme, for which he had been condemned as a Radical in disguise, became the prosperous and successful policy of the Conservative party. The spirit of the Administration and the aims which it pursued—at home, in Ireland, and abroad—in policy and in administration, were indeed widely different from those of any Government he would have guided; but in so far as the special points in conflict were concerned, Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation was vindicated in the most definite and tangible manner by the actions of those who had most strenuously opposed him.

All this availed him nothing. Ministers in plenty had quitted English Governments before without dissociating themselves from the party to which they belonged; but whether their course was inspired by honest principle or dictated by unworthy motives, whether it was marked by support of their successors or by intrigues and assaults to procure their overthrow, scarcely one was more relentlessly assailed than Lord Randolph Churchill. Even more pertinent and remarkable than the resignation of Lord Palmerston in 1853 is the case of Lord Salisbury himself. The Derby-Disraeli Ministry was in 1867 in a minority in the House of Commons and their position was highly insecure. The question of Reform pressed upon them, urgent and inevitable. A failure to deal with it effectively, still more an attempt to shirk it, might have inflicted enduring injury upon the Conservative party. Lord Salisbury met the Bill with uncompromising opposition. When Mr. Disraeli stood firm, he immediately resigned—and not alone; for by his personal influence he carried with him both Lord Carnarvon and General Peel. In this crisis nothing but the determination of Disraeli sustained the Government. Yet Lord Salisbury by writings, by vigorous and even violent attacks, by co-operation in Parliament with Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright, did not hesitate to compass its defeat. And he was wrong! But how was he treated? His good faith was never challenged; his disinterested abandonment of great office was admired; his error was condoned. When Disraeli returned to power in 1874 he allowed no prejudice or consideration of former hostility to separate him from the man who had dubbed him a 'political adventurer,' and it was upon that association—stamped into the imagination of the people by the Congress of Berlin, that Lord Salisbury's chief claim to leadership afterwards rested.

Why, then, was Lord Randolph Churchill so hardly used by the party which owed so much to his efforts up till the

year 1887, and might have often been grateful for support, and more often still for silences, afterwards? Why was such unusual and uncompromising advantage taken of the false step he had made? No doubt much must be set down to the animosities he had excited; much to the alarm of a Cabinet at so impulsive and imperious a colleague; something to Lord Salisbury's desire that the leadership of the House of Commons and all that might follow therefrom should be secured to Mr. Balfour. Perhaps, too, they felt less compunction in dealing with him than with an older man, and thought with Smith that all this was 'only an incident in the life of a young politician'; that ten years later, or twenty years even, he might serve with his own contemporaries or lead a younger generation. Time would cool the blood of the Reformer, and the experience of adversity might temper an impatience born of extraordinary success. Little did they know how short was the span, or at what a cost in life and strength the immense exertions of the struggle had been made. That frail body, driven forward by its nervous energies, had all these last five years been at the utmost strain. Good fortune had sustained it; but disaster, obloquy and inaction now suddenly descended with crushing force, and the hurt was mortal.

CHAPTER XVIII

ECONOMY

When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat;
Yet, fool'd with hope, men favour the deceit;
Trust on and think to-morrow will repay.
To-morrow's falser than the former day;
Lies worse; and while it says we shall be blessed
With some new joys, cuts off what we possest.
Strange cozenage! none would live past years

again;
Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain;
And from the dregs of life think to receive
What the first sprightly running could not give.
Dryden, *Aurung-Zebe*.

THE position of a Minister who has withdrawn from a Cabinet is always difficult and peculiar. If for the sake of some principle which he considers vital he is prepared openly to attempt to wreck the Government and inflict upon the party a defeat at the polls, and if the issue is one which must soon be decided, the course, however painful, is plain. He has only to drive steadfastly on through the storm, like Lord Salisbury in 1867 or Lord Hartington in 1886, careless of consequences so long as he does his duty, disdainful of the anger of friends, if he holds them mistaken, and looking for vindication to the calm, just judgments of the after-time. But if the question on which he has separated from his colleagues is not paramount or urgent, and if, while differing strongly from the Government, he is yet determined not to injure the party from which that Government is drawn, his position becomes impossible. The more powerful he has been, the more powerless he becomes; the higher his office, the greater his fall.

From his place in Parliament he is bound, in common-sense and consistency, to uphold and justify his immediate contention. It may be economy; it may be Free Trade. Whenever that subject is raised he must be in his place, alike for his own defence and for the sake of his cause, to show that there was good reason for his action and that the public interest was at stake. If he feels strongly, he will speak strongly. Convictions harden and grow, and differences magnify and ossify as the controversy progresses. His party and his former colleagues are embarrassed by his proceedings, however legitimate or honest they may admit them to be. The more effective his

advocacy, and weighty his charges, the more they are resented. The Opposition are naturally pleased. They take from the ex-Minister's statements whatever they may consider useful to themselves and they employ his phrases and arguments to belabour in the House and in the country the party and the Government they are seeking to overthrow. Thus assailed, the Ministerial press and the party machine—with all its scribes, agents, orators and small fry—retaliate after their kind. In a hundred newspapers, from a hundred platforms, hitherto voluble in his praise, the ex-Minister becomes the object of depreciation and censure, expressed in varying degrees of vulgar and untruthful imputation. And all the while, since he will not declare general war upon his party, he is prevented from defeating calumny by vigorous action or answering malice by attack.

When Lord Randolph Churchill pressed his charges of extravagance and inefficiency against the public departments, the party which happened to be responsible at the time were themselves offended. When the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer urged the need of economy and spoke his mind, in all courteous moderation, upon the financial policy of his successor, the Government Whips whispered that it was only his jealousy and spite. If, on the other hand, he had remained silent, the judgment of the nation on the great question for which he had sacrificed so much would have gone by default. To do nothing was to abandon his cause; to move was to quarrel with his party.

These embarrassments are only aggravated when the resigning Minister has been exercising in the Cabinet a general authority over the whole field of policy. As Leader of the House of Commons Lord Randolph had become acquainted with almost every question which was likely at that time to come before Parliament. On many of these he had formed strong views of his own. He knew exactly how he had intended to handle them when they became subjects

of debate. When therefore he heard them mishandled, or a course adopted at variance with Cabinet decisions he had previously obtained, it was natural that he should wish to criticise or demur. Such conditions pointed inevitably, if the tension were prolonged, to a total rupture between the most patient ex-Minister and the most generous Government; and Lord Randolph was not the most patient of men, nor the Government the most generous of Governments.

Looking back on the circumstances and events of those years in the light of after-knowledge, there may be some who will find it easy to say what Lord Randolph should have done after his resignation. He should have stated the whole grounds of his difference with the Tory Cabinet, minimising nothing, keeping nothing back. In two or three speeches in Parliament and in the country he should broadly have outlined his general political conception of the course the Conservative party should follow, and then, unless he was prepared to wage relentless war upon the Government for the purpose of compelling them to adopt that course, he should forthwith have withdrawn himself entirely from public life. Leaving his party in the place of power to which he had raised them, with all the glamour of three years of cumulative and unexampled success still untarnished, he might well have been content to stand for a season apart from the floundering progress of the Administration, leaving to others to muddle away the majority he had made. And he could have counted, not without reason, upon the continued affection of the Conservative working classes. The party press would have been silent or even conciliatory. The relentless irritation of the machine would have been prevented. As the years passed by and the discredit of the Government increased, the Tory Democracy would have turned again to the lost leader by whom the victories of the past had been won.

Lord Randolph Churchill chose otherwise. He did not

lay deep or long plans. His nature prompted him to speak as he felt, and to deal with the incident of the hour as it occurred. He was solemnly in earnest about economy and departmental mismanagement. He wanted to curb expenditure; and, while at that business, he was not at all concerned with his 'prestige' or his 'career.' Deeply injurious to himself and to his influence with the Conservative party as his course ultimately proved, it was at any rate perfectly simple and straightforward. He returned to England at the end of March, and plunged at once into the vortex of politics. In three speeches which he delivered during the month of April to public audiences at Paddington (where he defended particularly his resignation), at Birmingham, and at Nottingham, he made clear what his attitude towards Lord Salisbury's Government would be. He was entirely independent of that Government. He had resigned from it on important grounds of difference. He desired a liberal and progressive policy in domestic affairs, and he was determined to wage war on extravagance and expenditure. But in the main lines of their policy he was a supporter of the Government; and to the cause of the Union, as to the large and permanent interests of the Conservative party, he remained perfectly loyal. From these intentions he never in any degree varied or departed in the years that followed. 'You are quite right,' he wrote to FitzGibbon (November 5, 1887), 'in supposing that mere returning to office has never been in my mind. I fight for a policy and not for place; and when I go back to office (if ever) I shall have secured my policy.' A Tory Democratic policy could only be furthered from within the Conservative party, and to that party he faithfully adhered. Besides Mr. Jennings, Lord Randolph had two good friends among the younger men in the House of Commons—his brother-in-law, Lord Curzon, and Mr. Ernest Beckett, the member for Whitby. These gentlemen stood by him, worked with him, and rendered him many

political services in the years that followed his resignation, for which they were not extravagantly beloved in the high places of their party.

With these three exceptions the late Leader of the House of Commons was entirely alone. To do him justice he made no effort to increase his following and discouraged several who would have willingly worked with him. Profoundly as he disagreed with much that the Government did, and disliked the temper that inspired it, fiercely as he resented the Lobby slanders and the steady detraction of the party press, never in the five years that followed—the last five years, as they were fated to be, of his physical strength—did he contemplate alliance of any sort with the Liberal party or seek to cause cave, clique or faction in the Conservative ranks.

The introduction of the Budget on April 21 afforded Lord Randolph his first opportunity of opening his 'economy' campaign. Mr. Goschen's ingenious Budget differed widely from the ambitious proposals of his predecessor. The reductions in the Estimates for which Lord Randolph had fought were, indeed, maintained—and even increased. The result was a surplus of 776,000*l.* This Mr. Goschen now increased by an addition to the stamp duties, yielding 100,000*l.*, and by a reduction of the Sinking Fund and Debt Charge from 28 millions to 26 millions. The total sum, amounting in the balance to a surplus of 2,779,000*l.*, was to be expended in taking a penny off the income-tax, at a cost of 1,560,000*l.*; in reducing the duties on tobacco by 600,000*l.*; and by granting 330,000*l.* in aid of the local rates, leaving a final estimated surplus of 289,000*l.*

The Budget was, on the whole, applauded. The Conservative party, whose consciences were a little uneasy on financial questions, were delighted. The very questionable resort to the Sinking Fund—not for any special emergency nor general scheme of fiscal revision,

but simply for the purpose of courting popularity by inconsiderable reductions of taxation—was sustained by Mr. Goschen's financial record. 'Great,' exclaimed Lord Randolph Churchill, 'is the worldly worth of a reputation!' In complete good-humour, albeit with a sharp edge, he rallied the Chancellor of the Exchequer—'the canonised saint of the financial purists'—on his lapse from the austere principles he had formerly professed; and both on the night of the Budget's introduction and four days later when he spoke next after Mr. Gladstone, he addressed to the Government and to the Conservative party earnest counsels of retrenchment and departmental reform. He added:—

It is not necessary to touch the Sinking Fund. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has ample resources at his disposal. If he leaves the Sinking Fund alone, and remits a penny of the income-tax, he will still have a balance of 400,000*l.* If he does not reduce the income-tax, and prefers to take off the tobacco duty, he will have a balance of 800,000*l.* If he touches neither of these, and relieves the rates, he will have a balance of 300,000*l.* He can do any of these things if he will only leave the Sinking Fund alone; and he is touching it for a purpose so paltry and frivolous that I fail to understand why it entered his mind. I pray the Chancellor of the Exchequer to believe that I only make these remarks because of my intense and earnest desire that the present Government—whose career, I hope, is going to be a long one—may enter upon the paths of financial stability.

On this Mr. Gladstone enters in his diary: 'R. Churchill excellent.'

The Parliamentary Committee on Army and Navy Estimates, for which Lord Randolph had asked at the beginning of the year, had been promised by the Government in reply to a question, put during his absence, by Lord Curzon. But weeks and even months were allowed to slip by without the necessary motion being made. When at length it was put on the paper it was immediately blocked; and thus it would have probably remained. But one day, when the first business happened to be the vote for the decoration of Westminster Abbey, Lord Randolph asked abruptly if the Government really meant to say that they considered the decoration of Westminster Abbey more important than a Parliamentary inquiry into the naval and military expenditure. After this the motion was put down at a reasonable hour, and it passed by general consent. On May 14 Mr. Smith wrote:—

10 Downing Street, Whitehall: May 14, 1887.

My dear R. C.,—Before we proceed to nominate the Committee on Army and Navy Estimates I should be glad to know if you would take a leading place upon it.

I cannot, of course, nominate the Chairman; but, so far as I am concerned, I should be very glad indeed if you would take the Chair, and I should say so to my friends, as I have complete confidence that your influence would be exercised with absolute impartiality and for the good of the public service.

Believe me
Yours very sincerely,
W. H. Smith.

Lord Randolph replied at once in the affirmative; but the delay in nominating the members continued, and his patience broke again:—

2 Connaught Place, W.: May 24, 1887.

My dear Smith,—I must ask you to excuse me from having the honour of dining with you to-night. The dinner is, of course, an official one, and the names of the guests will be in the papers, and it will be assumed by the public that those who dine with the Leader of the House are thoroughly satisfied with the policy and conduct of the Government.

As far as I am concerned such an assumption would be entirely unfounded. I have watched a great deal in the action of the Government which I deplore more than I can say; but I cannot pass over without notice your neglect to nominate the Army and Navy Estimates Committee last night, or rather this morning, and your postponing of that most important matter till after Whitsuntide. The delay in appointing that Committee is scandalous and inexcusable. It might long ago have commenced its work had the Government been in earnest about the matter; but last night you gave me a positive promise that you would nominate it without further delay, and, relying on that, I spent the evening till 12.30 in examination of the Estimates with two other gentlemen, and, being then very tired, did not return to the House. I dare say you are all right in thinking that you can afford to indulge in this kind of treatment of one of your supporters, but you cannot expect me to show publicly pleasure or satisfaction. *Hodie tibi, cras mihi.*

Yours very truly,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Smith replied softly:—

3 Grosvenor Place, London, S.W.: May 24, 1887.

My Dear R. C.,—I am very sorry you do not dine with me this evening, and still more for the cause.

At half-past five this morning I moved that the Committee be nominated, but I was met by cries from the other side of the House that it was opposed, and by murmurs from our own benches, and I felt it was impossible to proceed further at that hour with a jaded and heated house.

I am sure you would have done as I did if you had been in my place.

Yours very sincerely,
W. H. Smith.

But the Committee was appointed without further delay.

Meanwhile Lord Randolph had been industriously preparing his general indictment of War Office and Admiralty maladministration. To the intricate and detailed information which he had acquired at the Treasury, he added a mass of material accumulated with the greatest care and trouble by Mr. Jennings and amplified and checked by various expert authorities, with whom he was in communication. Basing himself on this and on the papers presented to Parliament he formulated his charges at Wolverhampton on June 3. He seems to have believed sincerely that it would be possible for him to effect a large reduction in the cost of government. He recalled to his mind the fact that the Government of 1860 was determined on a retrenchment policy, and the Army and Navy Estimates were in five years reduced from 27½ millions to 22½ millions; and that whereas in 1868 the estimates were 25 millions, by 1871 they had been reduced to 21 millions. Such examples may prove the possibility of retrenchment, but they were the achievements of a giant Minister working year by year from inside the Cabinet, and using the whole leverage of the great department over which he presided; and we have since learned from Mr. Morley's pages that even in Liberal Cabinets elected on the famous

watchwords of ‘Peace, Retrenchment and Reform’ Mr. Gladstone had to fight for his economies at the constant peril of his official life.

It is instructive to study the course of an agitation for naval and military economy directed by anyone outside the circle of the Government of the day and without the aid of the machinery of State. It may begin in all undivided earnestness in a simple demand for a reduction of expenditure. The Government and its official advisers will reply that they, too, are the zealous advocates of such a policy, if only they can be shown how to effect it; and they invite suggestions of a specific character. That is the first stage. Thus challenged, the economist leaves for the moment the enunciation of great principles of finance and national policy and descends to grapple with masses of technical details. He discovers a quantity of muddles and jobs, and arrays imposing instances of waste and inefficiency. His statements are, of course, contradicted, and his charges are wrangled over *seriatim*. Expert is set against expert, and assertion against assertion. The reformer is accused—not, generally, without some justice—of exaggeration; and he is in part and in detail inevitably betrayed into inaccuracy. But in the issue enough is proved to awaken public anxiety and even indignation. Certain main facts of discreditable and disquieting character are clearly established. Many weaknesses, neglects, incompetencies are revealed. There are guns without ammunition. There are fortresses without provisions. There are regiments without reserves. There are ships imperfectly constructed. There are weapons which are obsolete or bad. But in the process of the controversy the movement has been insensibly and irresistibly deflected from its original object. It began in a cry for economy; it has become a cry for efficiency. That is the second stage. The Government and their official advisers at the proper moment now shift their ground with an adroitness born of past experience.

They admit the damaging facts which can no longer be denied. The politicians explain that they arise from the neglect or incapacity of their predecessors. They recognise the public demand for more perfect instruments of war. They declare that they will not flinch from their plain duty (whatever others may have done); they will repair the deficiencies which clearly exist; they will correct the abuses which have been exposed; and in due course they will send in the bill to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. So that the third stage of an unofficial agitation in favour of a reduction of expenditure and a more modest establishment becomes an agitation in favour of an increase of expenditure and a more lavish establishment.

All this happened exactly in the case of Lord Randolph Churchill. In his earlier speeches since his resignation he had confined himself to the need of retrenchment, and this had been the ground on which he had fought in the Cabinet. But at Wolverhampton he sought to show that, in spite of the great and increasing expenditure, the services were in a wholly unsatisfactory and even dangerous condition. And in this he was beyond all question brilliantly successful. In a fierce speech of an hour and forty minutes he unfolded a comprehensive catalogue of follies. His audience, consisting of about 4,000 persons—mainly Conservative working men—at first doubtful and apathetic, were gradually raised, as the newspaper reports testify, to a state of indignation. With a display of feeling unusual even at a partisan meeting, and still more remarkable when the currents of ordinary partisanship were running against the speaker, they interrupted him repeatedly with cries of anger, and he ended amid a perfect tumult of assent.

It is not necessary to this account to examine the details of his charges. Each generation has its own jobs and scandals to confront. The administrative follies of 1887 have passed away. Some survived, to be dwarfed by more

astonishing successors; others were corrected, but not extirpated. All have produced a prosperous progeny, nourished in richer pastures, and attaining proportions of which their ancestors could hardly have dreamed. The main outlines of the indictment must, however, be placed on record. The condition of the British Army and Navy in the year 1887 was, in sober truth, a serious public danger. Mr. Gladstone's Government of 1880 had had, during their tenure of office, to deal with all kinds of military and Colonial enterprises for the effective execution of which a Liberal Administration is not naturally fitted. They detested their work heartily; they executed it very badly. In truth the Cabinet, distracted by the violence of Egyptian and Irish affairs and the gravity of the Eastern situation, torn by the increasing demands of Radicalism, and harassed by a relentless Opposition, was incapable of giving to naval and military matters adequate consideration. There had followed upon all this the two years of political revolution with which this story has been largely concerned. It was natural, it was inevitable, that in the interval which had elapsed since the great Army Reform Parliament of 1868 much waste and inefficiency should have crept into the military system; and in the same period, from considerations altogether outside the course of British politics, an enormous extension and complexity had affected the responsibilities and functions of the Navy.

Lord Randolph alleged in respect of the Army that not a single fortress was properly armed; that no reserve of heavy guns existed; that the artillery, both horse and field, was obsolete; that the rifle of the infantry was defective; that the swords and bayonets broke and bent under the required tests; and that, notwithstanding these deficiencies, the cost of the land service had increased in twelve years by over four millions a year. He charged the Admiralty with such waste as exporting Australian tinned meat to Australia, rum and sugar to Jamaica, flour to Hong Kong,

and rice to India; with making improvident contracts for ships, engines, and materials of various kinds; with disarming the Spithead and Portsmouth forts in order to arm warships. He asserted that the whole of the 43-ton guns designed by the Ordnance Department, on which 200,000*l.* had been spent, were worthless and liable to burst even with reduced charges; that the Ordnance officials had been told beforehand by the principal experts of Messrs. Armstrong that this type of gun was imperfect; that they persisted in making them; that one of the guns had already burst; that the others had been condemned; but that they were nevertheless to be employed on her Majesty's ships. The most serious count, however, dealt with various classes of ships which had in important particulars failed to realise the expectations of the designers and were in consequence unfit for active service.

He instanced especially the *Ajax* and the *Agamemnon*, the battleships of the *Admiral* class and the *Australia* class of cruisers. Of the armoured cruiser *Impérieuse* he declared that she drew four feet more water than was expected, with the result that the armour which should have been above water was now below water, and in consequence the ship was actually unprotected. 'The result of all this is that in the last twelve or thirteen years eighteen ships have been either completed or designed by the Admiralty to fulfil certain purposes, and on the strength of the Admiralty statements Parliament has faithfully voted ... about ten millions, and it is now discovered and officially acknowledged that in respect of the purposes for which these ships were designed, the whole of the money has been absolutely misapplied, utterly wasted and thrown away.' The foundation for this somewhat sweeping statement was supplied by the explanatory memorandum to the Navy Estimates, 1887. 'In one important particular,' so this document affirmed, 'there is a discrepancy between ... the original design and its result which, in the case of the

Impérieuse and her sister ship the *Warspite*, attracted some attention, and which is likely to recur in the case of the belted cruisers, seven in number, the *Warspite* and the armoured vessels of the *Admiral* class.... If the whole of the 900 tons [of coal] ... be placed on board [the *Impérieuse*] the top of the belt will, on the ship's first going to sea, be six inches below the water.'

The Wolverhampton speech made a considerable stir. In spite of the pressure of Irish affairs and the general instability of the political situation, it was for some days the principal topic of public discussion. The powerful interests assailed, retorted at once, and the newspapers were filled with censure and contradiction. Even those which, like the *Times*, were forced to acknowledge Lord Randolph Churchill 'right in his main contention,' rebuked him ponderously for extravagance of statement and violence of language. His strictures on naval construction brought Sir Nathaniel Barnaby, the late chief constructor to the Admiralty—to whom Lord Randolph had personally alluded—into voluminous protest in the columns of the *Times*, and an acrimonious correspondence ensued. Sir Nathaniel denied that he had been 'dismissed' from his post and pointed in disproof to his having been made a Knight Commander of the Bath. Lord Randolph replied acidly 'that K.C.B.'s and official testimonials were the usual manner in which the country requited long service when the intentions had been honest, no matter how deplorably defective might have been the capacity'; and expressed himself willing to substitute the phrase 'allowed to retire' for the word 'dismissed.' On the main question Sir Nathaniel appealed to Lord George Hamilton; and Lord Randolph brought up Sir Edward Reed, a rival constructor of great repute, who confirmed and even aggravated most of his statements. Both parties fell back upon official records, memoranda and Blue Books; and a battle royal developed, around the outskirts of which naval authorities

of every rank and description cruised, seeking to intervene, on the one side or the other, with masses of highly technical information couched in highly controversial terms.

Lord Randolph's contention that the *Ajax* and the *Agamemnon* were failures was not seriously disputed, Sir Nathaniel Barnaby himself admitting (*Times*, June 7) that he was 'thankful they were the only approximately circular and shallow sea-going ships we built.' The fiercest strife raged around the cruiser *Impérieuse*. Sir Nathaniel Barnaby met the assertion that the money spent upon her was 'absolutely misapplied, utterly wasted and thrown away,' by quoting a later Admiralty memorandum which declared her to be, 'if not actually the most powerful, one of the most powerful ironclad cruisers afloat of her tonnage.' But Sir Edward Reed was able to show that this was not extravagant eulogy, for that there was only one other 'ironclad cruiser *of her tonnage*' in existence. He also showed that, to lighten her, she had already been deprived of her masts and consequently of her intended sailing powers; and that even so, to bring her to her intended draught, it was necessary to take out the whole of her coal. When the smoke had at length a little lifted, it was generally held that, although Lord Randolph Churchill's charges were sustained on almost every substantial point, he had injured his case by over-stating it. Full marks were also awarded to the 'distinguished ex-public servant cruelly assailed in his professional character.'

Lord Randolph Churchill was duly elected Chairman of the Army and Navy Committee. Mr. Jennings, who was also a member, laboured indefatigably to collect, sift and arrange material. The Committee met without delay, and collected much valuable and startling evidence. They discovered, for instance, that one branch of the War Office cost 5,000*l.* a year in supervising an expenditure of 250*l.* a

year. 'Would it have been possible,' the Accountant-General was asked, 'for any private member to have ascertained from the Estimates laid before Parliament from 1870 to the present year that the total increase of net ordinary Army expenditure amounted to almost nine millions of money?—A. 'It would have been extremely difficult.' Q. ' ...or that since 1875 there had been an increase of about five millions?'—A. 'I do not think it would.' 'Up to now,' Lord Randolph suggested, 'Parliament has never had the smallest idea of what was the total cost of the services?'—'Taking the whole of the services,' replied Mr. Knox, 'it has not.' It would be easy to multiply these specimens of the evidence collected by the Select Committee. Day by day, as it was published, it was commented on by the press, and public and Parliamentary scrutiny was increasingly directed towards the Estimates of the two services.

Here is a note which it is pleasant to transcribe:—

> One odd effect of your Committee: [wrote Jennings July 27]. Bradlaugh came to me this afternoon—said he had been reading the evidence—was immensely struck with it—thought you had done enormous service already. I told him a little more about it. He said: 'He has done so much good that I really think I must close up my account against him.' 'Well, surely,' I said, 'there is no use in keeping it open any longer. It only looks like vindictiveness.' 'Yes,' he said, 'I think I will close the ledger.'

It will be convenient to follow Lord Randolph's economy campaign to its conclusion. As it gradually became directed to efficiency rather than simple economy it enlisted an increasing measure of professional support. By May 1888, public opinion had become so vigilant that, following upon some outspoken and not very temperate statements by Lord Wolseley, then Adjutant-General, the Government determined—momentous resolve!—to appoint a Royal Commission with Lord Hartington at its head. Mr. Smith invited Lord Randolph Churchill to join

it:—

10 Downing Street, Whitehall: May 18, 1888.

My dear R. C.,—You will render great service to the administrative reform of the two great departments if you will join the Royal Commission over which Lord Hartington will preside.

Mr. Gladstone has asked Mr. Campbell-Bannerman to represent the Opposition; I am to go on, on behalf of the Government; and you would represent those who believe that efficiency and economy may result from a change of system. General Brackenbury will join as a soldier, and Sir F. Richards, who has just returned from sea, as the sailor. Two civilians with extensive knowledge of large business transactions are to be added, and Sir Richard Temple will also be asked as a capable and successful Indian Administrator. These are the people with whom you would be associated in the effort to improve our system, and I hope most sincerely that you will not refuse your help.

Believe me
Yours very truly,
W. H. Smith.

I enclose a copy of the reference.

'To inquire into the civil and professional administration of the Naval and Military Departments and the relation of those Departments to each other and to the Treasury; and to report what changes in their existing system would tend to the efficiency and the economy of the Public Service.'

Lord Randolph, however, knowing a good deal of the ways of such bodies, declined. He was persuaded by Lord Hartington, who wrote:—

Hôtel du Rhin, 4 Place Vendôme: May 26, 1888.

My dear Churchill,—Smith has sent me your letter declining to serve on the Army and Navy Commission. I hope very much that if you have not absolutely made up your mind you may be induced to reconsider your decision, as we are both very anxious to have your assistance.

I think that your Committee has taken some very valuable

evidence which shows the inefficiency and defects of the present system. But I should doubt whether you will effect much more by the examination of minor officials or by investigating the details of the separate votes; and I should think it might be possible for you to leave the inquiry to be finished by some one else. My own opinion is that we shall never get either efficiency or economy until we can find some way of giving the professional men more power and at the same time more responsibility; but how this can be done in combination with our Parliamentary system is a very difficult problem which requires bold and original treatment.

If we cannot suggest a more efficient and intelligent system of superior administration, I think that we shall do very little good by exposing details of maladministration in minor matters; and as the subject-matter of our inquiry is to be the real centre of the whole question of administrative reform, I cannot help thinking that you would find our inquiry more interesting and important than any which you can take up or continue on other branches of the same question.

I remain

Yours sincerely,
Hartington.

The Commission appointed on June 17, 1888, did not report till March, 1890. Lord Randolph's separate memorandum, which will be found in the Appendix, is well known. Its sweeping proposals were not adopted by the majority of the Commissioners; but it has been so often quoted, and bears so closely upon modern controversies, that the reader who is interested in these subjects should not neglect to study it. The indirect results of his agitation were, perhaps, more fruitful. Lord George Hamilton, with whom he so often engaged in sharp argument when Navy Estimates recurred, bears a generous tribute to the unseen influence which severe public criticism exerts upon the workings of a great department. It would seem that Lord Randolph Churchill's belief that considerable economies were possible on the establishments of 1886 was not without foundation.

Lord George Hamilton writes, October 4, 1904:—

During my tenure of office at the Admiralty great changes were made, and in the foremost rank of these reforms was the reorganisation and renovation of the Royal dockyards. These establishments had been allowed to grow and develop without a sufficient regard to the revolution in shipbuilding which the substitution of iron and steel for wood had caused. Laxity in supervision, connivance at practices neither economical nor efficient, dawdling over work, obsolete machinery and ill-adjusted establishments, associated with Estimates framed for political exigence rather than naval needs, all combined to bring these great national building yards into disrepute. The *personnel* was first-rate both in ability and integrity and the material used as good as money could obtain. All that was required was a thorough readjustment of the establishments to the work they were called upon to do, by the reduction of the redundant and superfluous workmen, by the dismissal of the incompetent, and an increase to the numbers working in steel and iron. Changes such as these, if associated with the introduction of the methods and checks in force in the best private yards, were quite sufficient to put our dockyards in the first rank of building establishments. But whoever undertook the task would be subject to much obloquy, both local and Parliamentary. The stern suppression of long-standing malpractices, the dismissal of a large number of unnecessary and indifferent workmen, if enforced on a large scale, required a strong current of public opinion behind it for its consummation. This assistance I obtained from Lord Randolph Churchill's crusade on economy. He and I differed on many questions of naval administration, but we were at one as to the necessity of dockyard reform. Many economists who, though agreeing in the abstract with Lord Randolph's views, hesitated to cut down the effective fighting forces of the Army and Navy, were delighted to co-operate with him in so non-contentious an improvement. The Labour party was not then as well organised or represented in Parliament as they have since become, and their opposition to dockyard dismissals was less strenuous than it would be now.

I was thus enabled, after two years of continuous labour and trouble, to organise the dockyards from top to bottom, to put down establishments that were not required, to dismiss the

loiterers, and to establish, modelled on the practice of the best private yards, a completely new system of supervision, check, and control. The effect was electrical. The dockyards at once became the cheapest and most economical builders of warships in the world. The largest ironclad ever designed, up to 1889, was built, completed and commissioned ready for sea in two years and eight months from the date of the laying down of its keel. No large ironclad had been previously completed within five years. Up to 1886 the average cost of the big ships building in these yards was 40 per cent. above their original estimate; since then the estimates have rarely been exceeded. In the first year of the new system there was an instantaneous saving of 400,000*l.* The continuous and satisfactory progress of our vast and annually increasing building programme is mainly due to those changes, and Lord Randolph could, I think, fairly claim that, though his name was not publicly associated with the great national gain thus achieved, it was the public opinion which he aroused, which largely contributed to the consummation of dockyard reform.

Lord Randolph Churchill addressed five meetings in the autumn and winter of 1887—two at Whitby and Stockport respectively for his two friends, Mr. Beckett and Mr. Jennings; and three in the North. The Whitby meeting in September afforded an opportunity for a display of the hostility with which he was regarded by the dominant section of the Conservative party, for several prominent local worthies publicly refused to attend—a proceeding which even the *Times* was compelled to censure. The 7,000 persons who gathered upon the sands and around the slopes of a kind of natural amphitheatre under the west cliff gave him a very different welcome, and listened with delighted attention during that beautiful afternoon to a spirited and ingenious defence of the miserable session through which the Government had shuffled. In Yorkshire and Lancashire, as in the earlier meetings of the year, and later in the North, his popularity with the Conservative masses was still undimmed. He was greeted everywhere by immense crowds. The largest halls were much too small.

Paddington was loyal and contented. His Birmingham supporters asked no better than to fight for him at once. At Nottingham, long before his arrival, the streets were thronged; and all the way from the station to the Albert Hall he passed through continuous lines of cheering people.[64] Similar scenes took place at Wolverhampton, and the Conservative Association of that borough passed a formal resolution supporting his policy of economy. In the North he made a regular progress. He visited three important centres in a single week and made a 'trilogy of speeches'—no light task for a speaker whose every word is reported and examined. He spoke on the afternoon of October 20 at Sunderland, at great length, in reply to a previous speech of Mr. Gladstone, covering the whole field of domestic policy and defining the immediate limits of the Tory Democratic programme. These proved sufficiently comprehensive to include Free Education, Local Option in the sale of drink, a compulsory Employer's Liability Act, the abolition of the power of entailing land upon unborn lives, 'One man, one vote,' and Parliamentary registration at the cost of local bodies. At Newcastle, two days later, he spoke in defence of the Union, justified the Government policy in Ireland, and vehemently attacked Mr. Gladstone for the countenance which he showed towards lawlessness and disorder.

On the Monday he spoke at Stockton, and here he turned aside to deal with another subject which had been thrust much upon him of late. Mr. Jennings, like Lord Dunraven, was, as the reader is aware, a Fair Trader, and throughout the year—from the very beginning of their association—he had laboured tactfully, but persistently, to win Lord Randolph to his views. He knew that although the cry of 'Less waste and no jobbery' might appeal to many, 'Economy' was not in itself a popular cause to submit to a Democratic electorate, and was, moreover, foreign to the instincts and traditions of Toryism. 'Fair Trade,' on the

contrary, touched a very tender spot in a Conservative breast; and, quite apart from this consideration, Mr. Jennings was an enthusiast. He had examined the question both from an American and a British point of view. He possessed a large and well-stored arsenal of fact and argument. On such subjects as 'One-sided Free Trade,' 'Our Ruined Industries,' 'The Dumping of Sweated Goods,' 'The Commercial Union of the Empire' or 'Our Dwindling Exports' he could write, as his frequent letters show, with force and feeling. Scarcely since St. Anthony had there been such a temptation on the one hand or such austerity on the other.

'The main reason,' Lord Randolph had said at Sunderland, 'why I do not join myself with the Protectionists is that I believe that low prices in the necessaries of life and political stability in a democratic Constitution are practically inseparable, and that high prices in the necessaries of life and political instability in a democratic Constitution are also practically inseparable.' And this having drawn upon him the wrath of Mr. Chaplin, he proceeded at Stockport to make his case good. He used no economic arguments. He pointed to the supremacy of the Conservative party as a proof of political stability under low food-prices. He pointed to the conversion of Sir Robert Peel as a proof of political instability, under high food-prices. To make wheat-farming profitable a duty was required which would raise the price of corn from 28*s*. a quarter to something between 40*s*. and 45*s*. a quarter. Would anyone propose a sufficient tax on imported corn to make it worth while for the rural voter to pay the higher prices which Fair Trade would secure for the manufactures of the urban voter? How did the Fair Traders propose to deal with India? How did they propose to deal with Ireland? Could they prove that France, Austria and Germany were more prosperous than Great Britain? 'It is no use saying to me, "Go to America or New South

Wales." I will not go to America, and I will not go to New South Wales. There is not the smallest analogy between those countries and England. America is a self-contained country and almost everything she requires for her people she can produce in abundance. We cannot. We have more people than we can feed; and not only for food, but for our manufactures, we depend upon raw material imported from abroad. Therefore I decline to go to America or New South Wales; but I would go to European countries—to France, Austria and Germany—and I want to know whether the Fair Traders can prove that the people of those countries are more prosperous than ours.'

This Stockton speech was naturally a great disappointment to Jennings. 'I cannot deny,' he wrote, 'that you gave many of your followers a bitter pill to swallow. I think I could give you satisfactory grounds for admitting that your objections to "Fair Trade" will not stand much investigation; but, of course, the real difficulty is that in many of our constituencies the question is popular. We have been partly elected on the strength of it; and when you attack it, you fire a broadside into your own supporters and give the Radicals in our boroughs a stick to beat us with. It is hard for us to fight against your authority, especially when we have been drilling into the minds of the people that yours are the views they should adopt. If you ever had half an hour to spare, I wish you would allow me to put the facts before you. You would soon see, for example,....' And then follow pages of tersely stated arguments of a kind with which most people are now only too familiar.

They produced no effect upon Lord Randolph. 'The policy which you advocate,' he replied (October 30), 'of duties on foreign imports for revenue purposes, much attracted me at one time; but I came to the conclusion that, although such a policy would gain the adhesion of the manufacturing towns, it is open to such fearful attack from

the Radicals among the country population that we should lose more than we should gain. I cannot see how you can persuade yourself that the country population would accept a method of raising revenue which would directly benefit the manufacturing population at their expense. The election of '85 made a great impression upon me. Then the defection of the rural vote completely neutralised our great successes in the English boroughs.' And again on November 3, after the discussions at the conference of Conservative Associations: 'Do you see how the Fair Traders have been wrangling and disputing with each other —everyone going in a different direction—confirming all that I said at Stockton about their not knowing their own minds?' Late in November came an invitation from the 'British Union,' a Protectionist Association having its headquarters in Manchester—of all places—to which Lord Randolph replied as follows:—

2 Connaught Place, W.: November 26, 1887.

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th inst. I understand that your Committee are good enough to do me the honour of asking me to preside at a meeting to be held on January 24 in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, in favour of Fair Trade.

You allude to the recent vote of the Conservative National Union bearing upon this subject, and inquire as to what effect that vote has had upon my mind. I may reply: 'None whatever, except to confirm me in the opinions I expressed at Stockton in the course of last month.' Both at the Fair Trade Conference recently held, as well as at the conference of the delegates of the National Union, I observed that the sentence which would best characterise those discussions was *quot homines tot sententiæ*. There is not among those who desire extensive fiscal reform the slightest approach to real agreement either as to objects or to methods. I must also point out that the delegates of the National Union do not appear to have had any instructions from those whom they were supposed to represent to debate and to decide on the question of Fair Trade, neither did they in any way specially represent trade interests. Their decision in favour of Fair Trade, therefore, is not more weighty than their decision in favour of

'Women's Suffrage,' which latter would certainly not be accepted by the Tory party as a whole.

Under these circumstances you will see that it is not possible for me to depart in any way from the views I have recently expressed on Fair Trade; nor could I, as you kindly invite me to do, 'take the helm of a movement' which up to the present remains altogether vague and undefined.

So far as I have been able to discover, this was, with one exception, his last public word on the subject.[65] His objections to Fair Trade were not based on principle. They were entirely practical. He cared little for theory. He hated what he used to call 'chopping logic.' He was not at all concerned to vindicate Mr. Cobden, and he mocked at 'professors' of all kinds. But he thought that as a financial expedient a complicated tariff would not work, and he was sure that as a party manœuvre it would not pay. He saw no way by which the conflicting interests of the counties and the boroughs could be reconciled and he believed that without such reconciliation the movement would prove disastrous to the Conservative cause. He was, no doubt, strengthened in his views by his desire so far as possible to work in harmony with Mr. Chamberlain and so to combine and fuse together all the Democratic forces which supported the Union. Yet Fair Trade had much to offer to a Conservative statesman. To him, above all other Tory leaders, the prospect was alluring. That section of Tory Democracy which had received the gospel of Mr. Farrer Ecroyd—and it was already important—would have followed a Fair Trade champion through thick and thin. In every town he would have secured faithful and active supporters. His earlier speeches had prepared the way. His own immediate allies in Parliament, his best friends in the press, were ardent Fair Traders. Hardly a day passed, as he said at Stockton, without his receiving letters from all classes of people imploring him to come forward as a Fair Trader. He had only to raise the standard to obtain a

following of his own strong enough to defy the party machine. The National Union might still afford the necessary organisation. And had he been, as it was the fashion to say, willing to advance his personal position regardless of the interests of the Conservative party, there lay ready to his hand a weapon with which he might have torn the heart out of Lord Salisbury's Government.

CHAPTER XIX

THE NATIONAL PARTY

'Love as if you should hereafter hate; and hate as if you should hereafter love.'—Bias (quoted by Aristotle).

'ALL the politics of the moment,' said Lord Salisbury on March 5, 1887, to the members of the National Conservative Club, 'are summarised in the word "Ireland."' The fierce struggle in the English constituencies was over. The Home Rulers had been totally defeated. Mr. Gladstone had been driven from office. A Conservative Government, strong in its own resources of discipline and class, strengthened by most of the forces of wealth and authority which had hitherto been at the service of the Liberal party, and supported by the energetic multitudes of Tory Democracy, sat in the place of power. Among the ranks of the Opposition, fortified in their midst, with leaders of their own upon their Front Bench, was a solid band of seventy gentlemen of unusual ability actively engaged in preventing the return of their neighbours to office. Such was the grim aspect of the field upon the morrow of the great battle. Such was the change of fortune which a year of Irish policy had brought to the Liberal party. But, although the relative forces of the combatants in the political arena had been so surprisingly altered, the question in dispute remained utterly unsettled and 'Ireland'

was still the vital and dominant factor in the political situation.

So long as the Liberal Unionists adhered to Lord Salisbury's Government it was, of course, unshakable; for it enjoyed the double advantage of their support and of the cleavage which they caused in the Opposition. But the conditions under which Liberal-Unionist support would be continued could not be definitely known; and its withdrawal meant the immediate fall of the Administration. Forced thus to live from day to day upon the goodwill of its allies, with few means of knowing and not always a right to inquire when that goodwill might be impaired, the Government was apparently deficient in real stability or power. Nor could it be said to make up in talent what it lacked in strength. The retirement of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach deprived the Treasury Bench of its sole remaining Conservative Parliamentarian; Mr. Goschen's position was, at any rate for the first year, difficult and peculiar; Mr. Balfour had yet his name to make; and the choice of Mr. Smith for the leadership of the House of Commons, however justified by his courage and his character, so far as the distinction of debate was concerned, only revealed the nakedness of the land.

In all these circumstances it was with no little anxiety that the Conservative party watched the progress of the negotiations which attended the Round Table Conference and endeavoured to estimate the effect upon those negotiations and upon the general attitude of the Liberal-Unionist party of the growing tension of Irish affairs. Mr. Chamberlain's intentions were especially uncertain. His effective co-operation with the Conservatives had been largely facilitated by his good relations with Lord Randolph Churchill and the very considerable agreement in political matters which existed between them. But Lord Randolph Churchill had now left the Government; and how could a Radical support a policy from which a

progressive Tory had been forced to separate? Moreover, Mr. Chamberlain was closely associated with Sir George Trevelyan. They had resigned together from the Home Rule Cabinet. They fought side by side in the election which followed. They were the joint representatives of Liberal Unionism at the Round Table Conference. On January 22, 1886, while the issue of that conference was still undetermined, Mr. Chamberlain was the chief speaker at a demonstration at Hawick in Sir George Trevelyan's honour; and Sir George Trevelyan was all the time known to be earnestly and eagerly labouring for the reunion of the Liberal party. 'It is because I believe,' said Mr. Chamberlain on this occasion, 'that at all events a great approximation to peace, if not a complete agreement, may be attained without a betrayal of the trust which has been reposed in us that I ask you to await with hope and confidence the result of our further deliberations.' Lord Hartington took, indeed, no part in these negotiations. 'Some one,' he said, characteristically, 'must stay at home to look after the camp;' but he proceeded to wish the Conference 'every measure of success,' and he was careful not to destroy by any words of his the prospects of reconciliation.

The whole situation—already delicate, uncertain and seemingly critical—could not fail to be profoundly influenced by the course of events in Ireland. The winter of 1886 was accompanied by a widespread, though by no means general, refusal or inability to pay rents. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach had never been too enthusiastic in his sympathy with the Irish landowner, and during the winter he had endeavoured to mitigate the severities of the time by the exercise of a kind of 'dispensing power.' Landlords were given to understand that the whole machinery of the Executive would not necessarily be at their disposal for the purpose of enforcing against their tenants claims which, in the opinion of the Chief Secretary, were harsh or unjust.

This rough-and-ready method was heartily supported by Sir Redvers Buller, and to its adoption the comparative crimelessness of the winter was largely due. But, however satisfactory its results in practice might be, it was easily and justly assailable in principle; and after the Lord Chief Baron Palles had authoritatively declared that the attempt to withdraw the police from supporting the legal claims of private persons was altogether unjustifiable, the 'dispensing power' had to be abandoned, and the law took its regular course. The consequence of the numerous and, in some cases, ruthless evictions which followed was a formidable agrarian conspiracy. The tenants on different estates joined themselves together to offer to the landlord whatever rent they considered just, and where it was refused as insufficient they deposited the whole sum with a managing committee to be used for the purposes of resistance. This movement, known to history as the 'Plan of Campaign,' was the immediate result. The secondary, though not less direct, result was the advent in the House of Commons of a Land Bill and a Coercion Bill, both of which must expose to uncalculated strains the composite forces on which the Government depended.

But now and in the years that were to come the far-seeing statecraft with which the Conservative leaders had stimulated and sustained the schism in the Liberal party and had dealt with the crisis of the General Election was to be vindicated. They had built far stronger than they knew. Underneath the smooth words of the Liberal-Unionist leaders towards their former friends, and behind all the generous emotions of the Round Table Conference, stubborn brute forces were at work which, though they did not necessarily conduce to the stability of the Conservative Government, were inevitably fatal to Liberal reunion. The Liberal-Unionist members who had come back safely to Westminster, having broken with their party organisations and defied the Grand Old Man, were very particular to call

themselves Liberals and to deny that they had severed themselves in any degree from the principles and traditions of Liberalism. They banned Tory colours and Tory clubs. When they attended public meetings they took care that the complexion of the platform should be Liberal Unionist. Even Mr. Goschen, after taking office in a Conservative Government, thought it necessary to assert in his election address his unaltered and unalterable character as a Liberal, and to apologise to the Conservative electors for the strain put upon their natural partisanship by his candidature. And there is no doubt that they were perfectly honest in their belief. They were not conscious of any abandonment of principle. They declared that they agreed with the Liberal party on every other question except the Irish Question, and even in regard to Ireland there was agreement on three points out of four. The Conservatives had exacted no pledges from them. They did not feel themselves divorced from one body of doctrine and engaged to another. They remained in political opinion on all the great contested questions of the day exactly where they had been when Parliament met in January 1885, and they sat in the same places and among the same party.

But, in fact, one change had taken place in their character of more practical importance than all the symbols and nomenclature of party, and counting more in political warfare than any change of principles, however sudden or sweeping: they had changed sides. Abstract principles and party labels might be the same, but whereas in January 1886 they wished and worked for a Liberal victory and a Conservative defeat, in January 1887 they wanted to see the Conservatives win and the Liberals beaten. Otherwise no change! No disagreement, outside Ireland, with the Liberal party—except that they sought its overthrow; no difference except the one difference which swallows up all others—the difference between alliance and war. And this difference, be it noted, was not founded on any passing

mood of anger or caprice which smooth words and fair offers might dispel. It was fundamental and innate. It was the basis of the election of these seventy members. They had stood as opponents of Mr. Gladstone and all the forces he directed. They were elected for the very purpose of preventing his return to power by electors nine-tenths of whom at least were Conservatives. While they opposed Mr. Gladstone, they responded to the constituent bodies by whom they were returned. If they made friends with him—no matter upon what terms—they ceased to represent nine-tenths at least of their electorates.

Moreover, few men go through the experience of an internecine quarrel, with its taunts and charges of treachery and ingratitude exchanged between old comrades who know each other well, and with all the wrenching and tearing asunder of friendships and associations, without contracting a deep and abiding antagonism for those from whom they have broken. Sir George Trevelyan—unembarrassed by a constituency—indeed went back; but he went back alone. The rest remained to justify, by their consistent action, the wisdom of Conservative tactics; to prove, as the years went by, the most trustworthy supporters of the Conservative party, and in the end to secure the main control of its policy. From that strange pilgrimage—'that bitter pilgrimage,' as Mr. Chamberlain calls it (was it so very bitter, after all?), there could be no turning back after the first decisive steps were taken.

All this was, however, either unknown or imperfectly appreciated in 1887; and even if the Liberal-Unionists' mind had been thoroughly understood, the uncertainty of the political situation would not have been by any means concluded. For, although there never was any real chance of Liberal reunion, there were repeated possibilities of a Conservative collapse. The Liberal Unionists were resolved to do nothing that would bring Mr. Gladstone back to power. Apart from imperilling the cause of the

Union, that process would probably involve the political extinction of most of their party. But, subject to that dominant proviso, they could not feel any particular affection for Lord Salisbury's Government. They disliked much of its action, they did not agree with its general views, and they could not be impressed by the Parliamentary exposition with which they were favoured. Their leaders were not desirous of office for its own sake; but they were gravely disquieted by the policy adopted towards Ireland, and more than once drawn to the conclusion that a wide reconstruction of the Cabinet would be necessary to maintain the reputation of the Unionist party in Parliament and the country. In view of their evident power to change the Government at any moment by a vote, the passage of the Irish Bills through the House of Commons was attended with extreme danger to the Ministry. On more than one occasion its life depended upon a single hand, and once it was decided that that hand should be withdrawn.

About Ireland and all that concerned her Lord Randolph cared intensely. He felt responsible in no small degree for the denial of Home Rule. As to that he had no doubts; but he had always intended, and had been allowed, with the full sanction of the Cabinet, to declare that the counterpart of the assertion of the Union was a generous, sympathetic, and liberal policy towards the Irish people in regard to religion, self-government, and land. Intimately acquainted as he was with many shades of Irish opinion, he was both grieved and angered at the temper displayed by the conquerors in the years that followed their victory. To Coercion, indeed, so far as it should be necessary to maintain the law, he had made up his mind before he left the Cabinet, and he had no thoughts of going back on that; but the Bill and its enforcement stirred all the latent Liberalism in his character. He discovered, as time went on, that special legislation was not regarded by the

Government as a hateful necessity; but as something good in itself, producing a salutary effect upon the Irish people and raising the temper of the Ministerial party. He was offended by the calm assumption of social and racial superiority displayed, as a matter of course, by Ministers towards their Irish opponents, and the studied disregard of Nationalist sentiments and feelings which, even when no public object was to be gained, marked these dark years of Unionist policy; and with all his determination never in any degree weakened to maintain the Union, it was in the conduct of Irish affairs from 1887 to 1890 that he realised most acutely his differences with the Government, and out of which his open quarrel with the Conservative party ultimately sprang.

The retirement of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach from the Irish office on account of his eyesight was the first blow.

'I waited till I got home,' Lord Randolph wrote on March 30, 'before writing to you, as I did not know where a letter might find you: but I feel sure no letter from me was needed for you to be convinced how profoundly grieved I was at your having to give up official work, and at the cause. I knew you had trouble before you, but was in great hopes that it might have been for long delayed. I saw Roose yesterday, and it was very pleasant to hear him assert with confidence that you would be as strong and well as ever before the close of the year. Indeed, you are a great loss to Ireland and to the party and to me. Now that you are gone, there is no one in the Government I care a rap about.... I should so much like to see you and have a long talk. I have as yet seen none of my late colleagues, nor do I want to. Don't trouble to answer this; but believe that there is no one who more truly and earnestly wishes for your renewed health and strength.'

The Land Bill opened various difficulties. Many of the Liberal Unionists thought it inadequate, and both Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Randolph had decided opinions of

their own upon several of its most important clauses. All through the summer of 1887 these two disinherited chiefs of democracy drew closely together. They were both, as Mr. Chamberlain describes it, ‘adrift from the regular party organisations.’ Yet each possessed great influence in Parliament and the country. It was natural that the idea of some Central party should present itself to their minds in a favourable light. And, indeed, the increasing weakness of the Government in the House of Commons and the apparently uncertain character of its majority made such speculations very reasonable. On at least two occasions a defeat in Committee on the Land Bill appeared certain; and in that emergency only a coalition headed by Lord Hartington and strengthened by both Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Randolph Churchill could have prevented the return of the Home Rulers to power, with a disastrous election to follow. In many letters and in several speeches the idea of a ‘National party’ recurs. In July the situation appeared so critical and the prospects of a collapse so imminent that Lord Hartington himself seems to have regarded the reconstruction of the Government as inevitable. In that event it was known that the two democratic leaders stood together and that neither would enter any Cabinet without the other.

The crisis passed, and with it the agreement. With the best will in the world Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Randolph Churchill found it very difficult to work in close accord. Their opinions were nearly alike, but their political positions were different. They had similar aims, but divergent antagonisms. The disputes within a party are always fiercer than those between regular political opponents and their rage burns long in the breast. Mr. Chamberlain had resigned from Mr. Gladstone’s Cabinet, and his attitude tended to become mainly one of opposition to him. All other political leaders, of whatever complexion, stood more or less in shadow. Lord Randolph, on the other

hand, had resigned from Lord Salisbury's Cabinet and the differences which most concerned him were those which separated him from the 'old gang.' Hence that strenuous alliance which was the necessary foundation of the National party was, from the very outset, subjected to perilous strains. Further difficulties arose from the topography of the House of Commons. The two friends sat on opposite sides of the House. No intercourse in the Chamber was possible without exciting notice and perhaps remark. On the other hand, the shifting course of the debates made constant consultings indispensable to harmonious action. Without them misunderstandings and disagreements were bound to arise. Both men formed strong and immediate opinions on every small point that arose. Both spoke with dangerous facility. Both had sharp tongues and some readiness to use them when provoked. During the long-drawn session of 1887 several petty disagreements, taking the form of public expression, arose.

One of these incidents occurred during the consideration of the bankruptcy clauses of the Irish Land Bill, August 1, 1887. The subject was technical, and the issue mixed. Lord Randolph Churchill had made a short argumentative speech upon an amendment which had been moved from the Liberal-Unionist benches. Mr. Chamberlain followed, and took a totally different line. 'The noble lord,' he said, 'has not told the Committee how he intends to vote on this amendment.' Lord Randolph said he would vote with the Government. 'I confess,' said Mr. Chamberlain, 'I did not come to that conclusion from his speech. I thought the noble lord intended to support the amendment, and upon that I was going to point out to him that the greater part of his speech was against it.' He then proceeded to indicate considerable differences with Lord Randolph on the merits of the question. The House was in Committee, and both men could therefore speak again. Lord Randolph referred to Mr. Chamberlain's opening remarks as 'a characteristic

sneer.' 'The right honourable gentleman evidently does not understand the process of differing from one's party and yet supporting it. On this question of the Irish land I hold certain opinions which I have ventured—I hope, with moderation—to press very rarely—I think, only three times—on Her Majesty's Government. And then, if the Government have not altogether agreed with these opinions, I do not think it necessary to assume that the Government are entirely wrong or that I am infallibly right. Well, on the whole, I adhere to my view of the case. I see nothing inconsistent in supporting them after the remarks I have made—not in a dictatorial, but in a pleading manner.' Mr. Chamberlain's retort was prompt and sharp. He denied that he had intended a sneer of any kind. He was sincerely in doubt as to how Lord Randolph would have voted. 'I am rather glad,' he said, 'that this incident has occurred, inasmuch as it has enabled the noble lord to pay me a compliment; and I can assure him that, coming from him, I very much value it. The noble lord said that I, at any rate, am not one of those who differ from their party and yet support it; neither am I one who speaks one way and votes another.' There the matter dropped so far as the House of Commons was concerned. Mr. Chamberlain wrote the next day to put matters right. 'I hope,' he said, 'that in this case it is *ira amantium redintegratio amoris*.'

Lord Randolph was not, however, easily placated. 'I freely confess,' he replied, 'that I had viewed your action last night with the greatest possible surprise and some vexation, which I thought proper to express. When on Clause IV. you took similar action, hostile to my views, I refrained from any public comment. I am quite at a loss to understand why you have thought it necessary on two occasions within a week to express in a most marked manner your entire disagreement with me; but I am sure you have excellent reasons for all you do.'

This ill-humour lasted only a few days. Within the week

the two men were dining and consulting with each other on personal terms as friendly as before. Yet some scars seem to have smarted, for there are signs in Lord Randolph's correspondence that from this date he began to draw more closely in matters political towards Lord Hartington, and less freely to confide in his former ally. One morning soon after this Lord Randolph and Mr. Chamberlain went for a walk together in Hyde Park. They discussed the whole position in the frankest way and decided by mutual consent to work independently and to pursue the objects they sought in common by separate paths. Thus ended that intimate political understanding which had united these fiery spirits during the period of storm in a comradeship which had not been without its effects upon public affairs. They parted, with many expressions of goodwill, to follow after a time different roads and to face in the end contrasted fortunes. Their alliance had been brief. Even in the few years with which this account is concerned, they will be seen in sharp antagonism. Yet both were accustomed to preserve, amid the inexhaustible vicissitudes of politics, pleasant memories of those exciting and eventful days.

With this separation the prospects of a National party fade again into that dreamland whence so many have wished to recall them. Few, indeed, are the politicians who have not cherished these visions at times when ordinary party machinery is not at their disposal. To build from the rock a great new party—free alike from vested interests and from holy formulas, able to deal with national problems on their merits, patient to respect the precious bequests of the past, strong to drive forward the wheels of progress—is without doubt a worthy ideal. Alas, that the degeneracy of man should exclude it for ever from this wicked world!

Late in August Ministers determined to put their powers under the Crimes Act into force. All the independent men

who kept them in office, seem to have been pained and dismayed by this decision. They feared its effects upon the majority, and doubted its necessity in Ireland.

'I am desperately puzzled,' wrote Lord Randolph to Lord Hartington (August 20), 'to know what line to take about this last action of the Government. I disapprove of it profoundly, but distrust my own opinion—all the more that I do not know what special information Ministers have to support their action. There is unquestionably a smack of vindictiveness about the proclamation, *prima facie*, which the country will be quick to feel. This, coupled with their singular treatment of the Land Act, cannot produce a good effect. I am anxious to know whether, before their final decision, they secured your concurrence, as in that case I should keep my opinions to myself and give a silent vote in their support.

'I have a letter from Chamberlain showing considerable irritation and impatience at your last communication to him, and great alarm for the future and his future; but he says he has decided to postpone any action tending to emphasise any difference of opinion between yourself and him. This, however, was written apparently before he was aware of the proclamation of the League and I do not know what effect that may produce on him.'

Lord Hartington's measured reply makes plain the debt which the Conservative Government owed to this grave, calm, slow-moving man:—

Private.

Bolton Abbey, Skipton: August 21, 1887.

My dear Churchill,—The Government did not obtain or ask for my concurrence before deciding on the proclamation of the League. They have throughout on this question seemed disposed to take their own course and have not consulted me, as they have done on other subjects. The first I heard of it was from A. Balfour, who told me some weeks ago that they would probably proclaim before the end of the Session.

I have had several conversations with Smith, Goschen, and Balfour, in which I have expressed my serious doubts as to the policy of the measure, although I could not tell what information they might have from Ireland. They seem to have felt, and I cannot complain of it, that this was a measure rather of Executive responsibility than of policy, and to have rather carefully abstained from asking me to share their responsibility with them. I also have felt that, not being able to share it with them, I could not press them very strongly on a matter in which they had knowledge which I did not possess.

I sent Balfour a very strong letter of remonstrance from Chamberlain, telling him at the same time from myself that the proclamation appeared to be open to every sort of Parliamentary and political objection, but that I could not tell what information they might have as to its necessity.

I shall come up on Wednesday night or Thursday, if it is settled to take the debate on Thursday.

Yours sincerely,
Hartington.

Lord Randolph, though reluctant and disquieted, was willing to acquiesce in this sober opinion. From FitzGibbon, who wrote to him distressfully, he did not hide his dissatisfaction:—

'I am against this proclamation business—as, I imagine, are most people of common sense and possessing knowledge of Ireland. But I must keep my opinion to myself and give a silent vote for the Government. It is no use finding fault with H.M.G. They are stupid, and there is no more to be said. I think there is nothing extravagant or improbable in the supposition that the G.O.M. will be Prime Minister before next Easter.' And he added, with more shrewdness, 'The Land Bill has been sadly mismanaged. I fear nothing will kill Home Rule except a second trial by Gladstone and a second failure.'

But Chamberlain was the gloomiest of all. Nothing can exceed the despondency of his letters at this time. He refrained, at the earnest requests of Lord Hartington and

Lord Randolph Churchill, from publishing his alternative plan of Irish Local Government which he believed the political situation required. He never wavered for an hour as to his own course. The darker the Unionist horizon, the more uncompromising was his attitude towards the Gladstonians. But he evidently expected the speedy downfall of the Government and perhaps the triumph of Repeal. Throughout the autumn he faced the public with deep anxiety at his heart. 'Every day of Coercion,' wrote this experienced judge of electoral possibilities (October 2), 'adds to the Gladstonian strength, and I see no probability that the strong measures which are disgusting our friends in England, will effectually dispose of the League in Ireland.... I cannot see how Mr. G. can be kept out much longer. If he comes back he will dissolve and most of the Liberal-Unionists will go to the wall. I do not feel absolutely certain of a single seat, though I think that I am safe myself. Then he will propose and carry his new plan, whatever that may be. I expect we shall not like it any better than the old one.' From these embarrassments he was glad to depart altogether, and the Government, not perhaps without cunning, suggested an attractive and important mission to the United States to negotiate a fishery treaty. He left England late in November, and did not return till March in the New Year. This interval gave practical effect to his political separation from Lord Randolph Churchill.

In the meanwhile the session ended and His Majesty's Government—as Governments do in a changeable world—ran for the time out of storms into calmer water. Lord Randolph continued in a twilight mood. He disliked the Ministry, but did his best so far as he truthfully could to sustain their policy. In the winter he revolved plans for an Irish Education Bill, and endeavoured to pick up again the threads he had been forced to drop incontinently two years before.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Justice FitzGibbon.

2 Connaught Place, W.: November 21, 1887.

This should be the plan of campaign. Assume that you are a benevolent despot with unlimited power for carrying out your own sweet will in respect of a legal solution of the Education Question:

1. Draw your Bill as per documents forwarded to me.

2. Ascertain from Walsh how far the draft meets with his concurrence and would secure his support; or what modifications or extensions would be necessary to that end. And, further, whether, if you and he are agreed, he and his party would desire that I should submit the matter to the House of Commons.

I have a better chance, I think, of carrying a Bill than the Government; for, although I have not the Government command of the time of the House, I can put very considerable pressure upon them to give me facilities, and it would be much easier for the Irish to support a private member than to accept anything whatever at the hands of a Coercion Government. Moreover, I feel confident of Liberal-Unionist support and, being very friendly with John Morley, I feel pretty sure of his benevolent neutrality—probably of his assistance also.

I will assent to, and assume Parliamentary responsibility for, any scheme which you and the Archbishop can agree upon. I do not think there is any difficulty as to the position of a private member opposing a grant of public money for certain purposes. The transfer of the expenditure on Model Schools to other purposes is certainly within the power of a private member.

When you have got your scheme drafted, and feel sure of your Archbishop, then I will get hold of Beach, and approach the Government. I cannot move until I get a draft Bill.

For strategic purposes, leave alone Erasmus Smith, Incorporated Society, Irish Society and London Companies; so that, if I am troubled by factious opposition from those interests, I may threaten reprisals by moving to appropriate radically their resources.

Would you approve of making your Bill very comprehensive and in three parts?

1. Elementary (see your paragraph, p. 18, of your Report).

2. Intermediate (see following paragraph).

3. University (*i.e.* the creation of a Catholic University out of the existing Royal University, endowed by the moneys now paid to the Queen's Colleges, and as a subsidiary measure a "Stincomalee" at Belfast).

A large Bill often moves through the House, by its own momentum, with greater ease than a small one, and the prospect of abolition of the Model Schools and the godless Colleges would, I think, be a lure which the Catholic clergy and laity would greedily swallow.

Your great organising mind could easily arrange a Bill of this dimension, and many circumstances lead me to think that the moment is very propitious for the launching of such a scheme.

2 Connaught Place, W.: February 6, 1888.

I think the education matter had better wait until you are able to come over to London and we can thrash it out together in conversation. Walsh's absence is decisive against doing anything yet. Perhaps H.M.G. contemplate moving on their own account. Do not say anything to them to give them the idea that you and I contemplate moving.

2 Connaught Place, W.: February 10, 1888.

I hope you will come over soon and arrange to remain several days. The Session comes in like a lamb. I am reminded of the earlier Sessions of the 1874 Parliament. I saw H.E. the Lord-Lieutenant yesterday; he tells me he often sees you, which I am glad of. The inconceivable apathy of the House of Lords prevented H.E. from delivering his views on Ireland; I am very sorry he was not able to speak. I have to give an address on the Irish Question to the Oxford Union on the 22nd. This must be a grave and moderate statement of our case. Do, if you have time, send me some good and novel views and, if possible, some effective references and quotations.

2 Connaught Place, W.: February 15, 1888.

It was very good of you writing me such a long letter and sending me so much good information. My thoughts, however, when I was preparing my speech for the Oxford Union led me away from the line you suggested and I fear you will think that I gave you a lot of trouble all for nothing. Balfourism acts like a

blister on Ireland and the Irish, and has the bad and good effects which such treatment generally produces. A too protracted application of the blister might do much harm.

Doncaster came in the nick of time. I think we shall probably hold Deptford. Things look fairly well in Parliament. There are hints and insinuations from some quarters as to my rejoining the Government. I am, however, very happy and contented where I am, and usually able to exert a good deal of influence if I take the trouble, without being saddled with any inconvenient responsibilities. I hope you will be running over soon.

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2 Connaught Place, W.: July 14, 1888.

I wish very much we could meet the Archbishop's views. It is a great pity that Irish education should be complicated and embarrassed by other political questions. Next year, if all is well, we must make a great effort to get forward. I hope to be in Ireland the end of August or beginning of September; and if so, perhaps I may have the great advantage of personally ascertaining the Archbishop's opinions.

If I can only attain full agreement with him I do not anticipate any difficulty with the Cabinet. The present moment is most propitious for action. Later on we may become again involved in the chaotic and whirling conflict of Home Rule, and education will be indefinitely postponed.

From the oratory of the recess and the rumours of reconstruction Lord Randolph hurried away upon an expedition to which he had for some months past been looking forward. To travel abroad, particularly in Europe, always amused him; and he found no better relaxation after a spell of political activity than in new scenes, fresh men and another atmosphere. He had always wanted to visit Russia; and to go there now, in circumstances personally so convenient and when the international situation was full of interest, was a project to him very attractive. Like most

men whose lot it is to live a part of their lives on the world's stage, to mingle with large crowds and to submit themselves to public comment or applause, he was especially jealous of the privacy of his holidays; and in order to prevent gossip of various kinds he had allowed it to be understood that he would spend a part of the winter in Spain. This device succeeded admirably until he was discovered about to start for St. Petersburg. Then the newspapers awoke. The Continental press manufactured rumours with that fertile ingenuity for which it has always been distinguished, and on these the London newspapers dilated with preternatural gravity. The *Times* led the way with a solemn warning to the Czar not to be misled, as his predecessor had been by a certain Quaker deputation on the eve of the Crimean War, by any assurances of British friendship which might be offered by the 'most versatile and volatile' of English politicians. Lesser journals were less restrained. All the gossip of the previous year was revived. He was making a political journey. He was charged with a secret mission. He was an 'officious' ambassador from Lord Salisbury. He was gathering materials for a campaign against the Government. If he were neither for nor against the Government, why should he be there at all? Why, except for grave reasons of State, should a man not physically robust exchange Spain for Russia in December? It was understood Lord Randolph was to seek health and warmth in the South; but here, in midwinter, he was 'deserting the Guadalquivir for the Neva, and the sun of Seville for the snows of St. Petersburg.' That he was 'accompanied by his wife' was apparently a matter of additional significance. The explanation that he was going to Russia as a tourist because he wanted to see Russia and the Russian Court was offered by his friends. But no one was so simple as to believe that; and at length an official *communiqué* was published from the Foreign Office: 'Lord Randolph

Churchill has no mission from the Government to M. de Giers. His presence in St. Petersburg is wholly without the knowledge of the Foreign Office and he has no official status'; and then followed a sentence which seemed to bear the marks of a certain sharply pointed pen—'His lordship alone knows why he gave up a contemplated Spanish tour for a visit to northern latitudes.' After this the lower Ministerial press struck a different note. The Czar would refuse to see a vulgar globe-trotter. There was no person whom the Russians more heartily despised than the member for Paddington—'a boastful, rattling, noisy egotist with no principle and, apparently, with no conception of duty or honour.'

Meanwhile the object of this merry chatter was enjoying himself. When the word has gone forth in Russia that a visitor is to be well received, he need not trouble himself about details. Everything moves *sur les roulettes*; railway officials and Custom House officers are transformed into attentive servants—often a considerable transformation; carriages are reserved in every train; and luggage passes untouched through every cordon. Lord Randolph arrived expeditiously at St. Petersburg, assailed by newspaper correspondents—'mischievous people' whom he refused to see (after all, they must live, like everybody else)—and met by his friends from the Embassy. The next day he saw M. de Giers; and the day after the Czar, without waiting for the usual New Year's Day reception, summoned him to Gatschina. Lord Randolph has left a carefully written account of his conversation with this great personage, which I have but slightly abbreviated. After driving in bright sun and bitter cold to the Winter Palace, and long delays, relieved by cups of tea, in interminable corridors adorned by wonderfully dressed servants with *panaches* of red and orange ostrich feathers, he was conducted to the Emperor's apartment. The Czar was sitting at a large writing-table in a small *cabinet d'affaires*, and told his

visitor to seat himself on a low yellow banquette on the opposite side of the table. After cigarettes had been produced and lighted, the conversation began in French, ‘which,’ writes Lord Randolph, ‘was a great disappointment to me, for he can speak English perfectly; and sometimes he talked rather low and in his beard, so that I, who do not hear very well, missed some of his remarks.’

Lord Randolph’s account proceeds:—

‘After some general observations as to the time when he was in England last and when I was presented to him, and inquiries as to my stay in Russia and intentions of going to Moscow, His Majesty said: "Well, I hope you have been long enough in St. Petersburg to find out that we are not so terribly warlike as we are made out to be." I replied that I did not think that anyone in England of information had the smallest doubts of the strong desire of His Majesty for peace and of the reluctance of the Russian Government to go to war. This had been abundantly shown by several incidents in the course of the last two years. The Czar remarked that the English journals were very bitter against Russia and attributed all sorts of malignant intentions to her. He added that he had been told that some of them were subsidised by Monsieur de Bismarck and excited against Russia by him. I told him that I could not think there was any foundation for the last statement, though I had heard a story of the * * * * having been paid by Monsieur de Bismarck to insert some months ago some startling announcement as to the relations between Germany and France; but that it was said that one of the proprietors had lost a large sum of money owing to the fall in securities which followed that announcement. Speaking generally on the question of English journals, I expressed a hope that His Majesty would not pay much attention to the remarks of English newspapers; that no public man in England ever cared a rap for anything they said; that they

were quite irresponsible, and on foreign affairs as a rule very ill-informed. I particularly urged the non-importance of the London press as any guide to English public opinion, which was far better expressed and followed by the provincial press and the leading daily journals of our large towns. His Majesty seemed struck by this and said that some one had told him the same thing once before.

'After saying that he had a great wish to go to England for the purpose of ascertaining the drift of English policy, he asked after Mr. Gladstone and whether there was any chance of his returning to office. I replied that Mr. Gladstone was very old and aged, that there seemed to be no reason why the present Parliament should not last for three or four years, and that it was hardly conceivable that after that period Mr. Gladstone would be physically capable of official duty, even if other circumstances were favourable. This latter contingency was extremely remote, as in my opinion the combination of parties against him was too strong to be resisted, and would probably keep the Opposition out of office for years. In a word, that no rational politician would count on Mr. Gladstone's return to office as a practical factor in politics. His Majesty appearing to be under the impression that the breach between Mr. Gladstone and the party of Lord Hartington was not a very irreparable one, and might be made up, I told His Majesty that at the commencement that was so, but the course of events during this year had hopelessly embittered the quarrel; and that Lord Hartington had taken up, with the assent of his followers, a very strong position of opposition in general to Mr. Gladstone, mainly on account of their conviction that Mr. Gladstone's internal policy was anarchical. His Majesty asked after several other public men—Lord Granville (*un homme charmant*), Lord Derby, Mr. Goschen.

'His Majesty then went on to say that he was anxious to have visited England in order to have a full explanation

with Lord Salisbury "*jusqu'à présent l'ennemi acharné de la Russie*." I reminded His Majesty that at the time of the Conference of Constantinople Lord Salisbury had by no means been such an enemy, but that at that time he probably had great sympathy for Russia; that after that events had taken an unfortunate turn, and that Lord Beaconsfield's influence had prevailed, and English policy been directed into an anti-Russian groove; but I also reminded His Majesty that Lord Salisbury had in August last made a speech at the Mansion House—which, coming from him, was of great significance—which was marked by a tone of perfect friendship for Russia and a strong belief in the possibility of good relations between the two countries.

'His Majesty did not disagree to all this, and said he hoped it was so, as he must have an understanding (or settlement) with England *une jois pour toutes*. These words he repeated more than once in the conversation. I said the great difficulty between us had been the Central Asian Question. He said it ought not to be a difficulty any longer, that the Russians wanted no more, that they had more than they could manage; but that the policy of the neutral zone had altogether broken down and proved to be nonsense; that the two Powers must be *limitrophes*, that we were making a great mistake in still pursuing the neutral-zone policy by insisting on the independence of Afghanistan, which we ought to take and govern ourselves. To this I replied, in the first place, that I had never understood that Afghan territories were included in any neutral zone; that, on the contrary, I thought it had always been accorded that Afghanistan was outside Russian influence and must be solely under British influence. To this His Majesty said nothing. I went on to say that it was vital to us in India to exclude all foreign influence from Afghanistan, and to retain its government under our sole guidance; that we could not tolerate the smallest departure

from this principle, and I said that if His Majesty thought we were too strong and unyielding on this matter he had only to recollect the essential nature of the Indian Government—250,000 whites ruling 250 million *indigènes*; that a Government of that kind rested almost entirely on its *morale* and prestige; and that *la moindre attente* against its prestige, if not promptly and effectively dealt with, might become the gravest wound; that any attempt to exercise influence other than British in Afghanistan would be such an *attente*. I went on to say that our position was not perhaps quite logical; for that, holding such opinions, we ought to take Afghanistan. This, I said, we could not do, as public opinion and the Parliament would be invincibly opposed to any such large extension of our Indian Empire, except under circumstances of the most critical and forcible character; that that was our position—that while we could allow no interference by others we would not assume the responsibility of direct government by ourselves; and that it seemed to me that a frank acceptance of that position would be essential to any understanding between the two countries. His Majesty having commented generally on this, and having contrasted our position with his own as regarded Khiva and Bokhara—which, he averred, were now most tranquil and prosperous, instead of utterly disordered as they used to be—went on to speak of the European position as it affected the two countries.

‘"With regard to the Black Sea and the Dardanelles, if you desire peace and friendship with Russia, you must not mix yourselves up there against us. We will never suffer," His Majesty said, with some slight approach to excitement, "any other Power to hold the Dardanelles except the Turks or ourselves; and if the Turks ultimately go out, it is by Russians that they will be succeeded."

‘I replied that I had always understood that that was the Russian view and that I would offer no criticism or

comment on it, as it appeared to me to be too speculative for practical purposes; that as regarded present European difficulties Constantinople was in no way *en jeu*; and that I did not think that questions concerning its ultimate fate ought to disturb relations between England and Russia.

'With respect to Bulgaria I expressed my own strong opinion that England had no direct or important interests in that part of Europe and that it could be no object to us to oppose the exercise of what I admitted was legitimate Russian influence there; that, if we had any interests, they were purely platonic, on behalf of liberty generally, and springing from a general anxiety that treaties should be maintained; beyond that they did not go. I added that in my opinion the policy of the Crimean War, which was also adopted in '76-'78 by England, had come to an end with the election of 1880 and was not likely to be renewed or resumed; that the English people were not likely to fight for the Turks, nor for the Bulgarians; and that they were not likely to associate themselves with Austria; that the policy which the English people would prefer about that part of Europe was complete neutrality and non-intervention. I said more than once that I knew nothing whatever of the Government policy; that I had no connection with the Government, direct or indirect; that I only spoke as one who had had much opportunity of learning the disposition of Parliament and the tendency of opinion among the people.

'His Majesty asked me if the views I had expressed were shared by Lord Hartington. I replied that it was almost impossible to say accurately what Lord Hartington's views were, as he was a man of remarkable reserve, but His Majesty would recollect that from 1880 to 1885, when the English Government pursued in Europe a policy which was certainly one of friendship and loyalty to Russia and of undisguised indifference as to the fate of the Turk, Lord Hartington was, after Mr. Gladstone, the leading man in

that Government, and that I had no reason to suppose that he had in any way receded from the foreign policy he then contributed to give effect to. His Majesty, speaking about Egypt, said that Russia had no desire to interfere with us there in any way. On the contrary, they had no interests in that country. He added that he did not see why England and France should not be perfectly good friends on all Egyptian matters. To this I replied that understandings with France appeared to be impossible; that not only did Governments succeed each other there with hopeless rapidity, but that the very form of Government in France was ephemeral. To this His Majesty quite assented, and said: "Well, if you like, you have a great task before you on your return to England—to improve the relations between Russia and England." I replied that for some time past I had worked in that direction and should continue to do so, although in certain quarters, Parliamentary and otherwise, my views had not hitherto been regarded with favour; but that I had formed a strong opinion that a thorough understanding between England and Russia was possible and would be of the greatest advantage to both. I added that I had said nothing, either to His Majesty or to M. de Giers, which I had not very often said to Lord Salisbury while I was his colleague.

'His Majesty, who throughout the interview had been wonderfully kind, quiet and simple, talking evidently with unreserve and allowing me to do the same without displeasure, then brought to a close a conversation which had lasted for about forty-five minutes.'

The next day Lord and Lady Randolph had intended to go to Moscow; but an invitation, equal to a command, to a party at Gatschina, delayed them. 'It was,' wrote Lord Randolph, 'certainly a very pretty and interesting sight. The Emperor and the Empress were very kind to us, and I sat at supper, at the Empress's table, between the Grand Duchess Elizabeth (daughter of the Duke of Hesse and

very beautiful) and the Grand Duchess Catharine. I made the acquaintance of some interesting people, *entre autres* of General Ignatieff. M. de Giers sat by me during most of the play. There was first a French play, then a quartette from *Rigoletto*, then the duo from *The Huguenots*, then a Russian play (quite unintelligible), and then another French play. The programme was too long. Between the pieces the Emperor and Empress walked about and spoke to people, and there was a large buffet where everyone went and lapped. The whole thing was splendidly done.'

The marked consideration shown to the English visitor increased the gossip—good-humoured and spiteful alike—at home; and in the Russian capital, where everyone takes his cue from the Czar, Lord and Lady Randolph for some days almost engrossed the attention of Society and the press. Reporters and telegram agents hovered gloomily round the hotel from morn till dusk. Skating parties, in which Lady Randolph much distinguished herself, and visits to important people occupied the days, and banquets and receptions the nights. Long tours through peerless galleries and museums, where Lord Randolph recognised with regret not a few alienated Blenheim treasures; a flying visit to Moscow; the 'Blessing of the Waters' on the feast of the Epiphany, 'when the Emperor had to stand bareheaded in the cold for a good long time'; a rout of 800 persons given in his honour by Lady Morier at the British Embassy, were among the incidents of a brilliant fortnight. 'I am sure in England,' Lord Randolph wrote to his mother, 'it would bore me dreadfully to go to all these dinners and parties and things, but here it amuses me. I wonder why it is.... You must not believe a word the newspapers say. I was most careful and guarded in all my communications and confined myself to general beaming upon everyone. Lord S. may or may not be angry, but I am certain that my going to Russia has had a good effect and can at any rate do no harm.'

He lingered a little on the homeward journey both in Berlin and Paris.

To his Mother.

British Embassy, Berlin.

Here we are very comfortable. I never travelled with so much circumstance before. The Malets are most kind and anxious to make everything very pleasant. On Monday night the opera, where was represented all Berlin Society *en grande tenue*; the old Emperor looking very brisk. Yesterday the picture gallery, in which I observed three Blenheim pictures—the Fornarina by Raphael (now called a Sebastian del Piombo), the Andromeda of Rubens and the great Bacchanalia picture by Rubens.... To-night Malet has an immense feast—thirty-six persons. I went this morning to Potsdam to write my name on Prince William, who called on us yesterday and saw Jennie while I was out. Then luncheon with Herbert Bismarck—very pleasant—no one else but Herr von Pothenberg, Prince Bismarck's *chef de cabinet*. We talked very freely for a long time, and drank a great deal of beer, champagne, claret, sherry and brandy! H.B. is delightful, so frank and honest.... I have not a doubt that the Chancellor kept away purposely. He is a *grincheux* old creature, and knows quite well that I will use all my influence, as I have done, to prevent Lord S. from being towed in his wake.... Some correspondents have been to see me, but I have been very snubby to them.

And so back to England, pursued by rumours with which the *Times* thought it worth while to fill three columns of its foreign telegrams.

CHAPTER XX

CROSS CURRENTS

'Surely there is no better way to stop the rising of sects and schisms than to reform abuses; to compound the smaller differences; to proceed mildly, and not with sanguinary persecutions; and rather to take off the principal authors, by winning and advancing them, than to enrage by violence and

bitterness.'—Bacon.

SIXTEEN months had passed, after Lord Randolph Churchill resigned, before he became involved in a serious and open difference with the Conservative Government. That he was separated from them by sentiment and conviction, not only upon various considerable questions of method, but upon the general character and temper of their policy, has been abundantly explained. But his misgivings were concealed from the public by his consistent defence of the Union, by an unaffected partisanship and by the lively attacks which he made upon the Opposition. It is true that the criticisms upon naval and military administration which had been a necessary feature of his crusade of economy had naturally won him little favour in Ministerial circles, and his open independence of the official leaders could not be welcomed by his party. But the details of departmental administration, though of immense practical importance, do not usually raise, and ought scarcely ever to raise, questions of confidence and loyalty. The efficient conduct of the services and the doctrines of public thrift are—formally, at least—included in the principles of both great political organisations. Except at rare intervals, they lie apart from the ordinary scope of Parliamentary conflict; and their discussion should never seriously divide political associates. But Ireland opened chasms of a very different kind.

When Sir Michael Hicks-Beach recovered his eyesight, Lord Salisbury was anxious for him to rejoin the Government and offered him—no other post being vacant—the Presidency of the Board of Trade. Beach, for whom office had few attractions, who was on many questions in full sympathy with Lord Randolph, and who was always bound to him by firm friendship, was in no hurry to accept. He proposed to Lord Randolph, as they walked down one day to the House together, that he should decline Lord Salisbury's offer and that they should both sit together and

work together for the rest of the Parliament. Lord Randolph would not, however, countenance this generous attempt to relieve the isolation of his position. He urged Sir Michael to join the Government. 'They need you,' he said, 'and besides, I shall like to feel I have one friend there' (February 1888).

During the whole of 1887 Lord Randolph had regularly supported his late colleagues. Any opinions he had expressed on the Budget and the Land Bill had been of a friendly nature and in the interests of those measures. He had joined in the debates of the House with the same tone and intention as he would have spoken in the Cabinet. No divergence of principle on a dominant issue had yet occurred. The Government had acted—however uninspiringly—in conformity with the main lines of the policy declared at the General Election. It was not until the year 1888 that the question of Irish Local Government and the Suakin operations provoked a definite and notorious disagreement. On both these matters Lord Randolph Churchill had made public declarations of the plainest character in Opposition or as Leader of the House of Commons, and to those pledges he adhered with a truly Quixotic disregard of his personal interests.

'On this question of Local Government,' Lord Randolph had stated in August 1886, speaking in the House of Commons in the name of the Conservative party, and with the full authority of the Cabinet as a whole, of the Prime Minister, of the Chief Secretary of the day, and of the leaders of the Liberal Unionists—'the great sign-posts of our policy are equality, similarity and, if I may use such a word, simultaneity, as far as is practicable, in the development of a genuinely popular system of Local Government in the four countries which form the United Kingdom.' The months had slipped away. A year and a half were gone. When Lord Randolph left the Government their good resolutions in respect of Ireland faded. Their

pledges were long to remain unredeemed. The arguments appropriate to such occasions were employed: the circumstances had changed; the disaffection of the people was patent; the Irish were unfitted by character and history for popular institutions.

It was a Wednesday afternoon (April 25), and under the old rules of procedure the House rose at half-past five. A Nationalist member had moved the second reading of an Irish County Government Bill, roughly designed to merge boards of guardians, lunatic asylum boards and town commissioners in smaller towns into county councils. To this a reasoned amendment was moved, with the concurrence of the Government, by a private member from the Unionist benches, setting forth the inexpediency at that time of introducing any large constitutional change in Ireland. Mr. Gladstone spoke in support of the Bill, and Mr. Balfour made an airy reply, instancing the improper conduct of Irish local bodies and declaring that that country was not fit for any extension of Local Government. Something in his easy manner, thus dismissing unceremoniously—almost, as it seemed, unconsciously—solemn pledges elaborately given to the electorate at a time of choice, and renewed in Parliament after the decision, seems to have stirred Lord Randolph's blood. He got up immediately the Chief Secretary finished. Speaking with much restraint, but with sufficient sharpness of manner to prevent him referring to his old comrade as a 'right honourable friend,' he reminded the Government and the swiftly-offended party of the declarations by which they were bound, and the authority upon which those declarations had been made.

'All the circumstances,' he said, 'upon which the Chief Secretary has enlarged this afternoon, showing the defects which exist in the working of popular institutions in Ireland and the dangers that might be anticipated from their extension, were before the Government of Lord

Salisbury at the time when they had to take a decision—a most momentous decision—upon this question.... The idea of the Government at that time was that a certain just extension, within reasonable limits, of Local Government in Ireland was to be looked upon as a remedy for the great evils which have been dwelt upon by the Chief Secretary.... I recollect that the pledges given by the Unionist party were large and liberal, were distinct and full, and that there was no reservation in those pledges with respect to all the defects pointed out this afternoon in the Irish character and in respect of Irish unfitness for Local Government—nothing of the kind. We pledged ourselves that we would at the very earliest opportunity extend to Ireland the same amount of Local Government which we might give to England and Scotland. I venture to say—and I do not care how much I am contradicted, or what the consequences may be—that that was the foundation of the Unionist party; and, more, that that is the only platform on which you can resist Repeal. If you are going to the English people, relying merely on the strength of your Executive power—if you are going to preach that the Irish must for an indefinite time be looked upon as an inferior community—unfit for the privileges which the English people enjoy—then I tell you that you may retain that position for a time, but only for a time, and that the time will probably be a short one.... The words I used in representing the Government at that table were that in approaching this momentous question of Local Government we should do so with similarity, equality and simultaneity. The time has gone by altogether for me to bear, and I will be content no longer to bear, solely the responsibility of those words; and I do not think that there would be a *bonâ fide* carrying-out of the policy I then announced if Ireland is not to have a measure of Local Government, until the state of order in that country is satisfactory to the Executive Government.'

Only a short time remained before the sitting must end. Chamberlain rose at once from the Front Opposition Bench and in a speech of four minutes said that he should vote with the Government on the understanding that measures of local reform for Ireland were simply delayed by pressure of business. Before the Leader of the House could add anything to the debate Mr. Parnell moved the Closure —the Irish desiring to obtain the division usual on such private members' Bills—and the incident ended. But it left an estrangement behind.

The second quarrel did not arise till eight months later. In November 1888 the chronic skirmishing and raiding around Suakin developed into a regular blockade of that place, and the squalid, worthless, pestilential Red Sea port became again a bone of strife between brave men in the desert and wise men in the Senate. I do not need to remind the reader of the vehement attacks which Lord Randolph Churchill had made upon Mr. Gladstone's Egyptian policy, or of the support and approval which those attacks had received from the Conservative party and the Conservative press. No part of those strictures had been more effective or more violent than that which referred to the operations around Suakin. They had not, as many people on both sides of politics had believed and freely stated, been impelled mainly by a factious desire to discredit and embarrass Mr. Gladstone's Administration. That was, no doubt, an obvious contributory motive; but behind it lay a profound detestation of the purposeless bloodshed with which Soudan history, and especially Suakin history, had since 1883 been stained. 'I do not hesitate to say,' he declared in 1888, 'that I hate the Soudan. The idea to me of risking the life of a single British soldier in that part of the world is inexpressibly repugnant.' Whatever he might have thought at another time, when the finances of Egypt were restored and the Dervish fires had burnt low, of a methodical and scientific reconquest of the country, he was

sincerely opposed in 1888, as in Mr. Gladstone's day, to the policy known as 'kill and retire.' It seemed to him the highest unwisdom, whether from a political or military point of view, to despatch a single British battalion, swamped among four thousand Egyptian soldiers, with no other object, even if successful, than to fight a battle, decimate the hostile tribesmen and return. He recalled the small beginnings and the insufficient forces out of which great and far-reaching events in Zululand and in the Transvaal had sprung. And he did not lack, as was afterwards proved, the support of high authorities for his opinion. 'I can assure you,' telegraphed Lord Cromer (then Sir Evelyn Baring) to Lord Salisbury on December 6, 'that, unless great care is taken, the Government may be dragged into another big Soudan business almost before they are aware of it'; and, again, 'all sorts of arguments will probably be put forward about tranquillising the Soudan once and for all. I believe that these arguments are of very little value and that for the present the Soudan cannot be tranquillised without the re-occupation of Khartoum, which would require a large force.'[66]

On these subjects and in this tenor Lord Randolph delivered three speeches in the House of Commons, which were, as may be easily imagined, met with unstinted resentment by his party. He spoke first on December 1, a general debate on the vote for embassies and foreign missions having been raised by Mr. Morley; and three days later he moved the adjournment of the House. This step created extravagant surprise and anger. He rose, as the newspapers took care to point out, to make his motion absolutely alone on the Government side of the House. He was supported by the whole Opposition. He spoke—as, indeed, throughout the Parliament of 1886—with gravity and moderation, and made a quiet, earnest appeal to the House to prevent the renewal of the Soudan warfare. His motion for the adjournment was unexpected, and the

Government were for some time, during the debate that followed, in a minority. At a quarter-past six, however, when the division was taken, they secured a majority of forty-two, although a half-dozen Conservatives—among whom Mr. Hanbury was probably the best-known—voted against them.

Loud and long was the expression of Ministerial wrath. 'In order to discredit his views,' wrote Jennings, in his preface to Lord Randolph Churchill's speeches, 'it was necessary to bring into play those formidable weapons of misrepresentation which can never be used with greater effect than when they are directed by persons who have the entire machinery of a great party at their command.' He was accused forthwith of having laid a plot with the Opposition to destroy the Government on a snap division; and the 'treachery' and 'ingratitude' of such conduct were for some days a popular and fertile theme. He was even forced to defend himself in public from such imputations. His reply was explicit: '(1) If I had desired,' he wrote to an inquiring person, 'to snatch a surprise division on the motion for the adjournment of the House, which I made on Tuesday last with regard to Suakin, I should not have occupied fifty minutes of the time of the House with my own speech. (2) If I had desired by the aid of the Opposition to defeat the Government, I should not have selected an evening when the supporters of the Government, under the pressure of a five-line whip, were likely to be present in great numbers in order to take part in a division on an Irish vote which had been arranged to come off before the dinner-hour. (3) The fact of the matter is that the case against the Suakin expedition is so strong, and the line taken with respect to similar expeditions by the Tories when they were in Opposition was so marked, that I felt very confident of receiving appreciable support from the ranks of the Ministerialists. For that reason I welcomed every circumstance which was likely to bring

together a full House.'

It is not suggested that Lord Randolph Churchill was unwilling to defeat the Government by his motion. Its object was to prevent the proposed action in the Soudan. That object could only have been attained by an adverse vote in the House of Commons. Whether such a vote would have involved the resignation of Ministers is uncertain. The pretence that a simple motion for adjournment, necessarily unaccompanied by any substantive censure of policy, should directly involve a change of Government is a modern abuse of Parliamentary practice. But even had the fate of the Government turned on the division—as, of course, they declared it would—conscientious conviction in an urgent matter of life and death would have fully justified Lord Randolph in the course he took. His action was reasonable, consistent and fair. Whether he was right on the merits of the question or as to its importance in relation to the general political situation, must be judged by others.

The Government profited both by the counsels which were offered them and by the result of their final decision. The British force despatched to Suakin was reinforced. The scope of the warfare was rigidly confined. Nothing that might prove extensive or entangling was permitted and, on the other hand, the limited operation was in itself completely successful. On December 21 an engagement was fought outside Suakin. The Dervishes were routed with heavy slaughter and driven away into the desert, whence—as it luckily happened—they did not subsequently choose to return in numbers sufficient to cause anxiety to the garrison or seriously disturb the peace of the Red Sea Littoral.

The speeches of Lord Randolph Churchill in Parliament during the years from 1887 to 1890 were the best in manner and command he ever made. He stood alone, surrounded by enemies who were once his supporters, and

faced by opponents whose plaudits he did not desire; but if he had still been Leader of the House he could not have been more at his ease and more sure of himself. His style was serious enough to suit the dullest; and yet point after point was made with a clearness and rhetorical force to which the dullest could not be insensible. His voice penetrated everywhere without apparent effort. Every tone was full of meaning. He was sparing of gesture and cared little for oratorical ornament. He was always heard with profound attention by the House, with obvious anxiety by the Government, and usually in silence by the Conservative party.

The influence which he exerted upon the course of affairs outside the ordinary divisions of party was palpable and noteworthy. With the full consent of the Government he moved (February 16, 1888) the Address to the Crown, which being assented to unanimously by the House, called into being the Royal Commission upon the alleged corruption and improprieties of the Metropolitan Board of Works. When a member of Parliament had been guilty of a libel upon the Speaker, it was Lord Randolph Churchill who with formidable authority of manner, and complete mastery of Parliamentary practice, persuaded, and indeed compelled, the House to resolve his suspension for an entire month (July 20, 1888). One hot summer afternoon (June 27, 1888) he appeared unexpectedly in his place and practically laughed the Channel Tunnel Bill—supported though it was by Mr. Gladstone and many prominent Tories—out of the House of Commons. Sir Edward Watkin, the promoter, had explained a device by which a Minister of State by touching a button could in an instant blow up the entrance to the tunnel. ‘Imagine,’ exclaimed Lord Randolph, drawing an airy finger along the Treasury bench—‘Imagine a Cabinet Council sitting in the War Office around the button. Fancy the present Cabinet gathered together to decide who should touch the button

and when it should be touched.' He had intended to add, 'Fancy the right honourable member for Westminster (Mr. W. H. Smith) rising at length in his place with the words "I move that the button be now touched,"' but the laughter from all parties which this diverting picture had already excited led him to forget the climax he had contemplated. The Bill was rejected by 307 to 165. Few private members, divorced alike from office and from the official Opposition, have in modern times been able by their unaided personal force so powerfully to sway the opinion of Parliament.

And now must be related an incident which, though not in itself of historical importance, created a great hubbub at the time and involved an open political dispute and severance between Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Chamberlain. Although Lord Randolph was comfortably settled in Paddington and enjoyed the luxury of a safe seat, he always hankered after Birmingham. Contact with a democratic electorate in a centre of active political thought was always personally very alluring to him; and it is singular that he never achieved his ambition of representing a popular constituency. But if these were general predilections, Birmingham offered attractions of its own. His association with the Birmingham Tories during the fighting days of 1884 and 1885 had formed ties of mutual regard and comradeship which proved strong enough—in the case of those who had come into personal touch with him, at any rate—to stand all the strains of the lean and melancholy years that followed. No amount of party disapprobation, of pressure from headquarters, of newspaper abuse, affected the faithfulness of those with whom he had fought side by side. They scorned every suggestion that he was 'disloyal' to the party. They held by him through thick and thin. In spite of the frowns of party leaders, and sometimes of real divergences of opinion, the controlling forces in the Midland Conservative Club were always unswerving in his support; and the last time he ever

appeared on a public platform was in the Birmingham Town Hall.

There were, moreover, obvious reasons why, in the early part of 1889, Lord Randolph should have wished to be sustained by the vote of a great constituency. He was out of joint with his party. He was almost alone in the House of Commons. All the orthodox and official forces in the Conservative party were hostile to him. He had taken an independent course on various important questions, and that course had twice been directly opposed to Lord Salisbury's Government. There was asserted to be a definite compact between the local Conservative leaders in Birmingham and the Liberal Unionists that, in the event of a vacancy in the Central Division, Lord Randolph Churchill was to be invited by both wings of the Unionist party to stand. This agreement was personal to Lord Randolph and particular to Birmingham, and quite independent of any general arrangement respecting Conservative and Liberal-Unionist seats; and a clear understanding to this effect existed between Lord Randolph and Mr. Chamberlain. There was, therefore, no doubt that if a vacancy occurred Lord Randolph had a right to stand and to look for the support of both sections of the party. If he did not stand himself, then only the nomination of a candidate would rest properly with the Liberal Unionists. It was admitted that in such a contest he would be victorious by a majority of two or three thousand votes; and his friends believed, almost without exception, that such a victory, involving as it did a popular endorsement of all that he had done since he left the Cabinet, must enormously raise his prestige in Parliament and the country.

All through the year 1888 Mr. Bright lay desperately ill. At the end of May Mr. Chamberlain, who had just returned from his American trip, and who was still on most friendly terms with Lord Randolph, wrote to tell him that he feared

the end was approaching, to ask what Lord Randolph would do, and to promise him support should he decide to stand. Lord Randolph replied (May 30, 1888): 'I hope Mr. Bright will get better. The news this morning is more favourable. In the event of a vacancy occurring, I should not leave Paddington unless it was the strong and unanimous wish of the Tories and of your party combined, and unless they were of opinion that there was real danger of the seat being lost if I did not stand. I do not imagine, however, that these two conditions are likely to arise. The seat is a Liberal-Unionist seat and that party has a clear right to put forward one of their own number, and to receive a full measure of Tory support.' These communications were on both sides informal. They did not in any way affect the compact. They were merely assurances as to what the writers would do personally under the compact as it existed, if the issue were raised at that time. The issue was not raised. Mr. Bright rallied and survived almost for another year. When he died, on March 27, 1889, quite a different situation had been created. Lord Randolph Churchill ardently desired to stand. Mr. Chamberlain was vehement to prevent him. The dispute that followed is not in its essence difficult to understand. A definite agreement exists between two friends. They agree as friends to interpret it in a particular manner. They cease to be friends as regards politics. They wish to interpret it in another manner; and they quote one another's friendly assurances as if they were an integral part of the agreement itself. Neither is legally bound; both are morally embarrassed. In the present case the complexity of the dispute was aggravated by all sorts of conflicting statements and promises made at different times by the local leaders. Into these it is not necessary to enter.

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Lord Randolph Churchill's right to stand was, of course, incontestable. Compact or no compact, his claim upon the Liberal-Unionist vote was strong. He had polled 4,216 Conservative votes against Mr. Bright himself in that very constituency. He had only been defeated by 773. The Conservative organisation was unanimous in his favour. He was 'idolised' (this is the word that is used most frequently in contemporary accounts) by the rank and file. They outnumbered by three or four to one the Liberal Unionists in the division. Their votes had contributed four-fifths of the poll of all the Liberal-Unionist members in the city. Lord Randolph had himself been the principal agent by which the return of these gentlemen had been secured. On the day after the vacancy was declared the *Birmingham Daily Post*, the official Liberal-Unionist organ, published an article supporting his candidature and giving the Conservatives reason to believe that it would be accepted by both parties; nor did Mr. Chamberlain himself deny that if Lord Randolph came forward it would be his duty to support him. The only question was: Should he come forward?

No sooner was Mr. Bright dead than the Birmingham Conservatives appealed to Lord Randolph. All his friends and well-wishers pressed him to stand. Mr. Jennings was insistent. FitzGibbon urged him to 'chuck another big town' at the 'old gang.' 'It would be like the Paris elections to Boulanger,' said others. Colonel North, with the blunt decision of a business man, telegraphed to him from Santiago: 'Be sure contest Birmingham.' Faithful supporters offered to place their seats at his disposal in case of accidents. Lord Randolph does not seem to have anticipated any opposition from Mr. Chamberlain; yet it should have been sufficiently evident that Mr. Chamberlain's interests and inclinations were not likely to be served by the establishment of 'Two kings in Brentford.' So long as they were allies working in concert,

it might be—perhaps it must be—endured. Now that they were separated and pursuing independent, and even divergent, courses the idea was intolerable. No difficulty or dispute was, however, apprehended. On April 2, when the writ was moved, Lord Randolph Churchill had every reason to suppose that complete unanimity prevailed. A deputation of Birmingham Tories waited on him at the House of Commons on that day with a hearty invitation. It seemed that his election was secured, and that a giant majority was certain.

And here I leave the account to Mr. Jennings:—

Mr. Jennings's Account of the Birmingham Affair.

Tuesday, April 2, 1889.

On my going to the House I met R. C. in the lobby. He drew me aside, and whispered that the deputation would be here presently. Would I meet them in the outer lobby, bring them inside, and talk to them till he came back? He was just going to see Hicks-Beach a few moments. He was turning away, but came back and said: 'May I ask you to do me another favour? Go and draw up a draft farewell address to the electors of South Paddington and an address to the electors of Birmingham.' 'When do you want them?' 'This afternoon.' he said. After a few more words he went away.

I made arrangements with Mr. Mattinson (M.P. for a Liverpool division) to meet the deputation while I went into the library to write out the addresses. I had finished the one for South Paddington and was half-way through the other when Mattinson came to me and told me the deputation were outside. I went to them, and had a little chat. They were radiant, having no reason whatever to anticipate a refusal. Mr. Rowlands told me R. C. was sure of a majority of between 2,000 and 3,000. After a talk I went back to finish the address, but met E. Beckett in one of the corridors. He said; 'Have you heard what he has done?' 'No.' 'He has left it to Hartington and Chamberlain to decide what he will do.' I was completely bewildered, and went into the smoking-room to look for R. C. Directly he saw me he came up and led me out into the corridor. There we walked up and down a long time, talking about it. He said he had been with Hicks-Beach, who was

dead against his going to Birmingham. While they two were talking a knock came at the door and someone said Lord Hartington particularly wished to see Lord R. C. R. C. said: ‘Let him come in here.’ H. did so, and said Chamberlain was ‘furious’ at the idea of R. C. going to Birmingham—that he was ‘in a state of extreme irritability.’ Would they (Beach and Churchill) mind having Chamberlain in to hear what he had to say? Churchill said no, but he would go away for half an hour and leave them to discuss the matter. He would abide by their decision.

When he told me this I said: ‘Surely you must know what their decision will be? Why, they would not want half a minute to decide that you shall not go. Chamberlain is "Boss" in Birmingham, and he means to remain so. He does not want you there, dividing his popularity with him or, most likely, taking the lion’s share of it.’ And so on.

R. C. did not seem to think it so certain that they would decide against him and said, moreover, that he could not take the responsibility of dividing the Unionist party. After a time he said he would go back and hear their decision. In the meanwhile Akers-Douglas had carried off the Birmingham deputation to his own room.

I should think about a quarter of an hour elapsed, when R. C. reappeared in the lobby, from the House, and made for the outer door. He saw me and said: ‘Where are the deputation—in the Conference Room?’ I told him where they were. ‘It is all over,’ he said. ‘I cannot stand for the seat. I’ll tell you all about it by-and-by.’

I would not go into the room, because I am not on terms with Akers-Douglas; but when a division-bell rang, and Akers-Douglas came out, I went in. The deputation were very incensed and loudly declared they had been cheated, and would go back and vote for the Gladstonian candidate. R. C. tried to smooth them down, but it was quite useless....

The deputation were not alone in their disgust. Mr. Jennings was so vexed by what he conceived to be the weak and capricious abandonment of a cherished plan that for several days he could hardly bring himself to discuss it with Lord Randolph. His other friends were puzzled and discouraged. They ridiculed the impartiality of the

committee of three. Chamberlain was an interested party, with a perfectly open and declared wish to prevent Lord Randolph standing. Hartington as leader of the Liberal Unionists could not act against the interests of his own followers. Beach, though a staunch friend, was a member of the Government. No wonder they had been able to come so promptly to a decision. To Lord Randolph himself the result was a cruel disappointment. He was isolated. He had few loyal followers and many powerful enemies. He could ill afford to surrender such advantages as he possessed. The others were armed with all the resources of a vast confederacy. Of his little he gave freely. In their prosperity and power they accepted the sacrifice as a matter of course. Mr. Chamberlain, it is true, was careful to say publicly[67] that Lord Randolph's action was 'in loyal accord with the arrangements made with the Conservative leaders, including himself, in 1886,' and to emphasise his 'honourable determination not to break the national compact of which he was a chief party in 1886.' But the *Times*, then in the closest agreement with the governing forces of the Conservative party, though admitting that Lord Randolph had acted 'with thorough loyalty to the great cause that unites us all,' permitted itself (April 6) to observe that 'if the Birmingham Conservatives had any right to be aggrieved at the loss of their pet candidate it was to him, and to no one else, that they ought to address their complaints.'

The dispute was continued passionately at Birmingham. Mr. John Albert Bright was duly brought forward as the Liberal-Unionist candidate for the Central Division. The Conservative leaders there—Rowlands, Sawyer, Satchell-Hopkins, Moore Bayley—utterly refused to support him. They were local men, and against them were arrayed the whole authority of their party chiefs and the force and influence of a great national politician. But they had fought hard battles before, and although they thought themselves

deserted by Lord Randolph Churchill they faced the situation with obstinacy. They declared that the Liberal Unionists had broken faith with them and that Mr. Chamberlain had intrigued and used unfair pressure to prevent Lord Randolph from standing. Their determination not to support Mr. J. A. Bright was endorsed by their followers. For several days it seemed as if the Gladstonian candidate, Mr. Phipson Beale, would carry the seat.

So critical was the position that Mr. Balfour was hurried down to restore peace. A crowded meeting was held, at which Mr. Rowlands was bold enough to say that the Birmingham Conservatives were not prepared to bow down to anything that might be settled in London, and the more vigorous members of the Midland Conservative Club shouted 'No surrender!' Mr. Balfour was at his best. He dwelt upon Lord Randolph's refusal to stand—'he had absolutely declined to do so.' There was almost a suggestion that the speaker doubted the wisdom of that decision—but there it was! He then asserted the unimpeachable right of the local Conservatives to choose their own candidate. He deprecated strongly the interference of London politicians in local matters. But he urged them, in the free exercise of their discretion, utterly uninfluenced by such interference, to oppose the return of a Gladstonian. He carried the meeting with him. The local leaders were divided. Some acquiesced; some stood aside for a time. The part Mr. Rowlands had played had been too bold and prominent for retreat or pardon. Birmingham politics are bitter. Notwithstanding that every Conservative organisation in the city passed resolutions urging him to retain his leadership, he resigned his offices and withdrew altogether from public life. He should be remembered for having carried out the arrangement of 1886, whereby the Conservatives gave their full support to the Radical Unionists, 'asking for no return, making no boast or taunt,' on which arrangement Mr. Chamberlain's second empire

in Birmingham was ultimately established; and also for his firmness and courage amid peculiar and uncertain circumstances. Mr. John Albert Bright was elected by a large majority, practically the whole Conservative party having voted in his support.

Mr. Chamberlain and his friends, like practical people, said nothing until the election was over and their candidate was returned. Then he addressed a letter to the Birmingham papers challenging the local Conservatives to make good their charges of bad faith and intrigue. 'I am perfectly ready,' he wrote, 'to accept full responsibility for the advice which, in common with Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and Lord Hartington, was tendered to Lord Randolph Churchill when he asked our opinions. I had no right and no wish to conceal my view that Lord Randolph Churchill's candidature might possibly be unsuccessful, and would certainly be regarded with disfavour by Liberal Unionists in all parts of the country, as taking from the party one of the comparatively few seats held by them in 1886. While, however, I maintained this opinion, I expressed my readiness to do all in my power to promote his return if he should finally decide to come forward.' To the challenge to produce proofs of a broken compact the Conservatives replied with vigour and volubility. A whole page of the *Birmingham Gazette* was occupied with their statements, which appear to have been both explicit and complete. But as the dispute turned largely on the exact terms of the 'understanding,' whether those terms constituted a 'compact,' and how far this compact, if it existed, was modified by a general compact relating to Liberal-Unionist seats throughout the country, and as both parties relied mainly on their recollection of conversations which had taken place at intervals during the preceding year, no definite issue could be reached. But the Birmingham Conservatives were provoked anew by the triumphant resolution passed by the Liberal Unionists

affirming that the recent election had proved their ‘preponderance of power’ in the Central Division, and the quarrel was protracted with the rancour of civil war and the amenities of political discussion in Birmingham.

These proceedings, which were reported very fully throughout the country, forced Lord Randolph Churchill to publish on April 23 a detailed statement in the form of a letter to Mr. Chamberlain. After dealing at length with the questions of the compact he continued:—

My going to Birmingham as candidate or not going always practically rested with you, as you perfectly well know, and you decided, no doubt on public grounds alone, that I was not to go. Now you have had your way, you have seated your nominee. I may claim to have assisted you materially, not only by yielding to your desire that I should refuse the request of the Birmingham Conservatives, but also by counsel, oral and written, as Mr. Rowlands and others can testify, to my friends in Birmingham to support Mr. John Albert Bright. If ever a man was compelled by duty to be magnanimous, or could afford to be magnanimous, it was yourself after such a conspicuous success. Your position demanded that you should neglect to notice any words which legitimate disappointment may have prompted, that you should do your best to soothe irritated but just susceptibilities, that you should suggest arrangements by which, in future electoral contests, the two sections of the Unionist party might work together cordially for their mutual advantage.

How widely different, however, has been your action! How curious the return you make to the Conservatives who voted in such large numbers for Mr. Bright, and to me, who thought I was your friend, and who certainly—to put the matter in the most negative and colourless manner—did nothing to interfere with Mr. Bright’s return.

As far as I am concerned, you endeavour to embroil me and my friends in Birmingham by representing, and by seeking to make it appear, that I have played fast and loose with them, although in dealing with the incident I have regarded your interests a great deal more than my own; and in respect of the Conservative party in Birmingham they are rewarded by an

acrimonious attack from you and their leaders, by contumely and denunciation being poured upon men to whom they owe much and whose services they highly value; and, finally, in order that insult may be heaped upon injury, you allow the Liberal-Unionist Association, which is completely under your control, at a meeting over which you presided, to set forth in a formal and written resolution an assertion so questionable as to be almost ridiculous, to the effect that the recent election has shown 'that the preponderance of political power in Central Birmingham is with the Liberal-Unionist party.'

I have entered into this controversy with you with much reluctance and have in no way sought it; but I owe too much to the Conservatives in Birmingham not to take up pen in their behalf when, as it appears to me, they are treated with unqualified injustice.

There the matter ends so far as this account is concerned; for it is not necessary to follow the long and vexatious discussions by which, after years had passed, the representation of the Edgbaston Division in lieu of the Central Division was ultimately conceded to the Conservative party. Lord Randolph's decision has been exposed to various criticisms, but the explanation is not obscure. He looked back with pride to the great compact of 1886. He could not bear to take action which would be misrepresented as hostile to the fundamental basis of the Unionist alliance; and he knew well that the forces for influencing public opinion against him were strong enough, whatever the actual rights and wrongs of the Birmingham dispute, to create that impression. This reasoning may have been sufficient; but it does not cover the fact of his submitting his claims to the arbitrament of such a committee. Whatever the circumstances, he himself should have decided. The responsibility was his alone; and although it might be prudent to receive the counsels of Lord Hartington and of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and to hear Mr. Chamberlain's opinion, he should have informed them, and not they him, of the decision that was finally

taken.

It should be said that Lord Randolph Churchill never considered that Mr. Chamberlain had treated him with any want of candour in this affair. He did not think he had been generous in action or in victory. But he recognised that a natural divergence had opened between them and, this, although acute, was confined to political and public limits and did not extend to personal relations. To the end of his life he was accustomed to say that their only quarrel was over the Aston Riots; and they met, though less frequently, on courteous terms. The blow was a bitter one to Lord Randolph. His enforced desertion of his Birmingham friends cut him to the quick. As he came out of the Whips' room, where he had given his answer to the deputation, a friend noticed upon his face the shadow of that drawn and ghastly look with which it was in a few years to be stamped.

So considerable an interval elapsed after the Suakin debates before Lord Randolph Churchill again addressed the House of Commons that he provoked a laugh by drolly asking 'the indulgence usually accorded to a new member.' The session of 1889 had almost reached its close without the question of making the necessary provision by Parliamentary grant for the children of the Prince of Wales having been debated. When he rose (July 26), in succession to Mr. Bradlaugh, from his accustomed seat immediately behind the Treasury Bench, the Conservative members seemed in some doubt as to his intention, and he was greeted by only a very faint cheer. But his first words made his position manifest: 'I have always held an opinion, amounting to absolute conviction, as to the indisputable right of the Crown to apply to Parliament to make provision for the Royal Family and to rely upon the liberality of Parliament in respect of such applications.' Then followed one of the most happy speeches he ever achieved. The argument, which was elaborate and precise,

was concerned largely with figures and precedents showing the small cost of the British Monarchy compared with other forms of Government, and the conduct of the reigning Sovereign with respect to claims upon Parliament in comparison with some of her later predecessors. The constitutional doctrine involved and the mode of presenting such a case to a popular assembly are worthy of the attention of politicians; but the whole was enlivened and adorned by a sustained sparkle of what in those days had come to be called 'Randolphian humour,' which kept the rapidly assembled House in continued laughter and applause. When, for instance, he referred to Mr. Mundella as having 'addressed his constituents in Paradise—Square,' with just the slightest pause after 'Paradise,' the whole House collapsed; and Mr. Gladstone, whose sense of humour was somewhat uneven, is said to have laughed more than at any other jest he had ever heard in Parliament.

The effect of this speech, which occupied more than an hour, was to produce for the moment a complete reconciliation between Lord Randolph and his party. All about him as he sat down was a stir of enthusiasm. The Treasury Bench turned a row of delighted faces towards him. Among his papers I find a bundle of letters, full of gratitude and praise, written from the House by Conservative members while the impression was strong in their minds. But Lord Randolph Churchill knew he had that to say two days later in the Midlands which would speedily dissipate such transient and uncourted approbation.

On successive evenings at Walsall and Birmingham he outlined an extensive, yet not unpractical, programme of domestic legislation, dealing especially with land and housing, and with temperance. A single extract will show how far his mind had travelled from those serene pastures where the Government lambs were nourished:—

...The great obstacle to temperance reform undoubtedly is the wholesale manufacturers of alcoholic drink. Those manufacturers are small in number, but they are very wealthy. They exercise enormous influence. Every publican in the country almost, certainly nine-tenths of the publicans in the country, are their abject and tied slaves. Public-houses in nine cases out of ten are tied houses. There is absolutely no free-will, and these wholesale manufacturers of alcoholic drink have an enormously powerful political organisation, so powerful and so highly prepared that it is almost like a Prussian army: it can be mobilised at any moment and brought to bear on the point which is threatened. Up to now this great class has successfully intimidated a Government and successfully intimidated members of Parliament; in fact, they have directly overthrown two Governments, and I do not wonder, I do not blame Governments for being a little timid of meddling with them. But, in view of the awful misery which does arise from the practically unlimited and uncontrolled sale of alcoholic drinks in this country, I tell you my frank opinion—the time has already arrived when we must try our strength with that party.... Do imagine what a prodigious social reform, what a bound in advance we should have made if we could curb and control this destructive and devilish liquor traffic, if we could manage to remove from amongst us what I have called on former occasions the fatal facility of recourse to the beerhouse which besets every man and woman, and really one may almost say every child, of the working classes in England.

The next day he spoke at Birmingham. Ireland was his principal theme. For the first time on this subject since he resigned he unburdened his mind without restraint. He showed how much he hated the harsh and ill-tempered opinions then so powerful. He advocated two great measures by which the Conservative party might with wisdom and propriety assuage the bitter discontent of the Irish people—Local Government and land purchase. He even named the sum of money for which the credit of the United Kingdom might be pledged to create a peasant proprietary. ‘Something like one hundred millions,’ he

said; and the audience gasped suspiciously. What folly to think the Conservative party would touch such measures! And yet they have passed them into law!

Surely the reader will linger on the wit and wisdom of this concluding passage, remembering always how great a price in influence and personal fortunes the speaker willingly paid for the privilege of telling the truth:—

I dare say many of us have read, and a great many of you remember, a charming novel of Mr. Dickens, 'Our Mutual Friend'; and it may be in your recollection that there was a certain character in that novel of great interest, the delineation of which, by Mr. Dickens, is a subject of great amusement to the reader. His name was Mr. Podsnap; and, if you recollect, Mr. Podsnap was a person in easy circumstances, who was very content with himself and was extremely surprised that all the world was not equally contented like him; and if anyone suggested to Mr. Podsnap that there were possible causes of discontent among the people Mr. Podsnap was very much annoyed. He declared that the person making such a suggestion was flying in the face of Providence. He declared that the subject was an unpleasant one; he would go so far as to say it was an odious one; and he refused to consider it, he refused to admit it, and with a wave of his arm, you recollect, he used to sweep it away and to remove it off the face of the earth.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that Mr. Podsnap is a character of fiction. I know him well. I often meet Mr. Podsnap in London society. Mr. Podsnap hates me; he looks upon me as a person of most immoral and most evil tendency; but, with that morbid love of contemplating and prying into things essentially evil which is possessed, I think, by a great many good men, Mr. Podsnap cannot restrain himself sometimes from conversing with me, and this is the sort of remark Mr. Podsnap makes when he accosts me. He says, 'Young man'—he always begins in that way, though I believe he is not very much older than myself—he says, 'Are you not more and more impressed day by day with the constant proof and illustration of the hopeless and hereditary wickedness of the Irish people?' I say 'No;' that I have had some experience of the Irish people, and I have lived amongst them for some years, and that I have always found them a very pleasant

people and a very amiable people, and very easy to get on with if you take them the right way. And then Mr. Podsnap is painfully annoyed; he shows his indignation, he declares that the subject is an unpleasant one, and he will go so far as to say an odious one. He refuses to admit it, he refuses to consider it, and he removes it and sweeps it away from off the face of the earth. Well, sometimes I like, when I have nothing better to do, to try and draw Mr. Podsnap, and I go up to him and I ask him whether he does not think on the whole it might be a good thing after balancing everything—if we could find some dodge which might keep the Irish members out of prison. And then Mr. Podsnap is startled, and he is much annoyed, and he says, 'Do you mean seriously to argue that the Irish members, if they had their deserts, ought not to be hanged, drawn and quartered in front of Westminster Hall?' Then I reply that no doubt that is one way of dealing with the Irish members and one way of governing Ireland, but that it appears to me a somewhat singular way of maintaining the Parliamentary union between two countries; and then Mr. Podsnap is very wroth, and he sweeps me away and he removes me and the Irish members and Ireland from off the face of the earth. But Mr. Podsnap is not a bad fellow on the whole, so long as you do not pay the smallest attention to him. But undoubtedly, at the present moment, what Mr. Dickens calls Podsnappery is rampant and rife in London, and I think this Podsnappery we ought to make a great effort to put down.

I am certain that intolerance and contempt of Irish opinion and prejudice, hopeless prejudice against Irish ideas, produce a corresponding rancour and hatred among the Irish people against us, and terribly envenom the feelings and the relations between the two countries. No, let us rather have recourse, and confident recourse, to justice, to liberality, to generosity and, above all, to sympathy in our Irish policy. You may be certain of this, that a free manifestation of those qualities in your Irish policy would work such a miracle in Ireland as you have no conception of. I hope most earnestly that I shall never live to see the day when there may be established in Ireland a separate Parliament and a separate Government; but I hope equally earnestly and equally strongly, that I may live to see the day, and that possibly it may be in my power somewhat to contribute to the advent of that time, and that that time may not be at any very distant or remote date,

when the Irish shall not only be prosperous, but free—free in the full and proper sense of the word—free as the English, as the Scotch, and as the Welsh are free; and when a strong conviction of the benefits and a strong affection for the ties of union with Great Britain shall pervade and fill Irish hearts and minds, when the recollections of the former strife of nations shall be all forgotten, and when our children shall wonderingly inquire of us how it was that through so many weary years Ireland was a source of danger and of distress to the British Empire.

These two speeches in the Midlands, especially the first, at Walsall, were a terrible rock of offence. The landlords, the brewers and the opponents of land purchase were incensed and alarmed. 'They are all up in arms against you,' wrote Jennings sadly from the House of Commons. 'The speech on the Royal Grants did you so much good with the party, and now ... the Conservatives say you are nothing better than a Socialist, and the Radicals are, for a wonder, equally hostile. They are all agreed in denouncing you. The wind is due east, I must admit, and very keen and biting.'

'I am sorry to have to tell you,' wrote a Conservative member who had been pressing Lord Randolph to visit his constituency, 'that the local Fathers in * * * think that in the interests of the party it would be undesirable to hold a meeting there, and that you would not meet with a good reception from our own people. All of them expressed the opinion that they could not afford to offend the brewers and publicans, who have done so much for us in the past, and that any scheme proposing a loan of money to Ireland to buy out Irish landlords was most unpopular and regarded as Gladstonianism pure and simple.'

In Birmingham especially a bad impression was created, and Lord Randolph's influence, already terribly injured by his refusal to stand, was further weakened. It need scarcely be said that Mr. Chamberlain was much shocked by the open profession of doctrines so advanced in constituencies

which bordered on his own, and on the first convenient occasion he felt it his duty to administer a suitable rebuke: —

> I observed the other day [he said] that a most distinguished nobleman, Lord Randolph Churchill, addressed various speeches to audiences in Birmingham and the neighbourhood, and that he declared himself to be a Tory. I can only say his programme is a programme which, I am perfectly certain, will be absolutely repudiated by Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour. I dare say you have often seen at a bazaar or elsewhere a patchwork quilt brought out for sale, which is made up of scraps from old dresses and from left-off garments which the maker has been able to borrow for the purpose. I am told that in America they call a thing of this kind a 'crazy quilt.' I think that the fancy programme which Lord Randolph Churchill put before you the other day may well be described as a 'crazy quilt.' He borrowed from the cast-off policy of all the extreme men of all the different sections. He took his Socialism from Mr. Burns and Mr. Hyndman; he took his Local Option from Sir Wilfrid Lawson; he took his Egyptian policy from Mr. Illingworth; he took his metropolitan reform from Mr. Stuart; and he took his Irish policy from Mr. John Morley. Is this Toryism?

All this was especially edifying, pronounced as it was within four years of the 'Unauthorised Programme.' But Lord Randolph was not, as some who wrote to him seemed to suppose, trying to ingratiate himself with the House of Commons Tories, or seeking to win re-entry to the Cabinet. 'I decline,' he said sardonically, 'to enter into competition with Mr. Chamberlain for the smiles of Hatfield.' He understood perfectly what reception the ruling class in the Conservative party would accord to his democratic ideas. The worthy Conservative gentlemen who had pressed their congratulations upon him after his speech on the Royal Grants could hardly restrain their indignation now. Finding themselves at one time in complete agreement with him, and at another in vehement dissent, they assumed, not unnaturally, that he was

unbalanced and insincere. Yet these speeches, variously greeted as they were, arose from the same logical and coherent system of political thought to which, rightly or wrongly, he had always adhered through good and evil fortune. The principal speeches which he made in 1889 almost covered, and were designed to cover, the whole field of 'Tory Democracy.' In justifying the Royal Grants he had affirmed that loyalty to the Crown which every true Tory Democrat must be prepared to practise and sustain. At Walsall and Birmingham he urged that energetic sympathy with practical social reform and indifference to selfish class instincts which alone can convince democracy that time-honoured institutions are not merely safeguards, but may be made effective instruments of progress. In Wales during the autumn he championed the Established Church. In Scotland later in the year he defended the Union. Something was, however, still wanting to complete his political faith. It remained to assert the sanctity of those constitutional barriers by which liberty and justice are secured. That omission the near future was to repair.

CHAPTER XXI

THE PARNELL COMMISSION

"Iam non ad culmina rerum
Injustos crevisse queror: tolluntur in altum
Ut lapsu graviore ruant."
Claudian.

It is no part of my task to examine the proceedings of the Special Commission, nor to supply a narrative of that long-drawn and embittered controversy known as 'Parnellism and Crime.' Those are matters of history, and even such allusion to their course and character as might have been required for the coherency of this story seems unnecessary

in view of an account recently given to the world by Mr. Morley,[68] combining the vivid and picturesque character which only an eye-witness can command, with that brevity in regard to general questions indispensable to biography. I am concerned only to pick out Lord Randolph Churchill's part and to trace the steps which led him to an utter breach with the Government and quarrel with the Conservative party; and this can be done mainly in his own words.

The letter involving Mr. Parnell in complicity with the Phoenix Park murders was printed in facsimile in the *Times* of April 18, 1887, and was doubtless intended to be a spur to the Unionist party on the day of the introduction of the Coercion Bill. That same night Mr. Parnell declared it to be a forgery. His denial was received with incredulity by the Ministerialists and he was at once asked why he did not take action for libel. His reasons for not doing so were apparently that he and his advisers had no confidence that their case would be considered without prejudice by a Middlesex jury, and that if a favourable verdict were obtained in Ireland similar English suspicions would deprive it of moral effect. No action being taken by Mr. Parnell, a motion was made by a private member for a Select Committee of Inquiry. This was debated on May 5, and the Select Committee was refused by the Government. Lord Randolph, who on this occasion, as on various other questions of privilege, was consulted by Mr. Smith, supported the Government decision, and warmly defended the Leader of the House from attacks which were made upon him. Although the murder charges against Mr. Parnell were repeated in various forms at partisan meetings, and even received countenance from several of the Conservative Ministers, the whole matter lapsed so far as Parliament was concerned, and would never have been resuscitated but for the perversity of chance.

An action for libel against the *Times* was instituted in November 1887 by an Irishman who had sat in the late

Parliament as a follower of Mr. Parnell and who felt himself damaged by the various allegations contained in the series of letters headed 'Parnellism and Crime.' This suit was tried before Lord Coleridge in July 1888. The *Times* happened to be defended by Sir Richard Webster, the principal law officer of the Crown—acting, however, as he explained, to his own satisfaction, purely professionally and not as a member of the Government. In the course of the trial the Attorney-General repeated during three days the general charges and allegations of the *Times* articles, and produced a further batch of incriminating letters alleged to be signed by the Irish leader. On this the Parliamentary case was reopened, and Parnell himself demanded a Select Committee of Inquiry. The Government, as before, refused the Committee, but—to general astonishment—they now proceeded to offer, and finally to insist upon, a Commission of three judges with statutory power to inquire not merely into the specific matter of the letters, but rovingly into the whole of the charges and allegations of the *Times*, whether against members of Parliament or 'other persons.' The necessary Bill was introduced on July 16.

Lord Randolph Churchill was dismayed by this unexpected departure. He felt it his duty to protest from the very beginning against such procedure. Yet he did not wish to embarrass the Government or to hamper them in their Irish policy. Instead of speaking in the debates upon the Bill, he drew up on the day of its introduction a memorandum which he sent to Mr. Smith, and which is at once a convenient narrative of the case and perhaps the most powerful statement he ever penned. If it were necessary to base his reputation for political wisdom upon a single document, I should select this.

Memorandum.

It may be assumed that the Tory party are under an imperative obligation to avoid seeking escape from political difficulties by

extra-constitutional methods. The above is a general rule. The exception to it can scarcely be conceived.

The case of 'Parnellism and Crime' is essentially a political and Parliamentary difficulty of a minor kind. A newspaper has made against a group of members of the House of Commons accusations of complicity in assassination, crime and outrage. In the commencement the parties accused do not feel themselves specially aggrieved. They take no action; the Government responsible for the guidance of the House of Commons does not feel called upon to act in the matter. A member of Parliament, acting on his own responsibility, brings the matter before the House of Commons as a matter of privilege and a Select Committee is moved for to inquire into the allegations.

The Government take up an unexceptionable and perfectly constitutional position. They refuse the Select Committee on the ground marked out by Sir Erskine May, that matters which may or ought to come within the cognisance of the Courts of Law are not fit for inquiry by Select Committee.

The Government press upon the accused parties their duty, should they feel themselves aggrieved, to proceed against the newspaper legally and, with a generosity hardly open to condemnation, offer to make the prosecution of the newspaper, so far as expense is concerned, a Government prosecution. The offer is not accepted, the view of duty is disagreed from by the accused persons, the motion for a Select Committee is negatived and the matter drops, the balance of disadvantage remaining with the accused persons.

Owing to an abortive and obscurely originated action for libel, the whole matter revives. The original charges are reiterated in a court of law by the Attorney-General, but owing to the course of the suit no evidence is called to sustain the allegations. A fresh demand is made by the accused persons for a Select Committee and is refused by the Government on the same grounds as before and, as before, with a preponderating assent of public opinion. So far all is satisfactory, except to the accused parties and their sympathisers.

For reasons not known, the Government take a new departure of a most serious kind. They offer to constitute by statute a tribunal with exceptional powers, to be composed mainly of

judges of the Supreme Court, to inquire into the truth of the allegations. To this course the following objections are obvious and unanswerable:

1. The offer, to a large extent, recognises the wisdom and justice of the conduct of the accused persons in avoiding recurrence to the ordinary tribunals.

2. It is absolutely without precedent. The Sheffield case, the Metropolitan Board of Works case, are by no means analogous. Into those two cases not a spark of political feeling entered. The case of 'Parnellism and Crime' in so far as it is not criminal is entirely political. In any event the political character of the case would predominate over the criminal.

3. It is submitted that it is in the highest degree unwise and, indeed, unlawful to take the judges of the land out of their proper sphere of duty, and to mix them up in political conflict. In this ease, whichever way they decide, they will be the object of political criticism and animadversion. Whatever their decision, speaking roughly, half the country will applaud, the other half condemn, their action; their conduct during the trial in its minutest particulars, every ruling as to evidence, every chance expression, every question put by them, will be keenly watched, canvassed, criticised, censured or praised. Were judges in England ever placed in such a position before? Will any judge emerge from this inquiry the same for all judicial purposes, moral weight and influence as he went into it? Have you a right to expose your judges, and in all probability your best judges, to such an ordeal?

4. The tribunal will conduct its proceedings by methods different to a court of law. The examination will mainly be conducted by the tribunal itself; a witness cannot refuse to reply on the ground that the answer would criminate himself. Evidence in this way will be extracted which might be made the basis of a criminal prosecution against other persons. Indemnities might be given to persons actually guilty of very grave crime, and persons much less guilty of direct participation in grave crime might, under such protected evidence, be made liable to a prosecution.

The whole course of proceeding, if the character of the allegations is remembered, will, when carefully considered, be found to be utterly repugnant to our English ideas of legal justice,

and wholly unconstitutional. It is hardly exaggerating to describe the Commission contemplated as ‘a revolutionary tribunal’ for the trial of political offenders, If there is any truth in the above or colour for such a statement, can a Tory Government safely or honourably suggest and carry through such a proposal?

I would suggest that the constitutional legality of this proposed tribunal be submitted to the judges for their opinion.

It is not for the Government, in matters of this kind, to initiate extra-constitutional proceedings and methods. One can imagine an excited Parliament or inflamed public opinion forcing such proceedings on a Government. In this case there is no such pressure. The first duty of a Government would be to resist being driven outside the lines of the Constitution. In no case, except when public safety is involved, can they be justified in taking the lead. They are the chief guardians of the Constitution. The Constitution is violated or strained in this country when action is taken for which there is no reasonably analogous precedent. Considerations of this kind ought to influence powerfully the present Government.

It is said that the honour of the House of Commons is concerned. This is an empty phrase. The tribunal, whatever its decision, will not prevent the Irish constituencies from returning as representatives the parties implicated. In such an event the honour of the House of Commons could only be vindicated by repeated expulsion, followed by disfranchisement. Does any reasonable person contemplate such a course?

The proceedings of the tribunal cannot be final. In the event of a decision to the effect that the charges are not established, proceedings for libel against the newspaper might be resorted to, the newspaper being placed under a most grossly unjust disadvantage. In the event of a decision to the contrary effect, a criminal prosecution would seem to be imperative. Regarded from the high ground of State policy in Ireland such a prosecution would probably be replete with danger and disaster.

These reflections have been sketched out concisely. If submitted to a statesman, or to anyone of great legal learning and attainments, many more and much graver reflections would probably be suggested.

I do not examine the party aspects of the matter; I only remark

that the fate of the Union may be determined by the abnormal proceedings of an abnormal tribunal. Prudent politicians would hesitate to go out of their way to play such high stakes as these.—R. H. S. C.

July 17, 1888.

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Nearly two years had passed since these words were written. During all that time Lord Randolph Churchill kept silence. The Government persevered in their courses. The Bill for the Special Commission was driven swiftly through the House of Commons by guillotine closure. The Judges slowly unravelled the vast tangle of evidence and ethics which had been thrust upon them. Not until the fiftieth sitting of the court was the letter reached which was the reason for the whole proceeding. Then there was an acceleration. In two days a wretched man was proved a forger. In five days he was dead. The only charge that gave birth to the Commission perished by the pistol-shot that destroyed Pigott. The other allegations, melancholy and voluminous as they were, useful as they may have been for political controversy, revealed only the bitterness of the national and racial struggle; and expressed in the language of the victorious party a condemnation of methods of political warfare, more or less lawless, certainly deplorable, but essentially characteristic of revolutionary movements, open or veiled.

The report of the Commission came before the House of Commons on March 3, 1890. In spite of every effort to broaden the issue and to escape from narrow and definite charges of murder, which had been disproved, to general charges of lawlessness and disloyalty which required no proof, the impression produced in the country was adverse to the Government. The party orator dilated on the heinous

conduct of the Irish members. The plain man stopped short at Pigott. Ministers had stained the cause of the Union by unconstitutional action and had allowed others to stain it by felony. Lord Randolph's private letters reveal from time to time the abhorrence with which he regarded the whole transaction. The by-elections attested the opinion of the public. There was too much truth in Parnell's savage accusation:[69] 'You wanted to use this question of the forged letters as a political engine. You did not care whether they were forged or not. You saw that it was impossible for us under the circumstances, or for anybody under the circumstances, to prove that they were forgeries. It was a very good question for you to win elections with.... It was also a suitable engine to enable you to obtain an inquiry into a much wider field and very different matters, an inquiry which you never would have got apart from these infamous productions.'

The feeling that some reparation was due to men against whom a charge of complicity in murder had been falsely preferred and who had been pursued by such unwonted means, was by no means confined to the Opposition. But the Government were resolved to brazen it out; and the party machine, local and national, held firm. The speech of the Conservative leader was grudging and unsympathetic; and Mr. Gladstone's condemnation and appeal rang through a responsive House. The debate on his amendment ebbed and flowed through four Parliamentary days, and from the division by which it was terminated fourteen Unionists, including Lord Randolph, abstained. Meanwhile, on March 7, Mr. Jennings—with the concurrence, as was generally known, of Lord Randolph Churchill—had given notice of the following amendment: 'And, further, this House deems it to be its duty to record its condemnation of the conduct of those who are responsible for the accusations of complicity in murder brought against members of this House, discovered to be

based mainly on forged letters, and declared by the Special Commission to be false.' Such a notice, coming from the Unionist benches and believed to have the support of Lord Randolph Churchill, of course attracted general attention. He himself was, however, in the greatest perplexity. Party feeling ran high. It is when the attack is grave and damaging, when there is fullest justification for censure, when manifestly Ministers are wrong, that those who adhere to them through thick and thin, are most impatient of reproach. He knew well that by speaking he would greatly injure himself in the eyes of his party. And yet could he honourably keep silent? He regretted that he had encouraged Jennings to put his amendment down. He asked him to withdraw it. But Mr. Jennings refused. It was not until Mr. Gladstone's amendment had been disposed of on the fourth day of the discussion that he made up his mind to speak, when the House should meet at the next sitting (March 11). By custom, though not by rule, the Speaker would have called upon the movers of other amendments, once that stage of debate has begun. But Lord Randolph, after much consideration, decided that he had better say what he had to say upon the main question, neither interfering with, nor being limited by, Mr. Jennings's amendment or others that stood before it; and technically he was within his right, if the Speaker should call on him.

He was heard by the House in a strained unusual silence, which seemed to react upon him; for he spoke with strange slowness, deliberation and absence of passion—like a judge deciding on a point of law, and without any of the lightness and humour of old Opposition days. He examined the question frigidly and with severity—how the Government had discarded the ordinary tribunals of the land; how they had instituted a special tribunal wherein the functions of judge and jury were cumulated upon three individuals; how the persons implicated had had no voice

in the constitution of that tribunal; how they were in part the political opponents of the Government of the day; and how one result had been to levy upon both parties to the action a heavy pecuniary fine. All these things were described in the same even, passionless voice, and heard by the House with undiminished attention and by the Ministerial supporters with growing resentment. Presently came a pause. He asked those about him for a glass of water. Not a man moved. Fancying he had not been heard, he asked again: and so bitter was party passion that even this small courtesy was refused. At length, seeing how the matter stood, Mr. Baumann, a young Conservative member from below the Gangway, went out for some. As he returned, the Irish—always so quick to perceive a small personal incident—greeted him with a half-sympathetic, half-ironical cheer, and Lord Randolph, taking the glass from his hand, said solemnly and elaborately in a penetrating undertone: 'I hope this will not compromise you with your party.'

At length he began to speak louder. 'The procedure which we are called upon to stamp with our approval to-night is a procedure which would undoubtedly have been gladly resorted to by the Tudors and their judges. It is procedure of an arbitrary and tyrannical character, used against individuals who are political opponents of the Government of the day—procedure such as Parliament has for generations and centuries struggled against and resisted —procedure such as we had hoped, in these happy days, Parliament had triumphantly overcome. It is procedure such as would have startled even Lord Eldon; it is procedure such as Lords Lyndhurst and Brougham would have protested against; it is procedure which, if that great lawyer Earl Cairns had been alive, the Tory party would never have carried. But a Nemesis awaits a Government that adopts unconstitutional methods. What,' he asked, 'has been the result of this uprootal of constitutional

practice? What has been the one result?' Then in a fierce whisper, hissing through the House, 'Pigott!'—then in an outburst of uncontrollable passion and disgust—'a man, a thing, a reptile, a monster—Pigott!'—and then again, with a phrase at which the House shuddered,[70] 'Pigott! Pigott! Pigott!'

Let us return to Hansard. 'Why do I bring these things before the House? [*An honourable member laughed derisively.*] Ah! yes; I know there are lots of high-minded and generous members, who not long ago were my friends, who are ready to impute—and much more likely to impute than openly assert—that I am animated by every evil motive. I bring these matters before the House of Commons because I apprehend the time—which I trust may be remote, but which I sometimes fear may be nigh—when the party which vaunts itself as the constitutional party may, by the vicissitudes of fortune, find itself in a position of inferiority similar to that which it occupied in 1832—when the rights of the minority may be trampled upon and overridden, when the views of the minority may be stifled, and when individual political opponents may be proceeded against as you have proceeded against your political opponents.'

He then explained how that these were no new views of his, that they had not been formed in consequence of the results of the trial—'as those who are always ready to form a most unfavourable opinion of me have said'—but that two years before, when the Bill for the Special Commission was before Parliament, he had embodied them in a document which he had 'respectfully laid before the First Lord of the Treasury.' 'There was a time,' he said at the end, 'not very long ago, when my words had some weight with honourable gentlemen on this side of the House; and in recalling that time I will add—I cannot refrain from the remark—that the prospects of the party were brighter than they are now. When I had the honour,

the memorable honour, of counselling them, the Unionist majority was more than a hundred. It has now fallen to about seventy. If there are any lingering memories on these benches of those days—when, I think, our fortunes were better—it is by those memories I would appeal to the Conservative party to give a fair and impartial and unprejudiced consideration to the counsels which I now lay before them. But if my words are to fall on deaf ears—if the counsels I most honestly submit are to be spurned and scorned, then I declare that I look forward to the day when a future Parliament shall expunge from the Journals of this House the record of this melancholy proceeding; and in taking such action—inspired, I trust, not by party passion, party vindictiveness or party rancour, but acting on constitutional grounds, and on those alone—it will administer to its predecessor a deserved and wholesome rebuke for having outraged and violated constitutional liberty and will establish a signpost full of warning and guidance to Parliaments yet unborn.'

He sat down very much exhausted—for his health was already weakening—by the strain to which he had been put. He had never spoken with more consciousness of right, never with less regard to his own interests and scarcely ever with greater effect. Deep down in the heart of the old-fashioned Tory, however unreflecting, there lurks a wholesome respect for the ancient forms and safeguards of the English Constitution and a recognition of the fact that some day they may be found of great consequence and use. Moreover, the case was black and overwhelming. But a formidable champion was at hand to succour and shield the Ministry; and it was Chamberlain who rose from the Front Opposition Bench to reply on behalf of the Government. His speech was couched in a friendly and respectful tone—not unmindful, perhaps, of an old compact as to the asperities of political warfare—but in every part it made clear the breach which now existed between these former

allies, and the bonds which were steadily strengthening between this Radical leader and his Conservative friends.

To all this Mr. Jennings had listened with impatience and resentment. His amendment had not, it seemed, been merely deserted by Lord Randolph Churchill; it had been compromised. The opportunity for moving it was irretrievably spoiled. The consequence that had attached to it, was gone. The crowded house was melting. No man about to address a critical assembly on a matter which he considers important, resolved to do his very best by his argument and braced against the expected disapprobation of his own friends, can be free from nervous tension; and the better the speaker, the greater the strain. At such a moment small things do not always appear small and grave decisions are not always taken on serious grounds. Mr. Jennings had been several times disappointed in Lord Randolph. He had failed to carry him forward into a Fair Trade campaign. He had been bitterly discouraged by the Birmingham surrender. He had watched with mortification the decline of Lord Randolph's popularity. He had disapproved of the Radicalism of the later speeches. And now, on the top of all the rest, came this sharp collision. He took it as an act of mortal treachery and insult. In that flood of anger the comradeship of four stormy years was swept away as if it had been a feather. While Mr. Chamberlain was replying he leaned over the bench and told Lord Randolph shortly that after such a speech he would not move his amendment, and would tell the House why. Lord Randolph, who had been absorbed by his own struggle, was amazed at his fierce manner, and realised for the first time that he had caused deep offence. He wished at once to put it right. But Jennings would not answer. He had made up his mind. Two pencil notes, written on slips torn from the order paper, were put into his hands. He read them, folded them, put them carefully away, and they have drifted here, like the wreckage tossed up on the shore long

after a ship has foundered. ‘I hope you will reflect before making any public attack upon me. It would be a thousand pities to set all the malicious tongues wagging, when later you will understand what my position was.’ And again—probably after Jennings had spoken—‘How can you so wilfully misunderstand my action and so foolishly give way to temper in dealing with grave political matters?’

As soon as Mr. Chamberlain had finished, Mr. Jennings rose, and struck as hard as he could. ‘He had not been prepared for the tone and manner of the speech of his noble friend.’ The delivery of a speech so hostile ‘to the Government’ had considerably embarrassed him. ‘It is said,’ he proceeded in his cold, measured way, ‘that I derive my opinions from my noble friend, but occasionally, and at intervals, I am capable of forming opinions of my own, and such an interval has occurred now.’ ‘The noble lord has a genius for surprises: sometimes he surprises his opponents; sometimes he takes his best friends unawares.’ Finally, he declined to move his amendment, as a means of dissociating himself from any attempt ‘to stab his party in the back.’ During this speech the occupants of the Treasury Bench took, as may be imagined, no pains to conceal their satisfaction. In a very brief personal explanation Lord Randolph Churchill declared that his own speech had been made without reference to any of the amendments on the paper, solely because it was pertinent to the main question rather than to any amendment. Mr. Caine, who was then on the verge of returning to the Liberal party, moved the dropped amendment without comment. Almost alone among Conservative members, Lord Randolph supported it, as he had promised and always intended, in the division lobby, and it was rejected by a majority of sixty-two.

The outcry raised against Lord Randolph Churchill for his speech and vote was immediate and astonishing. The entire Conservative press denounced him as a traitor, and

he was deluged with abuse. The *Standard* declared that he had no further right to be regarded as a member of the Unionist party. ‘The utter failure of his career points a moral of peculiar significance. Seldom has it been possible to give a more convincing proof of the fact that the man who is ready to sacrifice principle to personal ambition will not only lose the esteem of the worthiest among his fellow-countrymen, but will even fail in the object to which he is willing to surrender his convictions.’ But more important even than such pronouncements was the feeling in the country. The meeting which he was to have addressed at Colchester was cancelled ‘owing to the illness of Lord Brooke.’ The Chairman of his Association in Paddington resigned; the various clubs in the borough passed strong resolutions in condemnation of their member, and a meeting of the Council was convened for the 17th to consider his conduct. Opinion in Birmingham was very hostile. Even the Midland Conservative Club met together to pass a vote of censure.

Lord Randolph Churchill met these manifestations with composure not unmingled with scorn. To the resolution of the Paddington Council he replied in a letter described by the much-shocked *Times* as ‘characteristically pert and saucy,’ and dated from the Jockey Club Rooms at Newmarket. ‘I have no reason to suppose,’ he wrote, ‘that the Council are in error in committing themselves to the opinion that my action is "entirely out of harmony" with the views of the Conservative electors of the division; but I remark with satisfaction that the Council, with a prudence which I cannot too highly or respectfully commend, have abstained from expressing any opinion as to whether my action was right or wrong.’ If they wished him to take the opinion of the electors on the question they knew the steps which were necessary, but meanwhile he reminded them that the Council was not the Association and still less the constituency of South Paddington.

On the same morning of this meeting in Paddington Lord Randolph published in the *Morning Post*—which almost alone among Metropolitan newspapers remained well disposed towards him—the memorandum which he had written nearly two years before. The memorandum, he explained, had been intended to be 'a strong but friendly protest against the measure.' The speech of the previous Tuesday was intended, so far as lay in his power, to prevent such a measure being ever proposed by a Government again. This document had a marked and decided effect upon public opinion. Seldom had a political prophet been so completely vindicated by the event. It was now proved that two years before the exposure of Pigott he had warned the Government of the discredit in which the Special Commission would involve them and had described beforehand in exact detail many of the evil consequences by which they were now overtaken.

All of a sudden party indignation began to subside, and that keen sense of justice never far removed from the English mind reasserted itself. The journalists and the wirepullers had laboured to excess and the inevitable reaction followed. Numbers of plain people began to write to the newspapers to protest against the attacks made upon one who had been so greatly concerned with famous Conservative victories. At Birmingham the Old Guard—Rowlands, Sawyer, and Moore-Bayley—contrived to parry the vote of censure by a simple resolution of confidence in the Government, which the rest, when it came to the point, were content to accept. Mr. Fardell resumed the Chairmanship of the Paddington Council, and that body received their member's reply without further comment or action. So that Lord Randolph was enabled, without more hindrance, to pursue his own path in his own way.

But while he cared little for the displeasure of political associates and nothing at all for the party outburst, there was one breach which caused him regret. Louis Jennings

had been for the past four years an intimate friend and a close and valuable ally. He had become a friend at a time when others were falling away and after Lord Randolph had given up the power to help and reward good service. He had adhered to his leader with constancy, through much unpopularity and ridicule, and at the cost of his own political future—such as it might have been. Whatever cause he may have had for complaint, he had certainly repaid the injury to the utmost of his power. Nothing could be more disparaging to Lord Randolph Churchill personally or more prejudicial to the opinions he had expressed than that he and they should be publicly repudiated by the one man who of all others had stood by him until now. The political world found it difficult to believe that the tone of a speech apart from its tenor, a dispute about an amendment, or the accident of debate, could in themselves be a complete explanation of a sudden severance between such close political associates. Jennings volunteered no further information on the subject; and Lord Randolph Churchill to persistent inquiries merely replied: 'I was not aware, and could not be aware, that my speech would cause Mr. Jennings to withdraw his amendment, and I am altogether unable to understand his reasons for this action. I had told him that I would vote for his amendment and speak in favour of it, and, as a matter of fact, I did so. Mr. Jennings has acquired the reputation of being a man of reason, ability and sense, and his actions are presumably guided by those qualities. That being so, any further examination of his action against me last Tuesday does not particularly attract me.'

Mr. Jennings left, however, among his private papers a statement carefully prepared while the episode was fresh in his mind. I am content to place this upon record exactly as it was written.[71]

The breach was never repaired. Lord Randolph Churchill would gladly have made friends, and took pains

to let the fact be known to Mr. Jennings. But no communication, written or spoken, ever passed between them again. Whether from an enduring sense of wrong, or from vain regrets at such a miserable ending to four years of loyalty and labour, Mr. Jennings continued in antagonism, and from time to time employed his dexterous pen in sharp and sarcastic attack. There is an air of musty tragedy about old letters. Week after week, in packet after packet, since 1886, Jennings's neat handwriting recurs. Suddenly his letters stop, just as the Gorst letters had stopped five years before. He passes out of this story—was soon, indeed, to pass out of all stories men can tell. On that exciting night in March Lord Randolph Churchill had only five years to live. But Mr. Jennings had less than three. He took little further part in politics. He was returned for Stockport again at the General Election; but almost at once he declared that he must retire from public life. An internal malady had afflicted him, and he died somewhat suddenly on February 9, 1893, aged fifty-six years. The circumstances of his quarrel with Lord Randolph Churchill, no matter whether his anger was deserved or not, or on which side the balance of misunderstanding may have lain, cannot exclude from this account a full acknowledgment of his loyal, industrious and fearless comradeship. He suffered the vexations and disappointments which must always harass those who fight for lost causes and falling men.

The strange and memorable episode of the Parnell Commission lies at the present in a twilight. It has drifted out of the fierce and uncertain glare of political controversy. It is not yet illumined by the calm lamp of the historian. Those whose influence initiated or sustained the policy seem abundantly vindicated by events. Their action was ratified by Parliament and never seriously impugned by the nation. Whatever injury resulted at the time to the cause of the Union—and no doubt the injury was grave—

was more than healed by the unexpected proceedings in the Divorce Courts at the end of the year. If it be true, as some may think, that the conduct of Irish affairs by the Conservative Cabinet of '86 enabled Mr. Gladstone to advance the flag of Home Rule again at the head of a Parliamentary majority, it is also true that this second onslaught encountered a not less stubborn resistance and ended in an even more decisive and lasting success. Those who were responsible have no apparent cause to regret the course they took. Those who, on the other hand, opposed it, from whatever motive, were brushed aside, and could never persuade the public of their case. And yet such a strange place is England that there is scarcely anyone, from the Ministers who bear the burden, to the *Times* newspaper —left, through the policy of the Government it supported, loyal and indignant, with a quarter of a million to pay— who will not to-day confess, and even declare, that these proceedings were a grand and cardinal blunder from beginning to end; that an Executive has no business to thrust itself into disputes which the parties concerned may settle in the courts, and no right to erect special machinery for the examination of charges perfectly within the knowledge and scope of the law. So that if these things are affirmed while the light is dim, while even the dust of conflict has not altogether subsided, we may be hopeful of the judgment which history will pronounce.

. . . . . .

In these later years Lord Randolph Churchill was drawn increasingly towards a Collectivist view of domestic politics. Almost every speech which he made from 1889 to 1891 gives evidence of the steady development of his opinions. His interest in the problems of the labouring classes grew warmer and keener as time passed. He spoke his mind without the smallest regard to the susceptibilities of his party, or to his own influence and position; and he favoured or accepted doctrines and tendencies before

which Liberals recoiled and even the most stalwart Radicals paused embarrassed. He urged the House of Commons to examine the demand for a general eight hours' day 'with a total absence of anything like dogmatism.' He replied with some asperity to Mr. Bradlaugh, whose outspoken condemnation of the State regulation of the hours of adult labour had evoked delighted cheers from the Conservative party. He often wondered, he said, whether Mr. Bradlaugh or Mr. Chamberlain would be the first to take a seat on the Treasury Bench. He was sceptical, in the face of Income Tax and Revenue Returns, about 'the narrow margin of profit' remaining to capital. His answer to a deputation of miners who waited in succession on him and Mr. Gladstone to urge the enforcement of an eight hours' day in the coal trade was accepted by them as far more favourable to their desires than anything that fell from the Liberal leader. He voted for the principle of the payment of members of Parliament. He took a leading part in the movement to provide North-West London with a polytechnic institution—'a university for labour,' as he described it. 'An Englishman,' he said, 'possesses over Europeans one immeasurable and inestimable advantage. Out of the life of every German, every Frenchman, every Italian, every Austrian, every Russian, the respective Governments of those countries take three years for compulsory military service. If you estimate those three years at eight hours per day for six days a week, you will find that out of the life of every European in those nations no fewer than 7,500 hours are taken by the Governments of those countries for compulsory military service, during which time the individual so deprived is, for the purposes of contributing to the wealth of the community as a whole by his labour, as idle and useless and unprofitable as if he had never been born. But in our free and happy country, where the freedom of existence has practically no

reasonable limits and where only a very minute portion of the population voluntarily embraces a military career, every man who lives to the age of twenty-three or twenty-four, possesses as an advantage over the inhabitants of foreign countries an extra capital of at least 7,500 hours. That immeasurable superiority, if properly taken advantage of by the provision of adequate educational institutions, is what should enable us to put aside alarm as to foreign competition.' His Licensing Bill, which he introduced on April 29, 1890, in the last great speech he ever made to the House of Commons, while it affirmed the justice of compensation, asserted for the first time in Parliament the principle of popular control over the issue of licences.

All these questions trench too closely upon current politics to be conveniently examined here. But it is not difficult to understand why his opinions did not win Lord Randolph Churchill the support of every section of the Conservative party. And yet all the while, in spite of his public declarations—obstinately repeated—there continued in the Tory ranks a steady and at times a powerful pressure to bring him back to the Government. Session after session had been scrambled through in dispiriting fashion. The mismanagement of Parliamentary business, the failure of important legislative projects, the abiding discredit of the Pigott forgery, the lack of any life or fire or inspiration in the conduct of affairs, sank the Conservative party and the Unionist alliance lower and lower in public estimation.

By June 1890 Lord Salisbury's Administration was in the utmost peril. The Government majority upon a decisive division fell to four.[72] Their licensing proposals were ignominiously withdrawn. Their attempt to carry business over to an autumn session failed. And in these hard times many Conservatives who disagreed altogether with Lord Randolph Churchill's views felt that his return to a commanding place was a necessary condition, if the

waning fortunes of their party were to be retrieved. Ministers of importance approached Lord Salisbury. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach urged him not to allow the object of excluding Lord Randolph Churchill to prejudice the interests of the Unionist cause. Tory papers wrote favourable articles. Tory worthies met together in the Conservative Club under the presidency of Sir Algernon Borthwick, to entertain the 'prodigal son.' 'Randolph must return' was everywhere the whisper and the word. But Lord Salisbury was firm. Nothing would induce him to divide his authority again. And having regard to all the circumstances which have been related, he was, from his own point of view, unquestionably right. He knew well that Lord Randolph Churchill had altered no whit, had retracted nothing; and that, if he rejoined the Ministry, he would labour as of old, without stint or pause, with riper gifts of knowledge and experience and under conditions more favourable perhaps than in 1886, to guide and to deflect the policy of a Conservative Government into democratic and progressive paths. Better a party or a personal defeat; better a Parliamentary collapse; better even an Imperial disaster!

Fortune favours the brave. The courage and tenacity of the Prime Minister received an unexpected relief. The downfall of Parnell was at hand. Her Majesty's Government regained in the Divorce Court the credit they had lost before the Special Commission. The ranks of the English Home Rule party, lately so exultant, were broken in dismay; and Nationalist Ireland, hitherto united under one controlling hand, was distracted by enduring and ferocious feuds. This peculiar episode may have settled decisively the fate of the legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland. It also terminated for ever, without hope or expectation of renewal, the protracted conflict between the New Tories and the Old.



1887-1893

Meanwhile outside the House of Commons and the forbidding circles of politics Lord Randolph was developing during these years new interests and amusements. Excitement in one form or another always attracted him, and after his resignation he sought it on the Turf. In partnership with Lord Dunraven he soon acquired a number of horses, to whose training and running he paid the closest attention. He became a shrewd judge of 'form.' In handicaps especially, his forecasts were so often fulfilled that he acquired quite a reputation among his sporting friends. On the morning of a race meeting he would sit for hours pencilling upon the card, by the aid of *Ruff's Guide*, calculations which led very often to conclusions that were right and still more often to conclusions that were nearly right. Under his eye Sherwood's stable became successful and for two years at least stood high in the winning lists. His footsteps fell upon some odd streaks of luck. While he was away fishing in Norway, in the summer of 1889, his mare the Abbesse de Jouarre won the Oaks at odds of twenty to one. At Doncaster, the year before, he dreamed he saw a number hoisted. On consulting his card the next day he found that only one horse running had so high a number. Inquiries led to the belief that this horse had a much better chance than the odds at which it stood suggested. Lord Randolph backed it heavily and won a considerable sum. Against the advice of his trainer he insisted on running the Abbesse de Jouarre for the Manchester Cup in 1889, and her victory constituted perhaps his most fortunate speculation. Of other horses which he owned or leased it is not necessary to speak, but during the years 1887 to 1891 Lord Randolph's colours—'chocolate, pink sleeves and cap'—were often to the fore.

Standing, as he did, apart from the ordinary groupings of party, he cultivated during these years pleasant relations

with politicians of every shade. At his sister Lady Tweedmouth's house he met Mr. Gladstone more frequently than he had ever done before. Lord Randolph treated the illustrious old man with the utmost deference, and each appears to have derived much satisfaction from the other's society. 'He was the most courtly man I ever met,' observed Mr. Gladstone in later years to Mr. Morley. At one dinner at Brook House Mr. Gladstone had talked with great vivacity and freedom and held everyone breathless. 'And that,' said Lord Randolph to a Liberal-Unionist friend, as they walked out of the room together, 'that is the man you have left? How could you have done it?'

His own society was eagerly sought by his friends; for he had much treasure to give as a companion, if only he were in the giving vein. The gay and reckless brilliancy of his conversation fascinated all who came within its range. He would talk and argue with entire freedom on every subject. He loved to defend daring paradoxes; and when forced to exert himself he would produce arguments so original and ingenious that the listeners were delighted, even if they were unconvinced. He sometimes amused himself by saying things on purpose to shock ponderous people, and in painting himself extravagantly in the darkest hues, so that they departed grieved to think there was so much wickedness left in the world. He excelled in all kinds of chaff and conversational sword-play—from sombre irony to schoolboy fun. When he wanted to persuade people to do any particular thing, he took enormous pains, seeming to touch by instinct all the feelings and reasons which moved or disturbed them, and very often he coaxed or compelled them to his wishes. On the other hand, he did not care how rude he was to those who wearied or irritated him, and he would toss and gore fools with true Johnsonian vigour and zest. In this abrupt and impulsive way he hurt the feelings of some harmless people and

disquieted a good many more; but if he were sorry afterwards, as he very often was, he could nearly always make amends by a word or a smile or some little courtesy, and the sun shone out all the brighter for the storm. Although in his later years the nervous irritability of his nature became extreme, he steadily enlarged the circle of his private friends, and those who had known him long were increasingly attached to him. Not without justice could they apply to him Addison's well-known lines:—

> In all thy humours, whether grave or mellow,
> Thou'rt such a touchy, testy, pleasant fellow,
> Hast so much wit, and mirth, and spleen about thee,
> There is no living with thee, nor without thee.[73]

Lord Randolph was wont to pass much of the autumn and winter abroad and each year he pushed his travels further afield and remained a longer time. In August of 1888 he had visited Tarbes—the constituency which returned his friend the Marquis de Breteuil to the French Chamber—and here spent some placid agreeable weeks of fine weather amid splendid mountains, while his companion conciliated the principal electors by intercourse and entertainment. Of the attractions of Tarbes and its neighbourhood—better known, perhaps, to French and Spanish visitors than to the English tourist—it would be superfluous to write, for they were set forth by the local newspaper in a passage whose hospitable extravagance I shall venture to quote:—

> Nous apprenons l'arrivée dans notre département de lord Randolph Churchill, qui vient y retrouver son ami M. le Marquis de Breteuil.
>
> Nous souhaitons la bienvenue dans nos montagnes au noble Lord, au brillant orateur de la Chambre des Communes.
>
> Il est certain d'y recevoir un accueil cordial de la part de nos députés et courtois de la part de nos populations qui n'ont jamais

failli aux devoirs de l'hospitalité.

Il y retrouvera, avec un climat plus doux même que celui du Devonshire, des sites plus enchanteurs encore, des sommets plus élevés que le Snowdon, des lacs aussi bleus que le Lomond, des torrents plus impétueux que le Glen et le Liddel.

Si le daim, le cerf et la grouse nous font défaut, nous avons l'izard, la caille savoureuse, la perdrix noire, la perdrix blanche, le coq de bruyère, la bécasse, le lièvre, etc. L'ours même s'y rencontre, mais ... difficilement.

Chose plus importante encore, si l'honorable membre de la Chambre des Communes avait, victime de son éloquence, le larynx fatigué, les eaux merveilleuses de Cauterets seraient là pour le guérir.

De toutes les façons, nous avons la conviction que lord Churchill emportera de nos Pyrénées un bon souvenir.

To his Wife.

Tarbes: August 1, 1888.

Here we are very peaceable and comfortable—beautiful weather, splendid mountains, and nothing to bother about. This is a charming place; house and garden both very pretty. Breteuil's electors drop in at odd times and some remain to breakfast and some to dinner. They are not very amusing, but very harmless and interesting as types of French provincial society. The worst of the electors is that they will not go to bed; but remain very late. I suppose they are too glad to get an evening out.

The charm of this place is the absence of any crowd. French and Spaniards are the only people who come here and English and Americans are conspicuous by their absence. I tried the 'douches' at Cauterets. They are very pleasant at the moment, but, I think, enervating. We dined last night in company with Mons. de Gontaut, formerly Ambassador in Berlin—a charming old man.... Yesterday we drove to Lourdes, a very extraordinary place—a monument of 'la bêtise humaine.' A great number of electors are coming to dinner in the evening.

. . . . . .

I have just seen a man 118 years old. His father lived to be 114, and died from a fall from a horse; his mother lived to be 108. He is a Spaniard who lives at Tarbes—quite a poor man,

subsisting on charity; looks about 70 years old, has all his teeth, lots of grey hair, and he walked here all the way from the town—about three-quarters of a mile. There is no doubt about his age, as his papers are all in order. He served eight years in the French army in Spain and was present at the siege of Saragossa. He said he would be glad to die, as he was quite tired of living so long.... Breteuil's colleague in the representation of this department arrived this morning.

Now in 1890 he would go to Egypt, where with two old friends he had leased a *dahabeah* on the Nile. His letters to his wife, from which I make a few extracts, describe the even progress of the journey.

Monte Carlo: November 25, 1890.

So to-day is the meeting of Parliament. How thankful I am not to be going down to the House! In this morning's *Galignani* there is a sensational announcement that a dissolution of Parliament is to take place in the spring. I do not believe it, though perhaps, as Parnell's love affairs have thrown disarray among the Home Rulers, some of the Ministers might think it a good moment. But 'a bird in the hand' is what Lord S. will be guided by.

Rome: December 3, 1890.

Your nice long letter was very pleasant to receive. I should like to get them very often. I also got your telegram about a letter from Fardell posted to Naples, which I suppose I will receive to-morrow. I hope he does not announce a dissolution. Parnell's manifesto is a masterpiece. He lifts the issue between himself and Mr. Gladstone from the small ground of the divorce up to the large ground of a great political question. He may hold his own; but it must mean a complete smash-up of the Home Rule alliance.... The Government will be fools if they do not dissolve. This crash of the Home Rule party, this repudiation by Parnell of Mr. G.'s scheme, is the most complete and glaring justification of the Unionist cause. They will never get a better chance. However, I hope they won't do so, as it would spoil my Egyptian plans.... I fear that bad Land Bill may now pass and make heaps of difficulty and trouble for future Governments....

Dahabeah, Ammon Ra, near Luxor: December 28, 1890.

It was very pleasant on waking up this morning to find a

bundle of letters from you and others. They were brought down the river by one of Cook's steamers from Luxor, where we shall arrive in about an hour.... We have been eight days on the journey from Assiout, as, except for two days, the wind has not been favourable and our steam launch is not strong enough to tow us more than about three miles an hour. I cannot tell you how pleasant it has been; one day more perfect than another, and yet the heat has never been oppressive. The days slip by as if they were hours. The newspapers came to hand at Assiout—though newspapers here seem to be superfluities—and I was able to read up all the news to the 13th.... It certainly looks as if the Government had been immeasurably strengthened and would require no help from anyone. But all these things concern me very little. We are enjoying ourselves immensely. Life on the Nile is ideal. The scenery would be monotonous if it were not on so vast a scale; but as it is, one never tires of it. Certainly this is the only place to pass the winter if fine warm weather is desired.... I must say I wish you were on board this boat—a week of this weather and rest would make you as strong as a horse. Perhaps next winter, if we are alive and well, we may do it together....





Lady Randolph Churchill.
From a drawing by John S. Sargent, R.A.

1891
Æt.
41

Dahabeah, Ammon Ra, Denderah: January 6, 1891.

I can, I fear, ill repay you for your very interesting letter of the

24th. All I can say is that it was thoroughly appreciated. I have little or nothing to tell you. A life without incident and without emotion has many advantages; but does not lend itself to correspondence, either as regards energy or material. I have seen Philæ and the Cataract, as also the temples of Edfoo and of this place—most interesting. Also a long expedition from Luxor to the tombs of the kings, some four thousand years old. Each king must have passed his lifetime in making his tomb, and if it was not finished when he died he had to go without. The weather has been perfect—day after day of cloudless skies, cool breezes and unparalleled sunsets. We read, we smoke, we lounge, we play picquet—at which I continue to hold exceedingly indifferent cards.... We shall dawdle out our time here as much as possible, as we do not want to be more than a day in Cairo.

To Sir Henry James, who wrote him accounts of the strange developments at Westminster, he framed a more elaborate reply than was usual with him in private correspondence:—

Dahabea, 'Ammon Ra.' Edfu, 60 miles south of Luxor:
Jan. 3, 1891.

Your amiable and friendly letter reached me here this morning on my return from a visit to and prolonged study of a temple erected by the Ptolemies 250 B.C. It is ridiculously modern compared with Karnac, but its comparatively perfect state enables one usefully to imagine what Karnac was. In such a frame of mind, embracing a period of 10,000 years, your home politics, your House of Commons interests, the eloquence of Smith, the courage of Balfour, the honesty of Hartington, the financial genius of Goschen and the adroitness of Joe, all acted upon, stimulated and developed by the lax morals of Parnell, present themselves to my mental optics much in the same manner as fleas may attract the notice of an elephant. I am living with Rameses, Thotmes and Seti, and I have despised the Ptolemies as parvenus, and Cleopatra as ——! Imagine therefore how infinitely little becomes the struggle of the Kilkenny factions, the senile drivellings of Mr. Gladstone on Ravenswood which you think worthy of mention, the remorse of the officeless Harcourt or the doubting gloom of Morley. Here on this placid expanse of limitless plain and river and among these Egyptian temples you

appear to me, as I say, like performing fleas. I was once a flea like you and skipped as nimbly as any of you, but have by some Pythagorean process emerged from that abject condition, and prefer musings over an immense past to worryings over a little present.

In addition to the attractions of this country and of its historic associations, we have and enjoy ideal weather, perfect peace, absence of all noise and a floating domicile in all respects comfortable; good food, hock, champagne, Pilsener beer, Marquis chocolate, ripe bananas, fresh dates, and literally hundreds of French novels, recourse to which is interrupted by games of picquet, in which the lucky Harry T[yrrwhit] has gained of me 10,000 1*d.* points. French novels, cards and Egyptian temples assimilate pleasantly, but English newspapers and English news are out of tune with these surroundings. And what pleases me most in your letter is the reflection to which it gives rise, that I still exist in the memory of a friend.

This is the part of the world in which you must pass your next winter. This heavenly climate will tame the most ferocious gout and tranquillise the most irritated nerves. If all is well, I will conduct you here next winter, introduce to you my friends Rameses & Co., forbid you the acquaintance of the vulgar Ptolemies, and gain from you 10,000 1*d.* points at picquet.

We have reached our Southern limit at Assouan, and are now leisurely floating down the current back to Cairo, back to noise, back to cold, back to tiresome women, back to *Times* leading articles, all inventions of the devil from which Providence has preserved the waters of the Nile....

I do not think I have ever experienced so pleasant a time as during the last three weeks. I have arrived at the condition of the true philosopher; nerves calm, health good, everything to please the eye and the mind. The past affords matter for agreeable reflection. The future appears without vexation. I can inform myself with interest but without emotions either of pleasure or displeasure of the good or evil fortunes of my enemies or my friends, and I please myself with the imagination that if I were to die to-morrow, I should have experienced and exhausted, prudently abandoning before satiation, every form of human excitement. This is what you can come to if you spend your next winter in Egypt; and it is to repay you for your letter that I thus

lengthily suggest to you the prospect of obtaining at least six weeks of happiness and peace in the year of our Lord 1891.

1887-1890

It is instructive to notice that Lord Randolph's conduct during the years that followed his resignation will bear a far more exacting scrutiny than the years of his good fortune. Differing as he did on many questions from the Government, separated from them by the personal dislike or distrust with which he was regarded, he had nevertheless given them, so far as he conscientiously could, a loyal and regular support. He had never spoken against them except when compelled by opinions plainly declared in former years, or moved by deep feeling; and then he had always practised a moderation in tone and language foreign to his disposition. He had done nothing to embarrass them or hamper them. He had never made a personal attack on any of his late colleagues, nor can I discover any unkind or acrimonious word used about them. From time to time he had tried to influence their policy in directions which he believed the public interest and their own equally required; but these occasions had been rare and he had usually been right. Although the object of much abuse and even hatred from his old friends, he nourished no thoughts of permanent separation. 'Born and bred,' he wrote in 1891, 'in the Conservative party, I could never join the ranks of their opponents.' 'I have always been,' he told his constituents (February 22, 1891), 'more or less of an independent member. From the year 1874, when I entered Parliament, to the year 1880—during the time of Lord Beaconsfield's Government—I felt it my duty on more than one occasion to vote and speak against that powerful Government, and at times when in certain circles in London even to whisper a doubt as to its wisdom was considered almost treasonable. From 1880 to 1885 I pursued a course in Parliament of the greatest freedom and

independence. More than once I went my own way, not caring much whether anyone followed; but I hardly think there are those who will assert that my action from 1880 to 1885 did injury to the Tory party. I have been unable even of late years to divest myself of my independent character. Lord Melbourne—or was it Lord Palmerston?—once characterised an independent member of Parliament as a member who could not be depended upon. Well, this much is certain. If I am called upon to support a reactionary and antiquated policy, then I am not to be depended upon. If I am called upon to approve illiberal or sham legislation, then I am not to be depended upon. If I am called upon to support an aggressive policy or a policy of large expenditure, then I am not to be depended upon. But if I am called upon to abide by pledges I have given on any platform or in any published letter or to support the political principles I have advocated, since I entered Parliament, then I can confidently point out to you my past career as a proof that I am to be depended upon—more, perhaps, than any devoted partisan of the present Government.'

These were the best years of his intellectual power—a short summer when his mind was most fertile and his judgment ripe and prescient. Almost alone and unsupported he had by sheer personal force and persuasive speech commanded respect and procured important decisions. Grave or gay, in attack, defence, or exposition, on all sorts of subjects and in all sorts of humours, the House of Commons had delighted to hear him; and what he said in Parliament or out of doors, whether about politics or other matters, was received and examined with national attention. But let it be observed that Lord Randolph Churchill was beaten, whatever he did, when he played the national game; and was victorious, whatever he did, while he played the party game. No question of 'taste' or 'patriotism' was raised when what he said, however

outrageous, suited his party. No claim of truth counted when what he said, however incontrovertible, was awkward for his party. Yet almost fiercely he asserted his loyalty to the Unionist cause.

'It was not difficult for me to notice,' he wrote in 1891, in a letter to his constituents, never published, 'that after power was assured to the Tory leaders for some years by the General Election of 1886, it was their intention to stand on the old ways of Toryism in respect to Ireland, foreign policy and expenditure. Then I went away from them. On three occasions since during the last long five years have I gone against them: (1) When they threatened to recommence the policy of military expenditure in the Soudan; (2) when in 1888 the present Leader of the House of Commons, then Chief Secretary, ridiculed and denounced in the House the demand of the Irish members for Local Self-government; (3) when in 1890 I declared against the iniquitous and infamous policy of the Parnell Commission. With these three exceptions I often supported the Government by speech and vote in Parliament; I even spoke and voted in favour of their Coercion Bill in 1887, though I was much startled and disquieted afterwards by the manner of its administration; and in 1887, 1888, and 1889 I addressed large public meetings in their support. For the rest of the time, when I disagreed and doubted—as was often the case—I stood aloof and held my peace; and you must well remember that on more than one occasion in past sessions this strong Government and party managed to get themselves into the sorest straits, and that opportunities were offered of paying off some old scores which, if personal considerations had influenced me, I should not have neglected and which, I expect, not many politicians would have allowed to pass by. Bear this in mind, I pray you, in common justice when you hear me freely accused —as I have often been, and shall be again—of disloyalty to the Tory or the Unionist party; contrast the line of action I

have followed with action followed in former Parliaments towards former Governments by former out-going Ministers; and I call upon you to acquit me fully of any charge of disloyalty.'

It had been proved to utter conviction in those barren years that 'ten men armed can subdue one man in his shirt.' One friend after another had fallen away from Lord Randolph. The hostility of the Prime Minister and the tireless machine-like detraction of the party press had not been without effect. His Parliamentary position was one of complete isolation and his popularity in the country had declined. Others—scarcely heard of in the days of battle—were now bearing the burden of the Unionist cause, and the public eye was fixed upon a stout-hearted bookseller whose perseverance as Leader was making of his repeated failures a curious but undoubted success, and upon an Irish Secretary whose reputation was every day enhanced by the taunts and revilings he provoked from his opponents. The Minister who seemed so powerful in 1886, the people's favourite, the necessary Parliamentarian, the central link of the Unionist alliance, certainly its most redoubtable champion, stood outside all political combinations, actual or potential. The Government of such a sickly infancy was grown up into a strong, if not a healthy manhood. The sunrise of wealth and extending comfort which in every nation lighted up the last quarter of the nineteenth century was strengthening by an unseen yet irresistible process the forces upon which Conservatism depends; and the millstone of Home Rule bowed and strangled the Liberals. There was neither need nor place for a leader of Tory Democracy.

All this was perfectly appreciated by Lord Randolph Churchill, and his detached contented mood and habit of thought were carefully and laboriously assumed and fortified by every trick of mental discipline he knew. A studied disdain of the course of public events, the influence

of movement and of changing scenes, the delights of summer-lands, books, friends and mild Egyptian cigarettes —all were to him the incidents of an elaborate art. But the characters of valetudinarian, pleasure-seeker, traveller, sportsman, failed to satisfy, and served scarcely to distract. Always at hand, though forbidden his mind, lurked the hopes and the schemes, once so real, now turned to shadows: and the thought—never quite to be chased away —of that multitude of working people he knew so well, who had trusted him as their champion; who were still ready, if they knew how, to do him honour; but for whom —though their problems were still unsolved, uncared for, or cared for only as counters in the game of politics—it was beyond his power to do the smallest service. And although the great river, gliding impassively along by the sands of the desert and the temples of forsaken faiths, might seem to smile at fretful aspirations, the reproach and disappointment silently consumed him.

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Further and further afield! After the session of 1890 Lord Randolph Churchill abandoned the House of Commons. He attended seldom; he never spoke. In the summer of 1891 he sailed for South Africa in quest of sport and gold—and peace. A journey to Mashonaland was in those days an enterprise of some difficulty; nor, indeed, before the overthrow of the Matabele power, devoid of risk. Elaborate arrangements were required to conduct even a small party in comfort through these untrodden fields. The command of the miniature expedition was entrusted to Major Giles, a traveller well acquainted with the country. As killing game was a necessity as well as an amusement, one of the best hunters in South Africa, Hans Lee, was included in the party; and Mr. Perkins, a mining engineer of the highest eminence, was engaged to search for gold.

The interest with which Lord Randolph was regarded by

the public had survived his popularity and all these preparations excited general curiosity and afforded fertile themes for comment and satire. He was persuaded to write a long series of letters for the *Daily Graphic* by the extraordinary offer of a hundred pounds for each letter. Every incident of his journey, even the most trivial, especially the most personal that could be discovered, was telegraphed to England by assiduous reporters and discussed with genial malice by the Conservative newspapers. He was burlesqued on the Gaiety stage with a wit so pointed that the song was stopped by the intervention of the Lord Chamberlain. While paragraphs, lampoons and caricatures exhibited him daily to the ridicule of his countrymen; while the delegates of the National Union hooted his name at their annual conference; and while the chiefs of the Tories complacently admired the fulness of their triumph, the ex-Minister plunged into vast solitudes. Across the veldt by bush and kloof and kopje, through the drifts of flooded rivers, by mining camps and frontier posts into magnificent wildernesses toiled the tiny caravan. A gust of bracing air and rough exertion breaks in upon the artificial ventilation of the House of Commons. The crowded benches, with the yellow light streaming down upon them from the ceiling, recede into the distance. Waggons creak and jolt along stony tracks, camp-fires twinkle in the waste, antelope gallop over spacious pastures, lions roar beneath the stars

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All this has been described by Lord Randolph Churchill himself in the book in which his published letters were finally compiled.[74] I will not tell a twice-told tale. It was not perhaps surprising that a relentless criticism should have denied to these productions all title to literary merit. Their commercial value consisted mainly in the personality of the writer; and that personality was the object of powerful and widespread prejudice. The extravagant price

paid for them was an incitement to every sharp pen less generously rewarded. The letters themselves make no pretence to elegance. Here and there a touch of quaint humour, a caustic or jingling phrase, or a rhetorical passage—but for the most part they tell a plain story of sport and travel, as such stories have often been told before.

One extract shall suffice:—

We were riding along through a small open glade covered with high grass, Lee a few yards ahead of me, when I suddenly saw him turn round, cry out something to me, and point with his finger ahead. I looked, and saw lolloping along through and over the grass, about forty yards off, a yellow animal about as big as a small bullock. It flashed across me that it was a lion—the last thing in the world that I was thinking of. I was going to dismount and take aim, for I was not frightened at the idea of firing at a retreating lion; but Lee called out in succession five or six times, 'Look, look!' at the same time pointing with his finger in different directions in front. I saw to my astonishment, and rather to my dismay, that the glade appeared to be alive with lions. There they were, trooping and trotting along ahead of us like a lot of enormous dogs, great yellow objects, offering such a sight as I had never dreamed of. Lee turned to me and said, 'What will you do?' I said, 'I suppose we must go after them,' thinking all the time that I was making a very foolish answer. This I am the more convinced of now, for Lee told me afterwards that many old hunters in South Africa will turn away from such a troupe of lions as we had before us. We trotted on after them a short distance to where the grass was more open, the lions trotting along ahead of us in the most composed and leisurely fashion, very different from the galloping-off of a surprised and startled antelope. Lee now dismounted and fired at a lion about fifty yards off. I saw the brute fall forward on his head, twist round and round and stagger into a patch of high grass slightly to the left of where I was riding.

I did not venture to dismount with such a lot of these brutes all around ahead of me, not feeling at all sure that I should be able to remount quickly enough and gallop away after shooting. My horse, untrained to the gun, would not allow me to fire from his

back and would probably have thrown me off had I done so. I stuck close to Lee, determined to leave the shooting to him unless things became critical, as his aim was true. His nerves were steady, which was more than mine were, though I do not admit that I was at all frightened. I counted seven lions; Lee says there were more. I saw, and cried out to Lee, pointing to a great big fellow with a heavy black mane trotting along slightly ahead of the rest. He was just crossing a small spruit about one hundred yards ahead and as he climbed the opposite bank offered his hind quarters as a fair target. Lee fired at him, at which he quickened his pace and disappeared in front. We approached the spruit and, almost literally under my nose, I saw three lions tumble up out of it, climb the opposite side and disappear. Now I own I longed for my shooting pony Charlie, for they offered me splendid shots, quite close, such as I could hardly have missed. I raised my rifle to take aim at the last; but, perhaps fortunately for me, he disappeared, before I could fire, in the high grass on the other side. I saw Lee fire from his horse at one as it was climbing the bank, which he wounded badly. It retreated into a patch of thick grass the other side of the spruit, uttering sounds something between a growl, a grunt and a sob.

Mashonaland yielded no golden results to the practised eye of Mr. Perkins; and it was not until the expedition had returned to Johannesburg that he unfolded his novel theory of deep levels. At this time the outcrop of the Great Banket reef was the only gold area which was being worked. Mr. Perkins observed the slant at which the strata emerged from the upper soil. He calculated accordingly. He advised the purchase of farms and properties along the south side of the ridge. By striking down directly into the earth the Great Banket reef would again be overtaken—richer perhaps than ever before. Lord Randolph Churchill must have stood at this time very close to an almost immeasurable fortune. Such a vital thought could not, however, remain secret—was already occurring to other minds. But the investments which he made were not inconsiderable or ill-judged, and were sold at his death for upwards of 70,000*l.*

While such business and adventure occupied his mind the leadership of the House of Commons fell vacant. Mr. Smith's heavy task was at an end. For two sessions he had struggled against ever-increasing physical distresses. Hour after hour he had sat on his Bench with his rug across his knees—a pathetic and not unheroic figure. Night after night he had risen in his place to discharge in singularly bad speeches his duty—as he would have phrased it—to 'Queen and country.' Now he was gone, and Lord Salisbury made haste to appoint Mr. Balfour in his stead. His selection was almost universally applauded.

Lord Randolph Churchill to his Wife.

Mafeking, November 23, 1891.

So Arthur Balfour is really leader—and Tory Democracy, the genuine article, at an end! Well, I have had quite enough of it all. I have waited with great patience for the tide to turn, but it has not turned, and will not now turn in time. In truth, I am now altogether *déconsidéré*. I feel sure the other party will come in at the next election. The South Molton election is another among many indications. No power will make me lift hand or foot or voice for the Tories, just as no power would make me join the other side. All confirms me in my decision to have done with politics and try to make a little money for the boys and for ourselves. I hope you do not all intend to worry me on this matter and dispute with me and contradict me. More than two-thirds, in all probability, of my life is over, and I will not spend the remainder of my years in beating my head against a stone wall. I expect I have made great mistakes; but there has been no consideration, no indulgence, no memory or gratitude—nothing but spite, malice and abuse. I am quite tired and dead-sick of it all, and will not continue political life any longer. I have not Parnell's dogged, but at the same time sinister, resolution; and have many things and many friends to make me happy, without that horrid House of Commons work and strife. After all, A. B. cannot beat my record; and it was I who got him first into the Government, and then into the Cabinet. This he and Lord S. know well.... It is so pleasant getting near home again. I have had a good time (out here), but now reproach myself for having left

you all for so long, and am dying to be again at Connaught Place.

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CHAPTER XXII

OPPOSITION ONCE MORE

Though much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we
are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.
Tennyson: *Ulysses*.

1892
Æt.
43

THE variations of English politics are continual, and at times so swift that those who influence them and are in turn influenced by them are hardly conscious of the pace they are travelling. As the general situation alters, the relations of its principal characters insensibly change. The doubtful or indifferent acquaintance of one year is the trusted comrade of the next. Combinations impossible in January are inevitable in June. Mortal offences are forgotten, if they are not forgiven; and as the ship moves forward into newer waters only a fading streak of froth lingers on the surface of the sea.

Lord Randolph Churchill returned from South Africa early in 1892, to find, so far as he was concerned, a better temper and complexion in public affairs than at any time since his resignation. The life of the Government was ebbing away; the appeal to country could not be long

delayed; and although the Parnell disclosures had immensely strengthened the Unionist position, there was little in the record or character of the Administration to excite popular enthusiasm. The drag of six years of office made its effect felt, and the Grand Old Man seemed still to enjoy the unconquerable splendour of his powers. That feeling of closing up the ranks, usually the prelude to a General Election, was abroad in the party; and its chiefs, though he did not at first realise it, looked in amity, not unmingled with anxiety, to the erstwhile leader of Tory Democracy, who had done such great things with the electors in the past and might, for all they knew, exert even a greater influence in the future. His reappearance in the House of Commons in the first days of February created a stir, which his silent and reserved demeanour did not speedily allay. Alike in the lobbies and the newspapers the question was debated, 'What is he going to do?' And it must be admitted that his answer to the resolution in which the South Paddington Conservative Association inquired whether he proposed to stand, and if so whether he would support the general policy of the Conservative party, did not altogether remove the uncertainty which existed.

'I would be obliged to you,' he wrote to the Secretary of the Association (February 4, 1892), 'if you would inform the Committee that, as at present advised, it is my intention in the event of a dissolution of Parliament to offer myself to the constituency for re-election and that in taking that course I should hope that I might rely upon the renewed support of the body which the Committee represent. It would further be my intention, in the event of my being re-elected as member of Parliament for the borough, to give to the Tory party the same support which I have given to it since the year 1874, when I first entered Parliament. Of the usefulness of that support it is not for me to judge; it is sufficient for me to say that my action in the future in the House of Commons would be in accordance, and

consistent, with my action in the past.'

To FitzGibbon he wrote with greater plainness.

Penn House, Amersham: January 13, 1892.

It was too pleasant to get a sight of your handwriting again. My travel through South Africa was as nice an experience as anyone could have, and though I am very glad to get back I really enjoyed every hour of my journey. I think I find H. M. G. in a very weak and tottering state; their feelings towards myself more bitter and hostile than ever. But I imagine that, willy nilly, they will have to shake off or subdue their prejudices, for great troubles are before them. My information is that a large, influential and to some extent independent section of Tories kick awfully against Irish Local Government and do not mean to vote for it. This comes from a very knowledgeable member of the Government outside the Cabinet. If the Government proceed with their project they will either split or seriously dishearten the party, and to do either on the verge of a General Election would be suicidal. This is what they ought to do: They ought to say this Irish Local Government is far too large a question to be dealt with by a moribund Parliament; they ought to confess that there is not sufficient agreement among their supporters as to the nature and extent of such a measure, such as would favour the chances of successful legislation, and that they have determined to reserve the matter for a new Parliament, when the mind of the country upon their Irish administration has been fully ascertained. But I would not stop there. What is the great feature of the political situation in Ireland now? The resurrection in great force of priestly domination in political matters. Now I would cool the ardour of these potentates for Mr. G. by at once offering them the largest concessions on education—primary, intermediate, and University—which justice and generosity could admit of. I would not give them everything before the General Election, but I would give a good lot, and keep a good lot for the new Parliament. I do not think they could resist the bribe; and the soothing effect of such a policy on the Irish vote and attitude would be marked. Of course the concession would have to be very large—almost as large as what the Bishops have ever asked for—but preserving always intact Trinity College. It would assume the material shape of a money subsidy. What do you think of this? What is the frame

of mind of the Bishops? What form and scope would you give to such a measure or measures as I suggest?

H. M. G. have no imagination or originality. The keystone of their policy has been to play against the life of Mr. G. This (not very noble, but still human) policy should, once taken up, be pursued remorselessly. To carry on the policy, the life of the Parliament should be prolonged into '93. How to do this? Introduce a measure dealing largely with the registration laws.

'One man one vote'—a trifle—could be conceded; twelve months' residence in lieu of eighteen established; paid officials for preparing register appointed in all constituencies. The new register could not be ready before the early spring of next year, and the convenient time for the election would be the summer or autumn. Now, my dear FitzGibbon, imagine the consternation, fury and utter paralysis of the Gladstonians if the Government were to make this complete *volte-face*—this tremendous surprise (all so logical and defensible as it is), the relief and joy of the Tories at getting rid of Local Government and at getting another year of life! Do not show this to anyone, unless it be to David Plunket, if he is with you—the Government are too fond of appropriating my ideas without acknowledgment—but write me all you think about it. I could write pages in support of it, but your own wily and Ulysses kind of mind will suggest to you all the wonderful elaboration of which it is susceptible.

And again in April:—

Politics attract me less and less and I successfully resist all invitations to take part in them, whether in Parliament or in the country. I really sincerely do not think that an offer of office would cause me the slightest emotion or drag me from my freedom and carelessness. However, that speculation is not likely to be put to the test. I have now a nice position—well with my constituents, well with my party—and am inclined to let well alone. I anticipate with amiable malice a Unionist defeat, and speculate on the nature of their struggles to resume power after that defeat. Balfour is doing very well, and has been much benefited by the senseless outcry raised against him by the Opposition.... Did you see my beautiful Latin letter to the [Trinity] College authorities, corrected and revised by Welldon of Harrow! It ought to have been published.

As the dissolution approached, overtures were made to him to contest several constituencies and he was pressed on all sides for his assistance. He declined everything. 'It is not my intention,' he wrote to one ardent Tory Democrat, [75] 'to make any political speeches at the present time. Formerly I made many; but the labour was thankless and fruitless. Besides, I have not the smallest idea what the programme of our party now is.... From 1880 to 1886 I advocated on my own account a generally liberal and progressive policy, with the result that when I came into office I found that none of my colleagues were prepared to give to this policy the smallest genuine support; and that, office having been reached, promises to the people were to be forgotten or evaded. This experience I will never recommence; and it is for this reason that I decline, and must continue to decline, all invitations to take part in the platform exercises which precede the General Election.' In Parliament he remained silent. He admired Mr. Balfour's early essays in leading the House. 'At last,' he said, 'the Tory party have got a leader whom they like.' To one who told him that if he sat below the gangway he could soon overthrow the Government, he answered, 'No, no; Arthur Balfour is too often nearly right.'

The only interventions in outside politics which he allowed himself were a speech on Metropolitan affairs during the London County Council election and a letter to Mr. Arnold White, the Liberal-Unionist candidate for Tyneside. This letter, however, outlines so boldly the scope and direction of his views that it deserves to be quoted.

He wrote:—

> The Labour community is carrying on at the present day a very significant and instructive struggle. It has emancipated itself very largely from the mere mechanism of party politics; it realises that it now possesses political power to such an extent as to make it independent of either party in the State; and the struggle which it

is now carrying on is less against Capital, less one of wages or division of profits, but rather one for the practical utilisation in its own interest of the great political power which it has acquired. The Labour interest is now seeking to do itself what the landed interest and the manufacturing capitalist interest did for themselves when each in turn commanded the disposition of State policy. Our land laws were framed by the landed interest for the advantage of the landed interest, and foreign policy was directed by that interest to the same end. Political power passed very considerably from the landed interest to the manufacturing capitalist interest, and our whole fiscal system was shaped by this latter power to its own advantage, foreign policy being also made to coincide. We are now come, or are coming fast, to a time when Labour laws will be made by the Labour interest for the advantage of Labour. The regulation of all the conditions of labour by the State, controlled and guided by the Labour vote, appears to be the ideal aimed at; and I think it extremely probable that a foreign policy which sought to extend by tariff over our Colonies and even over other friendly States, the area of profitable barter of produce will strongly commend itself to the mind of the Labour interest. Personally I can discern no cause for alarm in this prospect and I believe that on this point you and I are in perfect agreement. Labour in this modern movement has against it the prejudices of property, the resources of capital, and all the numerous forces—social, professional, and journalist—which those prejudices and resources can influence. It is our business as Tory politicians to uphold the Constitution. If under the Constitution as it now exists, and as we wish to see it preserved, the Labour interest finds that it can obtain its objects and secure its own advantage, then that interest will be reconciled to the Constitution, will find faith in it and will maintain it. But if it should unfortunately occur that the Constitutional party, to which you and I belong, are deaf to hear and slow to meet the demands of Labour, are stubborn in opposition to those demands and are persistent in the habit of ranging themselves in unreasoning and short-sighted support of all the present rights of property and capital, the result may be that the Labour interest may identify what it will take to be defects in the Constitutional party with the Constitution itself, and in a moment of indiscriminate impulse may use its power to sweep both away.

This view of affairs, I submit, is worthy of attention at a time when it is a matter of life or death to the Constitutional party to enlist in the support of the Parliamentary Union of the United Kingdom a majority of the votes of the masses of Labour.

You tell me that you find the designation 'Tory' a great difficulty to you. I cannot see any good reason for this. After all, since the Revolution the designation 'Tory' has always possessed an essentially popular flavour, in contradistinction to the designation 'Whig.' It has not only a popular but a grand historical origin; it denotes great historical struggles, in many of which the Tory party have been found on the popular side. Lord Beaconsfield—who, if he was anything, was a man of the people and understood the popular significance of names and words—invariably made use of the word 'Tory' to characterise his party; and whatever the Tory party may be deemed to be at particular moments, I have always held, from the commencement of my political life, that, rightly understood and explained, it ought to be, and was intended to be, the party of broad ideas and of a truly liberal policy.

His interest in Labour questions was, indeed, growing steadily. When the Eight Hours Bill for Miners was discussed that year in the Commons, he addressed a long private letter to Mr. Balfour praying for its considerate treatment. 'I humbly advise, but pressingly; in the debate let Gorst have a little Labour fling. Keep your hand tight over Matthews and, if you can see your way to it, make one of those interesting and amicable speeches which you can do so well, not exactly saying that your mind is open, but, to use a Gladstonianism, that it is not altogether absolutely closed. You can realise,' he added quaintly, 'how much importance I attach to the question when I tell you that I am actually coming up from Lincoln and missing three important races in which our horses run, to vote for the Bill. I do not think I would do this for the Monarchy, the Church, the House of Lords or the Union.'

The General Election came at that period, July, dear to the hearts of Tory organisers, when democracy is supposed

to be under the soothing influence of summer weather, and before villadom has departed on its holidays. Lord Randolph took little part in it. He stood for South Paddington as a Conservative and an opponent of Home Rule. He let it be understood that if he was not interfered with by the Liberal party he would not speak outside the limits of his own constituency. This bargain seeming sufficiently good, in view of the fact that the seat was impregnable, no opposition was offered him. The only speech he found it necessary to make, and his election address, dealt almost entirely with the maintenance of the Union, though the latter also contained the following paragraph:—

'My views as to the reforms in the public service which public safety and economy alike urgently call for, are, I think, well known to you; they have undergone no change, save that I hold them more strongly than ever. You are also, I imagine, not unaware of my desire to meet with all legitimate sympathy and good-will the newly-formed but very articulate and well-defined demands of the labouring classes.'

To FitzGibbon he wrote:—

I cannot manage to get over for the Trinity College festivities. I have a great and increasing horror of anything in the nature of speeches and functions. We are all over here awaiting in suspense the result of the elections.... I have refused many invitations to speak. I do not think the time at all propitious for anything in the shape of a manifesto such as you suggest. Besides which, I have no contest in this constituency; and as the Radicals are not annoying me I do not want to provoke them. Nor do I feel called upon to take any action which may be of the slightest use to a Government and a party which for five years has boycotted and slandered me....

The Paddington election proceeded smoothly to an unopposed return. Parliament met only to change an Administration and separate for the holidays.



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I am living [Lord Randolph wrote to FitzGibbon in November] a very quiet life in London, mainly occupied in reading books of one kind and another. I have two discourses to deliver, one at Macclesfield on the 30th inst. and one at Perth in December. Then *tacebo*. I hope John Morley will make a final adjustment of the grievances of those poor Christian Brothers. If I can usefully make any representations to him, instruct me. We have always been very good friends. Such Ministers as I have seen declare that they will soon be turned out; but I cannot see why this should be so. At any rate, beyond opposing their Home Rule Bill, I shall do nothing to bother them, as I very greatly prefer them to their predecessors.

This feeling of detachment was soon to be removed. The accession of Mr. Gladstone to power and the imminence of a Home Rule Bill was bound to unite in the most effective manner all sections of the Unionist party. Lord Randolph had, since his return from South Africa, accepted, though not without embarrassment, an invitation to dine with Lord Salisbury. 'C'est le premier plat qui coûte,' wrote Wolff, who highly approved of the proceeding. Now Chamberlain sent a very friendly letter, and this was soon followed by a long and agreeable conference. The meetings which Lord Randolph had consented to address at Perth and Macclesfield in the autumn must have made his antagonism to the new Government plain; and only the sudden death of his brother the Duke of Marlborough, in November, which was a great shock to him, caused those arrangements to fall through; so that Parliament met in January, 1893, without his having formally joined himself to the official leaders of the Opposition.

With the opening of the Session and the beginning of the fight came full and complete reconciliation. He was urged to take his place again upon the Front Bench. 'If it had ever occurred to me,' wrote Mr. Balfour (January 30,

1893), 'that you could sit anywhere but on our bench, I would have spoken about it to you last night. *Everyone* desires you should do so, and *most of all* yours ever, A. J. B.' At the meeting of the Conservative party in the Carlton Club to consider the resistance to the Home Rule Bill, he kept himself in the background at some distance from Lord Salisbury. But after all the worthies had spoken, the assembly still found the proceedings incomplete and loud cries were raised from all parts of the room for 'Churchill.' At first there was no response, but so continuous and insistent was the demand that Lord Randolph eventually came forward and in a few simple words, which evoked remarkable enthusiasm, declared his willingness to serve, to the best of his ability, in the House of Commons under his friend and political chief, Mr. Balfour. He was henceforward invited to attend the private meetings of the Unionist leaders which were held at Devonshire House during the passage of the Irish Bill, and he took his share in framing the amendments and deciding upon the policy of the Opposition.

But now, when a new prospect was opening to his view, when he had been welcomed by the mass of the party, when he had returned to its inmost councils and ranged himself once again with his old friends and colleagues in whole-hearted support of a cause which he had long defended, a dark hand intervened. The great strain to which he had subjected himself during the struggle against Mr. Gladstone, the vexations and disappointments of later years and finally the severe physical exertions and exposure of South Africa had produced in a neurotic temperament and delicate constitution a very rare and ghastly disease. During the winter of '92 symptoms of vertigo, palpitation, and numbness of the hands made themselves felt, and his condition was already a cause of the deepest anxiety to his friends. But it was not till he rose on the occasion of the introduction of the Home Rule Bill

that the political world realised how great was the change. It happened that the debate was unexpectedly delayed by a question of privilege. The suspense proved a strain greater than he could bear with composure and when he rose his nervousness was extreme, and more to be looked for in some novice presuming for the first time than in a Parliamentarian of near twenty years' standing. He no longer dared to trust his memory: while the notes of his speech on the first Home Rule Bill had been written on a single sheet of paper, he now required eighteen. The House, crowded in every part to hear him, was shocked by his strangely altered appearance. It seemed incredible that this bald and bearded man with shaking hands and a white face drawn with pain and deeply marked with the lines of care and illness, and with a voice whose tremulous tones already betrayed the fatal difficulty of articulation, could be that same brilliant audacious leader who in the flush of exultant youth had marched irresistibly to power through the stormy days of 1886.

Yet the quality of his speech showed no signs of intellectual failing. Avoiding the network of details in which so many speakers had stumbled, he presented a broad intelligible picture. Lucid and original expression, close and careful reasoning, wealth of knowledge, quaint Randolphian witticisms—all were there. Although much of the charm and force of his manner was gone, his statement was considered by good and impartial judges to have been, with the exception of Mr. Chamberlain's, the best speech delivered against the Bill.

And he was destined to have one last flicker of success. Once again was he to encounter, not unequally, his majestic antagonist; once again those he had been so proud to lead, were to sustain him with triumphant acclamation. Exactly a week after his reappearance he was entrusted with the conclusion of the debate on the Welsh Church Suspensory Bill. The trying circumstances of his first effort

were no longer present and the feeling that he had broken the ice comforted him. His whole condition varied sensibly from day to day. This was his good day. The House seemed friendly to him; his spirits responded to its mood, and for the moment he seemed to recover all, or nearly all, of his former power. Anyone who will take the trouble to read in Hansard the intricate and sustained argument and the ready rejoinders of the speech will see that the vigour of his mind was unimpaired. Triumph came at the end. Putting aside his notes, he began a fierce and sparkling attack on Mr. Gladstone. It is the last quotation I shall make:—

'What motive has influenced the right honourable gentleman and his colleagues to propose this measure to the House? It is not, as the member for Hertford said, "plunder." That is the local motive. The political motive is widely different. It is undoubtedly to secure votes for their Irish policy. On behalf of that Irish policy nothing must be spared—not even the Established Church in Wales. Votes! Votes! Votes! That is the cry of the right honourable gentleman, and that is the political morality which he preaches.

'Hæc Janus summus ab imo
Prodocet. Hæc recinunt juvenes dictata senesque.

Votes at any cost, votes at any price. Refrain from nothing that can get you votes; adhere to nothing that can prevent your getting votes—the votes which alone can accomplish the political salvation of the Liberal party. I see before me,' he continued, backed by the clamorous growing support of the great party from whom he had been so long estranged, 'many distinguished gentlemen, as able as any that this country can produce, in the administration of public departments. But do you call that a Government? Whom do you govern? One day the Government is at the mercy of the Irish party; another day it is at the mercy of

the Welsh party; and on a third day yet to come it will be in the power of the Scotch party. The Government is absolutely in the power of any of the three sections of its majority. It must concede when any section makes a demand. An English Government has never yet been conducted on such principles—better suited to a Whitechapel auction than to the conduct of our State.'

This characteristic attack produced an electrical effect upon Mr. Gladstone, and the years seemed to fall from his shoulders as he rose at once to reply. 'I accept,' he cried, 'the monosyllabic invocation of the noble lord and I say "Vote, Vote, Vote" for both Welsh Disestablishment and Home Rule.' And in the course of a rejoinder which, though brief, was inferior to few, if any, of his later speeches, he cast back the reproaches of the Opposition and roused and rallied the enthusiasm of his followers amid a storm of cheers and counter-cheers. The First Reading passed by a majority of 56 in an angry and excited House, and the members hurried home, saying that the days of the 'eighties' were come back and that Randolph was himself again.

FitzGibbon, who was increasingly his correspondent, kept him supplied with an inexhaustible stream of fact and fancy upon the Irish Bill, and Lord Randolph's replies to his old friend constitute a sufficient account of his Parliamentary doings and domestic affairs:—

Branksome Dene, Bournemouth: January 15, 1893.

Many thanks for your letter. I am happy to say Winston is going on well and making a good and on the whole rapid recovery. He had a miraculous escape from being smashed to pieces, as he fell thirty feet off a bridge over a chine, from which he tried to leap to the bough of a tree. What dreadfully foolhardy and reckless things boys do! We have a sharp return of the cold, and snow is all about. I keep thinking of my good time in Ireland, which was the best I have had for a long time.

50 Grosvenor Square, W.: February 18, 1893.

Just a line to thank you for your letter. I imagine the speech produced not unsatisfactory effects. I was awfully 'jumpy.' The damned Bill is out, and I should greatly like from you, if you had spare time, a *critique raisonnée* of it. I shall have to make some speeches—probably one to a great meeting in Scotland at Easter time. The Second Reading is fixed for March 13, but this may be only a nominal date. I am very anxious about the result when it comes to a General Election. It is on England we must concentrate our efforts.

50 Grosvenor Square, W.: March 15, 1893.

It is most good of you taking so much trouble for me in respect of that measure, but I will try and make the best use of all you send me, and the 'lawyer's notes' may develop into orations which may electrify the country. If one can trust the statements of the Unionist Press, the Bill has absolutely no prospects or chances of passing. All the heart, what little there ever was, has been taken out of the Repealers by the postponement of the Second Reading. I only hope the end may not come too quick. The Local Veto Bill has infuriated the liquor interest even more than the H. R. Bill has Ulster.

I do not think the G. O. M. has influenza, but it may be some time before we see him again in the House of Commons.

50 Grosvenor Square, W.: March 29, 1893.

You are really too good, and I am shocked to have added so much to your work. Your notes will be most valuable to me and I am looking forward to their arrival. You will see that I loosed off last night against Mr. G. and Morley. I think our party were very much pleased. The old man is pressing us very hard with his demands for the time of Parliament and his refusal to give decent holidays. I have counselled that we do not enter on a futile resistance in which we must be overborne. I am all for giving him rope; he is sure to get into a terrible mess sooner or later.

I have a busy Easter before me. Political discourses at Liverpool and Perth, and I shall not get back to London till April 14. I shall keep your notes, though more for Parliamentary purposes; they will be too good for public meetings. With many thanks and much gratitude.

Penshurst: April 30, 1893.

Well, we have had three important meetings at Devonshire House—D. of D., M. of S., Joe C., Arthur B., Goschen, Sir Henry J., Atkinson, and myself. With the general result I am much pleased. I contended hard for the principle that none of our amendments should be in any sense constructive, nothing that could give rise to an idea that we were drifting into anything like an alternative scheme. Joe C. was much for leading us in this way, but Devonshire and Salisbury were very firm and the mischief was averted. Then there was another great danger avoided. Joe C., A. B., and Goschen were rather strongly in favour of an amendment excluding Ulster from the Bill. Your powers of reflection and discernment will show you at once what a horrid and dangerous trap that would have let us into. However, thanks again to Salisbury and Devonshire, the idea was dropped.

No amendments will be moved by any of us, but some have been drawn and will be given to others. James' amendments to the fifth clause are very ingenious. But I shall send you a paper of amendments marked after next Friday. We are to meet on Fridays when the H. R. Bill is in Committee. Government will not get their Committee Thursday: at the earliest not before Monday. I have not been very well lately, and the last three days have had a dreadful cough, which would quite have incapacitated me from speaking. I hope now it is yielding to treatment, and fortunately I have had no speeches to make. I am full of hope. There is much rumour that Mr. G. will go to the House of Lords. Harcourt is certainly very unwell. Belfast seems to have settled down. I have several speeches in the country before me in May. Write to me when you have time, but not in those horrid envelopes.

50 Grosvenor Square.

I have just delivered a twenty minutes' speech in the House of Commons on the case of the Christian Brothers. We had a large majority against the Ulster Bill. You will find a passage in Morley's speech in which he said that he still hoped for an arrangement, and that if he was a member of the Board [of National Education] he should expect to be able to discover a method. The Tories are, I expect, very cross with me.

I think you can now go to work again.

50 Grosvenor Square, W.: July 11, 1893.

I wish you had not written in so uncomplimentary a strain about Rosebery. I would have shown it him but for that. I have the very highest opinion of his work,[76] and always describe it as a literary diamond. Now please write me another letter, more complimentary. You can bring out all the views which have occurred to you without accusing him of absolute ignorance of Ireland. Remember, he was in a very awkward position, and Mr. Gladstone was very cold to him after the work appeared. After all, he made one of the most luminous expositions of the benefits of the Union and that covers every error. Do do what I ask, for I am very fond of Rosebery and very intimate with him, and I always look forward to being in a Government with him. He likes you very much, and knows on what intimate terms you and I are. Write me a review, not longer than your letter, fair and *raisonné*. It will not take you long, and it might do a great deal of good.

This is not the place to describe the stormy and protracted Session of 1893. The ruthless persistency of the Government; the stubborn resistance of the Conservative party; the inch-by-inch struggle in Committee; Chamberlain's keen and unceasing attack from below the gangway; the venerable figure of the Prime Minister, erect and unflinching, at the table; the mutilated procedure of Parliament; and the rising storm of partisanship on both sides contribute to an account which seems to approach by sure gradations a violent climax. Lord Randolph has left a record, in the form of a private letter to the Speaker, of the explosion:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to the Speaker.[77]

50 Grosvenor Square: July 29, 1893.

I am desirous of submitting to you a true account of the disturbance and the real cause of the disorder which occurred in the House of Commons on Thursday night.

The cry of 'Judas' was the retort to Mr. Chamberlain's expression 'Herod.' But Mr. Chamberlain has never taken any notice of it on previous occasions, nor did he on Thursday night, for I saw him smiling; and I do not consider that this exclamation was, except in a certain sense, the real cause of the turmoil. When Mr. Balfour left the House he told me that in the event of a

division we were to vote with the Government against Mr. Clancy's amendment, a course in which I thoroughly concurred. I did not know the tremendous passions which were raging behind me. The division had begun and I was already proceeding into the Lobby, when, turning round, I saw that scarcely a single member of the party had moved. I returned, and told them of Mr. Balfour's wishes, and begged them to go into the 'No' Lobby. But I was met by cries that they would not divide, and I ascertained that Mr. Vicary Gibbs had been trying to raise a point of order on the question of the cry 'Judas,' and, because that had not been settled, this very considerable section of the Opposition would not on any account divide. I thought it obvious that a point of order could not be decided when a division had been called, for the reason that a number of members had left the House for the Lobby. I urged upon them that not leaving their seats to vote was the gravest violation of the rules of the House, but all to no purpose. I therefore proceeded myself into the Lobby, where there was a small muster of Liberals, three or four Ministers, but none, so far as I could see, of the Opposition.

We waited for about two minutes, when the sound of a great noise reached us. We returned to the House; the floor was crowded with members, all standing; there was much scuffling; and certainly the scene was the most appalling I ever witnessed. I made my way to the Front Opposition Bench again, and implored the occupants of the Opposition benches to come into the Lobby to record their votes. There was still time to take the division, if only they would have moved from their seats; but all my efforts were more useless than before.

When you took the Chair, Sir, Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Balfour (neither of whom had seen all that passed) informed you that you had been sent for to decide a point of order as to the propriety of the cry 'Judas.' With all respect nothing could have been more inaccurate. I lay down confidently that the whole disorder arose from the Opposition members being determined not to take part in the division and from the Chairman seeming not to know that he could compel them to do so under pain of very severe penalties.

I must excuse myself for wearying you, Sir, with this long statement, but I would make two justifications: (1) I read there is a possibility of an inquiry into the cause of the disturbance, and I

am anxious that my evidence should be before you; (2) that there has been so much disorder and defiance of the authority of the Chairman of Committees by individual members of all parties during the progress of the Government of Ireland Bill that if it is not checked by the high authority which resides in yourself, Sir, the House of Commons will go from bad to worse, and it is impossible to foresee to what extent it may change its character in a very short time.

Lord Randolph's speech on the Welsh Church was his last Parliamentary success. Throughout the passage of the Home Rule Bill he held his place in the front rank of the Opposition and took a regular and not undistinguished part in the debates. In the Easter recess his speeches to large audiences at Liverpool and Perth commanded the attention of the country, and now, as in former years, he provided his party with an inexhaustible supply of catchwords and homely arguments. But the fire and force of his oratory were gone, never to return; and as the Session drew on, his difficulties of utterance and of memory increased, and the severe and unrelenting labour exhausted the remnants of his strength. Several times in the hot summer months he failed to hold the attention of the House and even sometimes to make himself understood. Once, indeed, the members grew impatient and the House was filled with restless murmurs. But his friends—some of them his most distinguished opponents—rallied to him, checked the interruptions, and tried perseveringly to make all look smooth and successful. And in these days it was observed that Mr. Gladstone would always be in his place to pay the greatest attention to his speeches and to reply elaborately to such arguments as he had advanced.

Lord Randolph Churchill was acutely conscious of his failing powers and the realisation roused him to immense exertions. A year before he had hardly cared for political affairs. Now he plunged desperately into the struggle. Others around him encountered the measures of a Liberal

Administration. He faced a different foe. With the whole strength of his will he fought against the oncoming decay. He refused to accept defeat. He redoubled his labours. If five hours no longer sufficed for the preparation of a speech—he would take five days. If his memory played him false, it must be exercised the more. If the House of Commons was escaping from his grip, he would see whether the people would still hear him.

During the months of May and June he spoke at no fewer than ten important meetings—at Reading, Bolton, Macclesfield, Leicester, Carlisle, Pontefract, Boston and other big towns. Everywhere he was received by immense audiences and frequently he succeeded, as of old, in arousing their interest and enthusiasm. The fertility of his mind and the store of political knowledge and expression he had accumulated were astonishing. Almost every one of these speeches was reported verbatim in the *Times* newspaper. All were confined to the single subject of the Home Rule Bill and the circumstances that attended its passage. No repetition of argument or phrase can be detected in the entire series of speeches.

It was at this time that he looked towards Bradford. That city had even before the General Election invited him to contest its central division. His eye for a political country was as good as ever. To persuade a great commercial centre to change its party allegiance, to be returned at the election with three solid seats won for the Unionist cause, to entrench himself in the heart of Yorkshire was a plan most attractive to his nature; and had he lived, these objects would certainly have been accomplished; for all divisions of Bradford returned Unionist members to the Parliament of 1895 and that condition continues to this day. On May 26 he addressed a large meeting in the St. George's Hall. His candidature was adopted with enthusiasm by the local Conservatives. Meetings were held, the organisation was improved, the Unionist press

was strengthened and supported, and a new impulse was imparted to the Conservative movement throughout the whole district.

For the autumn of 1893 he prepared a further extensive campaign all over the country, and he convinced himself that it was still in his power to raise a great wave of democratic excitement that would shake the Government and establish his position before the world. In order to collect all his strength for this effort he withdrew before the end of the Session to Kissingen and Gastein and submitted himself to the strictest discipline that the doctors could advise. The quiet peaceful life, with its simple routine of baths, walks and long drives, when the afternoon sun cast the shade of the forest and the hills over half the valley, seemed for a time to restore his health: and he hastened to write glowing accounts to his mother of the improvement. But these appearances were illusory and, underneath, the process of dissolution went remorselessly forward.

One incident—not unworthy of record—diversified the weeks at Kissingen and lighted up the autumn of 1893.

To his Mother.

August 7.—The sensation of yesterday was the visit of Prince Bismarck. We had left cards on him the day before, and I did not expect he would do more than return them. However, yesterday the weather was showery, and as Jennie was rather seedy we did not go our usual drive. I was reading the papers when a great big Chasseur appeared and informed me that the Fürst von Bismarck was in his carriage at the door and was asking for me. I hurried downstairs and met the Prince at his carriage. He came up to our rooms—which luckily are on the first floor—and sat down, and we began to converse. I had sent off a message to Jennie, who had gone to the Kurhaus to see a friend. So I had about a quarter of an hour in which to talk to the Prince. I will tell you of his appearance. He is seventy-eight—so he told me afterwards—but he looks so much younger than Mr. Gladstone that in fact you would hardly give him more than seventy-three or seventy-four

years. He looked in good health, and came upstairs without the slightest difficulty. We discussed various subjects, which I will go through *seriatim*. We spoke in English; but whether it was for that reason, though he spoke very correctly, he struck me as being nervous. Perhaps it was meeting with a total stranger, because he had never seen me before. However, he was most gracious and seemed very anxious to please. You may imagine that I did my very best to please him, for I thought it a great honour for this old Prince to come and see us.

The conversation began on Kissingen—the baths, the waters, &c. He told me he had first come here in 1874, and had been here almost every year since. He gave up drinking the waters about eight years ago, but he continues to take baths, and thinks they do him good. After this I asked him why he never went now to Gastein. He said, laughing, 'Oh, Gastein is a peculiar water to some people—sometimes dangerous'; that he knew two of his friends who died of apoplexy when taking the baths; and added that his doctor had told him that Gastein was the last resource; and he remarked, 'And I am seventy-eight,' and seemed quite pleased about it. Then he talked about the Emperor William on a question as to whether Gastein had not added some years to his life. He quite admitted it, and told me that for many years the Emperor used to go to Carlsbad, when he used to accompany him; and this reminiscence seemed very pleasing to him. In talking of the Emperor he always used the expression 'my old master.'

Then I turned the conversation on to Siam, and asked him whether he did not think it was a satisfactory settlement. He appeared to agree and began speaking in this connection of M. Jules Ferry. He regretted his loss, and said that Jules Ferry was the best man that France had had for years, and joked a little about his appearance—long whiskers, &c. Then he went on to say that he thought, if Jules Ferry had remained in power, a very good arrangement and condition would have come about between the Germans and the French. He said that he had nearly concluded an agreement between himself and Jules Ferry that France should remain on friendly and peaceful terms with Germany, and that he (Prince B.) would support France in Tunis and Siam, and generally in her Eastern colonisation. Then I remarked about Siam that Rosebery had learned out of his book

this principle—to ask for no more than he required, but to insist on getting what he required, and to treat with neglect what was not essential. He said that was so and he went on to praise Rosebery, and described him as a good combination of will and caution, and added that of all English statesmen he was the one who was most modest and quiet in his acts and attitude.

Of course, no conversation would be complete without a reference to Mr. Gladstone, to which I led him. He, of course, began by admitting that Mr. Gladstone was very eloquent; but that he had always been like an ungovernable horse whom no one could ride in any bridle, and was not to be controlled in any way. He used a German adjective to describe the horse, which I have forgotten; but seeing his drift, and in reply to his question what was the English expression for the German word, I said 'ungovernable and unmanageable and hard to ride' would express it, and I remarked that in England people often called such a horse a 'rogue.' On which he turned his face to me with a smile, but said nothing, though he clearly understood the allusion. He further in conversation said that he should be very alarmed and anxious if such a man as Mr. Gladstone governed 'my country.' Then Jennie arrived and he talked mainly to her for a few minutes, when he announced that his son Herbert and his recently married wife arrived that afternoon to stay a few days with him, and that he hoped we should see something of them.

Without doubt this Prince and statesman has a most powerful attraction. The whole of his career, from the time when he was First Minister of the King and fought the Parliament, to the time of the proclamation of the German Empire at Versailles, seems to me more intelligible now, and at the same time a work that only this man could have carried out or even conceived the possibility of. I never took my eyes off his face while he was talking to me and kept trying to fix it in my memory. For all his quiet manner his qualities would be apparent to any observer of experience; you can trace the iron will in great emergencies which has so frequently borne him up, all the calm courage for which the North Germans are peculiarly distinguished, and yet with all that —in spite of the recollection of the great things he had done—no trace of pride, no sign of condescension, but perfectly gracious and polite, a true *Grand Seigneur*. He carried himself at his age as erect as a soldier, and for all his long black coat and his rather

old black, soft, low-crowned wideawake hat he looks all over what he is—the combination, so rarely seen in this century, of statesman and General.

This friendly conversation, proving mutually agreeable, was followed by an invitation to dinner with the Bismarck family. 'We dined,' so runs the account, 'in the hall of an old Bishop's palace, on the first floor, which a friend of the Prince owns and lends him every year. It was of large and fine proportion. At one end we assembled before dinner; at the other end the table was laid. The dinner was a regular old-fashioned German dinner, a little *bourgeois* (like the Berlin Court under the old Emperor), but everything was dignified as to the table—the food, the wine, the old servants—and, though very different to our ideas, had really *un air noble*. All this was greatly added to by the presence of the Prince, his impressive appearance, and the combination of respect and affection which all his family and those friends that were dining, showed him. His good spirits and excellent humour and his sustained support of the conversation—sometimes with Jennie, sometimes with me, sometimes with Herbert and his wife—can never be forgotten by anyone who saw it.'

Lord Randolph sat next to Prince Bismarck and was so occupied in observing him and the scene generally that he took but little part in the conversation. The picture was complete—the Princess, feeble and broken in health; Count Herbert and his wife; the famous black wolf-hounds which once upon a time frightened Gortschakoff so much; Bismarck himself, 'speaking English very carefully and slowly, frequently pausing to get the right word, but always producing it, or something like it, in the end'; drinking a mixture of very old hock poured into a needle-glass of champagne—'"the last bottle [of hock], a present from ——," a Grand Duke whose name I cannot remember'—at length arriving at his great pipe, prepared all ready for him by a venerable retainer, 'stem two feet in

length, curved mouthpiece, bowl long and large in china and standing up square with the stem, lighted by broad wooden safety-matches to prevent him burning his fingers; and all the time running on in talk brisk and light, always courtly and genial, never quite serious.'

'I did not dare,' declares Lord Randolph, 'to drink this old hock, and only sipped it. The Prince, who was joking, said to Jennie that he was very sorry I had not drunk my share, as it would cause him to drink too much and he would be "half over the seas."' Presently he wanted to know about Mr. Gladstone. He would be useful in putting to rights the disorders of German finance. Would the English people exchange him for General Caprivi? 'I told him,' writes Lord Randolph shamelessly, 'that the English people would cheerfully give him Mr. Gladstone for nothing, but that he would find him an expensive present!' So with chaff and good temper the evening passed away—pleasant, memorable, one of the last he was to know.

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Lord Randolph returned from Germany none the better for his rest and plunged forthwith into an exhausting campaign. What experience can be more painful than for a man who enjoys the fullest intellectual vigour, and whose blood is quite unchilled by age, to feel the whole apparatus of expression slipping sensibly from him? He struggled against his fate desperately, and at first with intervals of profound depression. But, as the malady progressed, the inscrutable workings of Nature provided a mysterious anodyne. By a queer contradiction it is ordained that an all-embracing optimism should be one of the symptoms of this fell disease. The victim becomes continually less able to realise his condition. In the midst of failure he is cheered by an artificial consciousness of victory. While the days are swiftly ebbing, he builds large plans for the future; and a rosy glow of sunset conceals the approach of night. Therefore as Lord Randolph's faculties were steadily impaired, his determination to persevere was inversely strengthened; and in spite of the advice and appeals of his family, by which he was deeply wounded, he carried out in its entirety the whole programme of speeches he had arranged. Huddersfield, Stalybridge, Bedford, Yarmouth, Dundee, Glasgow, Bradford and Camborne followed each other in quick succession in October and November. But the crowds who were drawn by the old glamour of his name, departed sorrowful and shuddering at the spectacle of a dying man, and those who loved him were consumed with embarrassment and grief. It is needless to dwell longer upon this.

1895

Æt. 46

He spent Christmas at Howth. The old circle of friends were gathered once more, and they saw with sadness that their hopes of his return to power, cherished for so many years, would never be fulfilled. When he came back to England for the beginning of the Session, the hounds were hard upon his track. But it was not till June that he consented to yield. The doctors ordered complete rest. 'They told me,' he wrote to his mother, 'that I was to give up political life for a year. I did not agree directly, but said I would think it over. I returned next day and explained to them my plan [of a journey round the world]. Of this they fully approved.' And now followed only a few dinners of farewell to good friends—who knew they would never see him again—and busy preparations for a long journey. He sailed, with his wife, for America on June 27 under a sentence of death, operative within twelve months; and he realised perfectly that his time was very short. But now Nature began mercifully to apply increasing doses of her own anæsthetics, and for the space there was yet to travel he suffered less than those who watched him. Indeed, in an odd way he was positively happy in these last few months; for the changing scenes kept him from sombre reflections, and the increasing attention which he paid to details of all kinds occupied his mind. Nothing was too small to command his interest, and neither in America nor in Japan was ever seen so methodical a tourist. The light faded steadily. At intervals small blood-vessels would break in the brain, producing temporary coma, and leaving always a little less memory or faculty behind. His physical strength held out till he reached Burma, 'which I annexed,' and which he had earnestly desired to see. But when it failed, the change was sudden and complete. The journey was curtailed, and in the last days of 1894 he reached England as weak and helpless in mind and body as a little child. For

a month, at his mother's house, he lingered pitifully, until very early in the morning of January 24 the numbing fingers of paralysis laid that weary brain to rest.

The illness of Lord Randolph Churchill had been followed with attention throughout the country, and the tragic termination of his career evoked greater manifestations of sympathy than are accorded to many who have played a longer part in the world's affairs. Politicians of all ranks and parties attended the service in Westminster Abbey. Large crowds assembled in the streets through which the funeral procession passed. The journey lay, by a strange coincidence, from Paddington to Woodstock. The London terminus was thronged with representatives of the Metropolitan constituency. Woodstock gathered around the churchyard at Bladon. Thither, too, came deputations of the Birmingham Tories and Irish friends. Over the landscape, brilliant with sunshine, snow had spread a glittering pall. He lies close by the tower of the village church, and the plain granite cross which marks the spot, can almost be discerned, across a mile of lawn and meadow, from the great house which was his childhood's home, and whose sinister motto his varied fortunes had not ill-sustained. A statue is erected to his memory in Blenheim Chapel; and a bust by the same hand was set up in the House of Commons by private subscription among the members, and unveiled with a few simple and well-chosen words by his oldest and truest political comrade, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach.

. . . . . .

The story of Lord Randolph Churchill's life is complete in itself and needs no comment from the teller. That he was a great elemental force in British politics, that he was broken irrecoverably at the moment of maturity, should be evident from these pages. It is idle to speculate upon what his work and fortunes might have been, had he continued to lead the House of Commons and influence against its

inclinations the Conservative party. It is certain only that the course of domestic policy in Finance, in Temperance and other social questions would have been widely deflected from that which has been in fact pursued. Most of all, perhaps, was Ireland a loser by his downfall; for more than any other Unionist of authority he understood the Irish people—their pride, their wants, their failings, their true inspiration. What would have happened to him, aye, and to others had he lived the ordinary span of men—after all, he was but forty-six—are questionings even more shadowy and unreal. How would he have regarded a naval and military expenditure of seventy millions in time of peace? What would he have thought of the later developments of those Imperialistic ideas, the rise of which he had powerfully, yet almost unconsciously, aided? What action would have been wrung from him by the stresses of the South African war? Would he, under the many riddles the future had reserved for such as he, have snapped the tie of sentiment that bound him to his party, resolved at last to 'shake the yoke of inauspicious stars'; or would he by combining its Protectionist appetites with the gathering forces of labour have endeavoured to repeat as a Tory-Socialist in the new century the triumphs of the Tory-Democrat in the old?

For all its sense of incompleteness, of tragic interruption, his life presents a harmony and unity of purpose and view. Verbal consistency is of small value. Yet even his verbal consistency was not especially open to challenge. But the 'climate of opinion' in which he lived, the mood and intention with which he faced the swiftly changing problems of a stormy period, were never sensibly or erratically altered. The principles and convictions which he developed in the Parliament of 1874, and professed during the Parliament of 1880, were those, which guided him to the end. That the period was brief in which he swayed and almost dominated the Conservative party is

not wonderful. The marvel is that he should ever have won to power in it at all. Only the peculiar conditions of the Parliament of 1880, in the House of Commons and out of doors, made his career, as I have described it, a possibility, and enabled him to attack a Liberal Government for oppression and war and to appeal to a Conservative party in the name of Peace, Retrenchment and Reform. Tory Democracy was necessarily a compromise (perilously near a paradox in the eye of a partisan) between widely different forces and ideas: ancient permanent institutions becoming the instruments of far-reaching social reforms: order conjoined with liberty; stability and yet progress; the Tory party and daring legislation! Yet narrow as was the path along which he moved, multitudes began to follow. Illogical and unsymmetrical as the idea might seem—an idea not even novel—it grew vital and true at his touch. At a time when Liberal formulas and Tory inertia seemed alike chill and comfortless, he warmed the heart of England and strangely stirred the imagination of her people.

He contained in his nature and in his policy all the elements necessary to ruin and success. If the principles he championed from 1880 to 1885 were the cause of his rise, they were also the cause of his fall. All his pledges he faithfully fulfilled. The Government changed. The vast preponderance of power in the State passed from one great party to the other. Lord Randolph Churchill remained exactly the same. He thought and said the same sort of things about foreign and domestic policy, about armaments and expenditure, about Ireland, about Egypt, while he was a Minister as he had done before. He continued to repeat them after he had left office for ever. The hopes he had raised among the people, the promises he had made, the great support and honour he had received from them, seemed to require of him strenuous exertions. And when all exertions had failed, he paid cheerfully the fullest and

the only forfeit in his power.

Lord Randolph Churchill's name will not be recorded upon the bead-roll of either party. The Conservatives, whose forces he so greatly strengthened, the Liberals, some of whose finest principles he notably sustained, must equally regard his life and work with mingled feelings. A politician's character and position are measured in his day by party standards. When he is dead all that he achieved in the name of party, is at an end. The eulogies and censures of partisans are powerless to affect his ultimate reputation. The scales wherein he was weighed are broken. The years to come bring weights and measures of their own.

There is an England which stretches far beyond the well-drilled masses who are assembled by party machinery to salute with appropriate acclamation the utterances of their recognised fuglemen; an England of wise men who gaze without self-deception at the failings and follies of both political parties; of brave and earnest men who find in neither faction fair scope for the effort that is in them; of 'poor men' who increasingly doubt the sincerity of party philanthropy. It was to that England that Lord Randolph Churchill appealed; it was that England he so nearly won; it is by that England he will be justly judged.

APPENDICES

V

TWO ELECTION ADDRESSES

1886.

To the Electors of South Paddington.

Gentlemen,—A 'people's dissolution' has come upon

us. Such is the title given by Mr. Gladstone to the most wanton political convulsion which has, in our time, afflicted our country. The caprice of an individual is elevated to the dignity of an act of the people by the boundless egoism of the Prime Minister. The United Kingdom is to be disunited for the purpose of securing in office, if only for a little while, by the aid of a disloyal faction subsisting on foreign gold, a Government deserted by all who could confer upon it character or reputation.

Mr. Gladstone has reserved for his closing days a conspiracy against the honour of Britain and the welfare of Ireland more startlingly base and nefarious than any of those other numerous designs and plots which, during the last quarter of a century, have occupied his imagination. Nor are the results of the repeal of the Union, whatever they may be, a matter of moment to him. No practical responsibility for those results will fall upon his shoulders. He regards with the utmost unconcern, or with inconceivable frivolity, the fact that upon those who come after him will devolve the impossible labour of rebuilding a shattered empire, of re-uniting a divided kingdom. Let a credulous electorate give him, for the third time, a Parliamentary majority by the aid of which another Irish revolution may be consummated, and this most moderate of Ministers will be satisfied, will complacently retire to that repose for which he tells us 'nature cries aloud.' Nature, to whose cries he has for so long turned a stone-deaf ear.

This design for the separation of Ireland from Britain, this insane recurrence to heptarchical arrangements, this trafficking with treason, this condonation of crime, this exaltation of the disloyal, this abasement of the loyal, this desertion of our Protestant co-religionists, this monstrous mixture of imbecility, extravagance and political hysterics, better known as 'the Bill for the future Government of Ireland,' is furnished by its author with the most splendid

attributes and clothed in the loftiest language. (1) Under its operation a nation of slaves paying tribute is to be filled with exuberant love for Britain which it now hates, but with which it is now on a footing of perfect political equality. (2) Persons who have subsisted and flourished on the effects of crime and outrage are to be immediately transformed into governors wise, moral and humane. (3) A peasantry which has for years exhibited a marked disinclination to pay contract rents to many landlords will instantly commence and for the next fifty years continue with cheerful alacrity and fidelity to pay rent to one single landlord; that landlord, moreover, assuming the garb of a foreign and alien Government. (4) A people without manufactures, longing for protection by which to create and foster manufactures, are to become in a moment ardent converts to the blessings of free trade. (5) A Parliament, in which any and every legislative project or deliberative proceeding or executive act, may be vetoed for three years, is to abound in rapid legislation, and to surpass our ancient historic Parliament in efficiency of procedure. (6) A financial system, under which by no possibility can revenue be adequate to expenditure, is to perform prodigies of economy and 'to scatter plenty o'er a smiling land.' (7) A pauper population is to roll in riches. (8) Law and order and rights of property are immediately to take their place as the most sacred and cherished institutions of a country a great portion of whose people hitherto, from time immemorial, have regarded them only to deride them and violate them, &c. &c.

The united and concentrated genius of Bedlam and Colney Hatch would strive in vain to produce a more striking tissue of absurdities.

Yet this is the policy, the last specific for Ireland, which is gravely recommended by senile vanity to the favourable consideration of a people renowned for common sense, the possessors of an Empire erected and preserved by the

constant flow of common sense and, I doubt not, the progenitors of a posterity equally powerful, equally courageous and equally wise.

For the sake of this fifth message of peace to Ireland, this farrago of superlative nonsense, the vexatious and costly machinery of a general election is to be put in motion, all business other than what may be connected with political agitation, is to be impeded and suspended; trade and commercial enterprise, now suffering sadly from protracted bad times, and which political stability can alone re-invigorate, are to be further harassed and handicapped; all useful and desired reforms are to be indefinitely postponed, the British Constitution is to be torn up, the Liberal party shivered into fragments.

And why? For this reason and no other: To gratify the ambition of an old man in a hurry.

How long, gentlemen, will you and your brother electors tolerate this one-man power?

Since 1868, when this one-man power began to show itself in an acute form, have you enjoyed domestic security or foreign credit?

From that time to the present day, Ireland has been a struggling victim in Mr. Gladstone's hands. The Irish Church, a great agency for moral, social, and religious order, has been swept away; two special confiscations of landed property were confidently recommended to, and accepted by, Parliament as certain to produce peace; six coercion Acts of the most stringent character Mr. Gladstone has obtained; and all to no purpose. Confusion has become worse confounded; the fabric of Government in Ireland has been shattered; lawlessness and disorder have been triumphant and supreme; the present state of Ireland is one of 'grave disease,' says Mr. John Morley; and the blame is cast by Mr. Gladstone on the system, on the Constitution, on the Union.

It would be as reasonable to cast the blame upon the Equator.

The blame for this disgrace cannot be cast upon the system or upon the Constitution or upon the Union.

The blame must be borne by the man who has been Minister and who is Minister now.

Under the baneful insecurity which is inseparably connected with his name, your trade has gone from bad to worse, your Parliament has become demoralised, your foreign credit shaken, your colonies alienated, your Indian Empire imperilled.

Naturally enough, Ireland has suffered most of all, for Ireland, of all the Queen's dominions, was least able to stand a strain.

What frightful and irreparable Imperial catastrophe is necessary to tear the British people from the influence of this fetish, this idol, this superstition, which has brought upon them and upon the Irish unnumbered woes?

The negotiator of the 'Alabama' arbitration, the hero of the Transvaal surrender, the perpetrator of the bombardment of Alexandria, the decimator of the struggling Soudan tribes, the betrayer of Khartoum, the person guilty of the death of Gordon, the patentee of the Penjdeh shame, now stands before the country all alone, rejected by a democratic House of Commons.

No longer can he conceal his personality under the shelter of the Liberal party. One hundred members of that party in Parliament, representing thousands of electors, refused, in spite of all manner of blandishments, deceits and menaces, to support his Irish measure. All his colleagues have abandoned him. From the Duke of Argyll to Mr. Bright, from Lord Hartington to Mr. Chamberlain, one by one he has shed them all; none is near him of his former colleagues save certain placemen unworthy of notice. Last, but not least, the leading lights of

Nonconformity, such as Dr. Dale and Mr. Spurgeon, hitherto the pillars of the Liberal party, stand aloof in utter dismay.

Known to the country under various 'aliases'—'the People's William,' 'the Grand Old Man,' 'the old Parliamentary hand,' now, in the part of 'the Grand electioneering agent,' he demands a vote of confidence from the constituencies.

Confidence in what?

In the Liberal party? No! The Liberal party, as we knew it, exists no longer. In his Irish project? No! It is dead; to be resuscitated or not, either wholly or in part, just as may suit the personal convenience of the author. In his Government? No! They are a mere collection of 'items,' whom he does not condescend to consult. In himself? Yes!

This is the latest and most perilous innovation into our constitutional practices. A pure unadulterated personal *plébiscite*, that is the demand; a political expedient borrowed from the last and worst days of the Second Empire.

Gentlemen, it is time that some one should speak out. I have written to you plainly, some may think strongly; but whatever the English vocabulary may contain of plainness and strength is inadequate to describe truly and to paint realistically the present political situation.

At this moment, so critical, we have not got to deal with a Government, or a party, or a policy. We have to deal with a man; with a man who makes the most unparalleled claim for dictatorial power which can be conceived by free men. It is for that reason that I deliberately addressed myself to the personal aspects of the question, and that I have drawn the character of the claimant from recent history, and from facts well within the recollection of all.

Mr. Gladstone in his speech in Edinburgh on Friday recommended himself to the country in the name of

Almighty God.

Others cannot and will not emulate such audacious profanity; but I do dare, in soliciting a renewal of your confidence, to recommend the policy of the Unionist party to you in the name of our common country, our great Empire, upon whose unity and effective maintenance so largely depend the freedom, the happiness and the progress of mankind.

I am, Gentlemen, yours obediently,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Committee Room, 26 London Street, Paddington, June 19, 1886.

1892.

To the Electors of South Paddington.

Gentlemen,—A General Election is immediately before us. I desire again to solicit the honour of representing South Paddington in the House of Commons. It is pleasant to me to record my strong appreciation of, and my abiding gratitude for, the kindness and indulgence which you have consistently shown me and for the large measure of confidence which during six years you have accorded me. I most earnestly trust that as long as I have the good fortune to take part in public life the connection between us may remain as close and strong as it has ever been at any former time.

My opinions on the policy of Home Rule for Ireland are unaltered and unalterable. The impracticability and futility of such a policy become more apparent and glaring as discussion and argument proceed. The insanity of a scheme to create an independent Parliament in an island inhabited by two races controlled by two religious creeds separated from each other by an impassable abyss; the insoluble problem raised by such a scheme as to the

representation or non-representation of Ireland in the British Parliament; the impossibility of guaranteeing effectually, under any such scheme, justice to the Protestant minority, mainly residing in Ulster; the endless and bitter conflicts which must arise again, as they arose before, between the Irish and British Parliaments, in addition to those which must surely arise between Irish and British Administrations; the constitutional impossibility of establishing any tribunal to pronounce authoritatively on the validity of laws passed by either Parliament; the certain divergence of commercial and financial policy to be followed by Ireland and Great Britain respectively; all this Himalayan range of obstacles appears more utterly insuperable the closer it is looked at, the more attentively it is studied. A conclusive proof of the truth of these propositions is afforded by the impenetrable reserve maintained by Mr. Gladstone and by all his colleagues even as to the general form and outline of their Home Rule legislative project. The formula which I have more than once expressed, that it is impossible to put Home Rule into a Bill, is more rooted than ever in my mind; and even if the Party of Repeal were to be furnished with ever so great a majority at the coming General Election, that party is, I am convinced, condemned to political impotence and sterility so long as they continue to exhaust their energies in solving the insoluble, in accomplishing the impossible.

After six years of trial and labour the Unionist Party return to the country with a record of work and action cleaner and less open to serious attack than any other political party which I have known or read of in modern times. Ireland, on which country the last General Election turned, which was pronounced by our opponents to be ungovernable by the Parliament of the United Kingdom, is now simply and easily governed. Ireland was agitated in 1886; it is calm in 1892. Ireland was distressed in 1886; it is prosperous in 1892. No real grievance now oppresses

and irritates the Irish peasant, nor can persons possessing reason and experience doubt that the energies and sense of a new Parliament, if this Parliament is swayed by a Unionist majority, will be employed in constructing a scheme of Local Government for the Irish people so broad and generous that the last vestiges of difference, inequality, inferiority (if such there still be), between Ireland and Great Britain will be swept away.

Facts like these, written so largely on the history of the past six years, cannot fail to strike and to arouse the common sense of the British people as a whole; they must serve to dissipate the factious fury of baffled opponents, to neutralise the allurements of innumerable reckless and irredeemable promises. British electors at the present moment are in duty bound to draw largely on their memories and to make a very practical use of their experience. They cannot afford to forget or to neglect the lessons they learnt from the anxious and even terrible times which Ireland passed through during Mr. Gladstone's former administration. Remembering how gloomy and hopeless was the outlook, how frantic were the popular rage and passion which during all those years distracted and paralysed Ireland, how impotent were the measures of Mr. Gladstone's Government either to pacify or control; looking at Ireland now, tranquil, materially prosperous, crime (ordinary and extraordinary) reduced to an unprecedented minimum, the British electors must be compelled to realise that an invaluable period, rarely in history brighter, more full of justified hope and confidence, has at length, after infinite difficulty, been attained, and that even to run the risk of recurrence to former evils and perils would be an act of national folly difficult to characterise, ominous of Imperial ruin. I do not doubt but that South Paddington, in common with all other constituencies where knowledge and political study extensively prevail, will pronounce without hesitation in

favour of the wisdom of the Unionist policy, of the continuance in power of the Unionist Party.

My views as to the reforms in the public service which public safety and economy alike urgently call for, are, I think, well known to you; they have undergone no change, save that I hold them more strongly than ever. You are also, I imagine, not unaware of my desire to meet with all legitimate sympathy and good-will the newly-formed but very articulate and well-defined demands of the labouring classes.

Thus recording my political faith, I trust that you may be willing and satisfied to dispose of your political confidence as you have done in former years since South Paddington became a separate borough, and that I may be enabled again to serve in Parliament our constituency and the country.

I have the honour to be
Your obedient servant,
Randolph S. Churchill.

2 Connaught Place, W.: June 21, 1892.

VI

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Lord Randolph Churchill's Letter to Mr. Speaker and his Correspondence with Mr. Gladstone in 1886.

Lord Randolph Churchill to the Speaker.

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W.: Nov. 30, 1886.

Dear Mr. Speaker,—I venture to submit to you for your information and consideration, the result of the deliberations of the Committee of the Cabinet on the question of Parliamentary Procedure.

It would be of the greatest possible advantage to me if I could have the honour of an interview with you, in order to examine

and explain more fully than I could do by letter the effect and object of the various rules proposed. In case you should be coming to town before the 22nd or 23rd December and would make an appointment with me, I would be happy to wait upon you at any time or place which would be most convenient to you.

Two of the proposed new provisions especially concern the Chair:

1. The Closure of debate. (Rule No. 1.)

2. Motions for adjournment of the House at question time. (Rule No. 6.)

On the first these have been my views: The length of debate is essentially a question of 'order.' The Chair is the only judge of 'order.' By the present rule an unfair responsibility is thrown upon the Chair, in that the initiative with regard to Closure is thrown upon it, which initiative has to undergo the ordeal of a vote of the House. It is difficult and almost impracticable for the Chair to possess the information with regard to the proper time for the exercise of the initiative, without which action in the direction of Closure would be unsafe.

The Government propose to give the initiative of any Closure motion to the House, and a veto to the Chair with respect to receiving and putting such a motion. The Chair, under this provision, is not only the protector of fair and orderly debate (its chief function), but also guards against abuse of the Closure rule from motives of frivolity, obstruction, haste or tyranny. Nor can the decisions of the Chair be questioned or overruled, for no question is put to the House unless with the permission of the Chair.

Further, in the event of the House agreeing to the proposal, the association of the Chair with the exercise of the closing power will have been, for a second time, deliberately affirmed. This is a far better and more durable protection for minorities than any arrangement of numbers. An extreme and violent Government in office, supported by a powerful majority, would very soon make short work of any protective arrangement of proportionate majorities which might prove embarrassing to them. It would be a much more difficult matter to dissociate and exclude the Chair from all connection with, or control over, the Closure after that Parliament had on two occasions laid down a contrary principle.

Speaking generally, this Closure (as per enclosed) is aimed at persistent, deliberate, wilful obstruction. The Speaker can at any time permit an appeal to the House by a member, or a Minister, as to whether such obstruction is or is not being resorted to. This Closure is also designed to facilitate and render possible earlier hours of session and prevent unnecessary, stupid and perverse 'talking out.'

In respect of Rule 6 (adjournment of House at question time): After much anxious consideration I see no alternative to total abolition of the power of moving such adjournment, except the method proposed in the paper—of making the Chair the judge whether the subject to be discussed on adjournment motion is of such cardinal importance as to justify the postponement of the regular assigned business of the day. I imagine that the expression 'urgent matter of definite public importance' would receive, under the new arrangement, a strict and proper interpretation, and regard this matter, as the former one, as primarily a question of 'order.'

Please excuse this lengthy letter, and
Believe me to remain
Yours respectfully and faithfully,
Randolph S. Churchill.

The Right Hon. the Speaker.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Mr. Gladstone.

Confidential.

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W.: December 17, 1886.

Dear Sir,—By the desire of the First Lord of the Treasury I have the honour to submit to you, for your information and convenience, the draft of the alterations in the procedure of the House of Commons which it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to recommend to the consideration of the House next session.

I express the feelings of the Government when I assure you that in the event of its being within your power, and in accordance with your wishes, to offer any criticism or comment or suggestion on these draft proposals prior to the meeting of Parliament, such would be received and considered by the Government with every respect and attention.

I may add that in the opinion of the Government the House of Commons would do well to arrive at conclusions as to the reforms of procedure before commencing the regular business of the session; that it is with that object that Parliament has been summoned so early in the year; and that the Government, as at present advised, will press this course upon the House of Commons.

I have the honour to be
Your faithful servant,
Randolph S. Churchill.

The Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P.

Mr. Gladstone to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Confidential.

Hawarden Castle, Chester: December 18, '86.

My dear Lord,—I have to thank you for your courtesy in apprising me at this early date of the particulars in which the Government propose to amend the procedure of the House of Commons and of their intention to give precedence to the subject.

In the last stages of this important matter, that of the present year, I had but a minor concern, and I will therefore at once communicate with Sir W. Harcourt, who represented principally the late Administration on the Committee. The matter will remain strictly confidential, and will not go beyond those of my late colleagues who were specially concerned. In the meantime I do not trouble you with any observations, but I thank you for your obliging readiness to consider any suggestion which I may tender to you.

I remain
Faithfully yours,
W. E. Gladstone.

Right Hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

VII

POLITICAL LETTERS OF LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

1884-1893.
Freedom of Contract.

Mr. Moore Bayley to Lord Randolph Churchill.

57 Colmore Row, Birmingham: March 22, 1884.

My Lord,—I am a Conservative and an elector of the borough of Birmingham, and as such hope at no distant period to render your lordship, as a Conservative candidate for this borough, whatever political service lies in my power.

But before committing myself further in the compact that arose when you were accepted as such Conservative candidate I should like to know, as would a considerable number of political friends, how much further your lordship's views on the rights of contract proceed in the direction expressed in your speech in the House of Commons when you supported the second reading of Mr. Broadhurst's Leaseholders (Facilities of Purchase of Fee Simple) Bill.

The enactments of the present Government have in many particulars so violated the rights of contract between subject and subject that I am sure your lordship will not consider my request for information unreasonable as to the extent you are willing to commit your supporters in the furtherance of such like principles.

I remain
Yours obediently,
J. Moore Bayley.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Mr. Moore Bayley.

2 Connaught Place, W.: March 24, 1884.

Dear Sir,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd inst. In answer to your question as to my views on the rights of contract I beg to inform you that where it can be clearly shown that genuine freedom of contract exists I am quite averse to State interference, so long as the contract in question may be either moral or legal. I will never, however, be a party to wrong and injustice, however much the banner of freedom of contract may be waved for the purpose of scaring those who may wish to bring relief. The good of the State, in my opinion, stands far above freedom of contract; and when these two forces clash, the latter will have to submit. If you will study the course of legislation during the last fifty years, you will find that the Tory

party have interfered with and restricted quite as largely freedom of contract as the Liberals have done. With respect to the two leading instances of interference with freedom of contract during the present Parliament, viz. the Irish Land Act and the Agricultural Holdings Act, the Duke of Richmond's Agricultural Commission and the House of Lords must divide the responsibility for this legislation with Mr. Gladstone's Government. The latter had it in their power to reject this legislation, and did not do so; the former laid down the principles on which it was founded.

In comparison with legislation of that kind the compulsory conversion of long leaseholds into freeholds in towns, full and ample compensation being paid to the freeholder, is, as I called it in my speech in the House of Commons, 'a trifling matter.'

You will find the principle of this measure advocated in the *British Quarterly Review* five years ago (a very orthodox organ of Tory doctrine). You will find the principle again contained in the 65th section of the Conveyancing Law and Properties Act, passed by Lord Cairns in 1881. I may also add that Lord Cairns dealt a very severe blow at the rights of owners of freehold property when he gave to the courts of law power to protect leaseholders from forfeiture for breaches of covenant.

Under all these circumstances I am inclined to think that you will agree with me that all this outcry against the supporters of Mr. Broadhurst's Bill—this gabble about Socialism, Communism, and Mr. George, &c.—is highly inconsistent and ridiculous, and betrays a prevalence of very deplorable and shocking ignorance as to the extent to which the rights of property can be tolerated, and the relation of the State thereto.

I remain
Yours faithfully,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Lord Randolph Churchill on Temperance.

Private.

2 Connaught Place, W.: November 29, 1888.

My dear Sir,—I am extremely obliged to you for your interesting letter, with a great deal of the contents of which I am disposed to concur.

I think it would not be difficult to find a good many

Conservatives willing to make a considerable step towards a restrictive regulation of the sale of alcoholic liquor.

The party with which you are connected ought, however, in my opinion, to consider practically the question of compensation in some form or other to the retail trader. I exclude compensation to the brewers and distillers as an impracticable and impossible demand. The retail trader stands on a very different footing, and any glaring injustice towards him would alienate many who would otherwise join the Temperance movement.

One good result of buying up retail liquor interests by charges on the rates would be to give a permanence to any local decision in favour of largely diminishing the number of or even abolishing public-houses.

The community would be most indisposed, by any reversal of its Temperance policy, to run the risk of having again to face fresh compensation liabilities.

Caprice in popular decisions is a danger to be guarded against.

I shall continue from time to time to urge the importance of strong dealing with the Licensing Question. I only trust that your party will not take up the position of 'everything or nothing,' but, if good proposals are made, will accept them—reserving to themselves, of course, the right to continue their agitation for more.

We shall, however, not effect much against the publicans unless we act vigorously in the direction of better houses for the poor. As long as we allow such an immense portion of our population to live in pigsties, the warmth and false cheerfulness of the public-house will be largely sought after.

The two questions appear to me to be inseparable.

I shall always be very glad to talk over these matters with you should you feel disposed for conference.

I am
Yours very faithfully,
Randolph S. Churchill.

James Whyte, Esq.,
United Kingdom Alliance.

Lord Randolph Churchill on Home Rule.

2 Connaught Place, W.: February 10, 1891.

Dear Sir,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 4th inst.

I am not at all surprised to learn that you, in common with, I expect, the overwhelming majority of members of the English Home Rule party, find yourself puzzled, embarrassed and anxious in consequence of the recent very interesting disturbance of the harmony of the Irish Home Rule party.

I have always been of opinion that, however attractive Home Rule for Ireland might be in theory, it was an absolute impossibility to put Home Rule into a Bill. You might just as well try to square the circle.

The dispute between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Parnell as to what took place at what you call 'the notorious interview at Hawarden' brings out this fact with exceeding clearness; and if you, and those who agree with you politically, insist upon shutting your eyes rather than contemplate a disagreeable truth, it will, I fear, be the sad fate of your party to waste years of time and strength in fruitless efforts to arrive at a solution of the hopeless problem 'How to put Home Rule into a Bill.'

You ask me, in conclusion, for my opinion as to what would be the best policy for Ireland.

In reply I would refer you to several speeches which I have delivered and letters which I have written in recent years, in which I have declared my conviction that in a large, liberal, generous and courageous development of Local Government in Ireland on lines similar to those which have been so successfully followed in this country and in Scotland, will be found the best and the only prospect of political tranquillity for the Irish people.

I am
Yours faithfully,
Randolph S. Churchill.

John Ogilvy, Esq.

50 Grosvenor Square, W.: March 19, 1893.

My dear Sir,—In accordance with your wishes I write a few lines to you for the County Longford Meeting which is to be held to-morrow.

It is a pleasure to me to offer my congratulations to the Unionists of Longford on the energy and courage which they

display in publicly demonstrating, among a population apparently hostile, their firm and tried attachment to the Parliamentary Union between Ireland and Great Britain and their determination to resist all efforts to sever that Union.

I used in the foregoing sentence the word 'apparently' for indeed I do not believe that the bulk of the farmers and peasant farmers of Ireland are by any means confident as to the blessings which are to flow from Home Rule. I hear from many quarters, some of them of great authority, that there is arising and spreading in the minds of the Irish agricultural population an anxious doubt as to what will be their position under an Irish Parliament and whether the taxes which that Parliament will be forced to levy on income or on land, will not be far more onerous and exhausting than the rents they formerly paid to the landlords.

They will remember and reflect that under an Irish Parliament not only will they be absolutely cut off, in times of difficulty and of depression and of failure of crops, from all the sources of relief which from the Imperial Parliament they can now confidently draw upon and be assisted by; but they will be in the hands of a Government which, from sheer financial exigencies, will be compelled to treat the Irish taxpayer with the utmost rigour and harshness, to lay upon him imposts heavier than he can bear, and to exact relentlessly the payment of those imposts to the last farthing and on the earliest day that they become due.

I think you may well impress upon the farmers and peasant farmers the perfect security of property which they now enjoy under the protection of the Imperial Parliament; the perfect freedom which they possess from oppression of any kind, either from heavy taxation or from the unjust exactions of a pauper Government and Parliament; the great advantages in respect of their rentals secured to them by the Imperial Parliament and the great facilities afforded for the easy purchase of their freeholds by its liberality, which opportunities under the Home Rule Parliament will, from the squalid poverty of its resources, become illusory and insecure and in time absorbed by the hopeless insolvency of the Irish Government.

These are the great truths and facts which the loyal minority in Irish counties can urge upon the farmers and the peasantry. The Irish people, in respect of their material interests, have always been bright and quick-witted; they will, with their ready

imagination, quickly discern that though it may be pleasant and profitable to be represented in the Imperial Parliament by an independent and numerically powerful party who can extract from the British Exchequer and legislature no inconsiderable concessions to Irish wants, necessities and demands, it will be a widely different state of things when they (the Irish agricultural population) are handed over, body and soul, tied and bound and without appeal, to the uncontrolled domination of that 'separate and independent' party who—untrained in the art of just and economical government, eager to enjoy at any cost, and even only for a brief period, the profits of office and the delights of a reckless exercise of patronage and power—will have given over to their insatiable appetites the lives and properties of those who now exist and flourish, in tolerable prosperity and in perfect safety, by the cultivation of the Irish soil.

I have always been opposed to what is called 'Home Rule' more upon the grounds that to the Irish people themselves it must bring distress, poverty, misery and ruin, than on account of the dangers it will entail upon the British Empire, though those dangers are exceedingly great.

I trust that you may be able to continue with ardour and success the patriotic and excellent work among the Irish people which you inaugurate to-morrow; you may be sure that the full sympathy and genuine support of a vast majority of the English people will attend you in the struggle and you may be confident that the dark and menacing thunder-cloud that now impends over your country, almost turning Irish day into night, will soon be dissipated by the brightness of a recurring dawn of a new era of peace and prosperity for Ireland under the enlightened rule of a United Imperial Parliament.

Believe me to be
Most faithfully yours,
Randolph S. Churchill.

J. M. Wilson, Esq.

VIII

MR. JENNINGS' ACCOUNT OF HIS QUARREL WITH LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

March, 1890.

Mr. Jennings' Memorandum.

On Friday, the 7th of March, I called upon Lord Randolph Churchill, to tell him my opinions with regard to the Resolution proposed by the Government on the Report of the Special Commission. I told him I thought some express reference should be made in the Resolution to the emphatic acquittal of Mr. Parnell and his colleagues on what I called the 'murder charges,' and gave him my reasons. With these reasons he seemed to be much impressed, and after talking the matter over he urged me *not* to speak upon the main question, as I intended, but to embody my ideas in an Amendment, for then the Speaker could call upon me and I should have a recognised place in the debate. Otherwise I might not be called upon at all, and have no chance of speaking. I said that if any Amendment were drawn up, it should be in the most moderate terms, so that it might avoid the faults and disadvantages of Mr. Gladstone's on the same subject. He then went to his table and drew up the Amendment, saying, when he handed it to me, 'I think no one can object to this—there is not a single adjective in it.' We considered it well, and at one o'clock or so I left him, asking him to turn the subject well over in his mind before we met at the House and to let me know whether he was still in favour of the Amendment. At a little after three we met in the lobby, and he assured me that he was confident the Amendment was the right thing, and that he did not see how any reasonable objection could be made to it. I then went into the House, and after Questions gave notice of the Amendment.

On Saturday night I dined with Lord R. and a party at the Junior Carlton Club, but we did not have much conversation on the subject until the end of the evening, when Lord Justice FitzGibbon came up to us and condemned the Amendment. Lord R. then asked me to go to his house the next morning, and talk the matter over with 'Fitz.' I said that it was rather too late to 'talk it over' on the line taken up by FitzGibbon, for I was committed to the Amendment and intended to move it; that I should be very busy the next day, and would rather be excused going to his house. But Lord R. pressed me very earnestly to go

and accordingly I did so.

On entering his room (Sunday, the 9th), FitzGibbon having been with him some time before, Lord R. said: 'I am sorry you put that Amendment down; it is a mistake; can't be defended.' I was astounded. 'But,' I said, 'it is your own Amendment.' 'Yes,' he said coolly: 'but I have changed my mind.' I was silent a minute or two, and then asked him to tell me why he had changed his mind. 'FitzGibbon has been talking it over with me,' he said, 'and I am sure he is right.' 'Then,' I said, 'I am sorry Lord Justice FitzGibbon was not here last Friday morning.' I listened to what FitzGibbon had to say—it had all been in the papers before—and as soon as I could, I left. I felt, however, much disheartened at hearing the author of the Amendment which I had been induced to move, denounce it as 'all a mistake.'

The next evening (Monday) Lord Randolph's brother-in-law (Lord Curzon) came to me as I was sitting in the House and said he had something important to say to me about the Amendment. We went outside into the corridor by the library, and there he told me that 'Randolph had made up his mind to stand altogether aloof from the Amendment; he thought it would be best not to support it; he did not see his way clear to have anything to do with it'—with more to the same effect. I said: 'What will people think of him? He has himself told one of the newspaper correspondents that he intends to speak and vote for the Amendment.' 'Yes,' replied Lord Curzon, 'that is the nuisance of his talking to those correspondents.' I said: 'I know what *I* shall think of his behaviour—first Birmingham, and now *this*. You cannot doubt what my opinion will be.'

I should have mentioned that earlier in the day Lord R. C. had called me to his side in the smoking-room and said: 'I shall probably say something to-day on the main question, if I get a chance.' I did not quite see what he meant, and when afterwards he went away (at dinner-time) without speaking I thought he had meant nothing. Afterwards came Lord Curzon's message, just referred to. On the Tuesday, when the Amendment was to be moved, just as I was going into the House, Lord Curzon again came to me, and said, 'Randolph will not take any part in the debate unless you are attacked.' He added: 'I cannot support you.' I said but little, and went into the House, quite determined to go on.

The House was crowded, and just before Questions were over R. C. leaned back to me and said: 'I am going to speak on the main question.' I asked him 'When?' 'Now,' he said. 'How can you, after one Amendment has been voted on?' 'It is all right,' he said; 'I have arranged it with the Speaker.' There was no time for explanation or remonstrance. He was evidently quite determined, and in a few moments the Speaker called upon him.

He then delivered a violent diatribe against the Government, accusing them, in effect, of having called the forger Pigott into existence—'the bloody, rotten, ghastly fœtus, Pigott, Pigott, Pigott'—pointing with his finger at the Ministry each time he mentioned the name. He suggested the possibility of a Pigott being employed against himself. While he was speaking several friends who had intended to support me came to me and whispered that they could not be identified with so outrageous an attack upon the Ministry. 'You will be linked with it,' said several of them. 'Everybody will believe that the entire programme to-night was arranged between you.'

Smarting under the deliberate and treacherous manner in which I had been thrown over, and at the utter want of consideration shown by a leader for a follower placed *by* that leader in a very responsible and difficult position, I determined not to move the Amendment, and to tell the House why I adopted that course. When R. C. sat down I informed him that I should do this, and he made several attempts to dissuade me. I was quite resolved, however, and am glad that I was not induced to waver, although to throw up the Amendment was the sorest disappointment I have ever had; and—for the time, at any rate—the whole transaction has sickened me of political life.

L. J. J.

[I think it right to add to this memorandum the following note by Lord Justice FitzGibbon.—W. S. C.]

'Mr. Jennings' memorandum seems to me to give an unduly unfavourable impression of Lord Randolph's action. Lord Randolph told me that when Mr. Jennings first showed him the draft of the amendment he stated plainly that he wished to take the whole responsibility for it, and intended to move it whether Lord Randolph supported it or

not. Afterwards, at Connaught Place, on the day before the debate, the whole subject was fully discussed by Lord Randolph, Jennings and myself, and the conversation ended in a distinct statement by Lord Randolph to Mr. Jennings that, on fuller consideration, he thought the amendment a mistake, and that although he would not vote against it, he could not speak in favour of it, but would speak upon the main question if he spoke at all. His speech was, in substance, an examination of the constitutional position which he had adopted, and a vindication of his action in warning the Unionist leaders, two years before, of the dangers and difficulties into which the Special Commission must lead them. When I read the report of his speech in the *Times*, it seemed to me that, but for the sudden loss of self-control indicated in the text, which, as much by manner as by actual words, made it appear to be a bitter attack upon the Government, it was conceived in a moderate tone. But, after what had happened on the previous morning, I cannot understand how Jennings could have imagined that there was a breach of faith with him.'

IX

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL'S MEMORANDUM ON ARMY AND NAVY ADMINISTRATION

Included in the Report of Lord Hartington's Commission, March 21, 1890.

The Royal Commission desires, I apprehend, to recommend to her Majesty's Ministers a system of government and management for the Army and the Navy which shall appear to secure the *maximum* of efficiency which can be reasonably expected from normal expenditure on those services. By the consent of all, under present arrangements, this *maximum* has not been attained.

The present system of administration of the services may be said to date, for the Army, from 1855, and for the Navy from some twenty-five years earlier. A Prime Minister forming a government allots to the different offices members of Parliament of prominence and supposed capacity. Thus it invariably happens that gentlemen are appointed to exercise supreme control over the Army and Navy who possess no experience or knowledge of the military or naval service and profession. They are expected to decide general and technical questions of naval and military policy, they are supposed to be held responsible for the consequences of their decisions, and after a tenure of office, sometimes of several months, sometimes of a few years, they are succeeded by other gentlemen who take their places, provided with a similar lack of experience and knowledge. The duties which these two Ministers are expected to discharge involve scientific and economical provision for the defensive and offensive power of an Empire whose possessions are scattered all over the world and whose subjects number over three hundred million souls.

It can hardly be a matter for surprise that such a system has not altogether approximated to a satisfactory standard of combined efficiency and economy. Governments and Parliaments have been untiring in their pursuit after reform, but have as yet only succeeded in progressively increasing public dissatisfaction and, simultaneously, burdens on the taxpayer. The question seems to present itself whether the time has not arrived for considering seriously and without prejudice the expediency of a very radical change in our system of naval and military administration. The object aimed at is the *maximum* of efficiency consistent with the amount of expenditure which the taxpayer or his representatives will tolerate. Can any practical amount of efficiency of administration be obtained without professional training and knowledge?

Can it be obtained without direct personal responsibility? Can direct personal responsibility be reasonably expected without professional control? The answer to these questions, I submit, is obviously in the negative. Professional reputation to a soldier or a sailor is everything next to life itself and the loss of it equals professional ruin, entailing pecuniary and social loss of a heavy character. To the ordinary politician under our political system administrative miscarriage brings little or no evil consequences. His fate, if unfortunate or unskilful, is in the vast majority of cases to be transferred to some other office —to a foreign embassy, to a colonial governorship or, at the worst, to the House of Lords. Neither pecuniary nor social loss necessarily or ordinarily follows the unskilful and possibly the disastrous administration of our Ministers for the Army and Navy. More than this, the professional persons who advise respectively the Secretary of State for War and the first Lord of the Admiralty escape all risk of public censure, sheltered as they are by the fictitious responsibility of the civilian Minister. History and theory will be found to coincide, in support of the recital set forth above.

Parliament is made the scapegoat for defective administration. The control of Parliament, the interference of Parliament, the jealousy of Parliament for its rights and privileges, these are the stock arguments in favour of an adherence to the main lines of our present system of naval and military administration.

Personally, and speaking with some experience of the House of Commons and after several years' close study of the House of Commons, I put aside arguments of that kind. I have arrived at the conclusion that, eliminating great party issues, the House of Commons, with respect to the transaction of ordinary public affairs, is an assembly mainly composed of businesslike and reasonable individuals who, having to find certain funds for certain

purposes, desire, in the main, that the pecuniary demands of Government should not be obviously excessive and that fair guarantees should be given for economical expenditure of the funds provided.

With these views I advocate, as an improvement on present arrangements, that the administration of the Navy and the Army should be entrusted respectively to members of those professions. That naval training, naval experience and naval eminence should be the qualifications of our Minister of Marine. That military training, military experience and military eminence should be the qualifications for our Minister for the Army. Superficially, at any rate, this suggestion would seem to be reasonable and not out of accord with ordinary common sense. It may, however, be met with the objection that it is unsuited to our constitutional arrangements and incompatible with Parliamentary control. I doubt whether this objection will sustain vigorous examination. Parliament has to provide annually a certain number of millions sterling for the purposes of Imperial defence, and while Parliament is always willing and anxious, sometimes even over-anxious, to recognise and reward the public service of an individual, if at the same time under my proposed reform Parliament is enabled, without much difficulty, to do what it cannot do now and what it never has been able to do—namely, to detect and punish the maladministration of an individual—Parliament would probably be satisfied.

To this end I suggest that the offices actually in existence of Secretary of State for War and of the Board of Admiralty be abolished. In their place I propose that there should be created three new offices—

I. A Commander-in-Chief or Lord High Admiral of the Navy, having, subject to the Government, supreme control over and responsibility for naval administration. Naval training, naval experience and naval eminence being the qualification for this office.

II. A Commander-in-Chief or Captain-General of the Army, having, subject to the Government, supreme control over and responsibility for the administration of the Army. Military training, military experience and military eminence being the qualification for this office.

For the purpose of securing continuity of administration, and also of providing from time to time for fresh administrative energy, I propose that these two offices should be appointments tenable for five years; also for the purpose of gaining for the Cabinet military and naval opinion at first hand, I recommend that the holders of these offices should be created privy councillors and should be summoned to all Cabinet Councils when military and naval questions are under consideration, with, while those naval and military questions are under consideration, an equal position with the other Cabinet Ministers. But in order to keep the administration of the services free from party politics I suggest that these two Ministers should take no part in the discussion or decision of any questions other than those connected with naval and military affairs.

[A close parallel with the suggestion set forth above may be found in the position on the Council of the Indian Viceroy of the Indian Commander-in-Chief.]

For the purpose of bringing these Ministers into immediate contact with Parliament and at the same time of keeping them free from being involved in daily party debates and divisions, I advocate that they should be created members of the House of Lords.

[The feasibility of this suggestion is, I think, to a large extent illustrated by the positions now held in the House of Lords by his Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge and Lord Wolseley. Possibly also in former days similar positions were to some extent maintained, without inconvenience, by the Duke of Wellington and Lord Hardinge.]

These two Ministers would each of them be assisted by (among other officers) (1) a chief of the staff whose duties will be sketched below, and (2) a financial secretary, with a seat in the House of Commons, whose duty it would be to explain and, if necessary, to defend in that assembly naval or military administration in detail.

III. For the purpose of (1) preserving and insuring the financial control of Parliament and of the Government, of (2) supplying the much-needed link between the two services, so that one great object—viz., Imperial defence—should be more completely attained, I propose that there should be created the office of Secretary of State and Treasurer for the Sea and Land Forces of the Crown.

This Minister would, according to my view, settle with the responsible heads of the services the amount of annual expenditure to be submitted to the Cabinet; he would be charged with the duty of auditing the accounts of the Admiralty and the War Office, with presenting to and defending in Parliament those estimates and that expenditure. He would be charged, further, with a third great duty—viz., with the control, management of, and responsibility for, the Ordnance Department, and with the making of the great contracts for the Army and the Navy. He would, as it were, set up and carry on a great shop from which the military and naval heads would procure most of the supplies which they needed.

The main outlines of expenditure having been agreed upon by the two professional Ministers in conjunction with the proposed Secretary of State, this latter would not interfere nor necessarily be held responsible for the administration of the services, excepting in so far as he might have undertaken to provide those services with ordnance and other supplies and in so far as his duty lay in auditing the accounts and in testing the stores in hand.

The Secretary of State as proposed would be assisted by (1) a Permanent Under-Secretary of State, (2) a

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, (3) an Accountant and Auditor-General, (4) a Controller of Ordnance and Supplies, under whom would be (*a*) the Head of the Ordnance Factories, (*b*) the Director of Contracts.

The control and interference now exercised by the Treasury over Army and Navy expenditure would, under the proposed scheme, cease and determine. So also would the audit of the Controller or Auditor-General. I suggest that the Secretary of State, or his Accountant and Auditor-General would personally explain to Parliament and to the Committee of Public Account, Army and Navy Expenditure.

The relations between the proposed Ministers for the Army and Navy on one hand, and the Government on the other, would be closely analogous to the well-understood relations which now exist between the Home Government and the Viceroy of India or the Ambassador at a Foreign Court or a Colonial Governor. The Ministers for the Army and Navy might be dismissed by a new Government coming into office, but such a dismissal would be a grave Ministerial action requiring defence and explanation in Parliament.

The relations between the Ministers for the Army and Navy and the Secretary of State for the Sea and Land Forces of the Crown would be those of perfect equality and constant communication. The heads of the Army and Navy would bring to the Secretary of State in very authoritative form the views of their respective professions. The Secretary of State would bring to the heads of the Army and Navy the views of the Government and the House of Commons on the political circumstances of the time. The three would examine in concert the general requirements of Imperial defence from a point of view embracing and balancing one against another all the exigencies or supposed exigencies of the services. Where the claims or the views of the Army and Navy might conflict, the

Secretary of State would probably be found an authoritative and acceptable arbitrator. In the event of the Ministers for the Army and Navy disagreeing, either singly or jointly, with the Secretary of State, recourse would be had to the Cabinet. In the event of the Cabinet supporting the Secretary of State against the Ministers of the Army and Navy, either singly or jointly, those Ministers would have to consider whether their professional responsibility or reputation would admit of their continuing to hold office. In the event of the resignation of either or of both, Parliamentary discussion must ensue, and a Parliamentary decision must be taken. In the event of the administration of the heads of the Army and Navy being questioned by Parliament, the Secretary of State first, and the Government as a whole next, would have to consider whether they could or could not support in Parliament the administrative action arraigned. In either case, Parliamentary discussion and decision follow. Under the arrangements suggested above in almost every conceivable circumstance, I submit that not only in a very large measure (possibly as great as is practicable) is direct personal responsibility actually established, but also that the control of Parliament, far from being diminished, is considerably increased and made much more effective. The suggestions set forth above are, while probably open to much objection and criticism, also probably capable of much improvement and development, and in arriving at a judgment upon them, the Commissioners should bear in mind that the evidence before us discloses in many particulars a state of things more seriously unsatisfactory and possibly more pregnant with danger than Parliament or the public imagine; and the admitted defects of the present system of administration ought to be balanced by the Commissioners against the suggested defects of proposals for reform.

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FOOTNOTES:

[1] *Seven Years at Eton*, Brinsley Richards, p. 377.

[2] *Randolph Spencer-Churchill*, by T. H. S. Escott, M.A. (Hutchinson & Co., 1895).

[3] *Fortnightly Review*, October, 1874, vol. xvi., p. 412.

[4] Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto ix. lxxxiv.

[5] B. O'Brien, *Life of Parnell*, second edition, i. 163.

[6] 'That this House, having been informed in her Majesty's gracious Speech that the conditions on which her Majesty's neutrality is founded have not been infringed by either belligerent engaged in the war in the East of Europe, and having since received no information sufficient to justify a departure from the policy of neutrality and peace, sees no reason for adding to the burdens of the people by voting unnecessary supplies.'

[7] 'Elijah's Mantle,' *Fortnightly Review*, May, 1883.

[8] I have been greatly assisted in this chapter by the excellent accounts of the Fourth Party proceedings contributed by Mr. Harold Gorst to the *Nineteenth Century* from November 1902 to January 1903. In relating some incidents, notably on pages 153 and 161, I have by his permission used his actual words.

[9] *Life of Parnell*, R. Barry O'Brien, vol. i. 247.

[10] *Cf.* Mr. Forster's 'village ruffians.'

[11] *Men, Mines, and Animals in South Africa*, p. 23.

[12] Abridged.

[13] Mr. Gladstone.

[14] Mr. Chamberlain.

[15] A quotation from Mr. Gladstone's famous pamphlet of 1876.

[16] Preface to Lord Randolph Churchill's speeches, by L. J. Jennings, p. xxiv.

[17] Mr. Harold Gorst's articles, *Nineteenth Century*, November and December, 1902.

[18] Appendix II.

[19] Appendix II.

[20] See J. M. Maclean's *Reminiscences*, p. 68.

[21] Appendix II.

[22] Letter to Mr. Wainwright, M.P., June 9, 1884, Appendix III.

[23] Mr. W. H. Smith.

[24] See especially his letter to Mr. Harold Gorst of January 5, 1903, published in the *Times*, included as an Appendix.

[25] *Nineteenth Century*, January 1903, by Mr. Harold E. Gorst.

[26] Now Sir Charles Darling.

[27] Appendix IV. See especially his description of the tiger hunt.

[28] January 17, 1885.

[29] A note upon this chapter by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach.

[30] August.

[31] This was public-spirited. (See page 440.)

[32] House of Lords, May 3, 1888. *Hansard*, 325, 1179.

[33] Issued November 21, 1880.

[34] See Lord Randolph's Letters from India, Appendix.

[35] 'Ireland's Eye.'

[36] Lord Ashbourne.

[37] Our Very Good Lord: Ex-Chancellor Ball.

[38] *Times.*

[39] Appendix I.

[40] This appears to have been an outside estimate. (See p. 490.)

[41] Sir John Gorst's eldest son, now Sir Eldon Gorst.

[42] The italics are mine.—W. S. C.

[43] Mr. Smith to the Duke of Cambridge, October 9,

1885.

[44] Official memorandum.

[45] Colonel Burnaby was killed in action at Abu Klea, January 18, 1885.

[46] This was written ten days ago. Its contents are not much affected by recent events.—R. H. S. C.[47]

[47] The Memorandum and Lord Randolph's footnote are both undated, but Lord Salisbury's reply on the 9th shows that he had waited some days before replying. I conclude therefore that November 26 or 27 would be the latest date at which this document was written.

[48] Mr. Labouchere, who has checked and confirms this account of the conversation, remarks: 'As a matter of fact, Lord Randolph Churchill had asked me some time before to tell Mr. Gladstone that he would urge Ulster to resist by arms Home Rule, which I had done, and he now begged me to repeat to him his declaration of war.'

[49] *Life of Gladstone*, vol. iii. p. 270.

[50] Lost. The passage ultimately adopted reads as follows:—

'The social no less than the material condition of that country engages my anxious attention. Although there has been during the last year no marked increase of serious crime, there is in many places a concerted resistance to the enforcement of legal obligations, and I regret that the practice of organised intimidation continues to exist. I have caused every exertion to be used for the detection and punishment of these crimes, and no effort will be spared on the part of my Government to protect my Irish subjects in the exercise of their legal rights and the enjoyment of individual liberty. If, as my information leads me to apprehend, the existing provisions of the law should prove to be inadequate to cope with these growing evils, I look with confidence to your willingness to invest my Government with all necessary powers.'

[51] This was accompanied by the promise of a Bill dealing with the Land Question, pursuing in a more extensive sense the policy indicated by the Land Purchase

Act in 1885.

[52] At the Colonial Office, February 15, 1898 (O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, chap. xix. vol. ii.).

[53] Appendix V.

[54]

Lord Randolph Churchill	2,576
Rev. J. Page Hopps	769

[55] Wrongly stated in the *Annual Register* of 1886 as the Board of Trade.

[56] An expression quoted from Mr. Gladstone.

[57] 'Lord Randolph as an Official,' *Nineteenth Century*, October 1896, by the Right Hon. Sir Algernon West, K.C.B.

[58]

Scale of 1886, still in force:—

	s.	*d.*
Where the packet, box, bottle, pot, &c., did not exceed the price or value of 1*s.*, the duty was	0	1½
Exceeded 1*s.*, but did not exceed 2*s.* 6*d.*	0	3
" 2*s.* 6*d.* " 4*s.*	0	6
" 4*s.* " 10*s.*	1	0
" 10*s.* " 20*s.*	2	0
" 20*s.* " 30*s.*	3	0
" 30*s.* " 50*s.*	10	0
" 50*s.*	20	0

Lord Randolph Churchill's proposed scale:—

		s.	d.
Not exceeding		0	0½
2*d.* in value			
"	" 6*d.* "	0	1½
"	" 1*s.* "	0	3
"	" 2*s.* "	0	6
"	" 4*s.* "	1	0
"	" 8*s.* "	2	0
"	" 12*s.* "	3	0
"	" 20*s.* "	5	0
"	" 40*s.* "	10	0
Exceeding 40*s.* "		20	0

[59] The exact figure is 291,666*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*, but some reduction would probably occur in practice.

[60] Lord Ashbourne.

[61] Viscount Curzon, M.P. for South Buckinghamshire.

[62] Viscount Curzon, February 21. *Hansard*, 311, 179.

[63] Secretary to the Treasury.

[64] *Times*, April 20, 1887.

[65] See his letter to Mr. Arnold White, p. 459.

[66] No. 119, Egypt No. 8, 1888, published January 12, 1889.

[67] Letter to *Birmingham Daily Post*, April 18.

[68] *Life of Gladstone*, Book X., chapter iii.

[69] *Hansard*, March 1890.

[70] See Appendix, Mr. Jennings's Memorandum and Lord Justice FitzGibbon's note thereupon.

[71] Appendix VIII.

[72] Local Taxation Bill, June 17—228 to 224.

[73] Addison, *Spectator*, No. 68.

[74] *Men, Mines and Animals in South Africa.*

[75] The Hon. Lionel Holland.

[76] *Life of Pitt.*

[77] Abridged.

Typographical errors corrected by the etext transcriber:

the form of a **lettter** to his=> the form of a letter to his {pg vi 95}

the **Tukrish** rule=> the Turkish rule {pg vi 104}

furtherance of **this** political opinion=> furtherance of his political opinion {pg vii 53}

even **Constantiople**=> even Constantinople {pg vii 158}

I **purpose**=> I propose {pg vii 282}

They outnumbered by three **of** four to one=> They outnumbered by three or four to one {pg vii 385}

be would not speak=> he would not speak {pg vii 461}

the greatest **atention** to his speeches=> the greatest attention to his speeches {pg vii 474}

and **responsibilty** for=> and responsibility for {pg vii 521}

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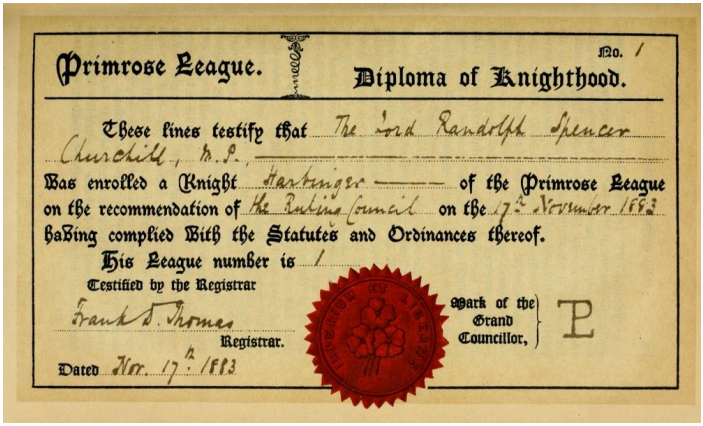
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Primrose League. No. 1

Diploma of Knighthood.

These lines testify that The Lord Randolph Spencer Churchill, M.P.,

Was enrolled a Knight Harbinger of the Primrose League on the recommendation of the Ruling Council on the 17th November 1883 having complied With the Statutes and Ordinances thereof.

His League number is 1

Testified by the Registrar

Frank S. Thomas

Registrar.

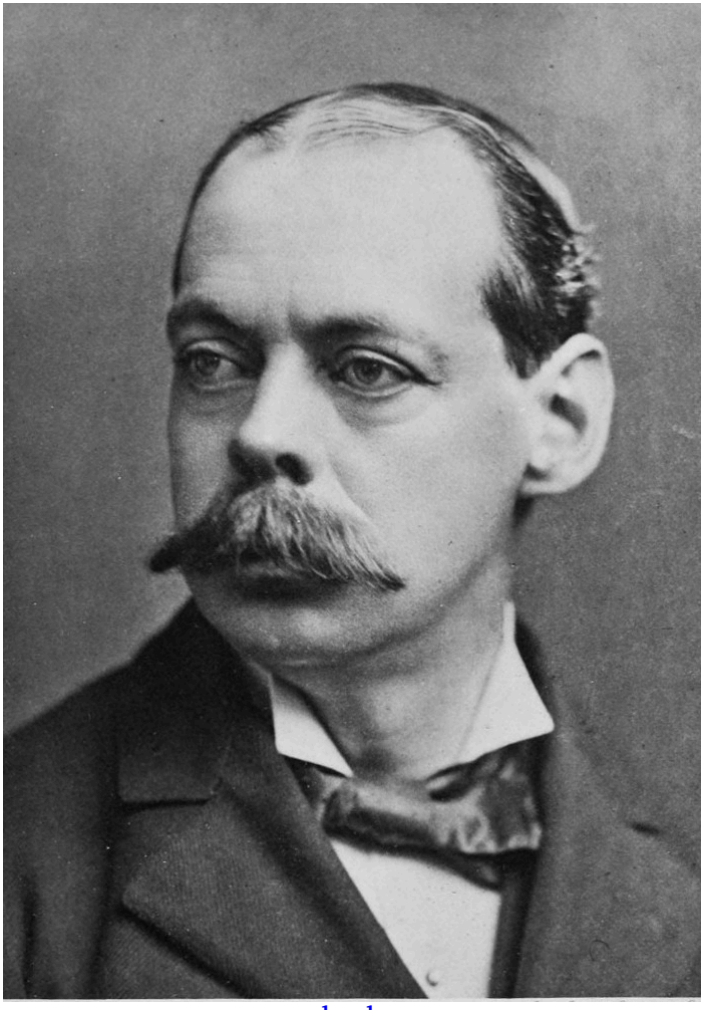
Dated Nov. 17th 1883

Mark of the Grand Councillor, P

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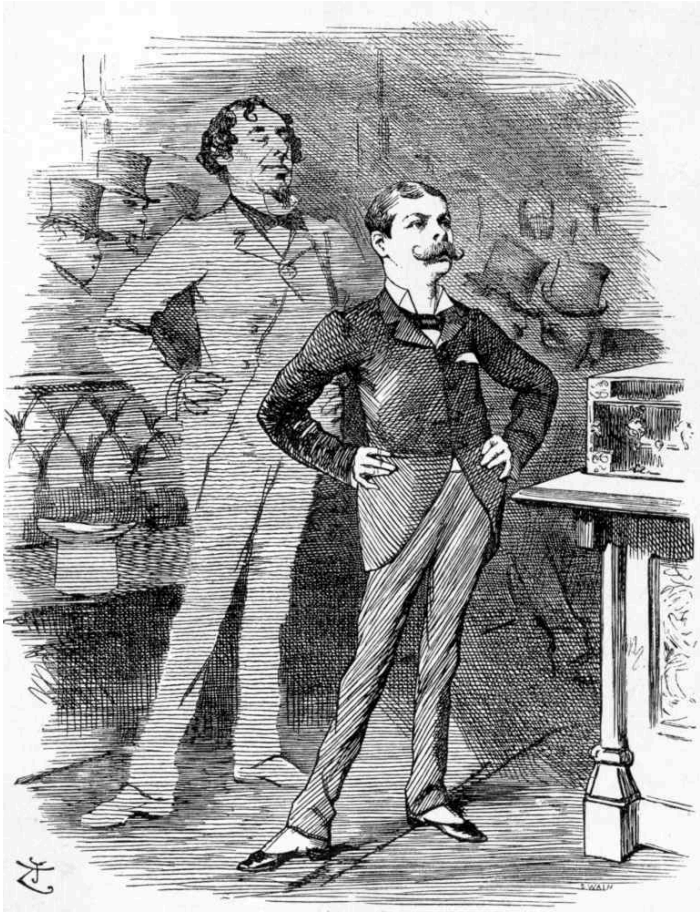
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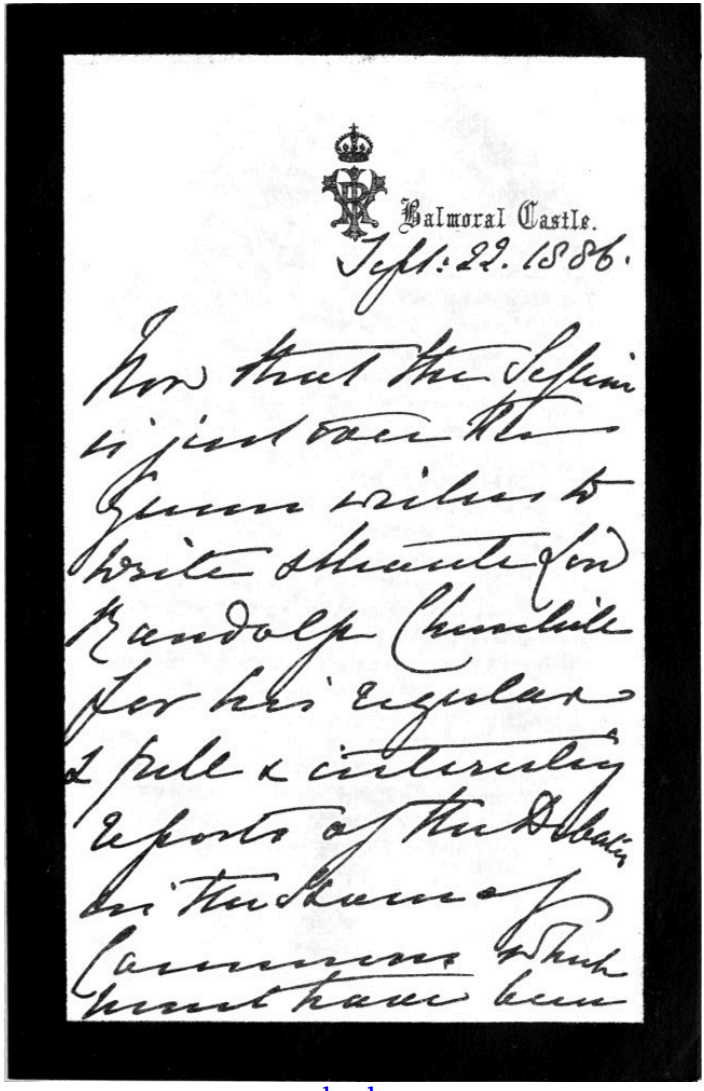
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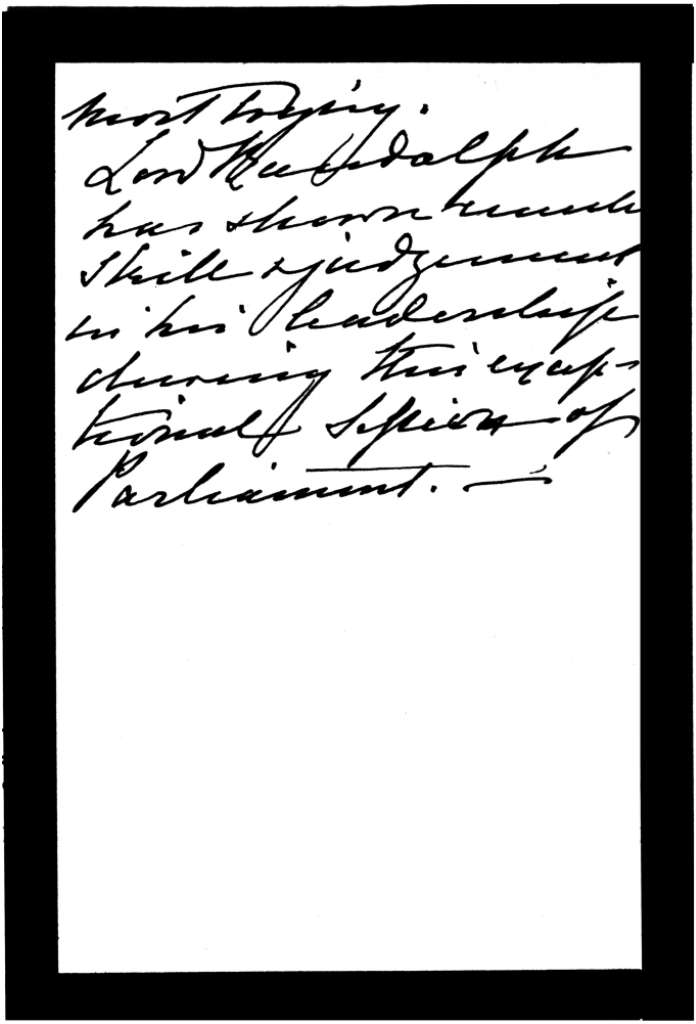
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Balmoral Castle.
Sept: 22. 1886.

How that the Session
is just over the
Queen wishes to
write a Memorandum for
Randolph Churchill
for his Guidance
& full & circumstantial
Reports of the Debates
in the House of
Commons & such
must have been

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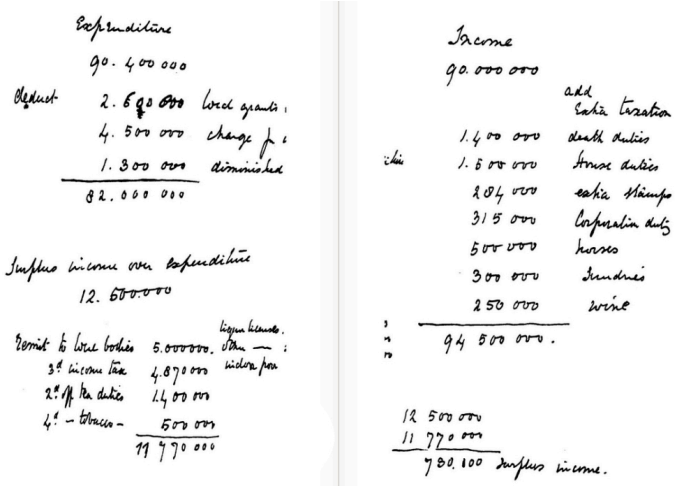
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Expenditure
90. 400 000
Deduct 2. 600 000 Local grants
4. 500 000 charge
1. 300 000 diminished
82. 000 000
Surplus income over expenditure
12. 500.000
Permit to Wine bottles 5.000000. Sugar licences
3d income Tax 4.870 000 Inhabited
2d Ale duties 1.400 000
4d Tobacco 500 000
11 770 000
Income
90. 000 000
add
Sale taxation
1.400 000 death duties
1. 600 000 House duties
284 000 sales Stamps
315 000 Corporation duty
500 000 Horses
300 000 Brandies
250 000 Wine
94 500 000.
12 500 000
11 770 000
730. 100 Surplus income.

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